PARTICIPATORY RURAL COMMUNICATION APPRAISAL

A Handbook

COOPERAZIONE ITALIANA

SADC Centre of Communication for Development

FAO FIAT PANIS

PARTICIPATORY RURAL COMMUNICATION APPRAISAL

Starting with the people

A Handbook

Second Edition

Prepared by
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Titus Moetsabi

for

the **SADC Centre of Communication for Development**
in collaboration with
the **Communication for Development Group**
Extension, Education and Communication Service
Sustainable Development Department

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INTRODUCTION

1. How this handbook can help
2. Who can benefit from this handbook
3. Suggestions for using this handbook

This handbook describes the procedure for planning and conducting Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA) as the first step in the design of cost-effective and appropriate communication programmes, strategies and materials for development projects. Developed by the SADC Centre of Communication for Development, in collaboration with Communication for Development Group of FAO. PRCA is a quick, multidisciplinary and participatory way to conduct communication research. It actively involves the people concerned in the research process to ensure that Communication for Development programmes are effective and relevant to them.

Since it was originally developed between 1994 and 1995, PRCA has been tested in development projects dealing with areas such as agriculture, animal husbandry, soil conservation, poverty alleviation, food security, adult education, health, family planning, water, sanitation and natural resource management. Experience from the field shows that there are a number of potential benefits for the people who use the PRCA process described in this handbook. For the grassroots, PRCA gives them the skills to articulate their opinions, to identify and prioritize their problems and needs and most importantly to seek ways and means of solving their problems and provide for their needs with or without outside intervention. Thus, PRCA is a way of sharpening the decision-making processes in the community and empowering the people to face up to any outsiders who might want to impose their wishes on them.

For the communication specialist, the findings of PRCA ensure that communication programmes spring from the people's perception of heir needs and problems. Such programmes utilize culturally appropriate communication approaches, materials and activities that the people find relevant and useful. Community identified opinion leaders, role models and influential sources of information and advice play a major role in such communication programmes.

For the development worker and extension staff, PRCA reveals that there is knowledge at the grassroots, although of a different form and nature from what they are accustomed to. With PRCA, this community knowledge can be identified and integrated in any joint development effort to improve the people's livelihood. PRCA is, therefore, capable of transforming development workers and extension staff from lecturers and educators into true grassroots catalysts. PRCA is also capable of breaking through the conspiracy of silence and diplomacy often associated with rural people. With its in-built field practice component, training in PRCA provides development workers with facilitation and communication skills as well as the right attitudes to work more effectively with the grassroots.

After the training, development workers and extension staff are better equipped to assist rural people to articulate their opinions and perceptions, identify and prioritize their problems and needs, and most importantly, develop and implement development action plans and supporting communication strategies to improve their livelihood in a sustainable manner.

For the development agency, results of PRCA provide the basis for planning communication efforts within development programmes that respond to the way the people define their own problems and their own ways of dealing with them. Such programmes are more likely to succeed and, in a sustainable manner, assist in the improvement of livelihood at the grassroots.

1. How this handbook can help

This handbook provides a simple, easy to follow step-by-step procedure to plan, conduct and analyze PRCA with communities in order to design effective communication programmes. It specifies the appropriate attitudes and behaviors required for the successful implementation of PRCA in the field. The handbook is illustrated with experiences garnered from various grassroots development efforts, especially those assisted by the SADC Centre's Action Programme for Communication Skills Development in the Southern Africa region and beyond.

2. Who can benefit from this handbook?

This handbook has been prepared primarily as a training and field guide for development workers and extension staff, field workers and communication practitioners. However, the publication could also serve as a valuable text on participatory rural communication research for universities, middle-level training institutions and professionals in rural development, communication and extension.

This handbook is also intended to be a useful guide for field practitioners, and their managers who need to know what is involved in designing and implementing effective communication programmes to facilitate rural development. Field development workers and extension staff who read this handbook are strongly encouraged to practice what they learn from it with communities in the research, planning and implementation of communication programmes. This is to ensure the success of development projects and ultimately the empowerment of the people.

This handbook is only a guide and staff who use it should see it as an inspiration to switch on their own creativity in order to develop and experiment with new and appropriate approaches for more fruitful participatory interactions with the various communities with whom they work.

3. Suggestions for using this handbook

PRCA is normally conducted by a team of facilitators made up of subject matter specialists, extension staff, field workers, communication and media experts in radio, video production, graphic design, translators and so on. Development workers, communication practitioners and extension staff who can use this handbook in two major ways. First as a reference guide (especially chapters 6 and 7) as they conduct PRCA in the field and second, as a training guide as they prepare others to plan

and conduct PRCA. For those who have not been trained in PRCA, it is advisable to arrange a brief orientation workshop in which the principles and procedures in the handbook can be learnt and practiced before applying them with a community group. For those who will use this handbook as a training text, a facilitator's guide should be prepared ahead. A reference manual can be obtained from the SADC Centre.

This handbook is still very much a working document and feedback is positively encouraged. Please send any comments on it to: The Communication for Development Group, Sustainable Development Department, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy SDRE@fao.org - www.fao.org

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Communication for Development in Action

Objective

To explain why development efforts often fail and the importance of communication, participation and PRCA in human and rural development.

At the end of this chapter you will be able to:

1. Define sustainable human development.
2. Identify why communication is important for rural development.
3. Recall the reasons for the frequent failure of rural development efforts.
4. Know the role of communication and participation in development.
5. Become acquainted with Communication for Development programme planning and implementation.
6. Define Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA).
7. Recall the historical background of PRCA.

1.1 Sustainable human development - The communication imperative

Human development is the process of enlarging the capabilities, choices and opportunities of people, especially the rural and the poor, to lead a long, healthy and fulfilling life. This process includes the expansion of people's capacity and skills to gain access to and control over factors that affect the basic needs essential to their lives. These needs include freedom from poverty, food security and availability of safe drinking water and improved sanitation. Other needs involve access to primary health care and basic education as well as the opportunity to participate effectively in the social, economic and political affairs of their societies and nations.

Human development puts people's empowerment at the centre of development. It aims to enable people to use their capabilities and resources to the fullest without destroying the richness of their cultural and natural environment. It also recognises that not much can be achieved without the improvement in the status of women and the opening up of opportunities to them.

One of the major factors that have slowed human development is the lack of people's participation in the design and implementation of policies and programmes that affect their lives. Unless people become the protagonists of their own development, no amount of investment or provision of technology will improve standards of living in a sustainable way. The problem, however, is that the rural and the poor who need to become active actors in their development to enable them improve their livelihood are often beyond easy reach. They are generally illiterate, but they have ideas, knowledge and practices shaped by deep-rooted cultural norms, traditions, experiences and values different from those of development workers. These peculiarities or differences render the task of involving rural people in the planning and implementation of development efforts difficult. To worsen the situation, most of the development workers, who work with the rural people, frequently lack the skills, tools, techniques and attributes to understand and involve them in the development process. This is a problem of communication and unfortunately not enough practical attention has been paid to the research, development or adaptation of techniques and training approaches to lessen it.

1.2 Why rural development often falls?

Rural development efforts fail for many reasons but the lack of people's participation and inadequate communication between projects and the people have often been cited as root causes. Below are some of the common communication-related reasons why rural development often fails.

1.2.1 Poor planning and programme formulation

Many rural development projects fail because the so-called beneficiaries do not truly participate in the assessment of needs and identification of problems to be addressed by such efforts. Rural people's perceptions of problems and solutions are often overlooked, while their storehouse of information, experience and analysis is usually neglected. Rural people are thus regarded as mere recipients, rather than as the actual creators of change and progress. This results in incomplete and inaccurate analysis of problems, and incomplete and inaccurate identification of solutions, frequently leading to poor programme planning and formulation. Target beneficiaries frequently refuse to participate in the implementation of such programmes because they are not perceived as relevant to their felt needs.

Box 1: Example of the consequence of planning without the people.

The Herald

HARARE, SATURDAY 22 JULY 1995

Villagers resist $250m project

GURUVE villagers in Nyangavi and Mupfurutsa communal lands are resisting the construction of a $250 million German-funded irrigation scheme and have threatened to beat up anyone who visits their area in connection with the project.

Guruve district Agritex officer, Mr Francis Mashayamombe, said in an interview that the villagers had refused to entertain any negotiations and have also barred Agritex officers from entering their territory.

He said they started resisting the project soon after a survey on how best it could be implemented had been completed claiming that it had been imposed on them since theyhad not been consulted.

Mr Mashayamombe, however, described the move by the villagers as unfortunate and said that if they continued with their stance, the project would be transfered to another district. --- ZIS.

1.2.2 Misallocation of project resources

When incomplete and inaccurate information about the community is used to plan development efforts there is a high tendency to allocate project resources to people who are not in most need of them or the truly poor.

1.2.3 Rural people's low sense of power

Some rural people, especially women, the oppressed and the very poor, usually feel powerless to steer development policies, priorities, technologies, agenda and programmes. They believe that development is controlled and decided almost entirely by outsiders and they cannot influence this process. This sense of powerlessness may be due to the non-inclusion of the people in creating the development programmes. Or, even where the political will exists to include them, the rural person's or community's low sense of power and ownership may be due to a lack of, or under-utilisation of, methods by which they may capably participate in the research, design, decision-making, implementation and evaluation of a development programme. Furthermore, development extension staff may be unwilling to use participatory methods or are ignorant of these. For instance, at Kwazulu-Natal Poverty Hearings held at Ulundi on 15 May 1998, over 600 people, the majority of whom were women, turned up to speak out against poverty. But the majority were too scared to speak out in public. 'I cannot go up there and speak', said one woman, 'I don't have the permission of my husband'.

1.2.4 Provision of inappropriate technology

Development agencies frequently promote inappropriate solutions that the people refuse to adopt because they are not perceived as relevant to their felt needs. This stems from the scantiness of effective methodologies to involve the people in the identification and development of appropriate technology, which address local conditions, needs and problems, and take advantage of local resources and opportunities. In such situations, development agencies commonly blame the rural people for being resistant to change and not having the appropriate attitudes and values to recognise the usefulness of offered solutions.

1.2.5 Inadequate promotion

Information, ideas and knowledge are often poorly identified and packaged for the socio-cultural context of rural people. This frequently leads to non-use, non-appreciation by people or even their confusion and misdirection. Many development workers who are charged with promotion are inadequately trained in appropriate ways to identify, gather and package information, ideas and knowledge in order to be useful and attractive for rural people. In many situations communication idioms, channels and media, as well as power and authority structures which are not effective for or accessible to rural people, both to receive and send information, knowledge, messages and decisions are used in rural development.

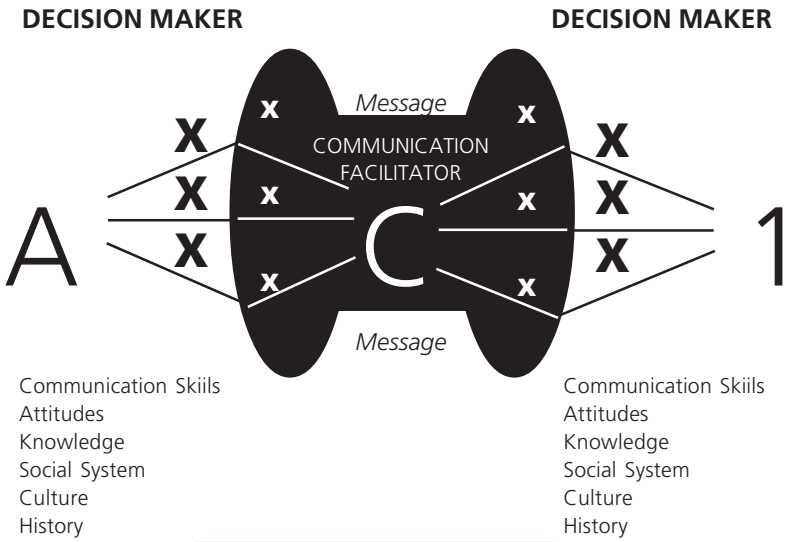


Figure 1: Working model of Communication for Development.

In this working model of Communication for Develop-ment, the traditional designations of receiver and source have been changed to Decision-makers A and 1. A is the first letter of the alphabet while 1 is the first number of the Arabic Numeral. In this way there is ideally no element of dominance in the model as has been the case with earlier communication models. It is recognised that the two decision-makers do not share the same communication skills with the result that the C (communicator) in this model is seen as a facilitator who interacts with each decision-maker within his or her own frame of reference. The facilitator translates utterances and actions of one decision-maker (white X) into idioms (black X) understandable by the other decision-maker in order to create mutual understanding that leads to successful joint decision-making.

Anyaegbunam Chike, 1989

1.2.6 Ineffective training methodologies

Training methodologies used in rural development frequently do not effectively transfer knowledge and skills to rural people who have low levels of literacy and little proficiency in formal education processes.

1.2.7 Lack of enabling policy

Finally, there is generally a low level of recognition of the true role of communication and participatory methodologies in planning and implementing rural development programmes, especially among policy and decision-makers in government and development agencies. Many government officials and development experts still see communication as a media oriented one-way process of sending information, knowledge and skills from the all-knowing project or government ministry to the

ignorant rural dwellers to educate them. This lack of appreciation of the two-way nature of communication as sharing and participation usually leads to inadequate funding and support for communication and participatory activities in rural development projects.

1.3 How can Communication for Development help?

1.3.1 What is Communication for Development?

Communication for Development is the systematic design and use of participatory activities, communication approaches, methods and media to share information and knowledge among all stakeholders in a rural development process in order to ensure mutual understanding and consensus leading to action. The aim is to facilitate people's participation at all levels of the development effort to identify and implement appropriate policies, programmes and technologies to prevent and reduce poverty in order to improve people's livelihood in a sustainable way.

1.3.2 Role of communication and participation in development

Communication for Development can be applied to all development sectors that rely upon the choices and actions of people to succeed. It is not limited to promoting agriculture alone, but also assists programmes for nutrition, health, gender, population and reproductive health, livestock, forestry, environment, literacy, income generation, sustainable livelihoods and other key areas. It usually focuses on the needs of communities and those organizations working with them. It empowers all stakeholders, especially the poor in rural and urban areas, to contribute actively to the decision-making processes of development as a whole.

Communication for Development can also be applied at any time during the project cycle. When applied during project formulation it ensures that the people actively participate in the identification of problems and needs which form the basis for project planning. Applied to a project already under implementation, Communication for Development helps to identify and solve communication problems and improve dialogue among all stakeholders to ensure that the objectives of the project are achieved. It might even be used for the adjustment or repackaging of project objectives and activities to ensure that they are relevant to the people's problems and capabilities. Specifically, communication and participation have the following roles in development:

- **People empowerment**

Communication for Development uses participatory activities, media and materials to empower people to articulate and share their own opinions, needs, problems and abilities both among themselves and with outside development agencies. This enables the people to influence the decision-making processes of formulating and implementing projects and programmes intended to satisfy their needs and solve their problems. People's participation in decision-making leads to consensus between them and the development agency on actions aimed at more sustainable community development. The outcome of this type of participation is often successful and sustainable because people see the decisions and plans as theirs and strive to ensure effective implementation. Empowerment increases people's readiness to mobilise themselves for collective action in order to achieve the objectives of the development effort.

- **Mutual understanding and consensus for action**

Communication for Development uses communication research, approaches, methods, traditional and modern media and materials to improve dialogue between rural people and development agencies in order for all parties to reach mutual understanding and jointly decide on problems, needs, solutions as well as on new and appropriate technologies and practices. Such decisions often marry local capabilities with outsiders' knowledge and skills for more effective problem-solving. Jointly identified solutions are often more acceptable to the people because they are seen as relevant to their needs.

Dialogue ensures that the people's culture, attitudes, capabilities and skills, as well as their views and opinions form the basis for the planning and formulation of effective and relevant development projects and programmes. Communication for Development can be used with success at any point in the development cycle to ensure people's participation. It is, however, most effective when used at the conceptualisation of the development effort to ensure that the people's perceptions of their livelihood and environment are taken into account in the process of planning.

Thus, Communication for Development ensures that information from development agencies is packaged in ways the people will find attractive, understandable, useful and relevant. In the same way, it also enables the people to transmit their perceptions and knowledge in ways that will be comprehensible to development agencies.

- **Improved training**

Communication for Development improves training of rural people by making available information, skills and knowledge in forms people find useful, relevant and attractive. Information and training about new technologies and practices are rendered in idioms and formats people can understand and transmitted in new ways that reach people more effectively wherever they may be through interpersonal, group and mass communication. Such communication-enhanced training can help to overcome the barriers of illiteracy and cultural differences by sharing ideas and knowledge in appropriate audio and visual forms.

Proper segmentation of the community using such criteria as wealth, gender, age, etc. ensures that the truly poor or people who really need training are the ones who get them in a development project. Communication for Development does not view communities as undifferentiated entities but as units made up of people of various circumstances and social standing.

- **Creating an enabling environment for policy to benefit the people**

In an advocacy role, Communication for Development helps to raise the awareness of policy and decision-makers to the need for better communication between projects and rural people. It also helps in coordinating policy between decision-makers and the people by packaging and transmitting the rural people's opinions in ways the policy makers will understand and vice versa.

1.4 Communication for Development programme planning and implementation: An overview

1.4.1 Phases of the Communication for Development programme

A programme of Communication for Development can be divided into six distinct phases with several steps in each phase. This handbook focuses on the first phase - Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal - because it provides the basis for successful planning and

implementation of the rest of the programme. An overview of all the phases is presented in this part of the handbook as a context for understanding what a PRCA should accomplish.

- Preliminary Situation Assessment
- Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal
- Communication Strategy Design
- Participatory Design of Messages and Discussion themes
- Communication Methods and Materials Development
- Implementation
- Monitoring
- Evaluation

Preliminary situation assessment

This is the assessment of the situation based on information already available to the team in order to determine the focus of the field appraisal.

Phase 1: Participatory rural communication appraisal

Research is one of the fundamental phases of the Communication for Development programme. In this phase, the use of Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal is strongly recommended because it is a participatory research method that involves the community in the process of communication programme planning right from the beginning. With PRCA, the needs and problems of the people are identified, defined and prioritised while opportunities and solutions existing in the community are discovered. Segments of the community who are most affected by these problems and needs can also be selected during PRCA. Such important community segments are known as 'Interaction Groups'. PRCA specifically seeks to discover issues amenable to resolution through the application of communication. Such communication issues often relate to the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the interaction groups, including their perceptions, values, knowledge, attitudes, and practices connected to selected problems and needs. As a communication research method, PRCA also identifies the traditional and modern communication systems in the community to be used for interacting with the people during programme implementation.

A baseline study, when combined with PRCA becomes a powerful tool to arrive at clear communication objectives in order to plan, implement and manage effective communication activities with the people.

Phase 2: Communication strategy design

In this phase, PRCA and baseline results are translated into useful accounts and utilised to design a communication strategy that will assist to achieve the development objectives selected during the PRCA. The communication strategy is based on the identified focal problems, which are turned into objectives. The strategy indicates the priority interaction groups in the community most affected

by the focal problems and specifies the best communication approaches such as information, motivation, promotion, training and education. Basic messages and discussion topics (rough core content) to be packaged for a variety of channels and media during phases 3 and 4 of the programme are also selected.

The strategy outlines financial, material and human resources required for solving the problem. It also contains a preliminary workplan and management plan that specify activities and the people responsible for performing them in order to obtain outputs that will contribute to the solution of the problems. To ensure that the programme does not go off track, the preliminary plan also contains measurable indicators for use in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the strategy.

Phase 3: Participatory design of messages and discussion themes

This is the third phase in the communication programme planning process. In this phase, the basic messages and discussion topics (rough core content) are creatively turned into appealing and thought provoking messages and discussion themes for various channels and media. Messages are information to be passed from one person or group to another with intent to produce effects. Discussion themes are information or ideas designed specifically to focus the attention of a group on a familiar problem and generate dialogue about the nature of the problem and possible actions to be taken.

In this highly creative phase, all the relevant knowledge discovered about the characteristics of the interaction groups and their perceptions of the problems are used for the creation of copies for the messages and discussion themes. Appeals are also added at this point to the messages and themes to bring the subject alive and make the interaction group stop, look, listen and discuss. To obtain maximum effect, the interaction groups must participate in this highly creative process. During this phase clear and written specifications are prepared to guide media producers in translating messages and themes into communication materials, media and activities.

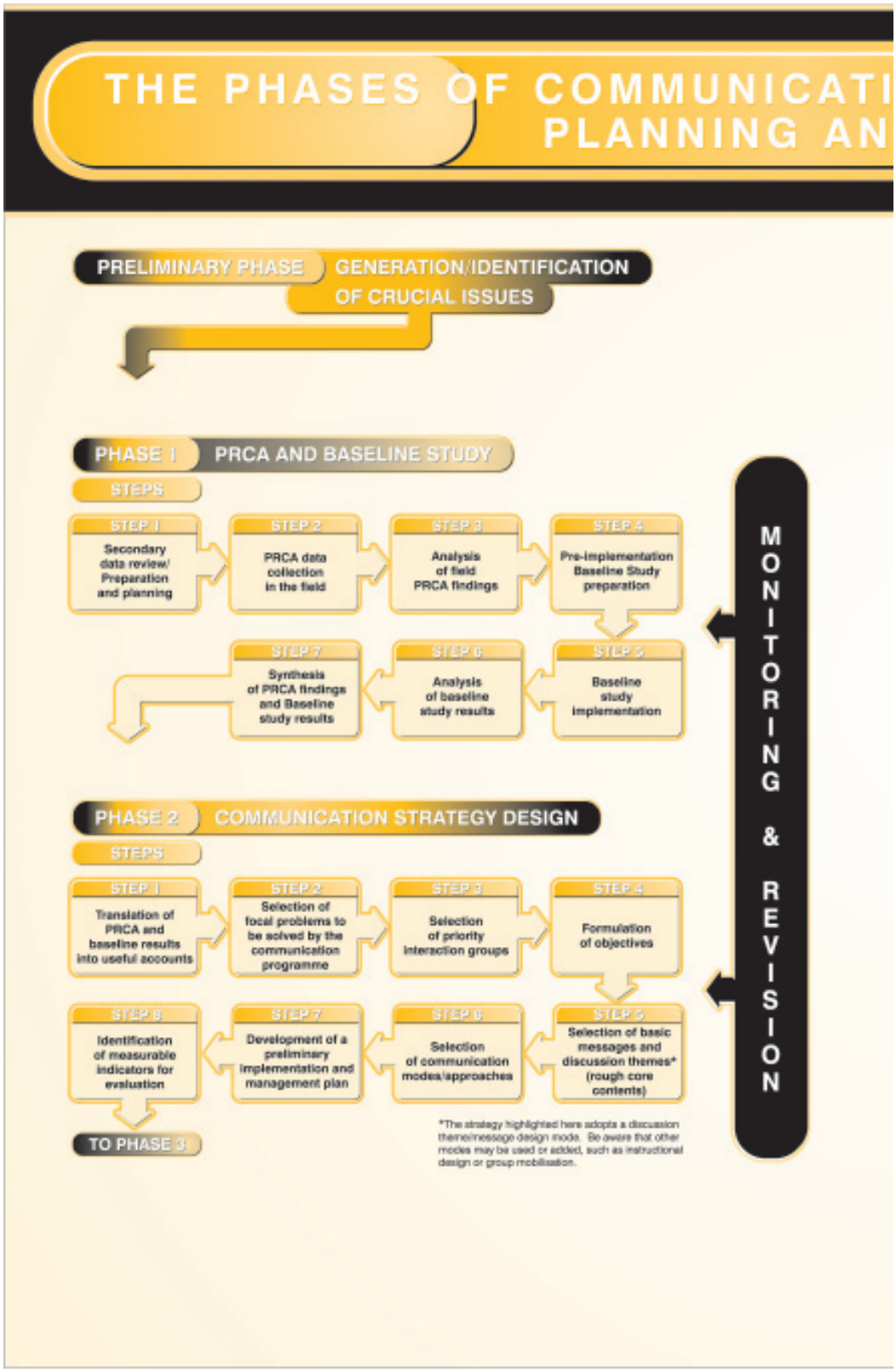
Note that there are other main communication modes, which involve the design of instructional and group mobilisation strategies as part of a communication programme. Message and discussion theme design have been highlighted here because they are the most frequently used.

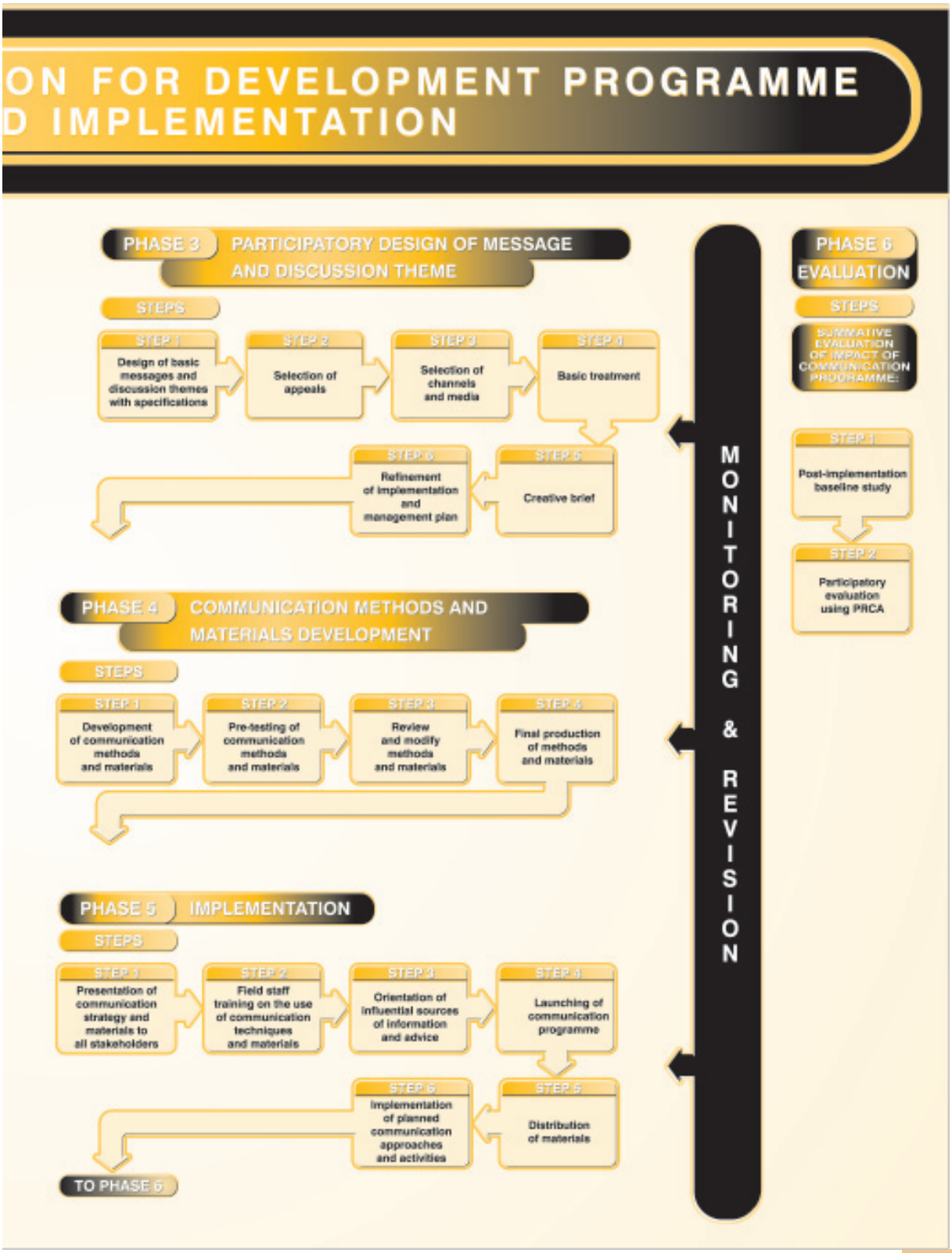
Phase 4: Communication methods and materials development

In this phase, with the help of communication media and activity producers the messages and discussion themes are turned into such audio visual materials and activities as radio programmes, posters, picture codes, flipcharts, drama etc. for mass production and eventual distribution and use in the field. During this phase supervision is essential to make sure that all materials are being produced according to the agreed specifications. All materials developed must be pre-tested with the intended interaction group before actually going into mass production. Pre-testing usually helps to verify the correctness and effectiveness of the material or activity. Materials should be corrected following pretesting to eliminate possible misinterpretations, biases or ambiguous elements.

At this stage the preliminary workplan is reviewed to ensure that the above activities and subsequent ones are properly scheduled to take place.

Figure 2: Phase of Communication for Development Programme.




ON FOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
D IMPLEMENTATION
PHASE 3 PARTICIPATORY DESIGN OF MESSAGE AND DISCUSSION THEME
STEPS
STEP 1 Design of basic messages and discussion themes with specifications
STEP 2 Selection of appeals
STEP 3 Selection of channels and media
STEP 4 Basic treatment
STEP 5 Creative brief
STEP 6 Refinement of implementation and management plan
PHASE 4 COMMUNICATION METHODS AND MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT
STEPS
STEP 1 Development of communication methods and materials
STEP 2 Pre-testing of communication methods and materials
STEP 3 Review and modify methods and materials
STEP 4 Final production of methods and materials
PHASE 5 IMPLEMENTATION
STEPS
STEP 1 Presentation of communication strategy and materials to all stakeholders
STEP 2 Field staff training on the use of communication techniques and materials
STEP 3 Orientation of influential sources of information and advice
STEP 4 Launching of communication programme
STEP 5 Distribution of materials
STEP 6 Implementation of planned communication approaches and activities
TO PHASE 6
MONITORING & REVISION
PHASE 6 EVALUATION
STEPS
SUMMATIVE EVALUATION OF IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME:
STEP 1 Post-implementation baseline study
STEP 2 Participatory evaluation using PRCA

Phase 5: Implementation

Phase five is the actual implementation of the planned communication activities with finished materials in the field. To ensure that this important phase proceeds smoothly, the first step is to present the communication strategy and materials to all stakeholders for a final review and to obtain their permission to proceed with implementation. In-depth training to field staff on the proper use of communication materials for the programme also takes place in this phase. Such field-staff training includes sessions on basic interpersonal communication skills and the differences between lecturing and facilitating. Influential sources of information and advice identified during the PRCA are also orientated on their roles in the programme. No communication programme can succeed without a cadre of well-trained field staff who will actually interact with the people to make the programme a reality and a success. Many communities appreciate a formal launching ceremony which brings all the stakeholders together to mark the beginning of the communication programme implementation.

Monitoring

This is a continuous procedure that runs through all the communication programme planning and implementation process. Monitoring is the systematic recording and periodic analysis of information to assess whether the programme is being implemented according to plan and how effectively. To monitor the process effectively, indicators are needed to point out whether the programme is on the right track or not. Indicators can be compared to road signs that tell motorists whether they are on the right road to their destination and how far they are from it.

Phase 6: Evaluation

It is also essential to measure the overall effectiveness of the programme at the end of its implementation. This is known as the final or summative evaluation. It measures the impact of the communication programme in the community and the degree to which the activities have contributed to the achievement of the communication programme objectives. This information can be obtained when results of a post-implementation baseline study are compared with the benchmark study carried out at the beginning of the programme.

1.5 Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA): A definition

1.5.1 What is Partipatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA)?

PRCA is a communication research method that utilises field-based visualisation techniques, interviews and group-work to generate information for the design of effective communication programmes, materials, media and methods for development purposes to ensure relevance and ownership by the people. PRCA facilitates dialogue among the rural people themselves and between them and the development workers in order for all parties to reach mutual understanding and plan for action. PRCA is therefore used to promote the involvement of rural people in decision-making that affects their livelihood.

PRCA results can be used for planning communication programmes for new development efforts or for adjusting on-going projects. Communication activities developed from PRCA facilitate the

sharing of knowledge and experiences between rural people and other development stakeholders in order for them to reach consensus on actions to be taken within the community to improve people's standard of living.

PRCA draws from such participatory approaches as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA). It borrows from qualitative and quantitative research as well as ethnography. It also incorporates ideas and techniques from the Logical Framework Approach (LFA), Objective Oriented Project Planning (OOPP), advertising and marketing research.

PRCA is built on the definition of communication that explains it as an interactive process characterised by the exchange of ideas, information, points of view and experiences between persons and groups. In PRCA, communication is a two-way process in which all the people are seen as important sources of information and ideas worth listening to. Passiveness is, therefore, non-existent in this process because it requires active mental cooperation of all the people involved until a common awareness and understanding is reached. It is a process in which all participants decide on a course of action together. In the context of development work, this view of communication therefore presupposes that all actors are equal. The convergence model of communication developed by Rogers and Kincaid (1981) best captures this framework.

1.5.2 The historical background of PRCA

The origins of PRCA can be traced to the participatory methods that started to emerge in the 1970s. During this period many development workers were becoming more and more disillusioned with the progress and achievement of development activities, especially in the rural areas. The limitations of many of the traditional communication research methods were becoming apparent. By this time the assumption that one of the main causes for lack of development was due to lack of education soon gave way to the realisation that there is a wealth of collective indigenous knowledge among the rural people that could be effectively used to raise their living standards. It was also realised that when rural people are involved in the identification of their own problems and needs they are more likely to support the actions needed to address the situation.

In the 1970s, development workers began to abandon the questionnaire methods which tended to be too long to administer, very rigid in their format, not taking into account the local reality (as the instruments were usually designed by researchers sitting in their urban offices) and complex to process and analyse. Looking for more effective methods, development workers learnt that most illiterates or semi-literate people can communicate any issues that affect them effectively through the help of visual representations.

All of the above factors gave birth to Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). This was a great improvement from the questionnaire methods. Data were gathered more quickly and as a result the reports of the findings were prepared faster. RRA also addressed the needs of the people better. However the researchers, after having collected the data in the villages, still took the information away from the people in order to analyse it in their own offices with their own sets of assumptions. That is why RRA has been known to be mainly extractive. Outsiders would go to rural areas, obtain information from the rural people, and then take it away to process and analyse, thereby controlling the process.

As RRA began to be applied in more situations, the emphasis on participation began to grow almost naturally. It became clear that the communities needed to be involved not only in data collection but also in the prioritisation and analysis of their problems and needs. Out of this process Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and later Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) methods

emerged. PRA and PLA recognised that there were many things that researchers and subject-matter specialists did not know and the only way to know them was by listening to the rural people. Similarly rural people were lacking some of the technical knowledge that the experts had to solve some of their problems. Thus, knowledge sharing became an essential component of PRA. PRA has been used extensively in agriculture, forestry and a number of other areas. However, interesting enough it has never been specifically used in the communication field, even though most of its techniques and tools derive from communication. PRCA was therefore created to take care of this oversight. PRCA belongs to the same family as RRA, PRA, PLA and the other participatory methods, but it is unique because it focuses specifically on rural communication systems and how to improve information sharing among all stake holders in a development effort. From the time it was conceptualised in 1994, PRCA has undergone changes to better adapt it to field realities. Comments and suggestions from international experts, field workers and rural people have been taken into account in polishing the research method.

SITUATION ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK IN PRCA

To define situation analysis framework (SAF), explain its various components and role in communication programme planning and implementation

At the end of this chapter you will be able to:

1. Define situation analysis framework (SAF): Purpose and rationale.
2. Apply the problem tree in the cause-effect analysis of critical issues.
3. Use the problem tree in the identification, prioritisation and analysis of focal problems.
4. Apply the main components of SAF in communication programme planning and implementation especially in the preliminary assessment of a project situation in preparing and conducting a PRCA.

2.1 Situation analysis framework (SAF): Purpose and rationale

2.1.1 What is Situation Analysis Framework (SAF)?

Situation analysis framework (SAF) is an analytical and planning method commonly used in PRCA and communication programme planning and implementation. SAF is adapted from the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) and the Objective Oriented Project Planning (OOPP). SAF borrows the problem tree analysis tool from OOPP, and adapts its various logical planning and organising components from LFA. SAF has been developed as a technique, which can easily be used in a participatory manner by field workers and the community for analysing problems and planning effective communication programmes to help in the achievement of the development objectives. For this reason SAF has been incorporated in the communication methodology presented in this handbook.

In Chapter 1, the reasons for the failure of many development projects were presented. The two main causes are the lack of people involvement in the development process and poor project planning. These two problem areas are specifically addressed by SAF through the participatory cause-effect analysis of problems and through a series of worksheets meant to assist in the organisation and management of the communication strategy. SAF is therefore an analytical and organisational technique that can facilitate the whole communication strategy design process. It is particularly useful for the following specific phases of the communication programme:

1. Preliminary assessment of the situation, as perceived by planners and project management, of an on-going project to provide a common framework for identifying and understanding the project's goal, problems, objectives and beneficiaries. This is done before the PRCA in order to have a better picture of the current situation of the project.
2. During field PRCA, SAF, especially the problem tree, is used in a participatory manner with the project beneficiaries to identify and carry out a cause-effect analysis of the main problems the project is addressing in the community. This exercise helps in the identification and selection of the priority focal problems the communication strategy will address.
3. During communication strategy design, SAF provides a framework for the organisation and management of the various elements that form the strategy such as the communication objectives, outputs, activities and inputs.
4. During the planning of the implementation phase of the communication programme, SAF provides the framework for identifying and incorporating indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

This handbook focuses on the first two functions, although it will introduce the reader to the third and fourth phases, which will be fully dealt with in the 'Communication Strategy Design Handbook'.

2.1.2. Main components of SAF

SAF includes a number of components, some of which are exclusively used in situation analysis, while others are used during other phases of the communication programme, planning and implementation process. Bear in mind that while keeping a logical sequential relationship among

all its components, SAF has also to deal with the creative factors present in communication. For instance, different from the LFA outputs, SAF outputs ARE NOT directly derived from the communication objectives but rather they are defined after being mediated through the communication design process. This involves a number of steps to define priority interaction groups, communication approaches, design specifications, media and activities.

The major components of SAF are the following:

- **Stakeholders (traditionally referred to as beneficiaries):** These are the people the project is trying to involve and assist through its activities. As the term implies stakeholders are those people in the rural communities who have a specific interest in solving the problem or improving the situation.
- **Development problem:** Also sometimes labelled the grand-problem, this defines a major undesired and negative situation affecting a large number of people. Projects are normally formulated as ways of reducing specific aspects of a development problem. Thus, a development problem can include a number of different problems and issues being tackled by various projects.
- **Project goal:** This is a statement of the overall aim of the project. It describes what the project aims to achieve by addressing the development problem. The goal provides the overall justification for the very existence of the project. It is also called the aim or development objective.
- **Main problems:** These are major specific problems or the undesired situation the project is specifically addressing. Main problems are derived from the development problem. They are the major causes of the development problem, or issues related to it. The definition of the main problems provides the boundaries within which the project can act. As will be explained later, the main problems usually constitute the central boxes in problem trees.
- **Project objectives:** Also known as immediate objectives, these indicate what the project aims to specifically accomplish in relation to the main problems and as a contribution to the achievement of the project goal.
- **The problem tree:** This important tool assists in the cause-effect analysis of a situation. The problem tree is the starting point of SAF as all the other components of the framework are derived from it. The rationale and how to develop a problem tree will be discussed in greater detail in the next section and in the Toolbox.
- **Focal problems:** Often referred to as root-problems, these are factors causing part or most of the main problem. This handbook will concentrate only on those focal problems that can be directly solved through a communication intervention. In order to identify focal problems it is necessary to carry out a cause-effect analysis of the situation, usually starting from the main problem. Focal problems are derived through the drawing and analysis of the problem tree.
- **Communication objectives:** These indicate what the communication intervention aims to accomplish, specifically in relation to the focal problem and as a contribution to the achievement of the project goal. The communication objectives are derived from the problem tree by rewording the focal problems as desirable states and/or as solution- oriented statements. Each communication objective should be expressed in a SMART manner with a specific timeframe for its achievement.

- **Communication Mode Design:** This includes a series of steps through which the Interaction groups, communication approaches, design specifications, media and activities are selected and refined. Most of the communication approaches are derived from the Communication Mode Design. The mode includes discussion theme/message design, instructional design and group mobilisation. The different modes assist to define the outputs. Communication mode design will be dealt with in detail in the 'Communication Strategy Handbook'. Please refer to worksheet 5 in section 2.3.3 of this chapter for some details about the process.
- **Outputs:** These are the measurable results of one or more activities. These are what the project activities are expected to produce so that the project can achieve its objective. The achievement of the outputs is within the direct control of the project and should therefore be guaranteed by the project through the provision of the necessary inputs.

  In order to define them more effectively outputs have been divided into two categories: quantitative and qualitative outputs. Quantitative outputs are the physical results of the activities such as the number of workshops held and of people trained, quantity of communication materials produced, for example, number of booklets and flipcharts. Qualitative outputs, on the other hand are the expected results to be achieved as a result of the physical outputs. These are intangible but still measurable results, for example, participants' satisfaction and level of awareness reached. For instance, if the output is 20 extensionists trained in interpersonal skills, the quantitative output will be the actual number trained and the qualitative one will be measured by how well the trained extensionists have learned communication interpersonal skills.
- **Activities:** These are the tasks/actions to be performed in order to produce the output needed to achieve the project's immediate objectives. Activities include such exercises as the training of trainers or the production of audio-visual materials.
- **Inputs:** These are the human and material resources (such as money, equipment, materials, personnel and training facilities) necessary to carry out project's activities meant to produce the outputs thus assisting to achieve the objective.
- **Indicators:** These can be compared to road signs that indicate to a driver whether he/she is on the right road and how far he/she is from the final destination. Indicators should be clearly verifiable and measurable. They are used for monitoring or assessing the effectiveness of each component of the communication programme in terms of quantity and quality. Indicators should be established in advance for each and every programme component (that is objectives, outputs and activities). In the case of a campaign to vaccinate children against polio an indicator may be the number of children vaccinated.
- **Means (or sources) of verification:** These are the sources and nature of information required to measure the indicators. Like the indicators themselves they should be identified and specified in advance. In the example mentioned earlier, official hospital and clinic records can be a means of verification of how many children have been vaccinated.
- **External factors (sometimes also referred to as Assumptions):** These are variables that are outside the control of the project management, but may determine the success or failure of the project. During the planning exercise, it is important to identify as many of these external factors as possible, in order to monitor them in the course of project implementation. For example, during a campaign to vaccinate children hospitals in the area run out of vaccines because a flood has cut them off. When this type of situation develops, the campaign might fail to reach its objective due to the unexpected external factor - the flood.

The box below summaries the logical linkages of the SAF components.

Box 3: The logical linkage of the SAF components.

Development Problem ↔ Goal ↔ Main Problem ↔ Immediate Objectives ↔ Problem Tree ↔ Focal Problems ↔ Communication Objectives ↔ Communication Mode Design ↔ Outputs ↔ Activities ↔ Inputs

Use this logical relationship 'sequential chain' among SAF components as a checklist to ensure that no element of the process is omitted and that all the linkages are consistent with one another.

2.2 The problem tree: Cause-effect analysis of critical issues

2.2.1 What is a problem tree?

The problem tree is a visual problem-analysis tool that can be effectively used by both field development staff and the community to specify and investigate the causes and effects of a problem and to highlight the relationships between them. As the name implies, this tool resembles a tree. The roots of the tree, in the lower part of the drawing, metaphorically represent the causes of the main problem (Figure 3). The tree trunk at the centre of the drawing represents the main problem and the tree branches, on the upper side of the drawing, provide a visual representation of the effects of the main problem.

As pointed out earlier, the problem tree is an effective tool for the identification and analysis of the relevant causes of the main problems, which will later form the bases for formulating solutions and objectives for the communication strategy. A discussion of the causes can help to identify the segments of the community who are most affected and who should be specifically interested in participating in activities aimed at removing the causes of the problem. Remember that each cause of the problem is also a problem in its own right.

The problem tree can be used in on-going projects as well as in the formulation of new development efforts with a community. In on-going projects, the problem tree is done at least twice. First it is done before going into the field, in order to assess clearly the project perception about the main problem and its causes. Then the problem tree is done with the community to assess if they have the same perceptions of the problem. Quite often the difference in the two perceptions constitutes one of the main obstacles towards the successful achievement of the projects' objectives.

The whole purpose of the problem tree is to define the main problems present in the community in order to analyse and prioritise their causes as the first step towards effective sustainable solutions. Probably the most important tool to keep in mind throughout this process is a single question or rather a single word: 'WHY?' It is amazing how this short word can generate unexpected insights, which greatly help in developing an effective communication strategy. Never be afraid of asking or wondering why something is happening, even if it seems obvious. Looking for reasons why something is occurring is the correct way of investigating an issue. Of course the 'why obsession',

as it is sometimes labelled, can be tricky since there is always a why to be asked and this can lead to a never-ending chain of 'why'. Where should it stop?

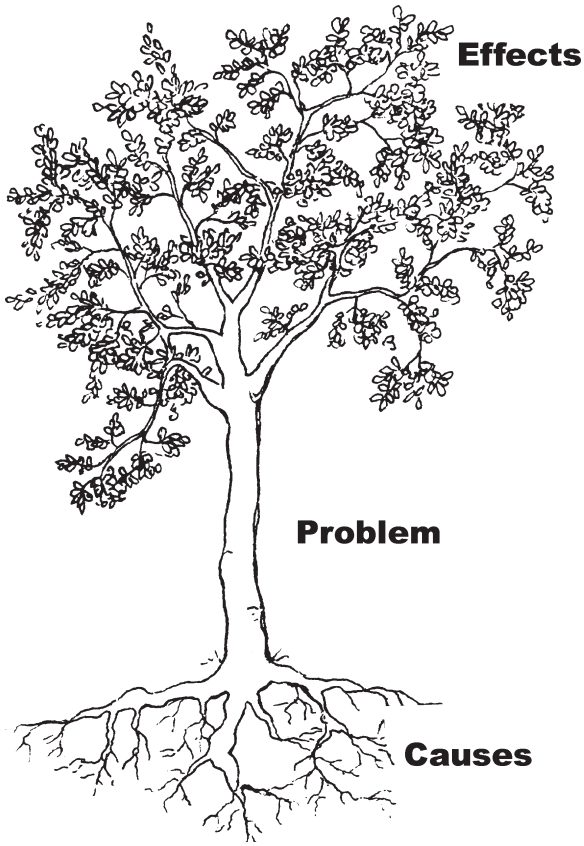


Figure 3: A simplistic view of a problem tree.

Let us consider this story. Tendai was going to work when her car broke down. WHY did the car break down? Tendai checked her car and found out that the fan belt had broken. WHY did the fan belt get cut? Probably because she had driven the car for too long without replacing the belt. WHY? Because she enjoys travelling by car or maybe she lives far away and she needs to use the car to accomplish her daily tasks. This questioning could continue to infinity but when should it stop? The answer is: whenever a point is reached that will allow for the problem to be effectively addressed. In Tendai's case that point was reached when she found out that the fan belt was broken. Since her main problem was that the car would not move and her objective is to have the car fixed to go to work everyday she only needs to find a good mechanic and replace the belt. It is of no use, and of no relevance for solving the problem, to know why she drives long distances by car. Similarly when dealing with development projects and carrying out problem analysis we need to identify the right entry point that will enable us to provide the solutions to the critical problems.

The problems and needs of the communities are at the heart of each development activity, that is why it is crucial to involve the community in the decision making process. This can only start with the identification and definition of the main problem and continue with analysis of the factors causing the undesired situation. From here the problem-solving strategy will pass through all the components of SAF in order to organise the plan of action. The end result should be involving the

people in providing an effective and sustainable solution to address the identified problem. The problem tree is the major tool capable of assisting in this effort.

The starting point of the problem tree is the identification of the main problem. Identifying problems may seem a simple task but it is not. There are often a number of problems, or causes, resulting in adverse circumstances but not all of them carry the same weight. In most aspects of life there are usually a few problems causing a large number of negative factors, while the vast majority of the problems are responsible for only a very small part of the situation. This is known as the 20/80 law. Usually 20 per cent of the tributaries carry 80 per cent of the total water capacity into bigger rivers. In marketing it is known that only a small part of the clients (about 20 per cent) accounts for the vast majority of the sales (about 80 per cent). In a similar way a big problem is usually caused by a small number of all possible causes. Through the cause-effect analysis, identify the main problems and their most relevant causes. These are the focal problems, responsible for most of the adverse situation experienced by the community. The main problem can be identified with the community using brainstorming techniques, focus group discussions, ranking or scoring. A similar approach should be used later on for the selection and prioritisation of focal problems. All the problems coming out of any of these exercises should be listed and prioritised. See the description below on how to develop a problem tree. For a more detailed explanation refer to the Toolbox for the tools and instructions on how to generate and prioritise the main problems and develop the problem tree, especially, brainstorming, focus group discussion, ranking and scoring.

2.2.2 Developing the problem tree: Identification and analysis of focal problems

The first question when starting the problem identification process should always be WHOSE PROBLEM? This is to ensure that the problems to be addressed are really perceived as such by the community. The problem tree can be a very useful tool to verify the perceptions of the problem by the community and explore all cause-effects links in on-going projects. Similarly it can also be used effectively in the formulation of new projects, in order to involve the communities in identifying and assessing their priorities.

The following are the basic steps that should be followed with the community, in developing the cause-effect analysis leading to the identification of focal problems and their solutions through the problem tree:

1. Identify, define and select specific main problems or undesired situations within the project scope;
2. For each specific main problem selected develop a problem tree;
3. For each problem tree carry out a comprehensive cause-effect analysis of the situation identifying the focal problems;
4. Based on the analysis carried out define the communication objectives.

In order to carry out these steps successfully develop and analyse the problem tree effectively. Once the specific problem has been identified, the first thing to do is to draw the central box stating the main problem. Draw the box at the centre of the paper (possibly a large one) or at the centre of the space available on the ground (in some communities the best option may be the ground. In this case make sure to copy the problem tree onto paper later). The analysis can be started either by stating the effects on the higher part of the paper or by stating the causes on the lower part. It is more effective to start with the effects as these will help the community visualise all

the negative, undesired effects caused by the main problem. As the boxes are drawn with the effects always ask what is this event/problem leading to? If the main problem is malnutrition one effect is unhealthy children, and what does this lead to? Increased expenditure for medicines, among other things. What does this lead to? Reduced income for the family hence increased poverty.

The method used above is the same kind of approach to be used for drawing boxes as casual events linking them not just to a single factor but to as many as they appeared to be linked to. In other words the same approach should be followed for drawing the lower part of the tree, the one concerned with the causes of the main problem. The question to ask is why is this happening? Or what causes this event? For instance ask what causes malnutrition? One reason may be lack of food in the community. What is lack of food caused by? Poor cropping. Why? Erratic rains. Why? Carry on until an entry point is found for communication. Remember that there is never a single cause responsible for a whole negative situation.

At this point the complete problem tree is drawn full of branches, showing the effects due to the main problem, and with many roots, stating the causes of the main problem. This provides a comprehensive visual representation of the main problem and its cause-effect relationships. Community opinions and analytical judgement must be used to identify the focal problems, which are the communication entry points. These are crucial problems that carry a heavier weight than others (remember the 20/80 law), that can be addressed by communication and that can directly assist in eliminating the main problem. Unfortunately the prioritisation of the focal problem is the most crucial and often the most difficult task to be performed. It is often not easy to decide which ones among the root-problems identified are the most relevant for solving the main problem. This is a crucial part of the whole process, as the priority focal problems selected constitute the bases upon which to build an effective communication strategy. A good way of prioritising root-problems is to assist the community to rank and score them. The example below illustrates the overall

Box 4: Case Study of an AP Nutritional Project

representation of the problem tree in a real life situation.

The attached case study of an AP Nutritional Project illustrates the logical use of the components of SAF in a project.

AP Nutritional Project

The AP Nutritional Project is the modified name of a project that participated in one of the AP workshops. Its problem tree, focal problems, objectives and SAF structure have been modified and adapted in order to clarify the issues presented in the training package and assist in making the instructional process easier to understand. The data presented does not therefore provide an accurate socio-economic representation of the situation in reality. Its use is only to illustrate the process and linkages of communication programme planning through SAF.

Similarly the data presented here are by no means to be considered as a full account of all

aspects included in designing a communication strategy. On the contrary, for each phase involved in the process, the strategy design only takes one single factor (which is in bold) in order to keep your attention focused on the sequence and the causal linkages needed rather than on the overall picture.

DEVELOPMENT PROBLEM

Poor livelihood and poorhousehold food security

PROJECT GOAL

Assist in the poverty alleviation effort by increasing food security

MAIN PROJECT PROBLEM

High rate of malnutrition in children under five years of age

MAIN PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. To improve food processing, preservation and appropriate food storages inthe community.
2. To reduce malnutrition among the children under five years.
3. To promote the utilisation of locally available food.
4. To promote and enhance the coordination among the intersectoral teams formed by various ministries, line agencies and NGO related to development in the districts concerned.

PROBLEM TREE: malnutrition among under fives (main problem)

FOCAL PROBLEMS

1. Under-utilisation of the feeding schemes.
2. Food shortage.
3. Poor feeding practises.
4. Inadequate knowledge on food processing and preserving.
5. Poor food storage facilities.
6. Frequent incapability by the mothers of identifying malnutrition at its early stage.

Some of these focal problems are interrelated and some could be partially causing others. For instance food shortage could be also caused by inadequate storage facilities. Similarly problem number 1, under-utilisation of the feeding schemes, and problem number 3, poor feeding practices, are most probably related. For the purpose of this training package the latter problem, about poor feeding practices, is going to be regarded as the main one around which the whole communication strategy will be built.

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

1. Raise the awareness of proper feeding practises in the district to account for 80 per cent of all women between the age of 16 and 40 years old by the next year.

2. Increase the knowledge of proper feeding practises to cover at least 60 per cent of all the mothers of under fives by the next two years.
3. Raise the percentage of mothers adopting correct feeding practices by 20 per cent over the next two years.

For the purpose of this training package objective number 2 is the one that will be referred to as the main objective. This will also avoid considering other variables that could make the learning process more complex (e.g., if considering objective number 3, lack of food could be an external factor impeding the success of the strategy).

COMMUNICATION BRIEF

In this phase, for each communication objective identify and clearly define the Priority Interaction Groups, the Communication Modes, Approaches and Media. This will allow you to design your strategy and get to the next step: definition of the outputs.

QUANTITATIVE OUTPUTS

1. 200 posters.
2. At least two group meetings for each village of the district.
3. 10 flipcharts on the importance of proper feeding practices and child health.
4. One training workshop for the 8 health workers of the district and their two supervisors.

QUALITATIVE OUTPUTS

1. Posters and group meetings are passing the right message.
2. Flipcharts truly encourage an open discussion among health workers and the women of the district.
3. Health workers and their supervisors effectively trained on how to use the flipcharts and how to dialogue with the women in the district.

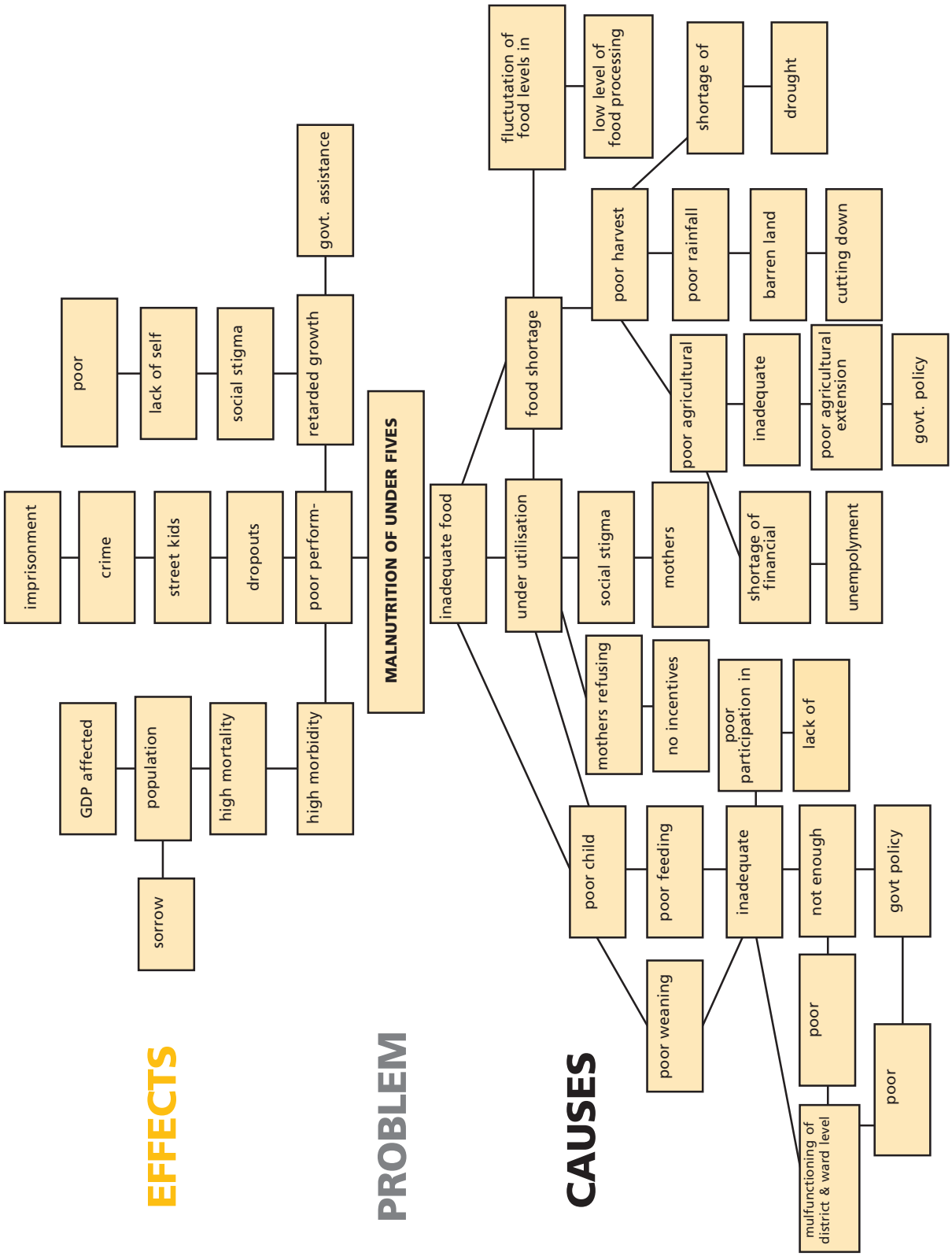
ACTIVITIES

1. Design draft flipchart panels.
2. Pre-test flipcharts.
3. Produce flipcharts.
4. Train health workers on how to use flipcharts.

INPUTS

1. Graphic artist fee.
2. Cost of materials for the flipcharts.
3. Transport costs for pre-testing.
4. Allowances for pre-testing.
5. Production costs.
6. Costs for organising a workshop (premises, transport, allowances, stationary, etc.).

Figure 4: An example of the problem tree.



From the example above it can be observed that some of the causes of the main problem can be tackled with communication strategy while others are structural and might need physical or policy inputs.

Before going to the next section go through this summary outlining the sequence of developing a problem tree:

- At the centre of a large paper, or any other big space as available, draw a square representing the main problem;
- Above the central square draw the branches of the tree (i.e. the effects experienced as a consequence of the main problem) making a box for each effect leading to another one and so on;
- Below the central square representing the main problem draw the roots of the tree (i.e. the factors causing the main problem) making a box for each cause resulting in another cause and so on;
- Use the fully developed problem tree to analyse all events and their causal relationship. Remember that each box, depending on how it is looked at, can be a problem, the cause of a problem (that is, of the box directly above) and the effect of a problem (that is, of the box directly underneath).

2.2.3 Identification, prioritisation and analysis of focal problems

Focal problems, also known as communication entry points, are the major causes of the main problem. Communication can be used in order to help eliminate or reduce the focal problems as a step towards solving the main problem, thus assisting in the achievement of the communication and project objectives. To be relevant to community needs and capabilities, the selection and prioritisation of the focal problems should be done hand in hand with the people. This is important because, generally, neither the community nor the project has sufficient financial and human resources to eliminate all the causes of the main problem at the same time. Priority focal problems should therefore be selected on the basis that they are considered to be major bottlenecks to the solution of the main problems, by both the community and the project staff.

Use such PRCA tools as scoring, ranking and focus group discussion for involving the community in this prioritisation exercise. These tools are discussed in detail later in this handbook.

As the relevant priority focal problems are being selected and analysed, the most effective ways and means of eliminating them or reducing their influence are also being identified and discussed. Once decisions on possible solutions of the priority focal problems are reached, the design of the communication strategy, beginning with the formulation of SMART objectives, can start. Instructions on how to design a communication strategy that addresses the identified priority focal problems will be dealt with in the 'Communication Strategy Design Handbook'. It is however important to keep in mind that proper problem identification and analysis are the bases for the design of an effective and successful problem solving communication strategy.

2.3 Role of SAF in communication programme planning and implementation

Following the introduction of the main components of SAF in the beginning of this chapter, a more detailed description of the uses of various SAF components during specific phases of the

communication programme is provided below. The shaded boxes in the SAF and Communication Strategy Worksheets indicate areas addressed with SAF. The specific worksheets in which SAF is used are :

- Worksheet 1 - Preliminary Assessment of the Situation (before the PRCA)
- Worksheet 2 - SAF for Field PRCA
- Worksheet 5 - Communication Strategy: Organisation and Management
- Worksheet 6 - Communication Strategy: Monitoring
- Worksheet 7 - Communication strategy: Evaluation

Communication Strategy Worksheets 3 and 4 shown below will be discussed in detail in the 'Communication Strategy Design Handbook'.

Worksheet 1 - Preliminary Assessment of the Situation (before the PRCA)

Development Problems	Project Goal	Main Problem/s	Project Objectives	Project Stakeholders/ (Beneficiaries)	Project Perceptions (Problem Tree)

Worksheet 2 - SAF for Field PRCA

Community Perceptions	New View of Problems (Identification of Critical Issues)	Identification of Focal Problems (Issues related to communication)	Prioritisation and Refinement of Focal Problems	(Focal) Communication Objectives

Worksheet 3 - The Communication Intervention

Portraits of Interaction Groups and Influential Sources	SMART Communication Objectives	Problem Solving Thinking (how to address the problem)	Rough Core -Content (Issues to be addressed)	Communication Approaches

Worksheet 4A -Communication Modes: Discussion Themes/Message Design

Basic Messages and Discussion Themes	Specifications (objectives of discussion themes and messages	Appeals	Selected Medium	Basic Treatment	Communication Brief - Creative Mode (including outputs)

Worksheet 4B - Communication Modes: Instructional Design

Subjects/ Content	Learning Objectives (specifucations)	Supporting Media	Basic Instructional Approach	Communication Brief - Instructional Mode (including outputs)

Worksheet 4C - Communication Modes: Group Mobilisation

Purpose and Rationale of Group Mobilisation	Specifications (group size, objectives and characteristics)	Supporting Media (if any)	Basic Group Mobilisation Approach	Communication Brief - Group Mobilisation Mode (incl. outputs)

Worksheet 5 - Communication Strategy: Organisation and Management

SMART Communic. Objectives	Quantitative Outputs (derived from Communication Strategy)	Qualitative Outputs	Activities	Inputs (with est. costing)	Responsibility	Timing

Worksheet 6 - Communication Strategy: SAF in Monitoring the Workplan*

Quantitative Outputs			
Qualitative Outputs			
Other activities			

Worksheet 7 - Communication Strategy: SAF in the Evaluation of Communication Impact

Quantitative Evaluation (of the Impact in relation to the Objectives)			
Participatory Evaluation (of the Impact in relation to the Objectives)			

* In this handbook monitoring and evaluation are always considered at two different levels of measurement:

1. Quantitative: measuring the physical result expected, e.g. number of radio programmes produced or training workshops held, extensionists trained, brochure produced, radio programmes aired, etc.

2. Qualitative: measuring how well the expected results of the activities were achieved, e.g. out of X number of extensionists trained, how many have achieved the intended level of skills and knowledge? Are the Y number of brochures produced of a satisfactory level? Are the radio programmes produced attracting the needed attention?

Specifically SAF can be used during the various phases of communication programme planning and implementation in the different ways listed below.

2.3.1 SAF for preliminary assessment of the situation

Worksheet 1 - Preliminary Assessment of the Situation (before the PRCA)

Development Problems	Project Goal	Main Problem/s	Project Objectives	Project Stakeholders (Beneficiaries)	Project Perceptions (Problem Tree)

In preparation for a PRCA and prior to communication strategy formulation, SAF is used as an analytical tool to understand the existing situation of an on-going project as defined by its management. The SAF components listed below constitute the minimum attributes of the project to be identified and analysed in order to obtain a clear understanding of the project situation:

- The development problem - the overall major undesired situation indirectly addressed by the project;
- The goal of the project - how the project is supposed to partially address the development problem;
- The main problem(s) to be specifically addressed and solved by the project;
- The project objectives - the targets the project is expected to achieve;
- The project beneficiaries - the people who are supposed to benefit from the project's activities.

This initial analysis defines the on-going activities of the project and provides a common background and terminology for understanding the rationale and purpose of the project. It also lays out a framework for identifying the main issues to be further explored during the PRCA. A problem tree is normally drawn at this stage of situation analysis using information provided by the project management. This initial problem tree will be compared to another problem tree produced by the community on the same issues during PRCA with the beneficiaries.

2.3.2 SAF for Field PRCA

Worksheet 2 - SAF for Field PRCA

Community Perceptions (Problem Tree)	New View of Problems (Synthesis of the two perceptions on critical issues)	Identification of Focal Problems (Issues related to communication)	Prioritisation and Refinement of Focal Problems	(Focal) Communication Objectives

The most commonly utilised SAF component for a field PRCA is the problem tree, which assists in the cause-effect analysis and prioritisation of problems with the community. The use of the problem tree in the community ensures that the community's perceptions of the main problems addressed by the project are obtained. The problem tree drawn with the community should be compared with the one drawn by the project team during preliminary assessment. This comparison often leads to a new view of the problems and assists in the identification of priority focal problems which are relevant to both the community needs and capabilities as well as the project's mandate and capacity. This in turn leads to the formulation of communication objectives that will address appropriate issues in the community. This ensures that the communication strategy, when designed, will address the most relevant causes of the main problems.

The success of any communication strategy is dependent on the correct identification and analysis of the relevant causes of the main problems. These causes of the main problem are the bases for formulating objectives for the communication strategy. SAF thus assists in the definition of relevant objectives to guide the formulation of the communication strategy. Without relevant communication objectives derived from main causes of a problem, an entire communication strategy might waste human and financial resources tackling the wrong problem. For instance a strategy was implemented for two years to review a school curriculum because it was thought to be the main cause of poor performance at school by village children. At the end of the strategy implementation, the problem still persisted. On evaluation of the strategy and further analysis of the problem, it was found out that the actual cause of the problem was the high rate of malnutrition among the children. Because the children did not feed properly, they paid little attention to what the teachers said in class, hence their poor performance in school.

2.3.3 SAF for Communication Strategy Organisation and Management

Worksheet 5 - Communication strategy: Organisation and Management

SMART Communication	Quant. Outputs (derived from Communication Strategy)	Qualitative Outputs	Activities	Inputs (with estimated costing)	Responsibility	Timing

During the development of the organisation and management plan for the communication strategy, SAF provides a consistent framework for the organisation of the various elements of the plan for implementation. SAF assists in the specification of the quantitative and qualitative outputs needed to achieve the communication objectives selected during the strategy formulation. These outputs are the results of activities the communication team and the community must carry out during the programme implementation. SAF specifies the inputs, which include all human and material resources, required to implement the activities in order to obtain the outputs.

The process of defining the outputs in SAF is different from the way they are derived in the Logical Framework Approach (LFA), where outputs are derived directly from the objectives. In SAF their selection is contingent upon a number of factors to be taken into account during the strategy design process. Outputs in SAF, therefore, derive from the characteristics of the interaction groups or audiences, the types of communication approaches to be adopted, the specifications of the type of design mode, the media to be used and the activities to be implemented in the strategy. It

is only after going through these processes that outputs are defined in SAF. Table 2 on the next page visualises how SAF linkages assist in getting to the outputs of the communication strategy.

Table 2: The Process of specifying outputs in SAF.

Focal Problems	Communication Objectives	Communication Mode Design				Outputs
		Interaction Groups	Communication Approaches	Design Specifications	Media and Activities	

2.3.4 SAF for monitoring

SAF can assist in the definition of a monitoring system for checking and verifying, at every step of the communication programme planning and implementation process, how the activities are progressing towards their ultimate objectives. When driving to a new destination most likely the driver will often check a map to confirm that he is on the right way. Similarly when progressing through the communication strategy it is vital that reference is made to checkpoints in order to confirm that the communication programme is on track. The map here is provided by a number of indicators that should be established with the community. SAF provides the framework for identifying and incorporating in the plan measurable monitoring indicators at the quantitative and qualitative levels. For every indicator established, it is necessary to specify how it is going to be measured, i.e. means of verification. (Please refer to section 2.1.2 Main components of SAF for the definitions of the three major elements of the monitoring phase: indicators, means of verification, external factors).

Indicators can be established for every activity or step during the planning and implementation process. However, it is more effective to select the most relevant points that could provide an accurate indication of whether things are on the right course. All factors that should be monitored must always be measured both at a quantitative and qualitative level. At the quantitative level, indicators are easy to determine as they relate to the physical outputs or number of certain activities such as workshops, posters, people trained, booklets, radio programmes and so on. At the qualitative level, however, indicators are more difficult to identify, as they do not deal with visible and physical factors but refer to the quality of the results achieved by the quantitative outputs. For instance, during monitoring, it is not enough to state the number of extensionists trained, it is also essential to measure and determine how much better the extensionists are doing their job since the training. It is therefore advisable not to make the common mistake of assuming that if the planned numbers of outputs have been achieved that everything is going fine. It is still necessary to measure the quality of the production - that is how well those outputs have been achieved. More details on how to measure outputs will be provided in the 'Communication Strategy Design Handbook'.

Worksheet 6 - Communication strategy monitoring

Topics/Results to be measured	Indicators	Means of Verification (for each indicator)	External Factors
Quantitative outputs			
Qualitative outputs			
Other activities			

Monitoring is therefore an integral part of the overall strategy design, since once the workplan has been finalised, the next step would be to ensure that everything will be carried out according to the plan. This is where monitoring becomes very necessary. Monitoring should be an in-built activity in every phase of the project, since, through the establishment of indicators, it is meant to verify that the project is proceeding in the right direction. An effective monitoring system alerts the communication team to any adjustments required during any phase of the process.

2.3.5 SAF for evaluation

Evaluation is the final measurement of the degree of success achieved by the activities of the project, in relation to the set objectives. It measures the amount of change brought about by the project as a direct result of its intervention. Since evaluation is concerned with the impact of the project activities in relation to the set objectives it is also done at two levels: quantitative and qualitative. The impact measurement is a rather delicate issue since it has to include both levels. The quantitative aspect of the impact relates to the communication objectives in a direct, objective and measurable way. The qualitative impact, on the other hand is more in line with a truly participatory assessment, whereby people set their indicators designed to measure their satisfaction and their perception of the improvements in relation to the original problem. Even if the qualitative impact can still be measured it deals more with community perceptions rather than with quantifiable objective achievements. The quantitative evaluation utilises the baseline studies, before and after the implementation, as its main measuring instrument. Qualitative evaluation relies on participatory assessments carried out by the community. Worksheet 7 provides a graphic representation to facilitate the understanding of how to account for the final evaluation of the impact of activities

Worksheet 7 - Communication strategy evaluation

Topics/Results to be measured	Indicators	Means of Verification (for each indicator)	External Factors
Quantitative evaluation			
Participatory evaluation			

PRCA METHODOLOGY

Objective

To explain why development efforts often fail and the importance of communication, participation and PRCA in human and rural development.

At the end of this chapter you will be able to:

1. Define sustainable human development.
2. Identify why communication is important for rural development.

3. Recall the reasons for the frequent failure of rural development efforts.
4. Know the role of communication and participation in development.
5. Become acquainted with the Communication for Development programme planning and implementation.
6. Define Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA).
7. Recall the historical background of PRCA.

3.1 Why PRCA?

PRCA was developed as an alternative to traditional communication research approaches. It is a participatory communication research methodology used for the involvement of rural people in the identification of the essential ingredients for the design of effective communication strategies for development. PRCA is used for creating dialogue with groups in rural communities in order to identify and analyse their problems and needs; their existing knowledge and practices; their feelings and attitudes; as well as their perceptions of the development issues under investigation. PRCA is also used to ascertain the characteristics of the different groups in a community and assists to map their existing patterns and networks of communication.

3.1.1 Perceptions and communication

Perceptions play a key role in communication, hence the need for a communication research approach that ensures that the project and the community do not have different perceptions of the issues or problems to be resolved. PRCA has therefore been developed to ensure that communication programmes for rural development are firmly rooted in the realities of the rural community. However, the problem with unearthing rural people's perceptions and local knowledge lies in the fact that most of these communities have developed ways of hiding their true feelings and information from outsiders, especially, when such outsiders cannot interact with the people within the people's frame of reference. Ascroft (1978) calls this ability of rural people to treat outsiders nicely without revealing themselves 'The Conspiracy of Courtesy'. To overcome this, PRCA uses visual methods and community facilitation techniques for generating, analysing and presenting data thus breaking through the conspiracy and removing the need for literacy on the part of the people. It is only through this way that research will be able to reveal the community and ensure that development efforts are firmly rooted in the realities of the grassroots in order to respond to their perceived needs, abilities and local knowledge.

3.1.2 Differences between PRCA and traditional communication research

PRCA is different from the traditional communication research because it is participatory and allows people to participate in development decisions and actions that directly affect their lives.

Rural people who are involved in PRCA share knowledge and experiences with the researchers from the start to the end of the process. They participate in everything from information collection

and analysis, problem identification and prioritisation to decision-making about how best to tackle issues revealed by PRCA.

Unlike traditional communication research, PRCA does not only reveal the best ways of designing messages for the grassroots. It also helps to identify strategies and materials to enable rural people articulate their own perceptions of community needs, local knowledge, opportunities, problems and solutions for integration in development efforts to improve their livelihood. In this way, PRCA puts the people back in the centre of their own development as owners of the development process rather than mere beneficiaries who are meant to receive only education and training about solutions to their problems brought in from outside.

As a different approach from traditional communication research, PRCA is more than a methodology for investigation. In addition to its research characteristics, PRCA is also a training and empowerment process for the community. As PRCA is carried out, the people also learn new ways of thinking and interacting with the complex and changing circumstances in which they live. After participating in a PRCA, people become trained and empowered to identify and analyse their problems, needs and capabilities. On their own, they seek additional skills, knowledge and outside assistance when they encounter problems beyond their existing capabilities and resources. At this stage, people also become more aware of the various external political and socio-economic factors that obstruct the achievement of their goals and often use their newly acquired skills of self-mobilisation to tackle these obstacles.

3.1.3 Differences between PRCA and other participatory methods

PRCA belongs to the same family as RRA, PRA, PLA and the other participatory methods. However, it is unique because it focuses specifically on the study of both traditional and modern communication systems in a community and assists in the development of communication strategies and materials to improve information and knowledge sharing among the various stake holders in a development effort (see Table 3 below).

Table 3: How PRCA is unique and different.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)	**Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA)**	**Traditioal Communication Research**
Not holistic – researches only community needs, opportunities, problems and solutions without attending to communication issues.	Holistic - researches community needs opportunities, problems, solutions and communication issues, networks and systems.	Not holistic – researches only communication issues.
Participatory: The researcher is a facilitator who enables the people undertake and share their own investigation and analysis leading to sustainable local action.	Participatory: The researcher is a facilitator who enables the people undertake and share their own investigation and analysis leading to sustainable local action and improved communication.	Not Participatory: The researcher is an investigator who is interested in learning as much information as possible for her own use.
Empowers and builds capacity of communities.	Empowers and builds capacity of communities and improves communication between them and outsiders.	Extractive and does not empower or build capacity of communities.
Leads to joint planning of development action with community.	Leads to joint planning of both development action and supporting communication programme with community.	Professionals plan communication intervention without the community.
Deals with community groups differentiated on the basis of sharing the identified problems. People are active participants in the process of generating and analysing information.	Deals with interaction groups identified on the basis of sharing a common problem and segmented according to criteria normally used by the people themselves. People are active participants in the entire research process.	Deals with audiences segmented according to criteria determined by investigator. People are seen as only passive recipients of messages and not as active sources.

Results of appraisal are presented by community.	Results of appraisal are presented by community.	Results of research are not shared with community. Investigator analyses and presents results to outsiders.
Community owns and keeps the results. Emphasis on the use of visual methods, interviews and group work for generating, analysing and presenting data.	Community owns and keeps the results. Emphasis on the use of visual methods, interviews and group work for generating, analysing and presenting data.	Results are owned and kept by researchers. Emphasis on verbal mode of questioning and gathering data, normally through questionnaire interviews or focus group discussions.
Emphasis on change of attitude and behaviour among facilitators.	Emphasis on change of attitude and behaviour among facilitators.	Emphasis on finding out ways of changing of attitude and behaviour of audience.
Emphasis on local people's knowledge, skills and capabilities for problem solving.	Seeks means of creating mutual understanding between local people and development workers in order to marry local capabilities with outsiders' knowledge and skills for more effective problem-solving.	Emphasis on how best to effect transfer of outside expertise to local people.

3.2 Principles of PRCA

PRCA is built on a number of principles similar to other rural appraisal methods, which endeavour to be participatory. These principles have been tested in the field and found to be effective. They therefore constitute the criteria for measuring the effectiveness of any PRCA with the people.

3.2.1 Principles that guide a good PRCA are:

- **Participation**

A good PRCA must involve all segments of the community in the appraisal as the owners of the process and its outcomes. In this respect, the most important role for a facilitator is to ensure that community groups take a leading role in the appraisal and that they express their ideas and priorities without fear. In this way, the appraisal lays the foundation for the participation of the people not just in the research but also in all following activities. To achieve this, participation should not stop at the data collection level, but it should be present throughout the whole process: from investigation, data collection and analysis, presentation and learning to planning and implementation of action.

PRCA empowers villagers by encouraging them to take the lead in investigations and analysis. For this to happen, ensure that the people are comfortable with the tools and techniques of the appraisal. When local materials are used, like the ground for mapping and diagramming, or seeds for quantifying, estimating and scoring, participation is often uninhibited and relaxed, with the people showing a willingness to express, share, cross-check, and analyse knowledge. The appraisal is accessible to all members of the community as they can see, point to, discuss, debate or alter the realities represented by such objects. In other words, everyone can see what is being 'said' because it is being 'done'. PRCA tools and techniques therefore provide the community with tangible materials for group reflection and participatory planning for action.

The key to facilitating people's participation in PRCA is to establish good rapport and trust with the community from the beginning of the appraisal. For this to happen, the behaviour and attitudes of the facilitators must be acceptable to the people. Facilitators must demonstrate that they are patient and trustworthy and that they are taking a keen interest in all the activities of the appraisal as well as the people's views and opinions.

- **Reversal of learning**

The rural people often have considerable knowledge about their problems and the possible solutions although they may not appreciate the enormous power that this knowledge can yield for them. This means that with proper facilitation, rural people have knowledge to disclose if they are allowed to. This requires a change in the attitudes and behaviour of PRCA facilitators towards the rural poor. In PRCA, community groups should therefore be given the opportunity to explain in their own terms, their own view of themselves. PRCA facilitators should also ensure that their preconceptions about the people acquired through training and analysis of secondary data does not stifle their ability to listen and learn from the people.

- **Sharing**

Good PRCA does not end with the facilitators learning from the community. It also involves the sharing with the community of any knowledge the facilitators might possess to help the people solve their problems. The facilitators' knowledge should not be imposed on the people but should

be presented as a topic for critical evaluation with them. Rural people might have great knowledge about many things and have tremendous practical experience but the facilitators, also have their own knowledge, which might be new to the people. Johari's Window below explains this.

Table 4: Johari's Window.

Open knowledge What we know and what they know	**Their hidden knowledge** What they know and what we do not know
Our hidden knowledge What we know and they do not know	**Blindness** What we do not know and they do not know

- **Gender sensitivity**

PRCA facilitators must bear in mind that even within the same community, various groups might have different experiences and perceptions of the situation of the community. Moreover, in some communities, some groups, such as women, are traditionally not allowed to voice their opinions in the presence of other groups, such as men. It is therefore essential that during PRCA, different groups in the community are interacted with in order to discover their own perceptions of the conditions in the community. To achieve this, the community should be segmented into various groups using different criteria such as gender, age marital status etc. In many cultures, it might be mandatory for the women in the community to have their activities and discussions with female facilitators while male facilitators work with the men. During the PRCA sessions, a deliberate effort must be made to draw contributions from every member of the group. Separating the community by gender has been discovered to be advantageous to the women because the men will not be there to dominate the discussions and activities. Moreover, people tend to discuss freely without fear of intimidation when they feel they are in a homogenous group.

- **Optimal ignorance**

This means that facilitators in a PRCA should not attempt to learn everything about the community but just what is necessary for them and the people to decide on specific future action. This calls for the setting up of an agenda and focus for the appraisal with the community before it begins. At the same time the agenda must be flexible enough to leave room for unexpected topics connected to the issues under discussion to emerge. The trick is to know what is not worth knowing and to always ask the question: what is this piece of information going to contribute to the understanding of the issues under discussion? In PRCA, relevance of information is therefore more important than the quantity.

- **Rapid but relaxed**

Compared with other research methods, PRCA can claim to be fast in establishing rapport and trust with the community in order to discover needed information and produce results for action planning. PRCA is relatively quick because it does not attempt to collect information from a statistically valid sample. Instead it uses many different techniques to obtain a complex profile of the situation in the community and makes the information available in a rapid and useable form. However, the

fast pace can only be achieved if the right techniques and tools to quickly build trust and engender people's participation are utilised. Although PRCA appears rapid, it is never rushed. It must be relaxed enough to enable the rural people think through their problems and come up with their own solutions which they will want to implement. This is achieved by careful planning and the use of the right tools to explore and probe issues rapidly but thoroughly.

- **Flexibility and adaptability**

PRCA can be used in many different forms, conditions and contexts. It can be used for various development sectors and at any time during the preparation, implementation or conclusion of the development effort. This in effect means that PRCA cannot be carried out with a blueprint. PRCA facilitators should therefore be ready to adapt to the field situation, to fit into the people's agenda and schedule instead of trying to bend the situation to suit their own preconceived framework. Although a lot of effort is made to anticipate the field situation through careful preparations and planning, PRCA must still be flexible enough to allow facilitators to quickly adjust their plans in order to take advantage of sudden opportunities and take care of unforeseen challenges. Facilitators must learn to think on their feet as they say.

- **Fieldwork**

PRCA forces the project team into the field to talk with the people in their own settings. It provides an opportunity for the team to observe and learn from the people. This is essential because projects should not base their decisions about people solely on what is heard or read about them. Development efforts founded on such second-hand information often fail or even worsen the situation in the community.

- **Triangulation/Cross-checking**

The biggest advantage of PRCA is that it is conducted in the open where all present can look at the results and agree or disagree on their correctness. The use of groups during PRCA enables the people to verify information as it is collected. In this manner PRCA gets closer to the truth as quickly as possible. PRCA tools are used in such a way that each tool builds on and verifies information collected with the preceding tools. In addition, PRCA uses many different tools and team members from different disciplines to look at the same situation from different angles. It also crosschecks information with as many segments of the community as possible. As a result, learning is done from many points of view with PRCA and facilitators are in a better position to easily identify and resolve contradictions.

3.3 Common biases to be avoided in PRCA

Over the years practitioners of participatory appraisals have discovered some common biases that can distort the study findings and render the process useless. Just because these reported biases are the most frequent and most obvious does not mean that they are the only ones. As more and more PRCA are carried out, other forms of biases that have not been described below might be discovered. Please share these with the SADC Centre for inclusion in their publications. In this part of the handbook an attempt is made to present some biases commonly encountered in PRCA if the practitioner is not alert. One way of avoiding some of the biases described below is to always let the objectives of the PRCA guide the preparation and implementation of the appraisal.

3.3.1 The common types of biases

- **Roadside bias**

This is a bias commonly observed in many rural research activities. Urban-based researchers prefer to conduct their studies in those villages near urban areas or those well serviced by a network of good roads. In many cases, urban-based professionals get around in rural areas in vehicles and so they try to avoid the hazards of dirt roads. According to Robert Chambers, the higher the officials the more likely they want to use the tarmac for comfort. Thus, visitors' comfort becomes the primary concern of most field research visits. Those seen and talked to are near the road. Information is therefore collected only from groups that live near the roads. This practice distorts the research findings because the views of those groups, who can only be reached on foot, since they are remote from the tarred roads, are neglected. To avoid this bias, information must be collected from all groups no matter their distance from the road as long as issues under discussion concern them equally.

- **Visibility Bias**

Often, rural researchers tend to interview only those who are present and visible in the community during a study. Discussions are held with people the researchers see or with those who attend meetings. There is always a tendency for the less privileged groups to be hidden from the urban visitor. The poor, the disabled, the sick, the old, the outcasts: the so-called 'invisible groups' in the community, are never identified and talked with. The opinions and priorities of these marginalised groups are therefore often not sought and therefore never reflected in reports and plans even when they are the potential target beneficiaries of subsequent development efforts. In meetings also, researchers often pay more attention to the utterances of the vocal and articulate, without prompting the silent to voice their views.

- **Wealth bias**

Wealth bias is not simply a matter of only talking to the people with money. Wealth mapping activities in various cultures have shown that the conception of who is rich and who is poor differs from country to country, district to district and place to place. Wealth bias is closely related to the visibility bias because the rich and powerful in a community are also the most visible with their large number of wives, bigger herds of cattle, bigger houses and the other easily recognisable trappings of affluence. Many researchers feel more comfortable discussing issues with these wealthy villagers than with the poor people. In many communities, the rich are also the people who live nearest to the roads and often have the first opportunity to talk with and the means to entertain researchers before they even go into the village. Views expressed by this group of affluent villagers might influence the researchers' interpretation of the situation in the community.

- **Pro-literacy bias**

Closely related to the wealth bias, is the pro-literacy bias, which occurs when researchers tend to speak to people who can speak the urban language, usually, English. By speaking to these literate people the need for an interpreter is not necessary. By focusing attention on this group in the community, the views of the illiterate are neglected.

- **Gender bias**

This is the tendency for rural researchers to concentrate the study on the gender they themselves belong to with little attention to the views of the other group. In many cases, men in the community dominate research activities with the result that women's concerns are neglected. This has often

led to the design of development activities with men in mind whereas in reality women are the ones who are primarily concerned with these activities. To avoid this bias, make sure that both the women's and the men's views are heard. Often their perceptions, roles and capabilities are different.

- **User and adopter bias**

This is the tendency for rural researchers to visit and talk with villagers who have already adopted and are using the new ideas or practices promoted by a development agency. In many communities these groups often ensure that the researchers easily notice them through such distinguishing things as club T-shirts, badges or caps. Those who have not adopted the offered solutions are not interviewed to find out why they have not done so. Instead the researchers see them as laggards who do not deserve to participate in the study.

- **Seasonal bias**

Living conditions in the rural areas vary with the seasons. By visiting the community during only one season, researchers go away with only a tiny part of the picture. For instance, in most rural areas, hunger and diseases are most prevalent during the rains but researchers often prefer to visit such areas during the dry season when the dirt roads are usable and when they do not have to get wet while carrying out their research activities. This means that rural people are not seen during those periods when it is wet, when disease incidence is high and some are malnourished. So, the wet season, in addition to being the hunger and sickness season also becomes the unseen season.

- **Project bias**

Rural researchers often prefer to carry out their studies where there is an on-going project or where the likelihood of one is high. In the same vein, some researchers visit only communities where projects are well staffed and villagers well briefed. These projects serve as public relations show cases for visitors. The project bias shifts attention and development action away from the poorest of the poor, who do not have any projects to boast about. In other words "unto those who have more will be added…"

- **Subject-matter bias**

Researchers feel more comfortable discussing those issues they are well versed in. They tend to talk about what they know the most. They feel comfortable in their own discipline. In a related way, researchers also tend to limit themselves to the mandate of the development agency they are working for to the exclusion of other concerns of the community that are outside such mandate. This often results in development agencies offering projects that are not relevant to the needs of the community. Such projects are doomed to fail because in the first place villagers accept them not because they need them but just to please the development agency. To the villagers, it is wise to accept anything now because one never knows what will come next. Maybe next time they'll really get us something we need. In other words the villagers assume the stance that the mouth of a gift horse should not be examined.

- **Pro-innovation bias**

Many rural researchers arrive in the community armed with new ideas and practices for solving people's problems and providing for their needs. In such cases, the researchers are in the community not to assist the people determine their problems, but to find out ways of making the villagers adopt the innovations whether they need them or not. Researchers, who have this bias, often believe implicitly in the innovations they bear and would seek ways of making the people abandon their traditional practices for the new ones without an opportunity for the people to examine the innovations critically.

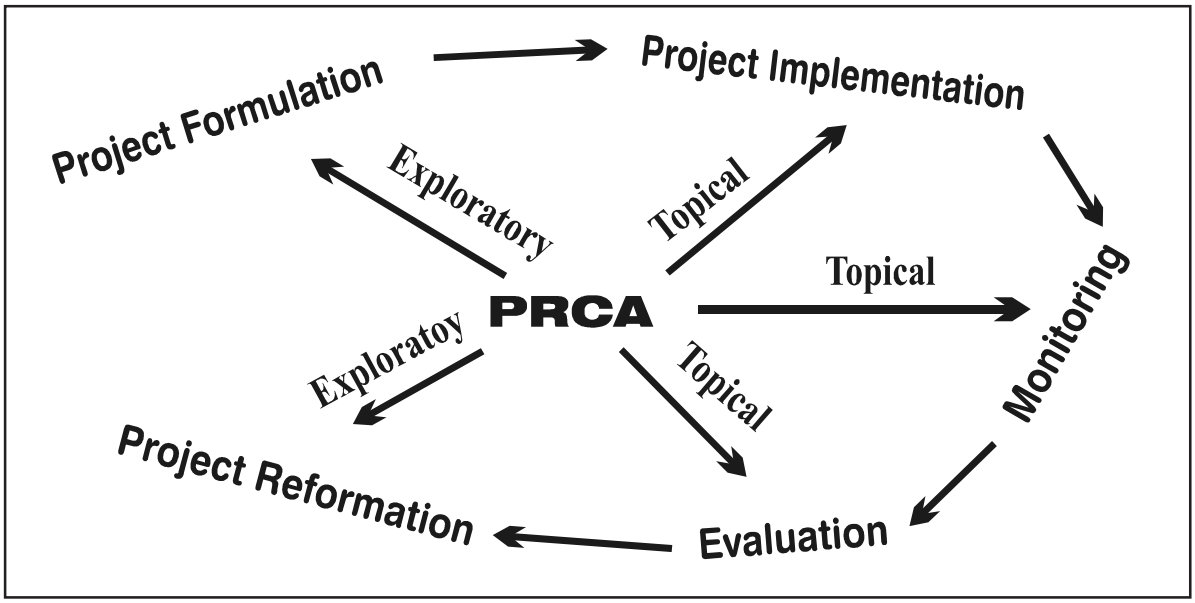
- **Pro-persuasion bias**

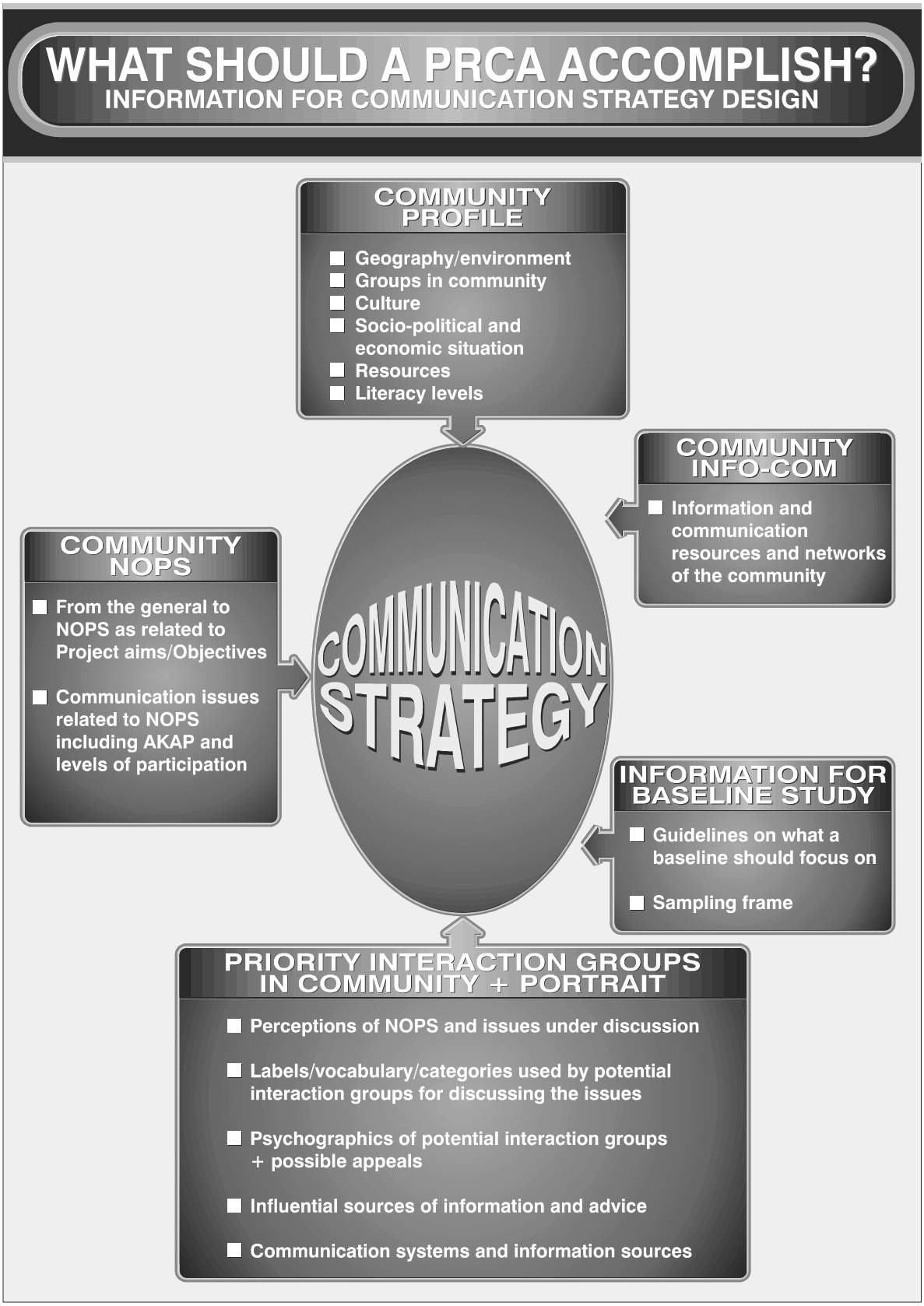
Researchers who are prone to this bias are mostly found in the field of communication. They go into the village to find out how best to use the people's culture etc., for designing messages to make external manipulation of the people more effective. They are not in the community to study ways of making development agencies more responsive to people's perceived needs and problems but to improve the persuasive effectiveness of messages and promotional materials from the agencies to the people.

3.4 Types of PRCA

PRCA is most effective if it is carried out at the same time the development project is being defined with the community. However, PRCA can also be carried out at any point of the project cycle to formulate a communication programme to initiate or improve dialogue between development workers and the people to ensure that project aims and activities are relevant to the people's needs, problems and capabilities.

Box 5: PRCA in the project cycle.




WHAT SHOULD A PRCA ACCOMPLISH?
INFORMATION FOR COMMUNICATION STRATEGY DESIGN
COMMUNITY PROFILE
Geography/environment
Groups in community
Culture
Socio-political and economic situation
Resources
Literacy levels
COMMUNITY INFO-COM
Information and communication resources and networks of the community
COMMUNITY NOPS
From the general to NOPS as related to Project aims/Objectives
Communication issues related to NOPS including AKAP and levels of participation
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
INFORMATION FOR BASELINE STUDY
Guidelines on what a baseline should focus on
Sampling frame
PRIORITY INTERACTION GROUPS IN COMMUNITY + PORTRAIT
Perceptions of NOPS and issues under discussion
Labels/vocabulary/categories used by potential interaction groups for discussing the issues
Psychographics of potential interaction groups + possible appeals
Influential sources of information and advice
Communication systems and information sources

3.4.1 Exploratory PRCA

PRCA is most effective when done as part of a larger multi-disciplinary study with the community at the initial stages of development project formulation. This type of PRCA is said to be exploratory because it is carried out to facilitate people's participation in the joint identification and analysis of their needs, problems and appropriate solutions before the design of a project. PRCA at this stage aims to empower the people to articulate their ideas or concerns and voice their opinions about their situation. PRCA also assists to establish cordial relations and lines of communication among all stakeholders: development agencies and their workers, government ministries and departments, district and provincial officers, extension staff and the community for the smooth planning and implementation of the project. Although PRCA is holistic in its own right, it is used at this initial phase of the project cycle to reveal the communication issues associated with the project under formulation.

3.4.2 Topical PRCA

This type of PRCA is generally used for projects that are already on-going. It is also known as diagnostic PRCA. The appraisal at this stage in the project cycle serves as a monitoring and evaluation tool. Topical PRCA, as the name implies, is used to investigate specific topics, issues, questions or challenges arising during the implementation of a project. Results of this type of PRCA are used to design communication programmes to solve problems or to improve dialogue among all stakeholders to ensure that the objectives of the project are achieved. Results might even call for the adjustment or repackaging of project objectives and activities to ensure that they are relevant to the people's needs, problems and capabilities.

3.5 What a PRCA should accomplish

Once upon a time there was an adventurous little mouse that lived in a large forest. The little mouse had never wandered far from home, but on one sunny day the urges for fame and fortune were too great to resist. Besides he thought, 'I need to see the world.' In spite of warnings from mama and papa, the little mouse took all the coins from his saving box and put them in his pocket, and set off to seek fame and fortune. After a short while the little mouse met an eagle.

'Where are you going?' asked the eagle.

'I am off to seek fame and fortune,' said the little mouse.

'Well,' said the eagle, 'for two coins I'll sell you this feather that will speed you through the forest.'

'Great, ' said the little mouse as he gave the coins to the eagle.

Soon after, the little mouse came across a squirrel.

'Where are you going?' asked the squirrel.

'I am off to seek fame and fortune,' said the little mouse.

'Well, in that case you will want to get there as quickly as possible. I have these special nuts that will give you extra energy and help you to get there faster. Do you have any coins?' asked the squirrel.

'Sure,' replied the little mouse, and he gave two coins to the squirrel in exchange for the nuts and

hurried on his way, until he was stopped by a big hyena.

'You seem to be in a big hurry,' said the hyena, 'Where are you rushing to?'

'I am off to seek my fortune and I am going as fast as I can,' replied the little mouse.

'There is a shortcut that will get you there immediately,' said the hyena with a toothy giggle. Just go right through that cave over there,'

And the little mouse dashed into the hyena's den, never to be seen again.

Adapted from Krueger, Richard. Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research. 2nd ed. London. Sage Publications. 1994.

PRCA is such a flexible and adaptable methodology and if the facilitators do not know where they are headed, like the adventurous mouse, they are likely to end up somewhere else - and it could cost them more than a few coins. It is, therefore, important to have a clear picture of what needs to be accomplished during a PRCA before venturing out into the field. The categories of information to be gathered with the people in order to plan an effective communication strategy and design appropriate materials should be determined in advance before the field PRCA. The communication strategy should start to emerge during field PRCA.

3.5.1 Essential information needed for the design of a communication strategy

The key elements a PRCA should reveal in order to assist in the design of an effective communication strategy are listed below and described in fuller details in the following sections.

Profile of the community

- How people perceive and define their world

Information and communication resources and networks of the community

Community perceptions of their Needs, Opportunities, Problems and Solutions (NOPS)

- NOPS listing and assessment
- Problem tree analysis of main problems
- Windows of Perceptions (WOPS)

Priority interaction groups

- Portraits or characteristics of the interaction groups
- Communication issues related to focal problems
- Communication systems and networks of the interaction groups
- Sources of information used and preferred by the interaction group

Indicators

- Quantitative indicators
- Qualitative indicators

These essential details include the main needs, interests, problems and aspirations of the community as well as the people's culture, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Others include information about the people's social system in order to distinguish among community groups and their perceptions, attitudes, knowledge and practices in relation to selected needs and problems. During PRCA the influential sources of information and advice as well as the existing traditional and modern communication networks within the community are also identified. Apart from revealing needs and problems, PRCA also assists in the discovery of obstacles and issues amenable to resolution through the application of communication.

The list below shows the categories of information and issues to be discussed with the community during PRCA. These categories of information provide both the content and context for the design of a communication strategy. The list is only a guideline and should be expanded or shortened depending on the team's experiences with PRCA and the objectives of the appraisal.

3.5.2 Profile of the community

- **How people perceive and define their world**

In addition to any data obtained from secondary sources, work with the people during the field PRCA to develop a profile of the community as seen by the different groups in the community. This enables everybody to reach mutual understanding on how the people perceive and define their world and reality. This is necessary because quite often, the way outsiders see the community or the descriptions given about them in books - their norms, values, actions and aspirations - might not correspond to the way the people see themselves and vice versa. Knowledge of the people's perceptions of their situation provides the background and context for the understanding of the other categories of information that will be revealed by the PRCA, including those issues concerning communication.

Figure 6: The two-headed woman.

Take a look this picture . What is the age of the woman in the picture? If you see just one woman please show the woman to as many people as possible until somebody points out the second lady to you. Now to create mutual understanding ask the person who saw the second lady to show her to you and you in turn should show the woman you saw to the person. It is only when two of you can see the real contents of the picture can you claim that mutual understanding has been created between both of you.

To collect the information required for drawing up a community profile, discuss the following topics with the people:

Geography of the community: This category should contain information about the various natural and physical features of the people's environment. It must include information about the settlement patterns in the community showing household characteristics and sizes, such as female-headed households and resource-poor people; community boundaries, resources and infrastructure as well as land use patterns of the people.

History of the community: This covers information about the significant occurrences in the people's lives such as the major positive and negative changes, including crises in the environment, population shifts, good and bad agricultural periods etc. the people have experienced through the years. Information about how the people have coped with the changes in their lives and circumstances over time should also be documented.

Seasonal trends in the community: Under this category, identify and document the various seasons normally experienced in the area. Any abnormalities and changes experienced by the people should also be revealed. Information on seasonal water and food availability as well as disease patterns should be documented. One of the most controversial information revealed under this category is the differences in the amount of activities carried out in a particular season by men and women. Try to also find out this information.

Social composition of the community: In this category identify the various groups in the community by gender, age etc and map the power relations within and among them. The institutions in the community; their roles, status and relevance to the issues under discussion should also be documented in order to determine who in the community has the authority to influence or make decisions. This assists in the identification of the formal and informal leaders of the people. The poor and the powerless in the community must also be identified.

Economy of the community: Discuss and document the people's sources of income, their labour and occupational patterns (including who does what and when explained in terms of gender). To get a complete picture of the people's economy, also discuss and document the internal and external factors that affect their sources of livelihood.

Group relationship patterns in the community: In general, this pertains to information about the different roles of various groups in the community and how each group perceives the other in relation to their capabilities, potentials and limitations.

Box 7: Zambian example

During a PRCA in a Zambian village, the team of extension workers and communication specialists continually referred to the people as farmers. Towards the end of the appraisal, when the people were now feeling comfortable with the team, the people revealed that they did not percive themselves as farmers. The people at this juncture gave the team their own definition of a farmer : a person with a title deed to his land. Since the people tilled their land under the traditional land tenure system, in which all ownership is invested in the chirf, they did not see themselves as farmers. The implication was that most recommendations that had been presented to these people as if they were farmers were not implemented in the village because they were meant for farmers and the people did not see themselves as farmers

Culture of the community: Information about a people's culture explains a lot of their actions and attitudes. In view of this, ensure that information about the people's religion, customs and values are revealed by the PRCA. Under this category labels, vocabulary and idioms used by groups in the community for discussing various issues should be discovered. By understanding the people's culture, it becomes easier to appreciate why they make certain decisions, the meanings they attach to events in their lives and ways in which they express their emotions in songs, dances, drama etc. It is also essential to discover and discuss the socialization procedures of the community as well as relevant rituals and initiation ceremonies as these might come in handy during the design of the communication strategy.

Patterns of access and control of resources in the community: PRCA should help to determine the different levels of access and control various groups have to the resources in the community necessary to sustain their livelihood.

Past experiences of community with development projects and programmes: This information is important because it reveals how the people related to development efforts in the past. It reveals what the people liked and disliked about previous efforts to solve some of their problems with or without outside assistance.

3.5.3 Information and communication resources and networks of the community

PRCA helps to discover ways of communicating with the community in mass, group or interpersonal modes. During PRCA the community can define their traditional and modern information and communication resources and networks. PRCA also assists to identify the communication linkages between the community and other communities, external organisations and institutions. The nature of the information transmitted through each network and potential uses can also be identified with PRCA. The attributes of the specific networks and systems preferred by the community can be determined using PRCA tools. It is necessary to also identify the influential individuals and groups in the community who provide information and advice about the selected development problems and issues.

- **Levels of education in the community**

PRCA reveals the levels of literacy in the community. It shows which people in the community can read and write in what language as well as how the people deal with numbers and arithmetic. This information reveals whether the community can communicate effectively through the written word and in what language. It also identifies the people in the community who can be reached with written materials for further dissemination such as teachers and school children.

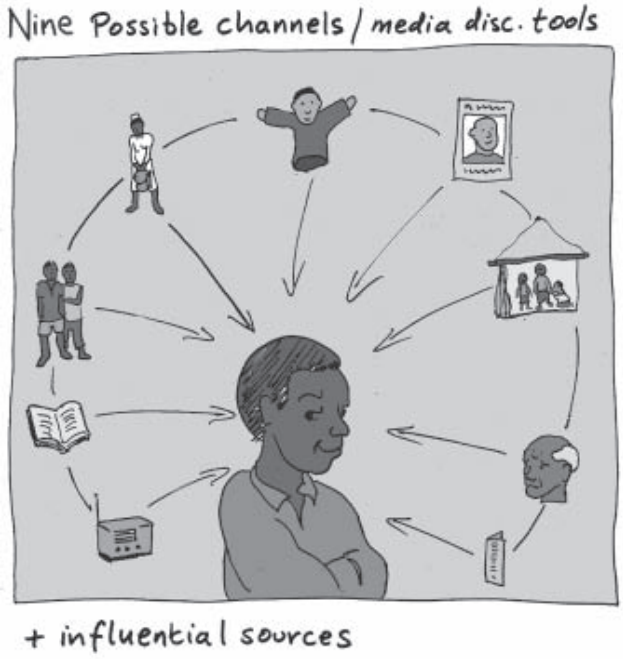
- **Internal distribution of communication resources in community**

During PRCA discover the availability, distribution and accessibility to such resources as radios, meeting grounds, training centres, songs, dance groups, associations, rituals, events, initiation groups, etc. within the community.

- **Information sources from outside the community**

PRCA helps to identify the external sources of information to the community (for example, seed company, market and auction floors) and their attributes (for example, reliability and accessibility). These could be used as opportunities and venues for interacting with the community.

Figure 7: Possible channels of communication.



- **Information and communication resources of the interaction groups**

As RCA progresses with each priority interaction group, define patterns of communication within the group. At this juncture it is also essential that with the groups, those in the community and outside who have a particularly strong influence on the behaviour, or the awareness, knowledge, attitude and practices of members of the priority interaction groups be identified. These are the truly influential, as opposed to the apparently influential sources of information and advice. They could be either traditional or modern. In some cases it has been discovered that the most influential sources in a community are the traditional healers/diviners and the church at the same time.

Figure 8: Traditional and popular media are quite effective.

It is also essential to identify the role models, both internal and external for members of the interaction group. What are their attributes? These attributes can be used in the selection of the sources of information / advice for the priority interaction group if any messages are to be sent to them as part of the communication strategy.

In addition to the elements mentioned above, it is essential to also ensure that the following communication related information about the interaction groups are collected:

- their perceptions of the development problem and proposed solution
- their location in the adoption process (if adoption is a goal), and what they specifically perceive about the so-called solution regarding its usefulness, benefits, compatibility with their culture, economic status etc, complexity and ability to be tried out
- who makes or influences the decisions to try out the solutions- individual, group, or leader
- availability and effectiveness of communication channels to know about it
- social / cultural / economic / environmental flexibility to accommodate the change
- their status regarding degrees of participation in the project
- idioms and existing or new references regarding the topic
- sound, music tune associated with the issue
- visual image-symbols-colour associated with the issue
- animals, insects, reptiles any creatures associated with the issue
- events, history related to the issue
- smell, touch, taste associated with the issue
- positive and negative appeals relevant to the topic
- relevant and preferred appropriate media (existing and new)
- information flow system
- relevant and preferred inter-personal channels
- relevant and preferred activities (e.g. meetings, group, theatre, ceremonies, events - market days)
- power structure of actual decision-making related to the topic (self, partner, group, leader, outside decision-maker…)
- training methods which have been useful in the past

3.5.4 Community perceptions of their needs, opportunities, problems and solutions (NOPS)

Beyond discussing general economic, social and environmental issues with the community, the PRCA team should assist the people to identify, define and prioritise their needs, opportunities, problems and likely solutions (NOPS). The identification and selection of the people's priority NOPS, especially the needs and problems, is the first step towards designing a communication strategy. With community priority NOPS selected, identify groups or segments of the community who are most affected or who can do something about the NOPS.

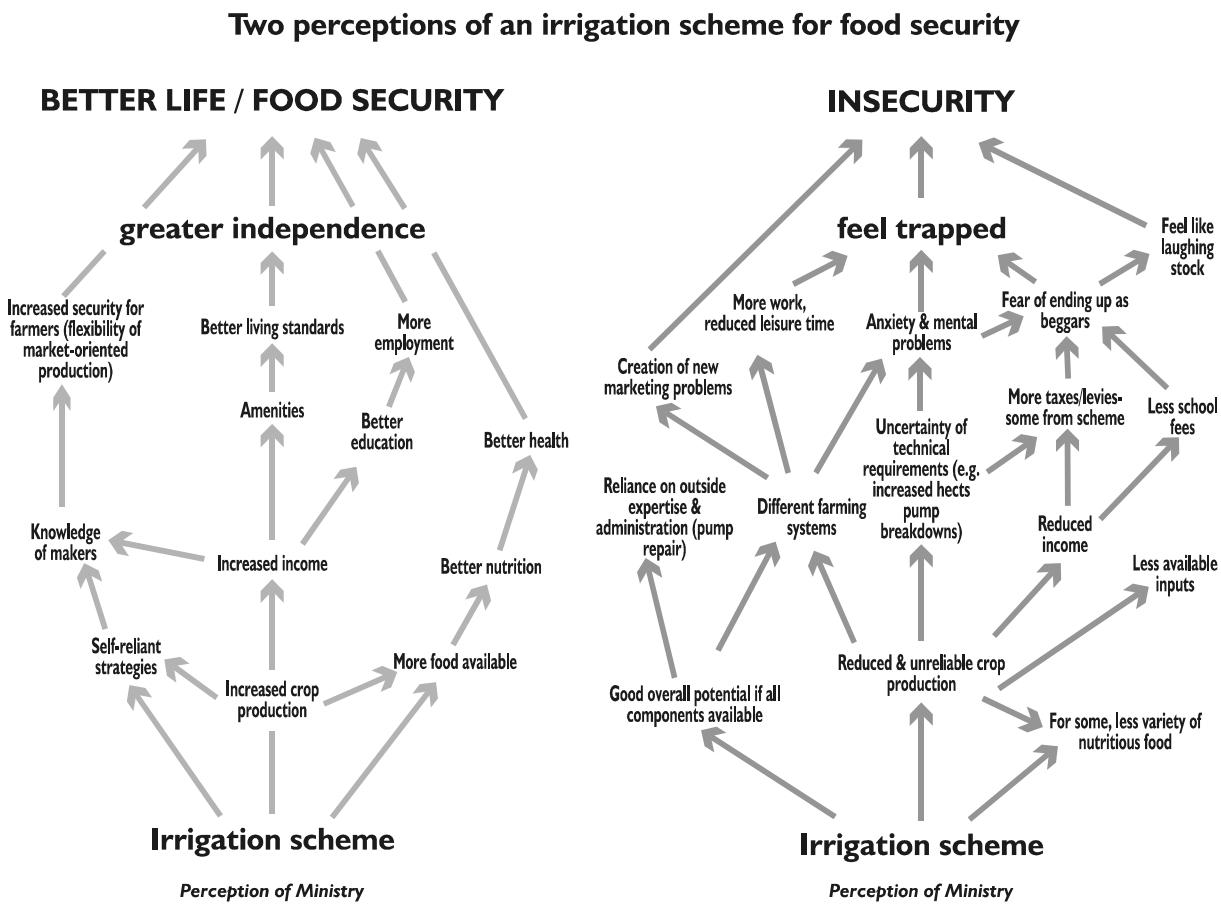
- **What are NOPS?**

Needs describe the lack of material or psychological inputs that the community perceives as important in order to improve its welfare. Opportunities are occasions that may be present in certain situations; if properly exploited these occasions may become valuable assets in efforts to improve the living conditions of the community. Problems are the negative undesired situations that constrain or stop communities from achieving their basic needs. Solutions are ways of dealing with the negative or difficult situations or problems

- **Problem tree analysis**

As previously discussed in Chapter 2, many problems will be identified during the PRCA. Apply the problem tree analysis to the main problems in order to define their causes and effects as well as to determine the priority focal problems, which the communication strategy will help solve. Analysis of the problems also helps to identify whom in the community they affect. These people are the interaction groups to be addressed by the communication strategy.

Figure 9: Windows of perceptions

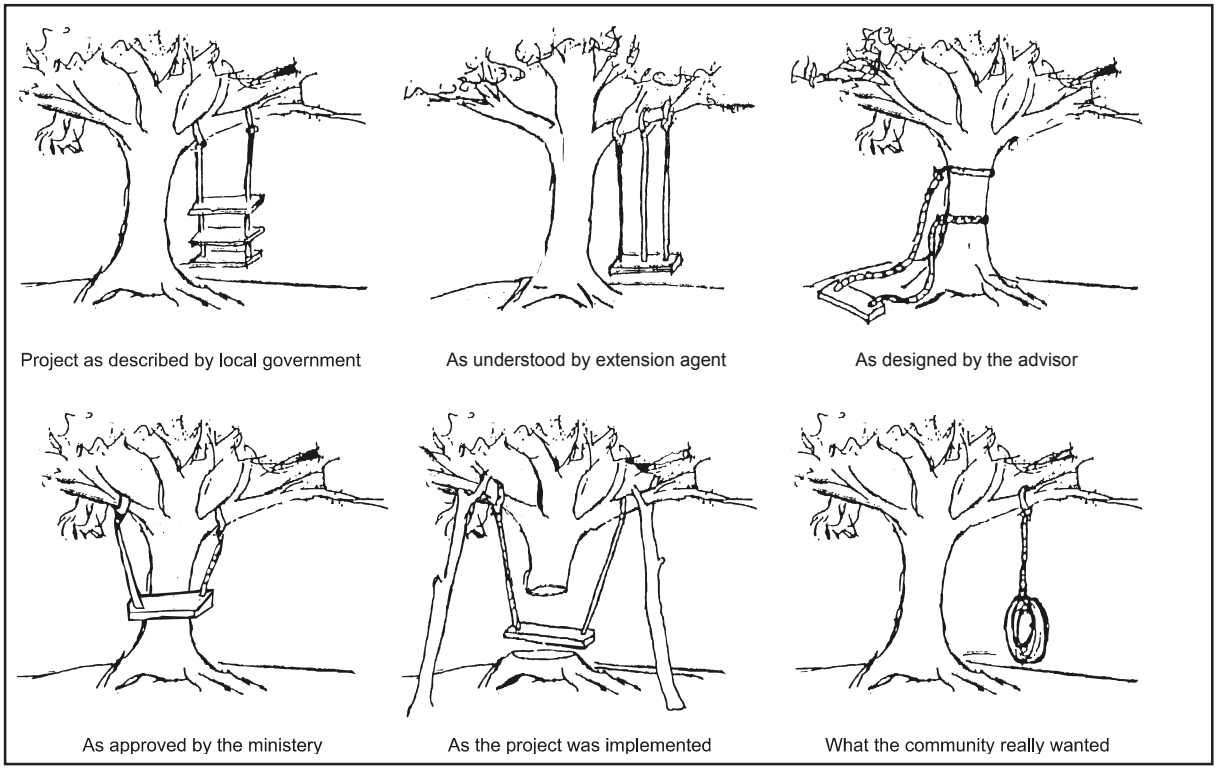


The problem tree analysis provides the community perceptions of the problems the project seeks to solve. Windows of perceptions (WOPS) are normally obtained when the preliminary project problem tree drawn by project staff before the PRCA is compared with the tree produced by the community in order to identify areas of agreement and disagreement. This leads to a new view of the problem agreed upon by the people and the project team. This becomes the foundation of the communication strategy.

- **Windows of perceptions (WOPS)**

Perceptions play a major role on how problems are defined. Take a look at the figure of the two-headed woman once more. Imagine what will happen if the picture is a problem in a community

Figure 10: Consequence of lack of mutual understanding



and the project is trying to define it one way and the community sees it in another way. With the possibility of this in mind, always strive to arrive at a common understanding with the community of what the NOPS are. What are the problems as they see them, and the solutions? What are the ingredients needed for worthwhile change? Figure 9 shows different perceptions of the same issue as defined by the project and as understood by the community while Figure 10 describes what often happens when the community NOPS are misunderstood.

- **Misunderstanding community NOPS: The consequence**

Many development projects have failed because the community problems were misunderstood. The cartoon below depicts what often happens when the community and the project do not have a mutual understanding about the problem or solutions needed by the people.

3.5.5 Potential interaction groups in the community and their portraits

- **What are interaction groups?**

Normally in other types of communication programme planning, these groups are known as 'Audiences' and in public relations as 'Publics'. However, since the approach advocated here is participatory, the term 'Interaction group' is used to replace the old definition of people as merely receivers of information. The term presupposes that the people involved in a PRCA and the entire communication programme are not passive receivers but people whose knowledge and opinions are valued and whose perceptions are seriously sought after. Interaction Groups are seen as sources of information and initiators of action as well as decision-makers. Interaction groups can be individuals, associations, agencies, institutions or cooperatives in and outside the community whose activities, needs, problems affect the people in a positive or negative manner.

All communities are made up of different groups: men, women, the literate, the illiterate etc. Some groups in the community such as the very poor, the invalid, outcasts or the sick might be invisible. If the issues under discussion concern such 'missing' groups, seek them out for dialogue.

- **Communication issues related to the focal problems**

Once the interaction groups are identified, PRCA should provide a more in-depth understanding of their perceptions of the NOPS related to them and their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices in relation to those NOPS. It should also reveal the groups' communication systems and the idioms they use for discussing the issue under investigation (see section 3.5.3, page 66). These are the essential ingredients for the formulation of a communication strategy.

PRCA does not only discover the community NOPS but also defines the communication issues related to the NOPS. It is therefore necessary that as the NOPS are defined and the interaction groups selected an effort is made to identify those NOPS that communication can help solve. Such communication-related obstacles include the lack of or low participation of the interaction group in the research, planning or implementation of efforts to solve the problem or provide for the need. Other obstacles might also include lack of or low awareness of the problem or lack of commitment to tackle the problem, insufficient knowledge to deal with the problem etc. In on-going projects where solutions have been identified and offered to the people, communication problems often relate to the non-acceptance of the solutions. Causes of such non-acceptance or adoption can either be associated with the interaction groups or with the project as Table 5 suggests.

Table 5: Causes of non-adoption of solutions

Stages of innovation acceptance process	Project causes of incomplete process	Beneficiary causes of incomplete process
Dissonance	Innovation attributes incorrectly communicated	Innovation fails to meet expectations
Adoption	Failure to develop relevant products or improve old ones	Innovation not relevant or another product more attractive/relevant
Trial	Behavioural responses not specified in communications. Poor distribution system	Alternative perceived as equally good. Innovation not available
Legitimisation	Poor source effect of communications	Peer-group or opinion leadership pressure against adoption. Laws/traditional sanctions against use of innovation
Attitude	Communication not persuasive	Complacency/suspended judgement
Comprehension	Communication difficult to understand	Selective retention
Awareness	Poorly used or too little communication	Selective exposure Selective perception
Problem perception	Lack of people participation in problem identification Poor research Misperception of problem	Lack of problem

To discover more in-depth information about the interaction group and their relationship to the NOPS use the table above to identify and analyse their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices in relation to the NOPS.

- **Knowledge**

Try to learn about the indigenous and adopted knowledge of the interaction group related to the issues under discussion. Indigenous technical knowledge of the group are those localised techniques and practices which have been developed and handed down from father to children. These are usually built up on centuries of experience and adaptation and are in harmony with environmental conditions and constraints in the community. They are expressed in local languages. Although essentially local, such knowledge may have been influenced by innovations emerging from within the communities themselves or from other systems. Such knowledge might provide an insight into how the group normally solved its problems and provided for its needs.

On the other hand adopted knowledge are those techniques, processes and practices that were originally introduced into the community from outside. How much of this knowledge the group actually has can be assessed. Increasing such knowledge might become an objective of the communication strategy if the level is found to be low.

- **Attitudes**

PRCA explores those acquired mental positions - negative or positive - that a group holds in regard to some idea or object. Often attitudes dictate how people behave towards the idea or object. Some people might have knowledge of some techniques but because they do not have a positive attitude towards that technique refuse to use it even when it is going to assist them in solving a problem. It is therefore important to find out people's attitude towards issues under discussion. With such information a communication strategy can be designed to change a negative attitude in order to solve a problem.

- **Beliefs**

PRCA explores the interaction groups' beliefs in relation to the issues under discussion. Although some of these beliefs might sound like superstition, making positive references to them in messages or discussions may determine the success or failure of the communication programme. Beliefs affect attitude and ultimately practices.

- **Practices**

Discuss and observe the practices of the interaction group in relation to the particular issue. Practices, like knowledge, are either indigenous or adopted. Answer the question: Why do people make decisions to act in certain ways and on what basis?

3.5.6 Indicators

Finally, PRCA should assist to identify both the quantitative and qualitative indicators for monitoring and the evaluation of the communication programme.

- **Quantitative indicators**

PRCA should provide the basis for the design of the baseline study and thus indirectly help to identify the quantitative indicators for monitoring and evaluating the communication programme.

The baseline study sharpens the objectives of the communication programme and makes them measurable during the evaluation that comes at the end of the communication programme.

- **Qualitative indicators**

PRCA should assist the community to set their own qualitative indicators for participatory monitoring and evaluation of the programme. This set of indicators is defined by the community and often reflects measures of their satisfaction or disappointment with the programme. The evalution is generally done with a post-implementation PRCA to assess the qualitative impact of the programme on the people in the community.

PRCA Tools and Techniques

Objective

To present an overview of the main categories of tools and techniques of PRCA and the information they commonly generate.

At the end of this chapter you will be able to:

1. Identify the main categories of PRCA tools and techniques.
2. Indicate the various suggested PRCA tools and techniques for facilitating certain activities or collecting different types of information.
3. Describe the various activities and information commonly facilitated with PRCA tools and techniques.
4. Describe the differences between PRCA tools and techniques for collecting information and those for probing and analysis.

4.1 Overview of PRCA tools and techniques

Tools and techniques used for PRCA are mainly borrowed from other participatory appraisal approaches such as PRA, PLA, etc. Since most of these tools and techniques are visual in nature, they remove the need for high levels of literacy and numeracy on the part of community members.

The primary purpose of PRCA tools and techniques is to enable groups in the community to express and analyse their knowledge. They help the people to map and diagram their situation and environment in the most comfortable and non-threatening manner using materials and symbols that they are used to. The tools and techniques also assist the people to easily identify and prioritise their needs, opportunities, problems, strengths, weaknesses and threats. They facilitate the development of a visual language common to the villagers and the PRCA team and thus ensure better communication and mutual understanding.

In selecting tools and techniques for a PRCA, it is advisable to start with those that can engage large numbers of people and present a broad picture of the community. These tools and techniques create excitement among the people and help the community warm up. Also bear the following in mind when selecting the tools and techniques:

- Some PRCA tools are flexible and can be used for collecting a variety of information;
- PRCA tools should be used in such a way that they complement each other and assist you in verifying earlier information;
- Some tools can only be used effectively after trust and rapport have been built between the team and the community;
- Some tools are for revealing information, while other tools help you to probe and uncover underlying circumstances of the situation;
- Some tools might be appropriate in one culture but not in another;
- All materials generated with PRCA tools and techniques must be left with the community. The PRCA team should make copies for their own use.

4.2 PRCA tools and techniques for getting to know one another, warming-up and energising

4.2.1 Tools and techniques for getting to know one another

Introduction of participants in a PRCA to one another is a crucial part of the exercise. It is an opportunity for the PRCA team to tell the community who they are and where they come from. It is also the moment to open up discussions with the community about the focus and scope of the PRCA in order to ensure that there is mutual understanding about the agenda of the appraisal between the team and the community.

Introductions can be done in many ways; some simple and straight forward others more innovative, complex and entertaining. The simple ones include self-introduction or introduction of the team and community members by their respective leaders. The more complex ones include paired interviews or self-introduction accompanied by some type of demonstration by the person to depict a part of her personality or profession. For instance, a village carpenter introduces himself and mimics himself at work building a table or something else.

4.2.2 Tools and techniques for warming up

Generally, some warming up often precedes the introductions described above. This is often in the form of welcoming songs and dances by the community. The PRCA team should participate in such activities, as long as it is acceptable to the community.

Figure 11: Dialogue with Ovahimba men in Namibia.

Apart from the initial warm-up, it is advisable to begin the PRCA information gathering with tools and techniques that break down the barriers of inhibition and shyness as well as build the confidence and kindle the creativity of the community members and the PRCA team. Such tools and techniques help in team building and at assisting the people to describe the geography and the history of their community; information they are familiar with and proud of and therefore do not find threatening. Sketch maps and historical time lines are recommended as the tools for starting a PRCA. Sketch maps help the community to model their village and identify structural, human and communication resources they own. Time lines, on the other hand, produce accounts of the community's history and help to ascertain how the people have coped with certain changes that have occurred in their life.

Figure 12: A PRCA Team shares knowledge with women in a village in Zambia.

4.2.3 Tools and techniques for energising

Energisers are techniques used during the PRCA sessions as interlude activities. They can be used to encourage more teamwork, to revitalise the people's creativity or break up an argument. Energisers can also be used as the bridge between one activity and another. Encourage the community to come up with their own energiser activities.

4.3 PRCA tools and techniques to know more about the community

4.3.1 Tools and techniques for collecting geographical data

Various types of maps and transects are used for collecting geographical information about a community. These tools and techniques assist the community to visually define the various types of people in the village, residential areas, infrastructure, shops, soils, water sources, institutions, communication resources etc. available in the community. They also show the community surroundings, lands, cattle posts, wildlife and other important features (hills, rivers, etc).

The most common sketch maps are Village/Resource map, Social map, Thematic map, Farm sketch and three-dimensional map or model. These maps are a very good communication aid. All people, even those who have never been to school can make and use maps. Drawing maps has proven to be such an enjoyable exercise that it can be used as the first tool in a PRCA to stimulate participation. Mapping is usually performed with a lot of enthusiasm and they set the right trend in terms of active participation of the community in a PRCA.

Transects are walks which take the PRCA team and selected members of the community through the village and allows them to see the range of features, resources and conditions across the area. Transects, often come after the drawing of maps and they are used to verify information gathered from maps. The walk rarely follows a straight line, but often zigzags through different areas.

4.3.2 Tools and techniques for collecting historical and other time-related data

Time related information and the history of the community could be discovered using such PRCA tools and techniques time lines, trend lines and seasonal calendar.

4.4 PRCA tools and techniques for data collection on communication issues

4.4.1 Tools and techniques for identifying community communication resources and networks

With such PRCA tools as communication linkage diagram, pair-wise preference ranking, direct matrix ranking, scoring, the communication and information networks, systems and channels of the key interaction group(s) can be defined.

These tools can be used to reveal the groups' preferred modern and traditional information sources both within and from outside the community. These can range from cultural/religious events, rituals, art, drawings, story-telling, dances, songs, role-play, drama, to audio-visual and print media. These tools can also help to identify influential people and institutions the groups see as credible e.g. role-models, leaders, trend-setters.

4.4.2 Tools and techniques for revealing community perceptions

For finding out how the various groups in the community perceive and define their problems, solutions and needs such PRCA tools and techniques as focus group discussions (FGDs), problem tree and windows ofperceptions can be used. FGDs can also be used to determine the awareness level of the community concerning the issues under investigation. In the same way, the community's' attitude and level of interest in a particular issue can also be determined through FGD and the ranking they ascribe to the issue through various PRCA tools especially the problem tree.

Figure 13: Men discussing prefered information sources in a Zimbabwean village.

4.4.3 Tools and techniques for studying community beliefs, knowledge and practices

FGDs, in-depth interviews and observation are the suggested tools for studying the community's beliefs, knowledge, skills and practices in relation to the problems and solutions under discussion.

While finding out all the above information it is also important to identify with the groups any additional information, knowledge, skills and resources they might need in order to solve the problem. The tools and techniques also help to identify the idioms, vocabulary, cultural norms and associations, symbols and stories the community uses in discussing the development issues.

4.5 PRCA tools and techniques for probing and analysing critical issues

4.5.1 Tools and techniques for problem identification and analysis

Tools and techniques such as access and control profile, livelihood mapping, gender analysis, brainstorming and the problem tree are often used for problem identification and analysis. They are also used for identifying and analysing the needs, opportunities, problems and solutions (NOPS) of specific groups in the community. Remember also that all the other tools and techniques contain

specific elements that point to the NOPS of the community. Although the NOPS might not be apparent as the tools are being used, probing or interviewing the community about the tools and techniques brings out the needs, opportunities, problems and solutions as well as the people's strengths, weaknesses and threats,

4.5.2 Tools and techniques for matching, grading and rating

During a PRCA, a lot of information, especially about the needs, opportunities and problems of specific groups in the community are discovered. However, bearing in mind that both the capabilities of the people and resources of any outside development agency are limited only the most important of these discoveries will be given preference. To assist the community in rating, ranking, matching, sorting and scoring the PRCA findings, certain tools and techniques are recommended. These include wealth ranking, shopping, open and closed ranking and scoring, preference ranking pairwise ranking.

4.5.3 Tools and techniques for probing

Quite often during a PRCA, the emerging information does not contain all the details necessary for making useful decisions about them. To ensure that such crucial details are discovered, PRCA uses such tools and techniques as focus group discussions, dynamic group discussions, key informant interviews and In-depth interviews to probe for more information.

You are reminded that the tools and techniques mentioned in this chapter are contained in the toolbox in this handbook.

Baseline Study in PRCA

Objective

To explain how baseline studies in PRCA are designed and implemented.

At the end of this chapter you will be able to:

1. Recall why baseline studies are important for communication programme planning.
2. Use PRCA findings to focus baseline studies.
3. Design a baseline research proposal.
4. Carry out a baseline study in the field.
5. Present baseline study findings.

5.1. Rationale and purpose of the baseline study in PRCA

5.1.1 What is a baseline study?

A baseline study is a descriptive cross-sectional survey that mostly provides quantitative information on the current status of a particular situation - on whatever study topic - in a given population. It aims at quantifying the distribution of certain variables in a study population at one point in time. It involves the systematic collection and presentation of data to give a clear picture of a particular situation as it relates the following: What? Who? Where? When? Why? How? A baseline normally covers only a sample of the population. If a baseline study covers the entire population it is called a census.

In PRCA, a baseline study generates information on the levels of awareness, knowledge, attitude and practices (AKAP) of a given population on selected topics in a specific geographic area. The baseline study is repeated at the completion of the communication programme implementation to measure changes that have occurred over time in the characteristics that were studied before the beginning of the programme.

5.1.2 Rationale for baseline studies

There are many good reasons to conduct a baseline study in addition to a PRCA. While PRCA collects and presents qualitative information about the community, the baseline expresses its findings in a quantitative manner. Below are some of the reasons for conducting baseline studies:

- Baseline studies quantify the results of PRCA and serve as means of triangulating or verifying the appraisal results in a statistical manner.
- Results of baseline studies, because of their statistical nature, can often convince and provide justification to policy-makers for the necessity of mounting a communication programme for a specific problem or project.
- Results of a baseline study, if shared with the community, might galvanise the people to action. If the findings are positive, the community can be shown that they are already doing a good job and should keep it up. When the results are negative, this could also serve as a catalyst for discussions with the community on the most appropriate means of action.
- Baseline studies are used to shape the communication strategy by assisting to further segment the priority interaction groups, sharpening communication objectives, and focussing content of media materials.
- Baseline study results show the spread and use of various media in the community. They also provide information on the media preferences of the different groups in the community, and hence guide the selection of most appropriate traditional and modern media to be used in a communication programme.
- Baseline studies serve as a reference point or benchmark for later comparison or impact studies to assess how well the original communication objectives have been achieved.
- If conducted properly, results of baseline surveys can be generalised and used for communities with similar characteristics.

5.2 Using PRCA findings to focus baseline studies

PRCA results are the bases for the design of the baseline study. PRCA results give qualitative information on what people of a given community know and what they perceive as a problem. They give an indication of what needs attention in the particular community and provide guidelines on what a baseline study should focus on.

- PRCA is therefore a guide to the most important issues for investigation with a baseline study.
- IPRCA can provide a guide, and in some cases, the sampling frame for the selection of households and persons to be interviewed to obtain the most relevant information in a baseline study. This is especially important where no sampling frame can be obtained from the local authorities. In such cases the social maps drawn by the community become the sampling frame.

5.3 Designing the baseline study

A preliminary baseline proposal and questionnaire should be prepared with the secondary data available. These will be focused and refined with the findings of the PRCA before they are pre-tested and administered.

5.3.1 Formulating the study purpose

Formulate a preliminary baseline study purpose. In general, the purpose of most baseline studies is to determine in a quantitative manner the current situation in the community and assess the people's perceptions, levels of awareness, knowledge, attitudes and practices (AKAP) related to the development issues under qualitative investigation by the PRCA. The purpose of the study assists in the formulation of the study topic or title.

5.3.2 Formulating the problem statement

A clear problem statement helps in the further development of the research proposal and the selection of objectives and the methodology for the study. It makes it easier to identify secondary information and reports from which the study under preparation can benefit.

5.3.3 Research justification/rationale

It is important to clearly state why the proposed research should be undertaken. It is often very essential to show the uniqueness of the new study. To achieve this, ensure that the proposed study is not a duplication of other research studies already carried out on the issue and point out the innovative uses of the anticipated results. A good problem statement should assist in the formulation of a convincing justification for a baseline study.

5.3.4 Literature review

Careful literature review reduces the chances of the proposed study duplicating work that has already been done on the issue under investigation. It helps to discover what others have learned and reported about the issues that the new study proposes to investigate. It familiarises the researchers with other types of methodologies that have been used to study the issues and may provide convincing justification for why the proposed study is needed.

5.3.5 Setting study objectives

Properly formulated study objectives help to focus the baseline study and reduce the chances of collecting information that is not strictly necessary for understanding and solving the problem under investigation. Objectives also help in the organisation of the study in clearly defined parts or phases. Specific objectives facilitate the development of the research methodology and give a framework for the collection, analysis, interpretation and utilisation of study results.

In PRCA, there are normally two sets of objectives for the baseline study: one set specifies what the study will focus on in terms of the subject-matter under investigation, while the other set deals with communication elements to be measured.

In formulating the study objectives, bear the following in mind:

- Objectives must cover the different aspects of the problem and its contributing factors in a coherent and logical sequence.
- The objectives must be clearly phrased in operational terms, specifying exactly what needs to be done, where and for what purpose.
- Objectives must be realistic considering local conditions.
- Action verbs that are specific and measurable must be used in formulating the objectives. Examples of action verbs include: to determine, to compare, to verify, to calculate, to describe and to establish. Avoid such verbs as to appreciate, to understand or to study.

Set study objectives using the **S M A R T** principle

S pecific

M easurable

A chievable

R ealistic

T ime-framed

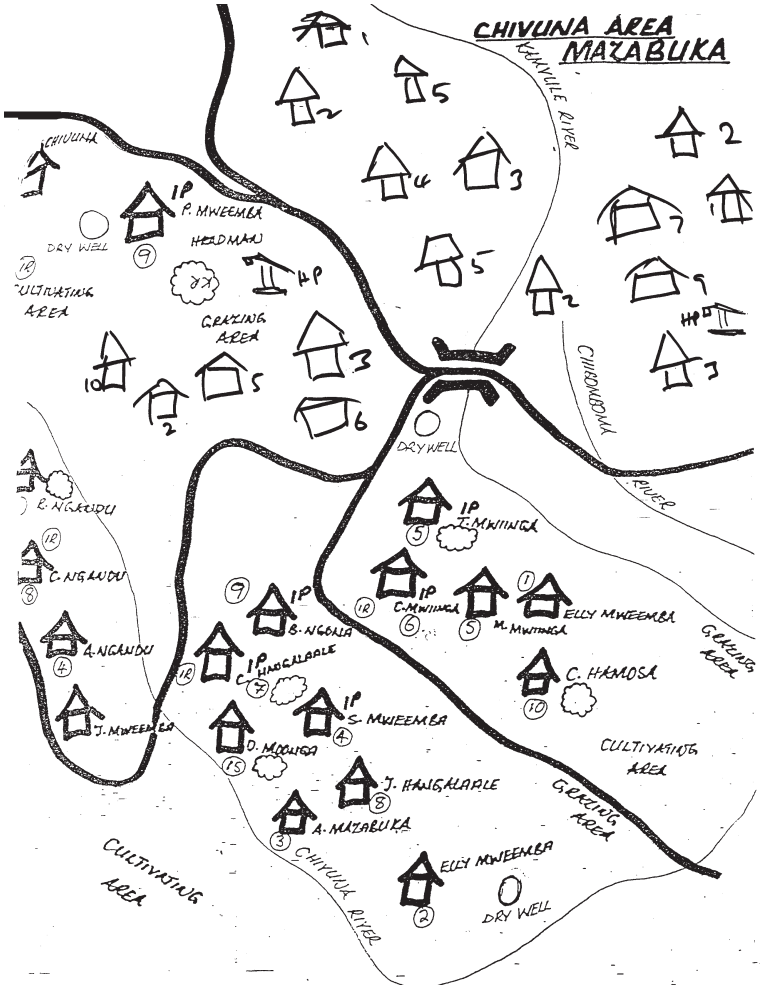
5.3.6 Methodology

Sampling methods and sampling size

Sampling

Sampling is essential because populations tend to be large and resources and time available limited with the result that it is usually not possible to study each person. For this reason there is little choice but to select a sample from the population and from it make projections or generalisations regarding the entire population.

Figure 14: A social map showing dwellings



Sample = a selected subset of a population.

Choose the geographic areas and population from which people who will respond to the questionnaire will be selected. It would be ideal to interview everybody in the chosen geographic areas but this is often too costly and time consuming. This is why it is important to select samples from the communities in the affected areas for the baseline study.

Representativeness

To draw conclusions that are valid for the whole population, care must be taken to draw a representative sample from the population. Such a sample must contain all the important characteristics of the population from which it is drawn.

Sampling methods

Simple random sampling: in simple random sampling the first step is to draw up a list of all the units that is, sampling frame. Each unit has an equal chance of being selected out of the entire population.

One way of obtaining sampling frames is to use the social map drawn by the villagers themselves that shows individual dwellings.

When the sampling frame is ready, select the respondents at random. Random selection means that the team has no discretion or choice about which units (areas, groups, homesteads or individuals) actually go into the sample. In random selection each unit has an equal chance of selection that is independent of any other event in the selection process. In other words, this procedure serves as a check on conscious or unconscious biases on the part of the researcher. It prevents the researcher from selecting cases that would support her PRCA findings or her assertions about the issue under study. It is like a lottery. For instance, the researcher can write the names of the people in a community on small pieces of paper, put all the pieces of paper in a hat or box and draw the required number of names from the container.

Systematic random sampling: This is another method of selecting a sample from the population through the use of a sampling interval. It means that all the units are numbered and only units that

occur after a certain interval is included in the study. For instance, every fifth hut in the village is selected as a unit to be interviewed.

With simple random sampling and systematic random sampling, it can be assumed that if the people whose names are picked up are interviewed, the study will get a fair representation of the opinion of the people on the whole list. However, this is only possible when all the people in a community are homogeneous: of the same age, gender and so on. To ensure that such differences are taken into account when sampling, other processes must be used.

Stratified random sampling: This involves dividing the population into distinct subgroups according to some important characteristics, e.g. age, gender, race, socio-economic status, geographical distribution, etc. and then selecting a random sample out of each subgroup or strata.

If the proportion of the sample drawn from each strata is the same as the proportion of that strata in the total population then the strata will be fairly represented. For example, if in total population 55 per cent of the households are male-headed and 45 per cent are female-headed. Sample of households stratified according to head of household should have 55 per cent male-headed households and 45 per cent female-headed households.

Cluster sampling: This involves the use of sampling frames that identify groups or clusters of enumeration units. A cluster is a sampling unit with a number of enumeration units. Typically the population is divided into mutually exclusive and exhaustive clusters based on geographical, administrative or political criteria.

Cluster sampling can be performed by following these steps:

Step 1. List the clusters

Step 2. Select the clusters

Step 3. List enumeration units in the selected clusters

Step 4. Select a sample of the enumeration units

For example:

Step 1. List villages

Step 2. Select villages

Step 3. List mothers of children between 12-59 months age group

Step 4. Select sample out of the mothers.

These steps are called stages in sampling terminology and sampling plans are often categorised in terms of the number of stages involved. For example, in a single stage cluster sampling only one stage is involved and in a multi-stage cluster sampling, two or more stages are usually analysed.

Sample size

An essential part of planning any investigation is to decide how many people need to be studied in order to acheive the study objectives. It is a strong belief among researchers that the bigger the sample the more representative and hence the more accurate the results. Too often the number is decided purely on logistic grounds determined by the resources available for the study such as time, manpower, funds, transportation. On the other hand interviewing more persons than is strictly necessary is a waste of time, money and other (usually limited) resources. In general, the table below is a guide on how big a sample to take in relation to total number of people in a population.

Table 6: How big a sample should be adequate?

Total number of group	Suggested number of sample	Percentage
100	15	15
200	20	10
500	50	10
1000	50	5

Data collection tools and procedures

Data collection tools and procedures allow for the systematic collection of information pertaining to the baseline study objective. They include observation and questionnaires administered through face-to-face interviews.

For baseline studies in PRCA, the administered questionnaire and observation are the recommended tools and techniques. Observation involves the collection of information related to the issues under investigation by watching, listening, inspecting and recording of information or activities noticed. An initial guideline on what to observe helps to make this activity systematic.

Use structured or close-ended interview questions and semi-structured or open-ended interview questions for the questionnaire. While structured questions are rigidly phrased with pre-determined answer categories, the semi-structured questions leave room for probing.

Pre-code the questionnaire for easy data collation and analysis.

Table 7: Example of a pre-coded questionnaire.

1. Sex	1. Female	❑
	2. Male	❑
2. Age group	1. 15 - 20 years	❑
	2. 21 – 30 years	❑
	3. 31 – 40 years	❑
	4. 41 and above	❑
3. Place of delivery	1. Home	❑
	2. General hospital	❑
	3. Private hospital	❑

Questionnaire design

Questionnaires help to obtain accurate information relevant to the purpose of the study. In designing the questionnaire bear the following in mind:

- Use simple and direct words that are familiar to all respondents.
- Avoid technical jargons, slang or concepts familiar only to those with specialised training.
- Ensure the questions are clear and not too general, complex or ambiguous.
- Avoid double-barreled questions. It is often tempting to save time and space with questions covering two or more issues at the same time.
- Do not use leading or loaded questions. A leading question pushes the respondent in the direction of a certain answer.
- Ensure that the questions are applicable to all respondents. For example when a question such as "How many children do you have" is asked, the question assumes that the respondents have children. Inapplicable questions are not only irritating and confusing but potentially misleading. The respondent with no children may give a figure just to save himself from embarrassment or simply to oblige the interviewer: He wants me to give an answer, so why not. To avoid the above, use contingency questions or skip instructions to weed out respondents who do not fit the specific category. See examples below:

Table 8a: Contingency question format. Table 8b: A typical Skip Instruction Format

Have you ever fed Soya beans to your family?
❑ Yes ❑ No
If yes: When was the last time you fed soya beans to your family
❑ Last night ❑ Last week ❑ Last month ❑ Last year ❑ cannot remember

12. Have you ever grown soya beans before?
❑ Yes (Please answer questions 13-20)
❑ No (Skip questions 13-20 and go to question 21).

Constructing the instrument

The most important things to bear in mind when constructing questionnaire instruments are that the questions posed to collect information should not provide answers to the respondent. The instrument must be translated into the local language to ensure that people who administer the questionnaire do not invent their own translations and thereby give their own interpretations to the questions.

Start the questionnaires with less sensitive questions about the respondent's background. This helps to get the respondent relaxed and build rapport. Introduce each section of the questionnaire in such a way that it is clear and coherent to the respondent.

Baseline questionnaires, especially, in on-going projects, contain the following categories of information to be collected from the community. The list below can also be adapted for a project under formulation. In general, this information should come out of the PRCA result analysis. The categories listed below provide the basic topics and concepts to be included in a questionnaire. They cover both the subject matter and issues related to communication.

Demographic information

- sex;
- age;
- occupation;
- status in the household;
- status in the community;
- educational level.

Perception, awareness and knowledge of subject-matter

- peoples' perceptions of issues, problems and solutions and opportunities;
- levels of awareness of issues, problems and solutions and opportunities;
- levels of knowledge and comprehension of issues, problems, solutions and opportunities;
- information needs on issues, problems and solutions and opportunities;

Attitude field

- peoples' feelings, opinions, beliefs or attitudes towards issues related to the subject matter: needs, problems, solutions and opportunities;
- levels of approval of the issues;

Practice field

- people's current practices;
- peoples' willingness to try the new idea;
- people's readiness to adapt or adopt the new ideas;
- perceived obstacles to the trial, adaptation or adoption of the new ideas;
- drop out rate of people who initially adopted the new idea;
- why people stopped using the new ideas.

Communication and information resources and systems

- communication and information resources and systems;
- common sources of information in the community;
- preferred sources;
- traditional sources;
- modern sources;

- frequency of use of source;
- languages;
- sound, music tune associated with the issue;
- visual image-symbols-colour associated with the issue;
- animals, insects, reptiles any creatures associated with the issue;
- events, history related to the issue;
- smell, touch, taste associated with the issue;
- positive and negative appeals relevant to the topic;
- people's role models and opinion leaders on the issues under investigation;
- people's perception of extensionists' level of performance;
- what people think of the extensionists;
- committees and organisation in community.

Level of people participation

- ability to make decisions concerning development issues;
- sense of ownership of project;
- level of people's involvement in needs assessment;
- level of people's involvement in solution identification;
- people's involvement in the design and pretesting of communication materials;
- people's involvement in committees and associations in the community.

Data analysis

PRCA baseline data analysis can be done manually because the samples are often small 100-150 respondents. However, with bigger samples the use of such computer statistical software as. Epi – info and SPSS is recommended. The popular simple data analysis processes are described below.

Data cleaning and recording

- On a daily basis, hold debriefing meetings with interviewers, check if all questions were answered and if all responses were correctly recorded.
- Remember the questionnaire is pre-coded. Collected data can, therefore be recorded or transferred directly from the questionnaires to data sheets, or into a computer. A data sheet for recording the age distribution of seven respondents by gender is shown below. Data on other variables such as level of awareness etc should be recorded on the sheet also.
- List each variable on the sheet in the same order as it appears on the questionnaire. For a small study all the codes can be entered into a single large sheet and used for data analysis.

Data Sheet

The figures 1 to 7 at the head of the columns represent each respondent while value 1 depicts a respondent in the indicated age group and 0 indicates that there is no respondent in the age group.

Respondents

Table 9: Example of a data sheet.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Age								
Less than 20	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
21-25	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
26-30	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
31-35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
36-40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
41-45	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
46-50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
51-55	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
56-60	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Sex								
Male	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	4
Female	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	3

From the sheet above it can easily be seen that there are four men and three women in the sample. In the same vein the number of men or women in each age group can be identified. For instance there is only one respondent in the less than 20 age group and he is male.

Univariate analysis

This is the examination of only one variable at a time for purposes of description and establishing distribution. The most basic format for doing this is to relate all individual respondents under study in terms of the variable in question. For instance, in a study to find out the views of villagers on borehole water, all the respondents' ages (individual cases) can be listed for exapmle, 10, 20, 45, 62, 33, 15, 28. Although this listing will provide the fullest detail of the ages of all the respondents, it is cumbersome. The alternative is to use percentages in expressing this finding. For example, it can be reported that x per cent of the respondents were between 10 and 15, y per cent were between 16 and 20 and so on.

Table 10: Age of baseline study respondents (hypothetical).

Under 35	9%
36 – 45	21%
46 – 55	45%
56 – 65	19%
66 and older	6%

From the above table you can easily see that the largest age group who participated in the study is actually 46 to 55.

Bivariate analysis

- Use a two-way-table or cross-tabulation to analyse two variables for purposes of describing and explaining their relationship to each other. For example, assume that the study in Table 10 above is on respondents' views on borehole water. Assume also that men and women were interviewed.

Notice that the table below could be regarded as an instance of subgroup comparison. While it describes each group independently, it also shows comparatively and descriptively that the women under description view borehole water as safer than the men do.
Do you agree that borehole water as safer than the men do.

Table 11: Bivariate relationship between gender and water safety.

	Men	**Women**
Agree	63%	75%
Disagree	37%	25%
	100%	100%
Total number of responses	200	200
Number who failed to respond	12	5

The same table, seen as an explanatory bivariate analysis tells a somewhat different story. It suggests that the variable gender has an effect on the variable water safety. In this instance we are no longer talking about men and women but about the independent variable gender as an influence on the samples' and the populations' perception of water safety.

Multivariate analysis

- Use this process to analyse more than two variables at a time to find out the relationships among them. For instance, when there is a need to examine simultaneously the effects of gender, age and social class on water safety, Multivariate Analysis can be used.

Let us return to the example of attitude towards water safety described above. Suppose that it is suspected that age has something to do with the answers: that younger people will be more ready to agree that bore hole water is safer than water from other sources than older people. The first step will be to divide the total sample into several subgroups based on the attributes of gender and age, that is, men and women and young men and young women. Then these subgroups will be described in terms of the dependent variable and then a comparison will be made.

Do you agree that borehole water is safer than water from other sources?

Table 12: A multivariate relationship of gender, age and water safety.

	Under 30		30 and above	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Agree	90%	78%	60%	48%
Disagree	10%	22%	40%	52%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total number of responses	100	100	100	100
Number who failed to respond	2	10	3	2

The table above is inefficient but correct. However, to simplify the results, they can be presented as in the table below. Notice that the disagree section has been taken away.

Do you agree that borehole water is safer than water from other sources?

Table 12b: The multivariate relationship expressed in percentages.

	Men	Women
Under 30	78%	90%
Respondents	00	100
30 and over	48%	60%
Respondents	100	100

5.4. Implementation of the baseline study in the field

5.4.1 Revision of questionnaire based on results of PRCA

Use the PRCA findings to sharpen the interview questions. It is generally necessary to drop or add questions depending on the outcome of the appraisal.

5.4.2 Pre-testing the baseline questionarie

Use about 7-10 respondents from the community who are similar to the actual study sample for the pre-testing. Pre-testing helps to determine whether or not both the interviewers and the respondents understand the questions, and to reconfirm the relevance of questions and data to be collected. It is used to find out how long it actually takes to administer the questionnaire. Generally, it should not take more than forty-five minutes to one hour to administer a questionnaire. If the questionnaire takes too long to administer, find ways of shortening it without loosing the important aspects. Use the pre-testing exercise to standardise interviewers' interviewing, probing and recording techniques. Revise the questionnaire one more time to incorporate the results of the pre-testing.

5.4.3 Implementation of the baseline in the field

Ensure that the study and its purpose are made known in advance to everybody in the community. Notify the relevant public authorities (e.g. village head, farmers' associations, etc.) before the study.

Explain that the study does not have anything to do with land acquisition, taxes or military service, for instance.

Become very familiar with the questionnaire so that when reading it to the respondent it is accurate and yet conversational. It is easier to administer a questionnaire if the respondent thinks that he or she is having a conversation rather than an interrogation.

Whenever possible conduct the interview where activities concerning the purpose of the study are taking place. For instance, If the study is about erosion in farmlands, conduct the interviews on the people's farms.

Approach the respondent in a respectful manner in order to gain his/her confidence and overcome any possible fears before administering the questionnaire. Make the respondent feel important because he or she has the information the study needs. Always assure the respondent about the anonymity of his or her responses. Always explain to each respondent the nature, purpose and time required for "discussing" the questionnaire. To motivate respondents, always stress the value, relevance and benefit of the study to them. The respondents are more likely to co-operate if they think that they will ultimately benefit from the study.

The interviewer is a neutral collector of information. The interviewer's presence should not affect the respondent's perception of a question or the expected answer. The respondent should never think that he is expected to give a certain answer.

Ask only the questions relevant to the affected respondents. In a study about birth control, it would be irrelevant to ask men if they take birth control pills or to stand in front of a man and ask him his sex.

Probing

Sometimes, the interviewer needs to probe for responses, especially, when the respondent is answering a question in a way that would force the interviewer to make a judgment about what the respondent actually means. For instance when multiple categories are presented such as agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree, don't know, a respondent might give an answer that does not fit into any of the categories by saying something like 'it is true'. It is necessary to prompt the respondent with such words as 'can you say you agree or agree strongly'. At times, it is also necessary to explain why such a 'concrete' answer is required from the respondent.

At the end of the interview, ensure that all relevant questions have been answered and ask if the respondent has any questions about the study. Do not forget to thank the respondent for his or her collaboration and time.

Supervision

The team of enumerators must be supervised daily as they administer the questionnaire in the field to ensure that the raw data or unprocessed information being collected from respondents is of good quality. Random checks on the interviewers should also be carried out while they are in the field to ensure that they are asking the questions correctly.

Interviewers should be debriefed at the end of each day to find out what experiences they had during the day and the difficulties they faced. If they are finding it difficult to collect certain information this should become obvious during the debriefing and a solution found. Keep record of any difficulties in case explanations are needed for certain discrepancies during analysis and presentation of results.

5.5 Presentation of survey findings

Planning and conducting the baseline study is a great achievement but it might as well have been a waste of the team's time and energy if they cannot present their findings in a persuasive and effective manner. To do a proper presentation it is essential to define the various audiences for the presentations and think through how each presentation can be adjusted to win the sympathy and understanding of each one of them.

5.5.1 Presenting baseline study findings

The first thing to do after collecting and analysing the baseline study data is to write it up as a report using tables, graphs, anecdotes (or real quotations from respondents) and charts to clarify the findings. Use audio-visual presentations in the form of video, photographs, or even drama to add punch and emphases to the presentation. At the end of preparing the baseline report, it should be integrated with the PRCA findings to produce a single comprehensive report for the communication research.

5.5.2 Preparing the baseline study report

The Executive Summary

This should not be more than one and a half pages long and should contain a summary of the major findings of the study and their significance as well as a summary of the recommendations. This should be written in such a way that people who don't have time to read the entire report could get the gist as quickly as possible. If the team succeeds in making this section of the report persuasive, it might even make such people eager to read the entire report.

The Introduction

This should contain the following sections:

- Background to the study and why the study;
- Where and when the study was conducted;

- Who paid for the study;
- Who conducted the study;
- What methods were used, how the sample was selected and why?;
- Practical problems or limitations encountered;
- Reliability of results.

Presentation of findings

This section is the heart of the report. It should point out the findings of the study and their implications to the purpose of the study. This is where the tables and graphs appear and they should be explained with text. Do not repeat the content of the tables and graphs in the text; instead show the reader the importance of the findings and relate these to the issues under discussion.

Conclusions and recommendations

This is another part of the report that people who are in a hurry tend to read. This means that it should be given a lot of thought before it is written. No unsupported claims should be made since many readers use the quality of this section as a yardstick for measuring the whole work.

Do not assume that the conclusions and recommendations are cast in stone. They should be seen as the starting point of discussions and even debates on the line of action to be taken to address the issues revealed by the study.

Often the veracity or truthfulness of the findings is questioned during presentations. Be ready to defend them in a diplomatic but emphatic manner with information in your possession.

Bibliography

List the books and publications consulted for preparing the study.

5.5.3 Synthesing PRCA and baseline findings

At the end of preparing the baseline report, it should be integrated with the PRCA findings to produce a single comprehensive report for the communication research.

How to Plan and Conduct PRCA and Baseline Study

Objetive

To present a step by step guide to planning and implementing a PRCA and a baseline study in the field.

At the end of this chapter you will be able to:

1. Prepare for a field PRCA and baseline study.
2. Discover essential information with a community using PRCA and baseline study.
3. Analyse, synthesise and present PRCA and baseline study findings.
4. Prepare for the next steps.

6.1 Identify and define the crucial issues

- Identify and define the crucial issues as determined by the community, organisation or project requesting the PRCA.

''This first step provides the framework for setting the focus of the appraisal because PRCA is never conducted in a vacuum. PRCA is always implemented as a basis for the design of a communication strategy to address crucial issues that need attention.

Crucial issues are often related to undesired situations that need to be improved, problems that require solutions, people's needs that should be met and ideals that the people desire to attain in order to improve their livelihood. These in turn are frequently connected to communities' problems and needs related to agriculture, food supply and nutrition; health; education; drinking water supply and sanitation; poverty and improved sources of income and good governance.

To better understand the crucial issues, you may need to do the following:

- Consult and interview the decision-makers or officials of the organisation or community requesting the PRCA to identify their interests, plans and policy related to the crucial issues under consideration. The list below identifies some of the key actors to be consulted at this stage:
  - Government policy makers;
  - Community decision makers;
  - Decision-makers in agencies and institutions related to the crucial issues;
  - Project managers and staff
  - Subject-matter specialists
  - Field development workers and extension staff

- Collect and review the following published and unpublished documents related to the critical issues in order to obtain background information:
  - Policy documents related to the development issue or the project objectives;
  - Documents outlining the goals and activities of the community or agency requesting the PRCA
  - Project documents and reports,
  - Materials related to the subject-matter under investigation,
  - Documents on technical topics related to the critical issue,
  - Reports of previous research studies conducted on the critical issues.
- Consult secondary data sources like the ones listed below to augment information you gathered:
  - Libraries
  - Statistical centres
  - Newspapers
  - Media centres e.g. radio/TV libraries
  - Internet
  - Archives
  - Donors
  - Universities
  - Provincial/district offices

Compile all the relevant information you collected from the sources above as a background document for your proposal and eventually for the appraisal report.

6.2 Prepare and plan for the field

6.2.1 Define a preliminary situation analysis framework (SAF) for the appraisal.

- Using the worksheet provided below analyse the crucial issues as presented by the project or organisation requesting the PRCA in order to define a preliminary framework for the PRCA. *(The worksheet is designed for a PRCA sponsored by an on-going project but can be adapted for a PRCA requested by any community or institution).*

The following SAF components are the minimum that must be determined at this stage:

(Refer to Chapter 2 for descriptions of the components).

- Development problem
- Project goal
- Main problems
- Project objectives
- Project stakeholders
- Project perceptions of the problem (Problem tree)

Worksheet 1 - Preliminary assessment of the situation (before the PRCA)

Development Problem	Project Goal	Main Problem/s	Project Objectives	Project Stakeholders	Project Perceptions (Problem Tree)

6.2.2 Define a preliminary research purpose

- Define the PRCA purpose as a fairly broad statement that describes the general focus of interest and intended outcomes of the appraisal. This is done in order to help you to outline the general direction of the study. However, it should not state what should be done in order to achieve the outcomes.

You get your PRCA purpose from the results of the preliminary assessment of the situation, especially the initial analysis of the problem as described by the organisation requesting the appraisal. It is advisable to consider this as a preliminary statement of purpose because later on a refinement might become necessary once you get to know the specific communities that will participate in the PRCA.

Your PRCA purpose must reflect how the results of the study will be used and the types of information that are of particular importance.

Examples of PRCA purposes:

(i) The four-week PRCA in three districts of Malawi aims to identify the appropriate communication systems and approaches to enhance the capacity of all stakeholders to articulate and share their views, needs, problems and capabilities in order to decide on actions for more sustainable community livelihood and food security programmes.

(ii) The two-week PRCA in Nzongomane District, Swaziland, aims to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and information between the project and the community on the food availability patterns of the area and related communication issues in order to plan a communication programme.

6.2.3 Select communities to participate in the study

- Use the results of the situation analysis, especially the preliminary research purpose, to select the general geographic areas where the critical issue is of major concern and select communities to participate in the PRCA from them.

- Use the following criteria for your selection:

POSSIBILITY OF A DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME:

Select communities where there is a likelihood of a concrete response to the needs the people will express during the PRCA.

REPRESENTATIVENESS:

Select communities that are socially, culturally and economically typical of most of the communities in the district or province.

SEVERITY OF PROBLEM:

Select communities in which the problems are severe. (For on-going projects, the problem tree will help you determine the main problems and select the areas where they are severe).

SHORTAGE OF PROJECTS OR DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES:

Select communities without too many development projects.

REMOTENESS FROM RESOURCES:

Select communities without such resources as network of tarred roads, health facilities, clean water and sanitation, etc.

Try to avoid the biases discussed in Chapter 3 during this exercise.

6.2.4 Assess community situation (including secondary data review)

Before you enter the community to carry out a PRCA you ought to have a good picture of what the people of that community are like. To build this picture do the following:

- Consult and interview people who are knowledgeable about the communities. Such people can be found in the communities themselves or among staff of district or provincial offices in which the communities are located. These include field development workers and extension staff working with the communities. Find out as much as possible about the people from these sources: their interests and agenda, history, culture and economic life.
- Collect and review published and unpublished secondary data on the socio-economic, political, cultural and environmental situation of the selected communities. Secondary data gives preliminary indications of where the people live, their means of livelihood, history, culture and perceptions of the major issues that concern their livelihood.
- Identify the traditional and modern systems and networks of communication in the community, the people's leadership structure and their levels of education as reported in the secondary information sources. This initial information about the people, their characteristics, their environment and their development status, enables you to refine the preliminary research purpose, select research sites and participants as well as prepare a methodological guide for the PRCA.
- Consult secondary data sources like the ones listed below in order to augment your knowledge of the people and draw a preliminary profile of the communities;

- Libraries/archives;
- Provincial/district offices;

- Sociological and anthropological accounts of the people;
- Reports of previous studies about the people related to the issues under consideration;
- Minutes of meetings by civic organisations;
- Survey maps;
- Photographs;
- Cinematic documentation;
- Paintings and carvings;
- Discographic information (audio recordings of music and folk tales);

Be ready to get a different picture from the people during the actual PRCA with the community!

6.2.5 Prepare a methodological guide for the PRCA (including initial tools for the appraisal)

- Develop a methodological guide for the PRCA, including a checklist of likely critical issues to be investigated with the community and the possible tools and activities to facilitate the investigations. This checklist is also a list of your research questions. Information you have already collected about the critical issues and the community would guide you in this exercise.
- In designing the guide for the PRCA, remember that the information collected will be used for designing a communication strategy with and for the community and others whose actions or opinions affect the situation in the community;

  In developing your checklist, go from the general to the specific, from the interesting and non-threatening to the delicate and sensitive. Generally, PRCA exercises flow from developing the profile of the community to identifying and analysing the people's NOPS and communication-related issues.
- Select possible PRCA tools and techniques to enable you and the community to gather information identified in your checklist in order to achieve the purpose of the appraisal. Your checklist will guide you in selecting relevant tools and techniques for the appraisal. The boxes on pages 111 and 113 give you an idea of what tools and techniques are recommended for collecting what information

6.2.6 Design a preliminary baseline study plan

- Prepare a preliminary plan for the baseline study, which will be incorporated in the research proposal. This plan is based on the information you have so far collected about the critical issues and the checklist of likely crucial areas to be investigated with the study.
- Formulate the preliminary study purpose and SMART objectives
- Prepare a preliminary justification for the study
- Describe the study methodology, including possible sampling methods and sample size, and types of data collection and analysis instruments.

(Refer to Chapter 3: the section on 'What a PRCA should accomplish')

Box 8: A guide for developing PRCA Checklist.

The following categories of questions will guide you in defining this checklist:

- What is the profile of the community as described by the people themselves?
- What are the information and communication resources, systems and networks of the community?
- What are the people's perception of their needs, opportunities, solutions and problems (NOPS) in relation to the critical issues or project under discussion?
- What are the main problems inherent in the NOPS?
- What are the focal problems related to the main problems?
- Who in the community and outside is associated most closely with the focal problems (priority interaction groups)?
- What are the characteristics of the interaction groups and their perceptions of the focal problems?
- What are the interaction groups' communication networks and preferred information sources?

- Outline the likely categories of information to be collected from the community
- Specify resources needed for implementing the study
- Develop a workplan for the study preparations and implementation, including who will be responsible for each activity.

  (Refer to Chapter 5: Baseline Study in PRCA)

6.2.7 Prepare a research proposal

- Design a proposal including a workplan and budget for your PRCA and baseline study in the field.
- Your proposal should discuss the following essential topics.
  - Introduction
  - Background and secondary data
  - Field communication research objectives
  - Research sites
  - Information to be collected
  - Research Methodologies, including sampling plan
  - Itemised budget
  - Complete timetable of activities and persons responsible
  - Name and address of contact person.

The following table will guide you in developing a field research proposal:

Organisation and management worksheet for field research

Research Objective	Outputs	Activities	Inputs (incl. est. budget)	Responsibility	Timing

- Use the topics in the boxes above as a framework for describing your proposal in a narrative format.
- As you develop your research proposal, define the research objectives and the outputs needed to achieve them. Outputs are usually the written reports of the field findings. The activities are those essential things that need to be done in order to implement the PRCA and the baseline study. The inputs are the human resources and materials needed to carry out the activities effectively (for example, DSA, transportation, funds for petrol, flipcharts and pens).
- See the PRCA Toolbox for an example of a communication research proposal outline for an on-going project. Adapt it for your own purposes.

Box 9: Purposes of a communication research proposal.

A communication research proposal serves several purposes:

- It describes the purpose of the research;
- It outlines the questions to be answered with the research;
- It describes the logistics and management plan for the research;;
- It outlines resources needed for the implementation of the research;
- It can be used to solicit funding for the research;
- It serves as a guide to field activities: what needs to be done, who has been selected as the focal point for each activity, timeframe for the activity to take place, etc;
- It provides a guide for analysing the results of the research and drafting a report.

6.2.8 Prepare the field

- Hold preliminary discussions on the aims, process and logistics of the appraisal with all the relevant state, provincial and district authorities as well as representatives of the selected communities.

- Hold discussions with the leaders and representatives of the selected communities to clarify the purpose of the appraisal and to seek their advice on the best period of the year for the appraisal. Let them also advise you on the most convenient time and location for meetings with the people during the appraisal. Obtain the commitment of local leaders and a wide cross section of the community.
- Inform the communities of your arrival dates well in advance and as the time for the appraisal approaches remind the relevant provincial and district authorities as well as representatives of the selected communities that you will soon arrive in their area for the PRCA.
- Arrange for your accommodation and feeding before you go into the field. It is recommended that you stay with the community as long as the people do not see it as an inconvenience.
- Identify development agencies and institutions operating in sectors which might be related to the critical issues of concern;
- Approach such organisations and institutions and discuss the proposed PRCA with them and seek their cooperation;

Box 10: Community problems often have many causes.

From field experience, it has been observed that problems of the community have causes that often cut across different development sectors. This means that if you go into the community with just your sector focus, causes of the problem related to your sector might end up coming from other sectors. For instance a PRCA which went in to address increasing soil infertility in a community found out that one of the causes of land exhaustion was over-cultivation. This in turn, according to the villagers, was partly caused by the increasing population of the community. Already you can notice that the study that started with land use problems as the focus has gradually shifted into family planning.

All arrangements with the communities ideally should be completed at least two *weeks before the team enters the community.*

6.3 PRCA data collection in the field

6.3.1 Live with the community

- Move into the community and live with the people. If for any reason this is not possible, arrange to be as close as possible to the people. In fact try to stay close enough for you to be able to participate in and observe the people's normal daily living patterns.

6.3.2 Build trust and rapport

When you move into a community to conduct PRCA, it is normal for the people to wonder who you are and what you are doing in their community. The people will listen to you and watch your

behaviour, and no matter what you say, will try to ascribe a description to you from their own frame of reference. It is not unusual for your presence to create confusion and to initially generate caution and suspicion among the community members. This is because the people are still not very certain of why you are in their community. A hint of distrust might still linger in the people's minds despite your initial meetings with them.

Often the people will judge you on how you conduct yourself on a daily basis rather than on any explanations you might offer them about your presence in the community. As time goes on you will be accepted, at least by some of the people in the community as they decide that you are harmless to them and that you are genuinely interested in learning and sharing knowledge with them. It is always a good idea to find out later how people in the community initially interpreted your presence amongst them.

To build trust and establish rapport with the community:

- Immediately on arrival in the community, honestly and directly explain who you are and why you are in the community in a way that makes sense to the people.
- Tell the people of other studies that have taken place in communities similar to theirs in the country and elsewhere and point out the benefits of such studies.
- Find out the people's customs in relation to strangers and strive to abide by them.

Box 11: Vilagers might still distrust you despite your initial efforts to build trust and rapport: A Zambian example.

Despite pre-research information sent to the community through various channels, there was still a high degree of initial suspicion of the PRCA team by the community as they moved into the village. The fact that the team lived in the village with the people for the entire research period did not mitigate this initial caution and anxiety on the part of the villagers. As far as the community was concerned, the humility, attention and readiness to dialogue exhibited by the team was unprecedented and therefore meant that there was an ulterior motive on the part of the team. The community was of the opinion that the team was a survey party sent in by some agency interested in acquiring their land and relocating the community.

Reasons for this apprehension were not difficult to find. First, most of the discussions between the team and the community revolved around the people's crop fields, their uses and problems encountered. Second, the people were used to teams coming to teach them without listening to their problems or to shove pre-formulated projects at them without consulting the community. The community therefore saw the team's humility and readiness to dialogue as something suspicious.

However, the team persisted in their efforts to win the confidence of the community through consultation with the influential persons in the community and social interactions with the people after hours.

6.3.3 Hold fruitful PRCA sessions with the community

WARMING UP

- Begin your PRCA sessions with exciting activities that warm up participants and break down the barriers of inhibition and shyness they might have thereby putting them in the right mood for the exercise.
- Use team-building exercises to put the people and the PRCA team in a co-operative frame of mind so that open discussions can take place.
- Introduce exercises that promote creativity and expressiveness among the people during the PRCA.
- Discuss the objectives, schedule and process of the appraisal with the people to ensure that the PRCA activities are relevant to the realities of the participants and fit into their daily programme. Go with the people's suggestions and do not impose your own schedule on them because the people know the appropriate days and time when it is best to meet.
- Assist the community to develop the rules and regulations that should guide the appraisal. These are the 'Rules of the Game' and they allow all parties to participate in the decision on how the PRCA should be conducted. The rules help to keep PRCA activities and discussions focused and productive.
- Assist the community to appoint an appraisal committee comprising of a chairperson, welfare officer and secretary. Help the people to identify the duties of this committee. Generally, the committee represents the community at the various meetings of the PRCA team. They also ensure that the PRCA activities are done on time and in an orderly manner.

(See the toolbox for suggested exercises for starting your PRCA)

SEGMENT THE COMMUNITY FOR **PRCA** ACTIVITIES

- Find out from the people the best ways of ensuring that all segments of the community are interacted with during the PRCA.
- Use gender, age and any other criteria suggested by the community to segment the people.
- Hold the PRCA activities in the groups that emerge as a result of the segmentation. This has some advantages as you can see from the short report in the box.

Box 13: Characteristics of a good PRCA facilitator.

In a PRCA exercise in Namibia, separating the community by gender was discovered to be advantageous to the women:

...During the PRCA women demanded to hold their discussions separate from men. In their own group, we discovered that female farmers can air opinions on issues we did not even know about or we thought were too sensitive for the extension workers to bring up during meetings. For instance, female farmers, prompted by revelations of their Daily Activity Calendar, raised and discussed issues concerning the imbalance in the gender division of labour in the community. The women also discussed other sensitive issues such as the question of male drunkenness during the farming season.

- Keep all the various groups busy and interested. There should be enough tools to keep every one involved in the appraisal.

CONDUCTING PRCA ACTIVITIES

- Begin the PRCA information gathering exercise, especially on the first day, with tools that people will find exciting and not threatening.
- Hand over the stick to the people as soon as possible. You are in the community as a facilitator and your job is to start the exercise. When you see that the people are comfortable with the activities you should withdraw and become a participant observer. You should therefore hand over the control of the exercise to the community.
- Ensure that no one section or person in the community dominates the exercise. Normally, in every group, there are persons who dominate the proceedings because of their status or role in the community or their personality. There are also people whose presence in a group stifles the free flow of information. Take this category of persons 'for a walk' to make it possible for the other members of the group to express themselves too.
- If any of the dominant figures seems to have specialised information, arrange for him/her to be taken for an in-depth interview to discover the special knowledge as well as keep him/her away from the group.

ENERGISERS

- As the PRCA progresses, throw in games and exercises, known as energisers to act as interludes between activities and prevent or cure the following:
  - Boredom
  - Sleepiness
  - Waning creativity
  - Lack of participation
  - Information overload.
- Discuss the appropriateness of the energisers with the community. They MUST be culturally appropriate to generate the right effect.
- Encourage the community to suggest their own energisers, such as local games, dances or songs.

RECORD THE PRCA PROCEEDINGS

- Capture the PRCA in photographs, audio and video recordings because such audio-visual documentation of the community provides a very important reference and authentic sound effects for use in communication materials production. They also provide an added credence to presentations of the PRCA findings to government or donor agency officials.
- Obtain the permission of the community before you begin any recording.
- Recording must be done discreetly so that it does not distract the people from their PRCA activities.
- If it is possible go into the field with a video play back unit and show the footage of the day's shooting to the people in the evenings. Community members are excited when they see themselves on video.

- Copies of all audio-visual materials must be made available to the communityappropriate to generate the right effect.

HOLD DAILY REFLECTIONS

- On a daily basis, after the day's work or first thing in the morning before the next PRCA activity with the community, the PRCA team must hold a meeting to discuss how are we doing? The purpose of these meetings is to enable the PRCA team to reflect on the information that has been collected for the day, compare it with information collected earlier in order to ensure that the research questions on the proposal are being answered.
- During the daily reflections, the team should decide whether some issues already discussed have been exhausted or whether they should be discussed further. These daily meetings are mini planning sessions where the activities for the next day are reviewed and any necessary adjustments made.
- The community appraisal committee should also attend these meetings.

Box 13: (continued) Characteristics of a good PRCA facilitator.

EMPATHY

A good facilitator tries to understand the community's point of view and perceptions no matter how different they may be from hers. The facilitator does not push the community into discussing her own agenda but is alert to spot any potential entry point that might lead to the purpose of the PRCA.

SHARING

Sharing is one of the most important pillars of PRCA. A good facilitator encourages exchange of experiences, information and knowledge among the people themselves, between the team and the people, and between the people and outside institutions and organisations.

The facilitator can accomplish this by helping to make invisible people and concealed knowledge become visible. She ensures that the stick is passed on from hand to hand.

HUMILITY

In PRCA, the people are the teachers and the team members are the learners. A good facilitator ensures that these roles are maintained throughout the appraisal. It is difficult to maintain this reversal of roles. But with humility on the part of PRCA team members, it is possible. As a learner the facilitator should not think that her own knowledge is better than the people's local knowledge. Don not underestimate local knowledge. Seek them out because solutions to a problem you are trying to solve may already be available in the community.

ADAPTABLE

A good facilitator is flexible and open-minded but takes advantage of new information and interpretations to keep PRCA focused on the objectives.

ALERTNESS

A good facilitator does not talk too much but listens attentively and asks questions in order to capture the meaning and implications of what the people are saying. Remember the mouth is not a listening organ and if you are talking, you can't listen. Talk less and listen more. Use your eyes to carry out direct observation because they can pick up different signals from the ears. A good facilitator keeps a record of people's comments about their experiences and makes notes of the vocabulary the people use for such explanations.

INQUISITIVE

A good facilitator is not satisfied with the first level of information or answers she gets from the people. She crosschecks such information through triangulation by repeating the same questions to different people at different times and in different forms. She uses one tool to collect the information and uses other tools to verify them. A good facilitator makes linkages among the different kinds of information received from different sources. A good facilitator does not rely only on what is said or what happened. She is aware that what didn't happen is often just as important as what did happen and what people don't say is often just as important as what they actually do say.

READINESS TO BE SURPRISED:

A good facilitator does not go into the field with assumptions and judgement about the people. She is ready to encounter new realities and seeks to understand them from the people's perspective.

BEST JUDGEMENT:

Use your best judgement because common sense can be a great guide to a facilitator.

6.3.4 Discover essential information and knowledge with the community

DISCOVER THE COMMUNITY AND DRAW ITS PROFILE

- Using various PRCA tools you and the different groups in the community can describe the socio-economic and environmental situation of the community as seen by the people. Table 11 outlines the basic information needed for designing a community profile and the suggested tools and techniques for discovering them. Revisit Chapter 3: the section on 'What a PRCA should accomplish' for more detailed descriptions of the categories of information listed below. Go to the toolbox for instructions on how to use the suggested tools and techniques.

IDENTIFY AND ANALYSE THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION RESOURCES, NETWORKS AND SYSTEMS OF THE COMMUNITY

- Use Table 12 as a guide to determine the information and communication resources, networks and systems within the community. Identify the types of information each network normally carries.

Table 13: Information for drawing community profile.

General socio-economic and environmental situation	
Information	**Suggested tools and techniques**
The geography of the community (Spatial data) Environment, settlement patterns and households (characteristics and size), boundaries, infrastructure, resources, land use patterns, etc.	Sketch maps: **Land use maps,** **Farm sketches** **Social maps,** **Village resource maps.** **Transect walk**
History of the community Significant occurrences and changes in the people's lives and their environment, migration patterns etc. How people have coped with changes and circumstances in their lives over time.	**Time lines** **Trend lines** **Historical transects** **Historical maps/models**
Seasonal trends e.g. Water availability Disease patterns Food availability Farming activities etc.	**Seasonal calendar** **Seasonal Activity Calendar (by gender)** **Livelihood diagram** **Trend lines**
Social composition of the community Significant individuals, groups and institutions in the community and their relationships. The relevance of their roles and status to the development theme under discussion. **Community leadership and power structure:** Who has the authority in the community to make or influence what decisions? Who is respected in the community? Who are the formal leaders and the informal leaders of the community?	**Chapati or Venn diagramming** **Linkage diagramming/scoring** **Observation** **Focus Group Discussion** **In-depth Interviews** **Wealth ranking**
Economy of Community Sources of Income	Livelihood mapping Wealth Ranking
Group relationship patterns in the community The different roles of various groups in the community. How various groups view **each other and their roles.**	Seasonal Activity Calendar Daily Activity Calendar Focus Group Discussion Role playing Observation

General socio-economic and environmental situation	
Information	**Suggested tools and techniques**
Culture of the community Religion, beliefs, customs, values, labels, vocabulary and categories used by potential interaction groups for discussing various issues; meanings the people have about their lives; ways in which people express their emotions and needs such as songs, dances, drama, art works and colours; cultural sites; mode of dressing; postures, and other non-verbal expressions; Knowledge that people use to interpret their experience and social behaviour	**Participant Observation** **Audio-visual recording** **Photographs** **Village map** **Transect walk** **Story telling**
Patterns of community access and control of resources Determine the different levels of access and control various groups have to the resources in the community necessary to sustain their livelihood. Access and control profile	**Access and control profile** **Focus Group Discussion**
Past experiences of community with development projects and programmes How did the community relate to such development efforts? What the people liked and disliked about such projects and programmes	**Focus Group Discussion** **In depth Interviews** **Time line**
Current people-initiated development efforts and outside development agencies / projects in the community	**Focus Group Discussion**

Discover the community's perceptions of their needs, opportunities, problems and solutions

- Identify the community perceptions of their needs, opportunities, problems and solutions as well as their strengths, weaknesses and fears in relation to the critical issues.
- As each of the PRCA tools is used, the community identifies and discusses issues regarding the NOPS inherent in information collected.
- Use focus group discussions (FGDs) and brainstorming for NOPS identification.
- Since many NOPS will be revealed in the course of a PRCA, use such tools as pair wise ranking and closed or open scoring to prioritise the NOPS and identify the main problems.
- Develop a problem tree with the community to analyse the causes and effects of the main problems.
- From the problem tree select the focal problems. These are the entry points for the communication strategy.

(Refer to Chapter 2 for instructions on how to identify the focal problems using the problem tree)

Identify priority interaction groups

- Identify the groups in the community who experience the identified focal problems and people who are potentially in a position to assist in some way in the solution of the problem or provide for the need.
- Also define as interaction groups development project staff who work with the community on issues related to the identified problems as well as institutions outside the community that have skills, resources, influence or knowledge to assist in the solution of the problems or provision of the needs. These are often development project managers, technical experts and policy-makers. These are your priority interaction groups. The PRCA must now try to interact with these groups in a more in-depth manner.

Table 14: Guideline for discovering community information sources.

Information and communication resource	Suggested Tools and Techniques
Internal distribution of modern and traditional communication resources in community e.g. radios, literacy patterns, meeting grounds, training centres, dance groups, associations, initiation groups, extension staff and other influential people and institutions in the community. Identify their attributes (e.g. reliability, accessibility etc.), and level of importance to community.	**Communication resource map** **Access and control of information resources** **Linkage diagram** **Pair wise preference ranking** **Direct matrix ranking** **Scoring**
Information sources from outside the community External sources (e.g. seed company, market, auction floor, etc.) and their attributes (e.g. reliability, accessibility etc.), and level of importance to community. District, provincial national level sources.	**Linkage diagram** **Pair wise preference ranking** **Direct matrix ranking** **Scoring** **Chapati or Venn diagram** **Access and control of information resources**

Box 14a: What is segmentation.

Segmentation is the art of grouping together people and institutions within and outside the community on the basis of their relationship to the identified community NOPS: Who has the problem or need? Who knows about the problem or need? Who is interested in the problem and need? Who is causing the problem? Who knows about solutions and opportunities? Who has skills and resources to solve the problems or provide for the need? Through segmentation, internal and external interaction groups are identified.

During PRCA, the divisions within the community in relation to the NOPS become more obvious. This helps to divide the people into more meaningful groups, define their characteristics and design communication strategies that are relevant to them. Information collected about the NOPS and the Socio-economic and Environmental situation of the community provide the basis for identifying the groups who are most seriously affected by the current status of the community or variability in the people's circumstances.

Box 14b: Segmentation according to criteria dictated by community structure: A Tanzanian example.

It has been traditionally believed that Masai men are the ones who take care of cattle and other livestock. Masai women have been seen as playing a very peripheral role in livestock care and usage. The PRCA among the Masai of Longido District of Tanzania revealed the contrary. Through development of 'Activity Profiles' by gender, it was discovered that in actual fact, women spend more time with livestock than men.

The Masai themselves guided the PRCA meetings. Instead of asking them to come to specific venues, as often happens when outsiders come into this society, the PRCA team followed the people to their work places. These were later discovered to be their conventional meeting venues. This led to a segmentation of the group initially by gender and later, within the gender groups by age. The PRCA team observed that when livestock is taken out of the Boma (kraal), where women really dominate in its care, it is taken care of by different age groups depending on the age of the animals. Participation in discussion of the animals was dependent on this aspect. In other words, any discussion of calves and their problems was left to young children, whereas discussion of older animals was being done by the Morans (the youth). Elders participated more actively in discussions pertaining to ownership and movement of the animals.

It was observed that these groups actually moved in and out of the meeting dependent on what age or type of animal being discussed. For instance, if the discussion was on calves, it was observed that the Morans left the meeting to do other chores in the vicinity while the young children remained to talk about the calves. Once discussion reverted to the older animals, the Morans returned and dominated the discussion. Although the elders were not

moving in and out of the meetings, it was observed that they did not participate when the young children or the Morans were at the centre of the discussion. During these discussions, most elders seem to doze off as if they were not interested in what was being discussed. However, whenever the discussion concerned them, they got up and rejoined the meeting.

While it was easier to notice the way age played a critical role in participation of men in discussions, it was not so clearly defined amongst the females. Since most girls are married early in life, it seems most discussions amongst Masai women were being dominated by younger women than the elderly ones even as the latter were always present during meetings (Kamlongera, 1997).

Segment the interaction groups and define their characteristics and their perceptions of the problems and issues under discussion.

- Segment your selected interaction groups and paint their portraits by describing their characteristics. The list below can be a starting point for this activity. The groups can be described in terms of the following:
  - Gender;
  - Culture: religion, beliefs, values, labels, vocabulary, categories used by potential interaction groups for discussing the issues;
  - Socio-economic status: wealth/poverty, class, and caste;
  - Occupation;
  - Age;
  - Educational background;
  - Psychographics of potential interaction groups: fears, hopes, motivating factors etc.;
  - Influential sources of information and advice;
  - Experience;
  - Marital status;
  - Parenthood;
  - Interests;
  - Position on the problem-solution ladder:

    Is the group aware of the problems and solutions? If yes:
    How does the group perceive and define the problems, solutions and needs?
    Does the group and the development agency have the same or different perceptions of the issues?
    What is the level of the groups' interest and attitude towards the problem and solution?
    What are the groups' beliefs, knowledge, skills and practices in relation to the problems and solutions?

For each of these questions find out why.

Define the information and communication resources, systems and network of the priority interaction groups

- Define patterns of communication within the groups.
- Identify with the groups those in the community and outside who have a particularly strong influence on their behaviour. These people are known as influential sources of advice or role models. Outline why the group prefers them. Find out from the group whether such sources are reliable, timely, easily accessible, knowledgeable, respectable etc. Any sources of information/advice you eventually select for passing on development messages to your priority interaction group must be seen to have these attributes.
- Identify the information and communication resources both modern and traditional accessible to the interaction group. These should range from cultural/religious events, rituals, art, drawings, stories, dances, songs, drama, to audio-visual and print media. Identify the ones most preferred by the groups and find out why.

6.4 Analyse and synthesise PRCA findings

PRCA results should give you a comprehensive picture of the various groups in the community affected by the identified focal problems. The results must contain the perceptions of the groups about who they are, how they view their needs and problems as well as reveal their strengths, knowledge, opportunities, beliefs and practices in relation to the critical issues under discussion. In addition, the results must provide answers to such questions as:

- Whose problems or needs are being revealed?
- What are the causes of the problem?
- Who is causing the problem?
- Why is that happening?
- Which of the identified factors can be turned into an opportunity?
- Which causes are most significant?
- Which causes can be the most effective communication entry point?

The results must identify the communication issues related to the problems and needs of the priority interaction groups and show how the people communicate within their community and their main sources of information from outside.

In your PRCA report, all these elements should be carefully highlighted since they will form the basis upon which to refine the baseline questionnaire and subsequently, plan the communication strategy. The diagram in Figure 10 gives you an idea of the uses of PRCA results.

6.4.1 Analysis and reflection with the community

- Start the analysis of the PRCA results by striving to gain a more in-depth understanding of any information community groups present in plenary after working with each PRCA tool. This helps you to discover hidden information and to find out what the community groups think about the tools they used. For example, probe to find out why the group is highlighting

certain issues and not others. Ask such questions as why a group showed the traditional healer's hut in their social map but did not indicate the clinic. Answers to such probing are very revealing.

- Encourage the community members to reflect on information being presented and to voice their own opinions.
- Be alert to any discussions or controversy the information being presented might generate among the community members themselves. Such exchanges can show where the community as a whole does not agree. They can also indicate to you that some members of the community do not want that particular information revealed.
- Document this process as part of your PRCA findings.

6.4.2 Daily reflections by PRCA team

- The PRCA team and members of the community appraisal committee must hold daily meetings to reflect on the day's activities and findings.
- Ensure that the information collected during the day are relevant to your PRCA proposal, especially the checklist and the research questions. This will help you weed out the 'unnecessary' information and retain only that needed to answer your research questions most vividly.

Remember that each individual tool can provide lots of data but you should concentrate on data that are relevant to the research proposal. At the same time you should be careful not to disregard or reject data that may become relevant at a later stage. During the research process you should cast your net as wide as possible in order to ensure that as many relevant causes of the problems are gathered.

- Compare information collected during the day with information collected earlier in order to ensure that the research questions on the discussion guide are being answered in increasing detail.
- Do your Windows of Perceptions: Compare your assumptions with the information coming out of the PRCA and note the differences and similarities.
- Decide whether some issues already discussed have been exhausted or whether they should be discussed further.
- Start discussions on the possible effects of the emerging PRCA findings on the baseline plan.
- Discuss the communication implications and uses of the information being revealed.
- Review the plan of activities for the next day and make any necessary adjustments to collect any missing information.

6.4.3 Summative analysis and synthesis

This is an important exercise that takes place at the end of the appraisal period.

- Hold a discussion with the community appraisal committee to review and synthesise the results collected from all the other analysis exercises.

- Evaluate the findings and the PRCA tools and techniques used for their collection.
- Formulate the diagrams and tables for organising and presenting the findings.
- Assign the tasks of preparing and presenting the findings to the PRCA team and community appraisal committee members.
- Discuss the final output and make the necessary changes if needed.
- Begin to use the findings to focus and refine the baseline plan.

6.4.4 Report back to the community

This is also known as the summative community analysis process.

- Present the results of the summative analysis to the community.
- Sit together with the people and talk about what you have found out and discuss what should be the next line of action.

Be ready to be corrected by the community.

6.5 Prepare and conduct the baseline study

(Refer to Chapter 5: Baseline Study in PRCA)

6.5.1 Select respondents

- After the report back to the community discuss the rationale and logistics of the baseline study with the community and select the households and persons to participate in the exercise.

6.5.2 Refine baseline study purpose, justification and objectives

- Check the preliminary purpose, justification and objectives of the study you set earlier on during the PRCA preparation stage to verify if they are still relevant in view of the findings of the appraisal. Make any necessary adjustments.

6.5.3 Prepare and translate a refined questionnaire for the study

- Use the findings of the PRCA to prepare a refined questionnaire for the baseline study.
- Translate the questionnaire into the local language.

6.5.4 Pretest questionnaire

- Select about ten people from the community and pretest the refined and translated questionnaire with them to ensure that the questions are understandable and appropriate. The pretest should not be done with people who will participate in the actual study.

6.5.5 Administer questionnaire

- Locate the people in the sample and administer the questionnaire to them.
- After each day hold a meeting to ensure that the study is progressing satisfactorily.
- Record data on a daily basis.

6.5.6 Analyse the findings

- Use the objectives of the study and the specific questions in the questionnaire as the basis for the analysis.
- What percentage of the respondents answered each question and in what manner?

6.6 Synthesise and present the PRCA and baseline study results

- Synthesise your PRCA and Baseline results so that each explains the other or brings out any contradictions.
- See below for a suggested format for you report.

Report writing

1. Table of contents

2. Acknowledgements

- Who paid for the study?
- Who participated in the arrangements for the study?
- Who provided information during the study?
- Who conducted the study?

3. The Executive Summary

(Not more than one and a half pages)

- Summary of study background and purpose
- Summary of the major findings and their significance
- Summary of the recommendations
- Structure of the report

4. The Introduction

- Background to the study: purpose and justification
- Background information: secondary data (e.g. history of village, characteristics of population, other researches and development efforts related to study purpose. Include maps and pictures if possible

5. Methodology

- Study design, sampling procedures, research methods, tools and techniques used and how the data was analysed
- Practical problems or limitations encountered
- Reliability of results
- Where and when the study was conducted

6. Presentation of findings

- Findings of PRCA and baseline study presented as answers to research questions in the proposal
- Tables, graphs, Pie charts, Bars, Histograms, Scatter diagrams, photographs etc. with explanations to visualise findings
- Implications of findings to the purpose of the study
- The communication implications of the findings

7. Conclusions and recommendations

- Summary of major findings and their significance
- Lessons learnt

Recommendations

- Next line of action for the project or development programme
- Suggestions for communication action
- Suggestions on how to improve the research methodology

8. Bibliography

- Books and publications you consulted

9. List of abbreviations and their explanations

Present your PRCA and Baseline study findings

- Define the various audiences for your presentations. Important potential audiences for your presentations include the management of agencies who funded the study.
- Think through how you can adjust each presentation to win the sympathy and understanding of each o f the audiences.
- Present your findings in a persuasive and effective manner.
- Use tables, graphs, anecdotes (or real quotations from respondents) and charts to clarify your findings. Depending on the audience you can also add emphasis and punch by using audio-visual presentations in the form of video, photographs, or even drama.
- Explain how you obtained the information, which tools you used and why.
- Explain the role of the community. It is important to show that the information came from the community through the use of a number of tools designed to unleash their knowledge and perceptions.

- When the veracity or truthfulness of your findings is questioned during presentations, defend them in a diplomatic but emphatic manner with information in your possession.

6.7 Ready for next steps

Your PRCA and baseline study findings are the bases for the design of appropriate communication strategies, activities, materials and media to address specific development challenges identified by the community. In the next phases, you and community will use the study results for designing a communication plan of action that will assist in achieving the development objectives selected during the PRCA.

The plan of action known as a communication strategy contains the focal problems to be solved by the communication programme and the priority interaction groups in the community most affected by the problems. It also outlines ways and means for solving the problem including the objectives to be achieved with specific communication modes and approaches such as information, dialogue, motivation, promotion, group mobilisation, training and education. The strategy also outlines financial, material and human resources required for solving the problem. It also contains a management plan that specifies activities and the people responsible for performing them in order to obtain outputs that will contribute to the solution of the problems. To ensure that the programme does not go off track, the study results, especially, the baseline findings, provide measurable indicators for monitoring the implementation of the strategy and serves as benchmark for impact evaluation.

The study findings also define the basic messages, discussion themes and appeals to be packaged for a variety of channels and media during the message design and materials development phases of the communication design process.

PRCA Toolbox

Exercises and Games

Warm-ups
Introductions
Creative blockbusters
Energisers

These exercises and games are samples of techniques you can use during the PRCA. You should identify more of them and try them out for your PRCA. In all the games and exercises please ensure that after describing the activity, you ask participants whether it is acceptable according to their cultural background. For instance, in some societies 'winking' is not socially acceptable as it is seen as an indecent gesture, while in others people may be offended by being told to run if they consider themselves 'old people'.

Most of the exercises and games described below can also be used as energisers.

Warm-up 1: Back to back

Objectives: To warm up or energise the gathering
To create an informal atmosphere for the PRCA

Suitable for: 7 to 17 participants [any uneven number]

Materials: None

Time: open (15 minutes including explanation)

Procedure:
1. Choose a partner and stand in a large circle.
2. One person stands in the middle and is the caller [the animator could start].
3. The caller shouts out two parts of the body, for example, ' back to back'.
4. Each person puts her back to the back of her partner.
5. Two other parts of the body are called out, e.g. 'knee to hip'.
6. Each person places a knee to the hip of her partner.
7. The caller keeps shouting combinations.

8. When the caller runs out of parts of the body to call, she shouts, CHANGE PARTNERS.
9. All participants try to obey the command by getting a new partner. The person left without a partner is the new caller and the game proceeds as before.
10. Animator stops the game when people have had a good session of loosening up and laughter.

Remarks: *Who can be formal now when an informal atmosphere has been created with this activity. There is no need to debrief participants after the activity.*

Warm-up 2: Let's sway and move

Objectives: To warm-up or energise the gathering

To create an informal atmosphere for the PRCA.

Suitable for: 5-30 people

Materials: None

Time: 20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Everyone stands in a circle.
2. Animator begins by chanting, 'Let's sway and move and begin to groove'.
3. Everyone else joins in the chant.
4. When the rhythm has been established, the animator makes a motion while chanting the above line [chant1] – left arm straight above head.
5. On the next chant repetition [chant 2], the person to her right, person 'A' imitates this motion and keeps her attention to the animator.
6. On the 3rd chant person 'B' imitates 'A' and continues to focus on 'A'.
7. On the 4th chant, person 'C' imitates 'B' and so on round the circle.
8. Meanwhile on the second chant the animator makes a new motion, that is, left arm extended to side.
9. On each chant the animator will initiate a new movement.
10. Each person is always one move behind the person beside them.

11. Each person should concentrate on the person to his left.

12. When someone gets confused and halts the game, he should replace the animator as initiator of movements.

13. The game continues until everyone is confused.

Remarks: *There is need to debrief participants after this activity. Tell participants that it is normal and expected that people would become confused during this activity. After all we are all human and liable to momentary confusion. Point out that this might happen during the use of PRCA tools for information and knowledge sharing and that people should not feel shy to report that they are confused or no longer following the processes.*

Warm-up 3: All people wearing something blue

Objectives: To warm up or energise the gathering.
To make the people more alert.

Suitable for: 10-20 people

Materials: None

Time: 15 minutes

Procedure:

1. Take away one of the chairs so that there is enough room for all except one person to sit down.
2. The standing person calls out all people who have a certain characteristic, for example, all people wearing something blue or all people with an E in their names.
3. Those people then stand up and rush to find another chair.
4. The person who is the caller then rushes to try and find a seat.
5. The person who fails to get a seat then goes into the centre and calls out another characteristic.

Remarks: *Reiterate the need for participants to be alert during the PRCA so that they do not allow incorrect information to be passed on to the PRCA team.*

Introductions 1: Tell and demonstrate

Objectives: To introduce participants to one another in a fun way.

To start the proceedings on a relaxed note.

Suitable for: 6 to 20 people

Materials: None

Time: 10 minutes

Procedure:

1. Ask each participant to introduce herself by the name she wishes to be known and to accompany the introduction with a gesture or demonstration of something about her she likes people to know about. For instance a carpenter stands up and says 'My name is John' and at the same time mimics a person sawing wood.

Remarks: *There is no need to debrief participants after this exercise. You might discover that people remember the gesture or demonstration and often associates the person with it.*

Introductions 2: Paired Introductions

Objectives: To discover more in-depth information about participants. To make participants feel proud about their accomplishments.

Suitable for: 6 to 20 people

Materials: None

Time: 45 minutes depending on the number of participants (5 for the interview and one minute for each participant to introduce his/her partner.

Procedure:

1. Split participants into pairs. Ask each pair to interview each other. Each participant should interview her partner for not more than 2.5 minutes. Interviews can focus on such questions as:

   What is your name? What do you do for a living?

   What do you expect from this PRCA exercise? Have you ever participated in this sort of exercise before?

   Name two good things that happened in this community in the past year.

2. After the interview ask each participant to summarise what she has learnt about the partner in one minute.

Remarks: *This activity ensures that information participants would normally not disclose themselves if they talked about themselves are revealed through the interviews. It is essential to make it clear to participants that the time allocated to the interviews and report back should be strictly adhered to in order to reduce the tendency of boredom setting in during the exercise.*

Team building 1: Animal game

Objectives: To get people in a group to share views of themselves with each other.

To know each other in a fun way and to develop trust among group members.

Suitable for: 20 people

Materials: Chairs

Time: 20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Imagine yourself as an animal…

Now

What animal do you see yourself as?

What animal do you think others see you as?

What animal would you like to be?

2. Take a few minutes to think about it, then take turns sharing your views with others.

Remarks: *When this exercise is over, reiterate its objectives to the people.*

Team building 2: The human knot

Objective: To demonstrate the need for leadership, planning and cooperation in groups.

Suitable for: a group of 5-15 people

Materials: None

Time: 20 minutes

Procedure: 1. Everyone stands in a circle shoulder to shoulder.

2. Reach across with your hands and grab any other two hands.
3. And not two of the same person.
4. Without letting go of any hands – UNTANGLE.
5. Anything else goes; crawl over, under, or through the tangles between the hands.

It is possible!!! Some people are good untanglers, let them direct.

6. When you have untangled you will be in one large circle or perhaps two.
7. Everyone will be much more familiar with the members of the group.
8. Advise group members to take their time, go slowly and be careful.
9. The strong ones in the group should not stretch.

Remarks: *Debrief the participants at the end of the exercise. Ask them to describe what happened during the exercise, how they felt doing it and what they learnt from it.*

Team building 3: Signals

Objective: To develop trust among people in a group.
To develop a form of communication between partners.

Suitable for: 6 to 30 people

Materials: Blindfolds

Time: 45 minutes

Procedure:
1. Divide participants into pairs.
2. One person becomes blind [blind folded or close eyes].
3. The other person becomes his guide.
4. The guide uses different sounds [not words] to signal the blind person to:
   Go forward a
   Stop
   Turn right
   Turn left

The way to arrive at the meaning of signals is entirely between the two people and usually differs with each pair.

5. Once a system of communication is developed, the guide signals the blind person around the room [or village meeting ground] making certain that the blind person doesn't bump into other people or objects.
6. Now each pair changes roles, and a new system of communication is worked out.

Remarks: *Ask participants how they felt. Explain that the exercise was a way of demonstrating that people in a group need to trust each other in order to successfully achieve their objectives and goals.*

Creative blockbusting 1: Faces

Objective: To remove inhibitions and stimulate creativity.

Suitable for: 7 to 50 people

Materials None

Time: 20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Everyone sits in a circle.
2. One person starts the game by making a funny [weird, ridiculous, frightening] face to the person next to her.
3. This person copies the face and shows it to every one in the circle, then takes it off and makes her own face to the next person in the circle.
4. This continues around the circle until each person has had a turn.

   Now face up to yourself. Ha! Ha!

This game can also be played with words and sentences to develop a story. One person starts the story with a sentence , the person next to her repeats the idea in the sentence and adds her own and the next person does the same until a full story emerges.

Remarks: *Ask the people how they feel after this exercise. Explain that often people have brilliant ideas but because they are shy or think others will laugh at the ideas, such brilliant thoughts do not get expressed.*

Creative blockbusting 2: Wink

Objectives: To give people the opportunity to improvise.
To stimulate the people's power of creativity.

Suitable for: 7 to 20 people

Materials: None

Time: 20 minutes

Procedure:

1. The animator chooses a setting, for example, a market.
2. Participants are told to choose a character that they would find at a market and be ready to act out this character.
3. Everyone stands in a circle with their eyes closed.
4. The animator chooses a 'killer' by tapping one participant on the shoulder.
5. Participants now open their eyes.
6. The characters walk around interacting with each other.
7. When a person is winked at she is dead.
8. She should dramatize her death.
9. She is no longer in the game.
10. The game continues until every one has died or until someone discovers the killer

a If a participant who has not been winked at thinks she knows who the killer might be, she can indicate her suspicion to the animator who will take this suspect out of the game for a while.

a If someone else dies after this person has been taken out, it is obvious that this suspect is not the killer.

a The suspect goes back into the game and it continues.

a The game continues until all participants have been 'killed' or until the 'killer' is discovered.

Remarks: *Reiterate the objectives of this exercise and point out that during the PRCA people should not hesitate to voice their opinions even when they are not sure it is* ***right.***

Creative blockbusting 3: Mighty machine

Objective: To demonstrate the need for creativity and cooperation in a group

Suitable for: 10-20 people

Materials: None

Time: 20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Stand in a loose circle
2. One person starts building a 'machine' by going into the middle of the circle and performing a simple movement,
3. Another person adds on to the machine by doing a movement that fits in with the first movement
4. People keep adding to the machine with new movements, while integrating with existing ones
5. When everyone has joined the machine [become part of it] accelerate the machine until it is almost out of control
6. Now slow it down gradually
7. Stop

Machine – Variation 1

Same as above except that movement and sound are used

Each person does a simple movement and simple sound

Machine – Variation 2

Instead of mechanical movements and sound try:

- *Dancing*
- *Flowing*
- *Rhythmic movements*
- *Musical sounds*

Remarks: *Ask participants what they learnt from the exercise. It must be made explicit that the exercise was a way of showing that when people pool their creativity as a group, they are able to achieve great things.*

Sources:

S Williams with Janet Seed and Adeline Mwau, *The Oxfam Gender Training Manual/Augusto Boel, Theatre of the Oppressed.*

New Games Foundation, *The New Games Book,* Edited by Andrew Fluegelman.

Pretty. Jules, N., Irene Guijt, John Thompson, Ian Scoones. (1995). Participatory Learning and Action, A Trainer's Guide. IIED Participatory Methodologies. Russel Press, UK.

PRCA Tools and techniques

Tool No. 1: The problem tree

Description

- This is a visual problem analysis tool that can easily be used by both field development staff and the community to specify and investigate the causes and effects of a problem and identify the possible relationships between them. As the name implies, this tool resembles a tree. The trunk of the tree is the main problem under analysis. Roots of the tree are used as visual representa-tions of causes of the main problem while the branches stand for the effects.

Uses

- Analysis of the cause-effect relationships of the main problems as defined by an on-going project.
- Identification of the community perceptions of the causes and effects of the main problems.
- Definition of who is affected by the causes of the problems and determination of who should participate in activities aimed at solving them. Each cause of the problem can be seen as a problem in its own right.
- Identification of the focal problems or the causes of the main problem that communication can help to solve.

Materials

- Large sheets of flip chart paper, markers or large point felt-tipped pens (various colours).

Participants

- Various groups in the community facilitated by PRCA team members.

Procedure

- Identify major problems and needs as perceived by the community or as detailed in information provided by the project or the agency that commissioned the PRCA.

  For on-going projects, the major problem(s) is derived from information supplied by the project management or data provided in project documents. Most ongoing projects express the major problem(s) in an explicit manner somewhere in a document.

  For generating the major problem(s) with the community assist groups in the community to brainstorm their situation in order to identify their needs, opportunities, problems and likely solutions.
- Rank problems to identify the main ones.

  Normally, a lot of problems will be generated through this process. These problems are not of equal importance and therefore should be ranked to identify the priority problem(s).

  Ranking is usually done through an analysis of the importance of each problem and by considering which problems cause other problems.

Once the main problem(s) is/are identified, the process of building the problem tree for ongoing projects and with the community is the same.

- Formulate the problem properly.

  To be of greatest assistance in drawing the correct problem tree, the main problem must be stated or formulated correctly. A problem should be stated NOT as the absence of a solution (e.g. food is not available), but as an existing negative state (e.g. a part of the community is malnourished). An incorrectly formulated main problem often leads to the identification of very limited causes and subsequently to the selection of inadequate solutions. To reduce the risk of stating problems as the absence of solutions you can recommend that terms such as lack of…, insufficient… absence of and no…, etc are totally avoided in the formulation of main problems.

- For the main problem develop a problem tree;
- Use a large paper and draw a major square representing the main problem at its centre;
- Above the central square draw the branches of the tree - the effects experienced as a consequence of the main problem;
- Below the central square representing the main problem draw the roots of the tree, i.e. the factors causing the main problems, which are usually seen as problems in their own right. Ask the people what caused the problem.

  Repeat the question until you feel it is no longer necessary to continue.

See Figures 2 and 3 in Chapter 2: Problem trees

- Identify the focal problem.

  At this point you have a complete problem tree full of branches, showing the effects of the main problem, and many roots, representing its causes. You now have a visual representation of the main problem, its causes and effects as well as the relationships between them.

  Now you must identify the focal problems (causes of the main problem), sometimes also called entry points. These are crucial problems whose solution with communication can directly assist in eliminating the main problem.

Remarks: Often it is necessary to divide the community into groups according to various criteria such as age or gender for the drawing of the problem tree of the selected main problem. This tells you how each group perceives the main problem and therefore gives you a comprehensive view of the community perception.

Tool No. 2: Brainstorming

Description

- Brainstorming is a two-tier process of generating and critically analysing a host of ideas around a common theme.

Uses

- Quickly generates creative ideas about issues and problems of concern to the community for further analysis or investigation.

Materials

- Large sheets of flip chart paper or cards, markers or large point felt-tipped pens (various colours).

Participants

- Groups in the community facilitated by the PRCA team members.

Procedure

- Explain the concept of brainstorming.
- Introduce a small exercise to make it clear that you are foregoing logical or restrictive thought patterns. For example, you can show a hoe and ask participants to enumerate its potential uses.
- Set the ground rules for the exercise:

  All ideas are valuable ideas

  One idea at a time

  No criticism, no praise, but you can ask for clarification

  No interruptions when someone is talking

  Be brief and clear

  Do not be afraid to be wild and original

  If you cannot think about anything just pass
- Establish the real topic to do a brainstorming session on.
- Get the ball rolling by asking each participant to mention an idea.
- Write the ideas as they are generated on a large flip chart paper or on cards.
- After ideas have stopped flowing from the participants the ideas are clustered and evaluated for utility or feasibility. This can be done through voting. Ideas that receive the largest number of votes are retained for further investigation and the rest discarded.

Remarks: You must differentiate the wild and the analytical phases of this exercise, otherwise the participants might not get down to talking about the useful ideas. The exercise should not last too long, as brainstorming is only a liberating moment in an important planning process. Make it clear to participants that any idea can be expressed and that there should be no critique or arguing over ideas. This has to be done later in the rational discussion phase.

Tool No. 3: Sketch maps

Description

- Sketch maps are geographical and environmental models of the community done by the people themselves to show various aspects of their village such as residential areas, infrastructure, shops, soils, water sources, institutions, communication resources etc. Sketch maps show the village surroundings, lands, cattle posts, wildlife and other important features (hills, rivers, etc). Sketch maps can be used to show how the village looked in the past, its current features or how the people will want it to look in the future.

The community can model different kind of maps:

(i) Village/Resource map depicting infrastructure, wildlife, grazing land, water sources, trees, arable land, shops, residential areas, meeting places and important sites, etc.).

(ii) Social maps depict households and who heads each one by gender, the households' status or levels of literacy, malnutrition, etc. The ownership pattern of such resources as farm implements, radio sets etc.

Decide in advance what you want to know but allow villagers to decide what they want to learn in terms of information on households.

Ideal for discovering such information as who benefited from food aid, number of destitute households, literacy levels, child mortality, etc.

Social maps are only possible in small communities, unless done per ward.

(iii) Thematic maps are drawn for specific topics. They include credit sources map, soil map, health map, land-use map, communication resource map etc.

Uses

- Purpose depends on the objective of the PRCA and the type of map drawn;
- In general, these maps identify community boundaries, local resources and environmental features such as the location of water points, roads, land use patterns and related problems. They also show available infrastructure as well as physical, economic, communication and historical resources.
- It puts the village in a perspective that people probably have never visualized before and ensures that you and the community arrive at a common understanding of the local reality.
- Maps are a very good communication aid. All people, even those who have never been to school can make and use maps. Drawing maps has proven to be such an enjoyable exercise that it can be used as a warm-up tool that stimulates participation, and is usually performed with a lot of enthusiasm. Maps set the right trend in terms of active participation of the community in a PRCA.

Materials

- Any materials the villagers select to represent features in the community such as stones, seeds, ash, red earth, cow dung etc. Flip chart paper, pencils and erasers, markers (for transferring the maps to paper).

Participants

- The exercise can be done in different groups according to gender and / or age etc.

Procedure

- Explain to villagers that in order to get a common understanding of their realities, i.e. their village, features and local surroundings and problems and opportunities related to them, you would like them to model and draw their local world on the ground using local materials such as sticks, stones, goat droppings, beer cans, old shoes, wire etc. as their symbols.
- Find a place in the shade with a lot of space that will facilitate people's participation.
- Give the people a chance to model and draw what is important to them without interference.

- Interview the map when finished. Use probes to find out more about the various features depicted on a map. For instance, you can find out the yields per hectare of the cultivated land, whether the people feel the land is yielding enough, what can be done to improve yields etc.
- The map can still be worked on if the designers want to do so but do not force them to incorporate things you perceive as important.
- Try to understand all the drawings and explanations. Usually the different maps produced by the various groups are not combined because every map is a good map. Every map highlights a different perspective and reality, they supplement each other instead of competing against each other.
- Copy the maps from the ground onto Manila paper. Two copies of each map should be made because while one copy is taken away by the PRCA team, the other is left in the community for their own record. It is often possible to find literate and enthusiastic young people in the community to transfer the map onto paper.

Remarks: Try as much as possible not to interrupt the process, ask questions after the map is complete.

Tool No 4: Transect

Description

- Transect is a walk or series of walks which take the PRCA team and some members of the community through the village and allows them to see the range of features, resources and conditions across the area. Transects, generally, come after the drawing of maps and they are used to verify information gathered from maps. The walk rarely follows a straight line, but often zigzags through different areas.

Uses

- It is motivating and rewarding for villagers to show people around their village and their homes. Outsiders get a chance to familiarize themselves with the diversity of eco-systems, land use patterns, socio-economic indicators, cropping patterns, slopes, drainage patterns, etc in the village and the problems and opportunities associated with them.
- If properly conducted with as many villagers as possible, a Transect can offer a wide range of information.

Materials

- Cameras to document the walk

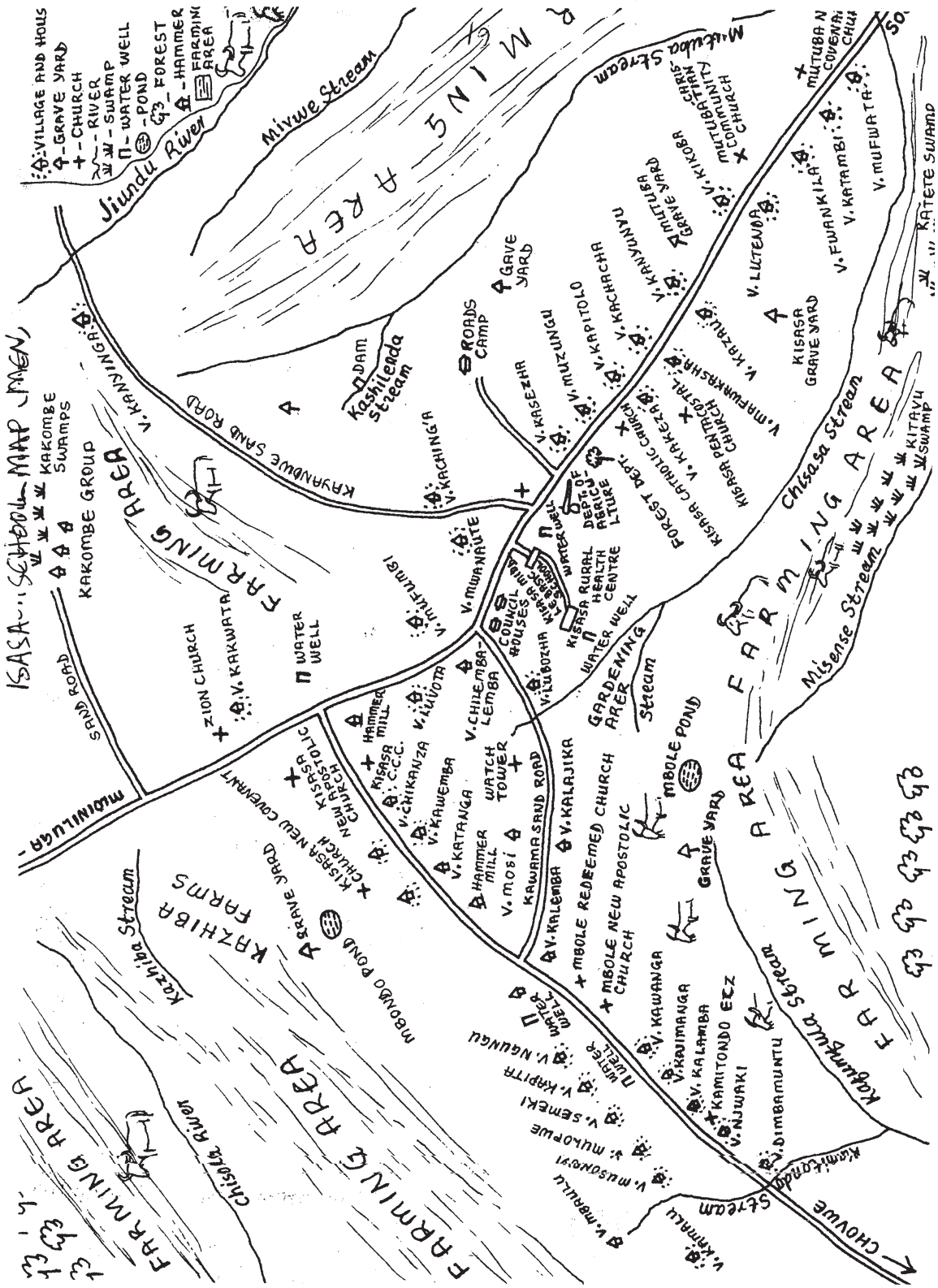
Participants

- The PRCA team and members of the community. Ensure that community members doing the transect come from both genders and represent the various socio-economic segments and age groups in the village .

Procedure

- Explain to the community that a better understanding of their local reality has emerged and that you would like to share more of their knowledge and ideas. Ask the people to take you

Figure 11.


ISASA - SCHOOL MAP MEN
VILLAGE AND HOUSE
GRAVE YARD
CHURCH
RIVER
SWAMP
WATER WELL
POND
FOREST
HAMMER MILL
FARMING AREA
Jiundu River
Mivwe Stream
FARMING AREA
Mitebba Stream
KAKOMBE SWAMPS
KAKOMBE GROUP
SAND ROAD
V. KAMANINGA
KAYANDUE SAND ROAD
DAM
Kashilenda Stream
ROADS CAMP
GRAVE YARD
V. KASEZHA
V. KACHING'A
V. MUZUNGU
V. KAPITOLO
V. KACHACHA
V. KAYUNUYU
MUTUBA GRAVE YARD
V. KIKOBA
MUTUBA CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
MUTUBA N COVENANT CHURCH
V. LUTENDA
V. FUANKILA
V. KATAMBI
V. MUFWATA
KATETE SWAMP
V. KAZAU
KISASA GRAVE YARD
V. MAFUMKASHA
KISASA CATHOLIC CHURCH
V. KAKEZA
FOREST DEPT.
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
KISASA RURAL HEALTH CENTRE
WATER WELL
COUNCIL HOUSES
V. MUWANUTE
V. MUFUMGI
V. ILUBOZHA
V. CHILEMBA-LEMBA
V. ILUVOTA
V. CHIKANZA
V. KAWEMBA
V. KATANGA
V. MOSI
KAWAMA SAND ROAD
WATCH TOWER
HAMMER MILL
KISASA C.C.C.
KISASA NEW COVENANT CHURCH
KISASA CATHOLIC CHURCH
GARDENING AREA
Chisasa Stream
Misense Stream
KITAVU SWAMP
V. KALAJIKA
V. KALEMBA
MBOLE REDEEMED CHURCH
MBOLE NEW APOSTOLIC CHURCH
MBOLE POND
GRAVE YARD
V. KAWANGA
V. KAWIMANGA
V. KALAMBA
KAMITONDO EEZ
V. NJWAKI
V. BIMBAMUNTU
Kabumbula Stream
Kamitondo Stream
CHOVUE
V. KAMMALU
V. MARULU
V. MUSONGWI
V. MULOFWE
V. SEMEKI
V. KAPITA
V. NGUMGU
WATER WELL
MBOMBO POND
GRAVE YARD
KAZHIBA FARMS
Kazhiba Stream
Chisala River
FARMING AREA
MUKUMULUAR
ZION CHURCH
V. KAKWATA
WATER WELL
V. MUFUMGI
V. KAMANINGA
KAYANDUE SAND ROAD
V. KACHING'A
V. MUWANUTE
V. MUFUMGI
V. ILUBOZHA
V. CHILEMBA-LEMBA
V. ILUVOTA
V. CHIKANZA
V. KAWEMBA
V. KATANGA
V. MOSI
KAWAMA SAND ROAD
WATCH TOWER
HAMMER MILL
KISASA C.C.C.
KISASA NEW COVENANT CHURCH
KISASA CATHOLIC CHURCH
V. KALEMBA
MBOLE REDEEMED CHURCH
MBOLE NEW APOSTOLIC CHURCH
V. KALAJIKA
GARDENING AREA
Stream
MBOLE POND
GRAVE YARD
V. KAWANGA
V. KAWIMANGA
V. KALAMBA
KAMITONDO EEZ
V. NJWAKI
V. BIMBAMUNTU
Kabumbula Stream
Kamitondo Stream
CHOVUE
V. KAMMALU
V. MARULU
V. MUSONGWI
V. MULOFWE
V. SEMEKI
V. KAPITA
V. NGUMGU
WATER WELL
MBOMBO POND
GRAVE YARD
KAZHIBA FARMS
Kazhiba Stream
Chisala River
FARMING AREA
FARMING AREA
FARMING AREA
V. KAKWATA
ZION CHURCH
SAND ROAD
KAKOMBE GROUP
KAKOMBE SWAMPS
V. KAMANINGA
WATER WELL
V. MUFUMGI
V. MUWANUTE
V. KACHING'A
V. KASEZHA
V. MUZUNGU
V. KAPITOLO
V. KACHACHA
V. KAYUNUYU
MUTUBA GRAVE YARD
V. KIKOBA
MUTUBA CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CHURCH
MUTUBA N COVENANT CHURCH
V. LUTENDA
V. FUANKILA
V. KATAMBI
V. MUFWATA
KATETE SWAMP
V. KAZAU
KISASA GRAVE YARD
V. MAFUMKASHA
KISASA CATHOLIC CHURCH
V. KAKEZA
FOREST DEPT.
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
KISASA RURAL HEALTH CENTRE
WATER WELL
COUNCIL HOUSES
Chisasa Stream
Misense Stream
KITAVU SWAMP
GARDENING AREA
Stream
MBOLE POND
GRAVE YARD
Kabumbula Stream
Kamitondo Stream
CHOVUE

on a walk through their village in order for you to see some of the features depicted on their maps such as land-use patterns, the distribution of resources, etc. Allow as many questions as possible and re-assure the people that the exercise has no hidden agenda.

- Define a route from your sketch map, from north to south, east to west or high lands to low lands, showing the line of greatest diversity;
- Choose a logical starting point (boundary, highest,...) in consultation with the community;
- Assign responsibilities for observations, listening and note-taking to team members;
- Ask people to accompany you on the transect. Try to choose guides who have lived in the area for a long time, their knowledge will be invaluable. Make sure to include women. Without them, you will miss many features and explanations.
- Choice of topics to be covered will depend on the characteristics of the community and the objectives of the PRCA, and should be agreed upon by the team beforehand.
- Be on the look out for such socio-economic indicators as pit-latrines, type of houses, productivity levels, etc and any problems and opportunities related to them, etc.
- Talk to people whom you meet on the way that are living/working in different parts of the village to collect their own perceptions of the village. The additional information concerns such issues as the use and management of soil, access and availability of water and firewood, veld-products, grazing, etc.
- A large and highly variable community may require more than one transect. The community and the PRCA team can be divided into different companies to cover different parts of the community;
- Construct a chart, to present the information gathered.

Remarks: Make sure there is a high level of participation from all community and team members and that no one is dominating the process.

Tool No. 5: Farm sketches for farming systems analysis

Description

- Farm sketches provide the starting point for farming systems analysis. It is normally the sketch of a small sample of arable and small stock farms belonging to those who will be interviewed for information about their farming systems. A farm sketch could include the farm layout, cropping patterns, crop diversity, resource conservation practices, trees, buildings/ houses, fallow land, storage, small stock etc. Farm sketches provide the basis for the further analysis of such topics as farm inputs and outputs, relationships between the farm and external (off-farm) people (e.g. labourers, extension officers, traders, etc) or outlets and resources (e.g. markets, shops, water sources...).

Uses

- Helps to identify how individual farm families manage land resources.
- Helps to understand the farms' linkages to the total society and other systems such as marketing, education, government, research and extension etc.

Figure 12: Natural Resources Transect Tshwaane Village ans Surroundings..

Land use	Grazing Natural Resources [Veld products]	Residential Natural Resources [Veld products] Kraals	Natural Resources [Veld products]	Residential Natural Resources [Veld products] Kraals	Grazing, Natural Resources [Veld products]
Vegetation	Grass, Truffles, Grewia flava, Grapple, Acacia, Erioloba, A. Merifera, Setsubo, Motlhajwa, Dikgalo, Mongone, Leata, Motsholo, Motjididi, Monna-Montsho	Grewia flava, Acacia Hebaclada, A. Erioloba, Konkwane,	Grewia flava, Seloka, Konkwane	Grewia Flava, Acacia Erioloba, Konkwane	Mokha, Acacia Erioloba, Grewia Flava, Grass, Grapple
Soil	Fine red sand	Fine light sand	Hard black crust, [Veld products]	Greyish sand	Fine red sand
Socio Economic Indicators	Veld products	Weaving, Business, Beer brewing, Leather tanning	Grazing	Veld Products, Business, Beer brewing, Road	Veld products
Water				Water pump, Sunk Borehole	
Problems	Over utilisation, Plants are all seasonal, Decrease in trees				

- Depicts variations in farm size, cropping patterns, yields, access to and control of labour according to gender, etc.

Materials

- Any materials the villagers select to represent features in the community such as stones, seeds, ash, red earth, cow dung etc. Flip chart paper, pencils and erasers, markers (for

transferring the maps to paper).

Participants

- A sample of farmers selected for the systems analysis, possibly grouped according to size and type of land holding, as well as gender. It can also be done with an individual farmer.

Procedure

- Delineate the farm boundaries (total ha.), dividing the farms into blocks by land use. In each block indicate who does what according to gender, the yields over past years, who controls the output, any diseases, pests? Use of manure, fertilizer etc.
- Ask questions on the basis of the drawings (problems, reasons for planting certain crops, crop management - timing of planting, crop rotation, weeding practices, and changes in cropping patterns).
- Include symbols for men and women, stating what they do/have, for example C (control), R (Responsibility), L (Labour).

Remarks: Bear in mind that the reality of the systems can be so complex that it might prove difficult to visualise comprehensively.

Tool No. 6: Time lines

Description

- A time line is a list of key events in the history of the community that helps identify past trends, events, problems and achievements in the people's life. The time line should go back as many generations as villagers can recall and record details of significant events.

Uses

- Understanding the past of a particular community is often necessary to analyse present conditions, and to try to forecast how present conditions may evolve in the future. The time line helps the community to understand what local, national and international events they consider to be important in their history, and how such events have affected their lives.
- Knowing past events might show how and why individual and community activities have been shaped.

Materials

- Materials the people can use as symbols and feel comfortable with, Manila paper and markers (especially where the people are literate).

Participants

- Various segments of the community: leaders, elders, youth, committees, men and women.

Procedure

- Ask the community to assemble at their usual meeting place or another place with historical value. Ensure that various segments of the community are represented: the young, the old, the poor, the wealthy, men and women. Through group discussions, assist the community to list all the significant events in their life with dates.
- If the assembly is very large, divide them into different groups according to gender or age, and compare the different responses later.

- Where the people are literate, information collected is written on manila sheets in the local language. However, in situations where most of the people are illiterate, a long line can be drawn on the ground with one end representing the distant past and the other 'today'. Symbols could be used to represent the events
- Opening questions: What were the main events in the village? When did this community settle here? Who were the founders of the village /settlement? What was the first important event that they can remember in their community? Have there been migrations, epidemics, famines, floods, droughts, or other natural disasters? What are some of the best things the community has done? What were some of the happiest times? Preferably the villagers identify what is important to them in their history, what they want to discuss and put on their time line. Probe for more information and explanations, but allow the community to decide on what new details to add to their line.
- Once the topics are exhausted, find certain trends of events and discuss how the community deals with those (e.g. drought) or builds on those (e.g. tradition of self-help). Ask them about efforts by the government, church and the community to address some of the problems. Find out how the community mobilised itself, what communication methods were used to create awareness and action to deal with the problems.

Historical Time line (Agriculture).

1947	Drought and the introduction of yellow 'Kenya' maize meal;
1953	Another drought but not as serious as the 1947 one;
1962	Marketing of produce began at Hughes' (Huzzze) Store or Matigimu's @ $6/91 kg bag;
1967	Drought;
1976-81	Marketing at GMB Masvingo;
1979	Use of fertilisers amid fears that they destroy the soil;
1982/3	Serious drought, Kenya;
1986-90	Marketing at Masvingo Co-operative Union; poor pricing policies;
1990-present	Marketing at Nyika Growth Point;
1991	Talk of dam began and surveys carried out;
1992	Devastating drought; food hand outs; widespread livestock deaths;
1992/3	Construction of dam and other ancillary irrigation infrasrructure;

Tool No. 7: Trend lines

Description

- Trend lines visualise significant changes of key issues in the community over time. Topics for trend lines often reflect themes that the people consider important, for example, teenage pregnancy, infant mortality or soil erosion etc.

Uses

- Helps you to learn from the community how it views changes in issues considered important by the people.
- It assists in problem-identification and analysis.
- It focuses community attention on positive and negative changes over time.
- It might show the different perceptions of the various socio-economic segments in the community, if the trend line is done in groups formed according to age, gender etc.
- It provides information for the formulation of possible basic messages, discussion themes and appeals to the PRCA team.

Materials

- Materials the people can use as symbols and feel comfortable with, Manila paper and markers (especially where the people are literate).

Participants

- Although the trend lines focus on discussions among elders and long term residents, young people can also be included.
- Make sure that people from both genders drawn from all ecological zones, socio-economic levels and various age groups in the community are included.

Procedure

- Explain the purpose of the exercise.
- The PRCA team and the community decide on a list of topics of interest for the trends.
- Groups of villagers are organised according to gender, socio-economic status, age etc., depending on the topics selected and the community composition.
- Explain the concept of trends using a simple graph. Explain how time (in years), moves from left to right along the bottom axis, and how the topic increases/decreases on the upright axis. The child-growth card from the clinic usually rings a bell.
- Ask the groups to draw their lines on the sand, or on the floor.
- Quantification is not always easy. Ask questions if necessary e.g. 'when was the most, the least?' Another way of doing so, is with stones (e.g. 1 stone is 1 cow, or 1 extension officer, or 1 malnourished child etc.) on an individual.
- Use the discussion of trends to probe for explanations of the changes. This will help identify underlying problems and traditional activities to correct the situation. For instance, if soil erosion is getting worse, ask why and find out what measures have been tried in the past

and how well they have worked. Ask what they think might ease the situation.

- Copy the trends and the explanations onto paper.

Tool No. 8: Seasonal calendar

Description

- The seasonal calendar is a useful tool for charting major events and village activities on an annual timetable. Issues to be recorded will vary and should be discussed. Typical examples are rainfall, water availability, crop-production patterns, animal diseases, housing improvements, community celebrations and labour availability etc.

Uses

- Determines labour availability, timing of project-activities, potential absorptive capacity for new activities, times of disease and food shortage, etc.
- It is a useful tool to understand and discuss with the community how seasons affect village life and how daily routines are organized.
- It helps to identify when problems or needs are most acute

Materials

- Materials the people can use as symbols and feel comfortable with, Manila paper and markers (especially where the people are literate)

Participants

- Groups according to types of farmers / agro-ecological zones, gender.
- Both genders, all ages, different farming systems, etc.

Mujumanzzovu Seasonal Calender (Men-Non beekeepers).

Activity	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Maize Kutema				x	x	x x	x x	x				
Kuchipula		x	x	x	x	x						
Kulapula									x	x x	x x	x
Kubyala (Maize)											x x	x x
Kusekwila	x x	x x										
Kubigila (Maize)				x	x	x x	x x	x				

Procedure

- Determine with the community what you want to discuss and analyse.
- Explain the purpose of the seasonal calendar and how you want to proceed.
- Ask community to write or draw on black board, or manila, or newsprint, or sand.
- Time scale on horizontal axis (start with January or with beginning of the people's year e.g. onset of rain season), activities on vertical axis. The PRCA team should have the activities it wants to discuss ready (e.g. crop activity, collection of veld-products...).
- Let the people fill in the calendars using local materials like leaves, stones etc.
- Discuss the different activities and note the problems and possible solutions.
- In the seasonal calendar symbols for men, women and even children can be included to show who does what.

Activity	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Kunowa (Maize)						x	x x	x				
Kulonga (Maize)						x	x x					
Mebele Kutema Mebele				x	x	x x	x x	x				
Kujima Mebele											x x	x
Kubingila					x x	x	x	x				
Kunowa							x	x x	x			
Kulonga									x x			

Tool No. 9: Wealth ranking

Description

- This is a card sorting exercise to elicit information about the socio-economic status of households in a community and the differences among them. The exercise works best with fewer than 150 households.

Uses

- To understand how the community defines wealth and well-being.
- To understand the socio economic situation of different households.

- To get indicators for assessing the influence of the project on wealth and well-being of the various groups in the community.

Materials

- Cards, pens baskets or cardboard boxes.

Participants

- Selected sorters from different segments of the community. These should be key informants who know the area and the people very well. The exercise may be done in separate groups as the results from such groups show a cross sectional view of the community. Five sorters from each group should be enough.

Procedure

- Make a list of all the households to be used in the exercise and assign a number to each household.
- Write all the names of households on cards, number them and indicate if they are Female-headed households [FHH] or Male-headed households [MHH].
- Select sorters from the various groups in the community taking the following factors into consideration: gender, length of the person's residency in community; the longer the better, and role/status of person in the community; key players in the village are preferred. The resource poor must be represented among informants.
- Explain to the sorters that the purpose of the exercise is to define the different classes of wealth in the village.
- Agree on the criteria for categorising the different socio-economic status in the community.
- Create three baskets to represent each of the categories. For instance, a wealthy household can be one that has enough to eat, send their children to school and can be relied upon to help other household from time to time.
- Tell informants that the information has to be treated confidentially, as some people in the village might be sensitive to being called rich, poor or average.
- In private, ask each sorter to place the card for each family in one of the three baskets, piles according to whether the household name on the card is in the rich-medium-poor category. (Read out the name on the card if the sorter is illiterate).
- Read out all the names in each pile to allow the informant to make changes if she so wishes.
- Shuffle the cards between sorters so that each starts with a random pile of cards. Discuss with the informant the characteristics associated with each pile the informant has made and the reasons for assigning a household to a particular basket.
- Count and record the each sorter's distribution of the cards.
- After all informants have sorted their cards, work out the average position of each household. Average position or score is calculated by the number of cards placed in each basket divided by the total number of sorters. Express the results as percentages. See the example below.
- Discuss with the people how one can travel from one pile to the other (how people become poorer or less poor).

Remarks: Wealth ranking is a sensitive subject, and sometimes a taboo in certain societies. You must therefore treat any exercise to collect such information with tact and absolute confidentiality.

Wealth ranking.

	Rich	Average	Poor
Cattle	30	15	3
Farm Production	50 bags maize	20 bags maize	5 bags maize
Children's education	Up to University	Up to Form 4	Up to Grade 7
Homestead	8 rooms with iron sheets	3 rooms with asbestos	2 rooms grass thatched
Area of land	8 acres	2 acres	1 acre
Farm implement	scotch cart, plough, harrows, cultivator, hoes	plough, harrow, hoes	hoes

Tool No. 10: Ranking

Description

- This is a tool for ranking problems, needs and opportunities to put them in a particular order.
- When done with criteria, it reveals information about why people make certain choices.

Uses

- There are usually more problems, needs or opportunities than resources can solve, provide for or exploit. Under such circumstances there is need for instruments which assist the community as a heterogeneous group to get as close to their priorities as possible. These priorities are the ones that receive preference.
- Ranking provides information on both the choices people make and reasons for the choices.
- It can be used to compare preferences and priorities between groups in a community.

Materials

- Stones, flip chart paper and markers.
- Participants
- Groups in the community.

Procedure

- ***Ranking can be done in the various ways listed below:***
- ***Preference ranking (with or without criteria)***
- Relative preference ranking

- ***Pair-wise ranking***
- ***Shopping***

For any of the ranking techniques listed above, a closed or open scoring can be used to 'buy' or 'vote' for the issue of preference. When scoring is done in private (secret balloting) it is said to be closed scoring. When it is done in the open it is said to be open.

Explain to the participants that there is always a danger of people being influenced by others if the scoring is open.

- Review the list of problems, needs etc (if a problem tree has been drawn review the causes of the main problem)
- Draw a chart with boxes containing the reviewed issues (see example below)
- Select the type of ranking technique to be used.

Vegetable	Baby marrow	Brocoli	Beet root	Egg plant	Potatoes	Garlic	Swiss chad	Chinesse	Lettuce	Corn flower	Spinach
Spinach	11	10	9	1	7	6	5	4	3	2	x
Cornflower	2	2	2	2	7	6	2	4	2	x	
Lettuce	11	10	9	3	7	6	5	4	x		
Chinesse cabbage	4	10	4	4	7	6	4	x			
Swiss chad	11	10	9	5	7	6	x				
Garlic	6	6	6	6	7	x					
Potatoes	7	7	7	7	x						
Egg plant	11	10	9	x							
Beetroot	11	10	9	x							
Broccoli	10	x									
Baby marrow	x										
Score	5	7	4	0	10	9	3	7	2	7	1
Rank	4	3	5	2	1	2	6	3	7	3	8

- Request the community to decide the number of stones they need to use to rank the issues.
- Discuss with them whether they want to rank with or without criteria.
- Ask them whether they want the scoring to be closed or open.
- Give individuals in the group attending the exercise a number of stones/sticks/seeds etc.
- Ask them to buy one or more problems or needs, which according to them requires to be solved first.
- Count the number of stones allocated to each problem, need or opportunity and rank.

VegetableCovo		Green	Cabbage pepper	Carrots	Peas	Water	Potato melon	Beans	Gem	Butter squash	Cucu nut	Rape mber	Tomato
Onion	14	1	1	1	10	1	8	7	1	1	1	3	2
Tomato	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	7	2	2	2	3	x
Rape	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	7	3	3	3	x	
Cucumber	14	4	4	4	4	4	4	7	4	4	x		
Butternut	14	5	5	5	5	5	8	7	5	x			
Gem squash	14	6	6	6	10	9	8	7	x				
Beans	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	x					
Potatoes	14	8	8	8	10	8	x						
Watermelon	14	9	9	9	7	x							
Peas	14	10	10	10	x								
Carrots	14	11	12	x									
Cabbages	14	12	x										
Green pepper	14	x											
Covo(kale)	x												
Score	10	0	2	1	6	4	7	13	3	6	8	12	11
Rank	4	11	9	10	6	7	5	1	8	6	5	2	3

Preference ranking without criteria

Description

- To find out people's preferences without asking them why they made certain choices.

Participants

- A limited number of people [for example 5] or two groups [for example groups A and B].

Procedure

- Ask each person to collect 6 stones.
- Have each person rank problems or opportunities from least (1 stone) to most important (6 stones).
- No reasons should be given for selection.
- Do not add the rankings.

Preference ranking with criteria

Description

- To find out people's preferences or priorities and why they made the choices.

Participants

- One or more villagers.

Procedure

- Ask the villagers to select criteria, for example: which problem or need should be tackled first? Which problem is the most controllable? Which problem is the most important? And for opportunities, criteria could be - feasibility, time, acceptance, sustainability and so on.

· Determine the key:

For example - ++++ very positive [low cost]

+++ Positive [medium cost]

++ Neutral [high cost]

+ Negative [very high costs]

- Score each option against the criteria.

Relative preference ranking:

This is choosing between different quantities, as in a kind of modified pair wise ranking. Would the participants prefer 20 goats or 2 cows?

For example:

Option	Selection
2 x 5 minute radio programmes or 1 x 30 sec TV advertisement	TV
2 x 5 minute radio programmes or 1 x 45 sec TV advertisement	TV
2 x 5 minute radio programmes or 1 x 1 min TV advertisement	TV

Pair-wise ranking

Description

- To obtain a comparative ranking of various issues.

Participants

- The villagers assisted by the facilitator.

Procedure

- Write down all problems, needs or opportunities in a matrix.
- Limit the number of items being ranked to not more than eight.

- Ask the villagers whether they want to rank with reasons or without.
- Compare each problem against the other diagonally.
- Count how many times each problem was mentioned.
- Write the total on the score board below.

Relative preference ranking

Description

- To obtain a comparative ranking of various issues.

Participants

- Community assisted by facilitator.

Procedure

- Write the item options in one column.
- Write the selection in another column.
- Ask the community whether, for example, they prefer one sack of maize or one sack of potatoes.
- Write their choice in the selection column

Methods of excreta disposal using rapid scoring by the men of Sichuundu village.

Methods	Score
Bush	15
Toilets	0
Cat methods	0

Shopping

Description

Participants

- Everyone in the community participating in the exercise should be there.

Procedure

- Ask villagers to select 10 people, 5 men and 5 women who will rank.
- Ask villagers to choose different items to be ranked, for example, different grains.
- Give two stones [tokens] to each of the ten people.

- Instruct the villagers to buy two items each.
- The item most bought is ranked first.

Give 10participants 3 tokens each, enabling them to buy up to 3 piles of wood each for the good year, and 1 token for the bad year. The different sizes of piles reflect the relative prices. This tool is useful when there is a constraint on availability.

Wood Choice	Good Year		Bad Year	
	No. of purchases	%	No. of purchases	%
Mopane: 1kg	15	50	5	50
Gum tree: 2 kg	10	33	1	10
Eucalyptus:2 kg	0	0	1	10
Msasa: 2.5 kg	5	17	1	10
Wattle: 2.5 kg	0	0	0	0
Mahogany: 1.5kg	0	0	2	20
Total	30	100	10	100

Remarks: *Be conscious that priorities for men and women sometimes differ. Where the priorities differ according to gender, each group should make their own analysis of opportunities and ranking, and select activities to address the problems they have prioritised.*

Normally, the PRCA team will consist of technical staff or resource persons who are subject matter specialists - when these people give advice, they should never overrule the community.

Tool No. 11: Chapati or Venn diagramming

Description

· A process of listing, ranking and connecting institutions, groups or individuals and communication systems and information sources that influence the community's decision-making in development.

Uses

- To find out which institutions exist.
- To establish how the institutions are perceived.
- To understand which institutions could play what roles in development activities.
- To analyze the social and power relations of the different institutions.
- To ensure that all relevant institutions are included in a plan for particular activities.

Materials

- Cards and pens

Participants

- Men and women

Procedure

- Cut out different sized cards (circles) to represent each institution or individual.
- Explain objective of exercise to all partners.
- Divide groups according to gender - men and women usually have different perceptions about the importance of institutions.
- Ask each group to list the different institutions in the village.
- Ask about the different roles of the institutions.
- Ask whether some institutions are more important than others, with regards to their role in development and decision making, etc.
- Find out the most important institution.
- Write the name of the institution on the biggest sized circle.
- Ask community to rank other institutions according to whether they are big, medium or small.
- When ranking, put the biggest circle in the centre.
- Ask which institutions are linked to it and consequently which ones are linked to those ones.
- Explain that linking means institutions are working together.
- Linking is symbolized by touching and degree of overlapping.
- Touching means institutions are sharing information.
- A small overlap means there is some cooperation.
- An isolated circle shows an institution that does not have any contact with others.
- Allow for debate to take place and note reasons for different trends.
- Ask them what the diagram means to them. How would the picture look like in an ideal situation?
- What can be done to achieve the ideal relationships.

Tool No. 12: Livelihood mapping

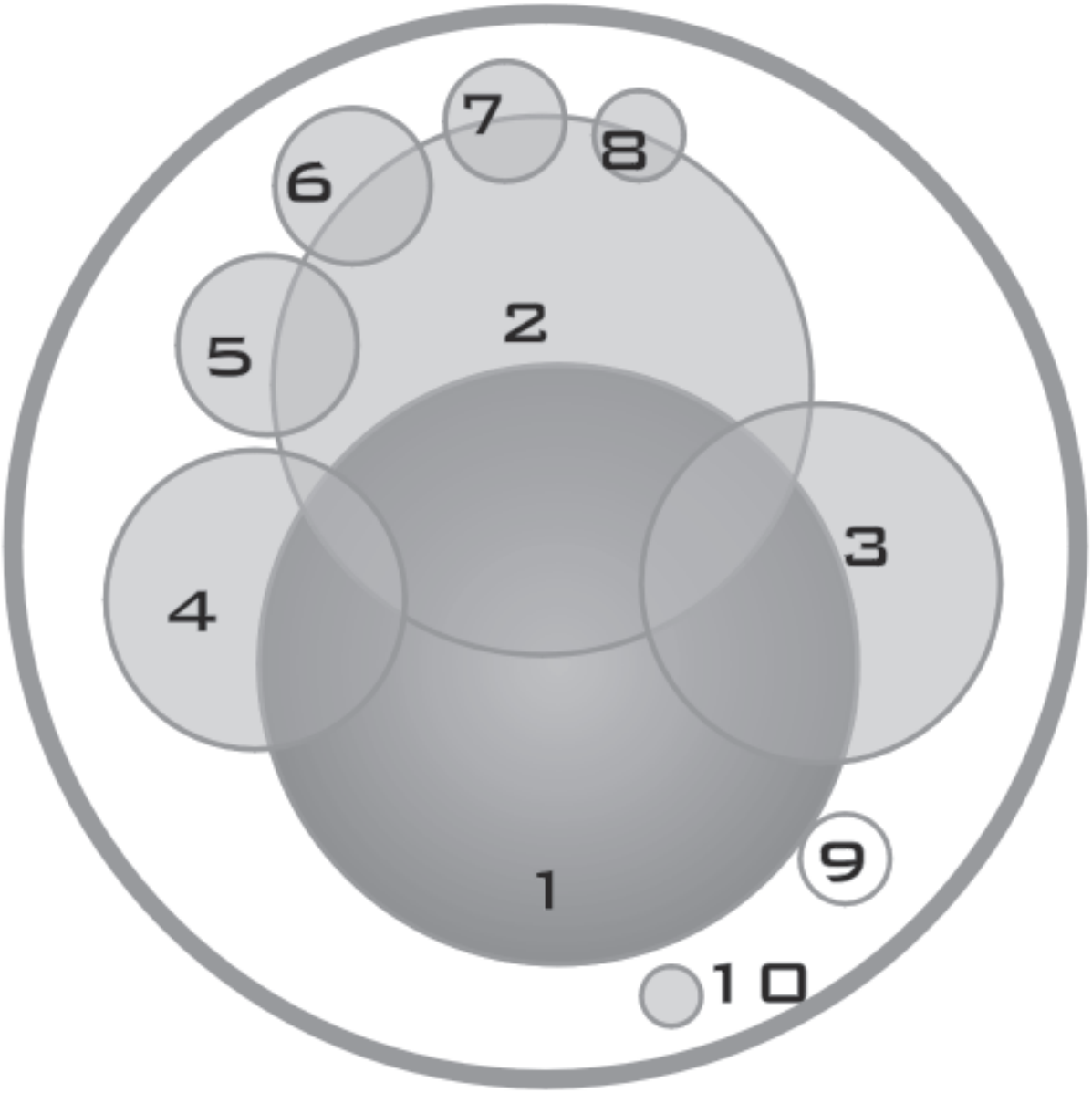
Description

- This depicts the community's sources of livelihood in diagrams and shows how important each source is. Such information includes the people's sources of income, patterns of expenditure and access to land and livestock.

Uses

- This type of mapping shows deficiencies in self - reliant lifestyles and the changes that take place from time to time.

Figure 13: VENN - Diagram of Institutions in Anokere Development Centre - June 6 1998.



KEY
1 PEASANT ASS.
2 DEV. CENTRE
3 LOCAL MILTA
4 EDIR
5 COURT OF P.A.
6 DEBO
7 CHURCH
8 MANAGER
9 GRINDING MILL
10 DAIRY PROJECT

- It shows differences between and among groups.

Materials

- Different paper sizes and pens

Participants

- All community members

Procedure

- Have different sizes of paper squares available.
- Identify sources of livelihood.
- Establish whether the sources are of high, medium or low importance.

Linkage diagram

What: This is visualisation, using symbols, or on the ground or using cards of key components of a particular subject or topic such as key influential persons in the village; sources of information; or foods eaten by under fives.

Why: This exercise is helpful when one wants to have an overview of the community's perception of the components they relate to a particular subject.

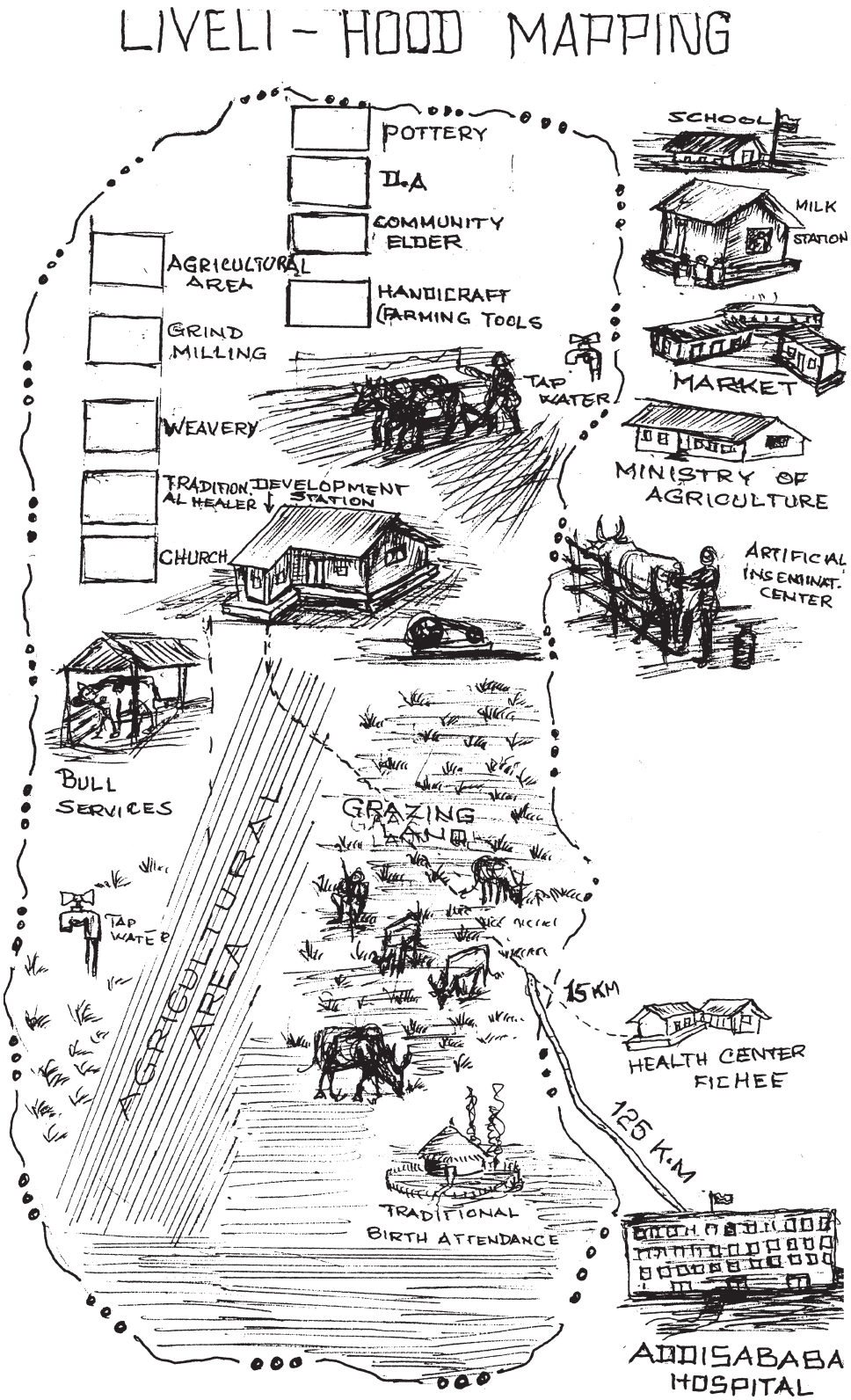
How: Choose subject you want to get the different components constituting it. Draw a circle on the ground. Write the subject matter inside the circle, for example: sources of information in general.

List all the sources of information found in the community, for example: radio, headman, school children, traditional midwife, healer, fortune teller and so on.

Draw circles round the centre circle, and connect these surrounding circles to the centre circle using a line.Write the different sources of information in the surrounding circles. Ask the community what type of information comes from each source, and write the types opposite the relevant circle. Linkages can also be visualized incorporating sources of information at different levels such as the village,, the ward, the district and the Province.

Who: The community members and the facilitator. The outside facilitator should be able to let the community members choose their own facilitator once the community has grasped the concept.

Figure 14: Livelihood mapping.



Tool No. 13: Gender analysis

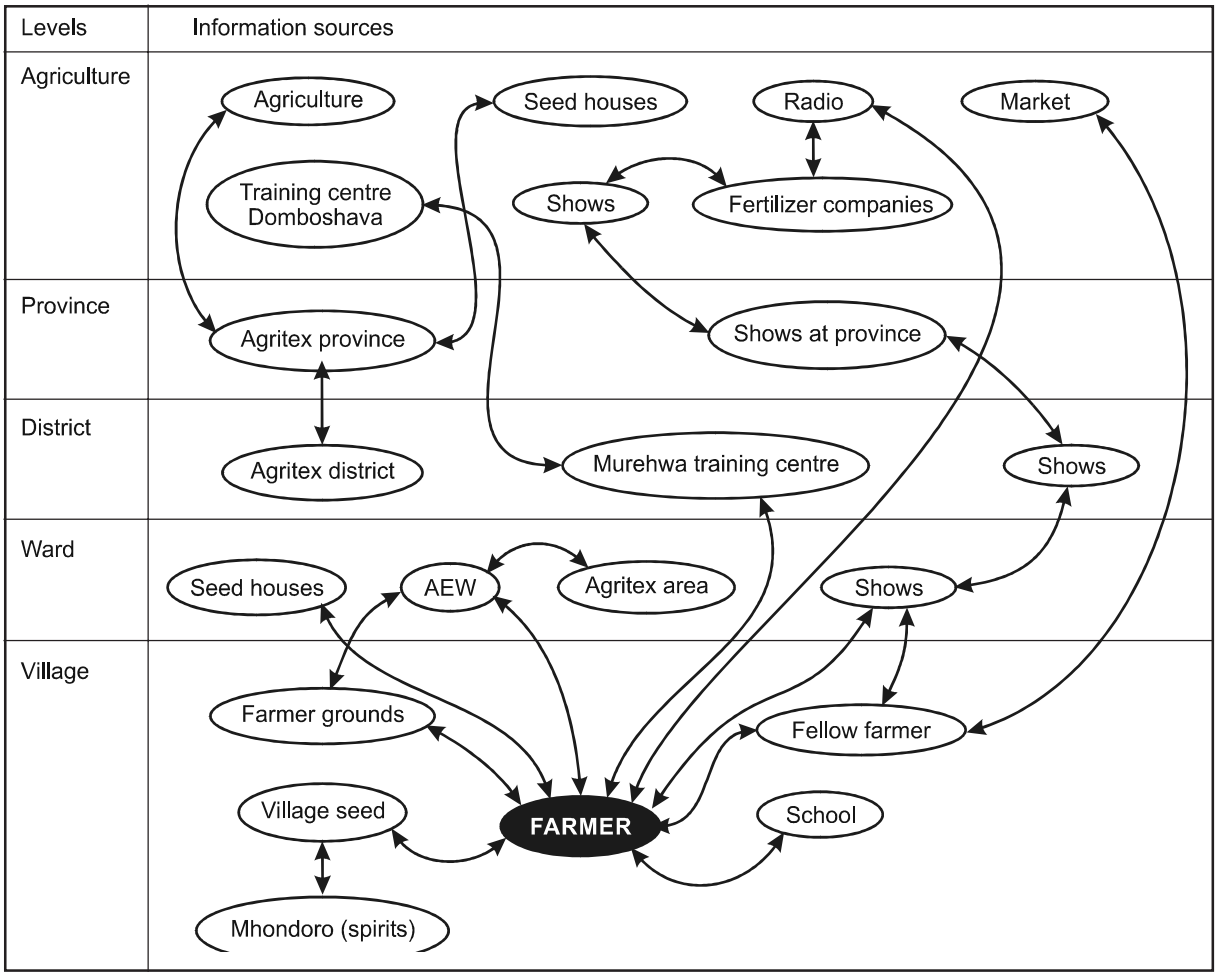
Description

- Different exercises exist to analyse the gender relations in a community. Apart from doing most PRCA exercises from a gender perspective or with women and men separately, some specific exercises can be done such as Gender daily calendar, Activity profiles, and Access and control profiles to discover distribution of workload etc.

(i) A gender daily calendar analyses the different day to day activities performed by men and women. The division of labour can also be quantified according to major sectors such as arable agriculture, livestock rearing, household duties or going to church [social activities].

(ii) An activity profile reveals activities men and women do in the sphere of reproductive work, productive work and community work.

Sources of agricultural information.



(iii) Access and control profiles analyse whether men and women have access to the resources necessary to undertake the activities listed, derive benefits from them and whether they have control over them.

Uses

- Women are important to the survival of the environment and the family. But gender is often overlooked in development projects. Programmes can never be sustainable if they leave women out or fail to take their activities or their levels of access and control of resources seriously.

Materials

- Flip chart paper and markers

Participants

- Women and men, young and old.
- You might have to separate unmarried women from married women, unmarried men from married men

Procedure

(i) Gender Daily Calendar

- Divide the people into two groups by gender.
- Take an average day and ask each group what roles men and women play.

TIME	ACTIVITY
05 00 - 06 00hrs	Wake the children up
06 00 - 11 00hrs	Go to work in the fields
11 00 - 14 00hrs	Rest and have lunch
14 00 - 15 00hrs	In the fields
15 00 - 18 00hrs	Mending fences
18 00 - 19 00hrs	Have supper and bath
19 00 - 05 00hrs	Rest and sleep

- Write the chores, with the time and ask who does what?
- Discuss the calendar and emphasize that the intention is not to blame any one.
- Avoid conflict but allow a lot of time for all issues to be discussed

Diagram

(ii)Activity Profile

- Divide the people into two groups by gender.
- For each group, make a matrix showing the activities on the **y**-axis and the men and women on the **x**-axis.

- Ask the group to divide ten stones among the activities performed by men and those carried out by women.
- Ask them why certain activities are performed by men and others by women.

TIME ACTIVITY	
04 00 - 05 00hrs	Fetching water
05 00 - 06 00hrs	Sweeping kitchen and preparing breakfast
06 00 - 11 00hrs	Working in the fields
11 00 - 12 00hrs	Fetching firewood and herding livestock
12 00 - 13 00hrs	Preparing lunch
13 00 - 14 00hrs	'Resting' while mending torn clohes or basketry
14 00 - 15 00hrs	Fetching water and washing plates
15 00 - 17 00hrs	Back to work in the fields
17 00 - 18 00hrs	Fetch firewood on way back home
18 00 - 19 00hrs	Bath children and prepare dinner
19 00 - 20 00hrs	Eat supper, bath self and wash plates
20 00 - 22 00hrs	'Resting' while knitting
22 00 - 04 00hrs	Sleeping

- Bring the groups together and compare the matrixes.
- Consolidate men's and women's matrixes into one and discuss the consequences of the results for development of the community.

(iii) Access and Control Profile

- Divide the people into two groups according to gender.
- Identify the resources available in the community on the **y**-axis.
- Identify the access and control for men and women on the **x**-axis.
- Determine who has control and access over what.
- Discuss changes in patterns over time.
- What are the implications for development, house hold relations, well-being and community relations?

Activity profile of Anokere Development Centre (Men ans Women), June 7 1998.

No.	ACTIVITY	MALE		FEMALE	
		M	F	M	F
1	PLOUGHING	10	-	10	-
2	TAILORING	10	-	10	-
3	WEEDING	5	5	5	5
4	MERCHANT	5	5	5	5
5	TRESHING	10	-	-	10
6	BARN CLEANING	10	-	10	-
7	COLLECTINO FIRE WOOD	10	-	10	-
8	HOUSE CLEANING	-	10	10	-
9	HAY MAKING	10	-	2	8
10	INJERA MAKING	-	10	-	10
11	COOKING	-	10	-	10
12	PRIMARY TILLAGE	10	-	-	10
13	COFFEE MAKING	-	10	-	10
14	CATTLE HUSBANDRY	5	5	5	5
15	DISTILLING LOCAL SPIRIT	-	10	10	-
16	WEAVNG	6	4	3	7
17	FAMILY FEEDING	-	10	10	-
18	HOUSE CONSTRUCTION	10	-	-	10
19	LIVESTOCK FEEDING	5	5	5	5
20	FENCING	10	-	2	8
21	MILKING	-	10	7	3
22	CROP PROTECTION	5	5	5	5
23	CALF FEEDING	-	10	10	-
24	TRANSPLANTING	10	-	-	10
25	CATTLE FEEDING	10	-	-	10
26	COLLECTING FIREWOOD	-	10	-	10
27	LOOKING AFTER CATTLE	5	5	-	10
28	HAY MAKING	5	5	5	5
29	FATTENING	-	-	-	5
30	COLLECTING OF CROP AFTER HARVESTING	10	-	-	-
31	PROTECTION OF CROP/IMICE	-	10	10	-
32	TERRACING	10	-	5	5
33	GRAIN GRINDING	-	10	6	4
34	SPRING CLEANING	10	-	-	10

Tool No. 14: In-depth interviews

Description

- Question and answer sessions between the interviewer and interviewee. These sessions provide in-depth information and offer the opportunity for the discussion of sensitive issues that are difficult to bring up in a group setting because individuals are less constrained by what other people might think about their perceptions, attitudes and practices.

Uses

- To further probe and triangulate specific issues raised during group activities.
- To discuss sensitive issues that are not proper for group activities
- To hold discussions with key players who might not have the time to attend the full PRCA exercise.

Materials

- Notebooks and pens.

Participants

- Selected community members (interviewees) and PRCA team members (interviewers).

Procedure

- Prepare a checklist of issues for the discussion.
- Select members of the community to be interviewed based on gender, age, relationship ti issue etc..
- Conduct interview sessions in a location where the interviewee is most comfortable.
- Make the interviewee know that the exercise is not just another chitchat but a serious exercise.
- Be patient, respectful, and accommodating.
- Be brief and to the point.
- Analyse the information so that you are able to use it in the ensuing discussions as the PRCA continues.

Tool No. 15: Key informant interview

Description

- An in-depth interview with an individual or a group of people who have special knowledge on a particular topic.

Uses

- Used for discovering special knowledge.
- To obtain information about the knowledge and behaviour of others in the community.

Materials

- Notebooks and pens

Participants

- People in the community with special knowledge on particular topics and interviewers.

Procedure

- Prepare a topic guide for the interviews.
- Select key informants from the community such as teachers, traditional birth attendants, merchants, etc.
- Select suitable locations for the interviews or visit the key informants in their homes or places of work for the discussions.

Tool No. 16: Focus group discussions

Description

- Focus group discussion -FGD- is a cost-effective qualitative research technique generally used to discuss a specific topic in detail and probe into people's feelings, opinions and perceptions of the topic.

Uses

- It is used to verify and obtain more in-depth details about information collected during the PRCA with other tools.
- Group dynamics generated during FGD produce rich responses and allow new and valuable thoughts to emerge.
- It provides an opportunity for you to observe a group's non-verbal reactions and discover their feelings and attitudes towards the issue under discussion.

Materials

- Notebooks and pens.

Participants

- Groups selected from the community, moderators and note takers.

Procedure

- Be clear about the purpose of the study.
- Appoint moderators and note takers for the discussions.
  - Moderators must be good listeners who can link and follow-up issues as they emerge during the discussions.
- Prepare a topic guide to be used during discussions.
  - Make sure the questions are notes concerning important issues.
  - Ensure you have probe questions for digging for more detailed information
  - Avoid leading questions and biases

- Form homogenous groups of six to ten people who share the problems concerned with the topic to be discussed. Use the following factors to determine the composition of each group:
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Educational background
  - Socio-economic status
  - Religion
  - Life cycle, etc.
- Select interview locations that provide privacy for the participants. Select a location where the discussion can be carried out without having external observers or potential intruders.
  - Avoid locations with a noisy surrounding.
  - Select non-threatening locations where participants can air their views without reservations or intimidation.
  - Select locations easily accessible to all respondents.

Ten tips for moderator

1. Quick learner - Absorb and understand quickly
2. 'Friendly Leader'- develop a rapport but must be an 'authority figure'
3. Knowledgeable but not all-knowing - if members think of him as an expert the point of the group discussion is lost, they merely turn to him for advice but they must respond to direction
4. Excellent memory - remember the early inputs at the end in order to redirect
5. Good listener - be quick to pickup and to retain even the quietest
6. A Facilitator not a performer - object of the exercise is to secure information from the participants. Be light but avoid the use of too much humour as it can divert attention from the main purpose.
7. Flexible - go with ebb and flow of discussion. Deviate from plan where necessary if discussion is going in a constructive direction
8. Empathetic - be aware of others' inhibitions, nervousness etc.
9. A 'Big Picture' thinker - must be able to separate the important from the less significant
10. Good Writer - ability to make clear and concise notes and summaries.

Example of a PRCA Proposal Outline for an on-going project

Action Programme for Communication Skills Development

Field Communication Research Proposal

Country Identification

1. Project Summary _____

1.1 Title of Proposal _____

1.2 Duration of Field Communication Research

From (date): ____ / ____ / ____

DA MO YR

To (date): ____ / ____ / ____

DA MO YR

1.3 Total Funds Budgeted: N$/KW/Z$ _____

1.4 Principal Investigator:

Name: _____

Position or Post: _____

Full Postal Address & Telephone/Fax no: _____

1.5 FAO Research Technical Advisers:

Name: _____

Position or Post: _____

Full Postal Address & Telephone/Fax no: _____

1.6 Institution responsible for field communication research:

Name: _____

Position or Post: _____

Full Postal Address & Telephone/Fax no: _____

1.7 Collaborating Institution(s): _____

1.8 Names of Field Researchers:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

1.9 Translator(s)

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

2. Introduction and background (secondary data)

(a) State clearly the development objectives (overall goals) of your project:

(b) State clearly the immediate objectives of your project.

(c) State clearly the expected outputs of your project

(d) State clearly the inputs needed to produce the outputs

(e) State clearly the activities of your project

(f) What are the environmental factors affecting your project (risks)

(g) Outlinewhat is presently know about the project area:

- Geographic/ecological variables (climate, soil etc)

- Resources available

(h) Briefly describe the innovations being introduced by the project

- What skills are needed by target beneficiaries to adopt, adapt and use the innovation successfully?
- What knowledge is needed by beneficiaries to implement the innovation?
- What resources are needed by the beneficiaries to adopt and implement the innovation successfully?
- What attitudes are needed by the beneficiaries to adopt and implement the innovation successfully?
- What alternatives to the innovation exist in the project area? i.e.. How have the people survived without the innovation?

(i) Briefly describe the intended beneficiaries of the project:

- Outline what is presently known about the people and their ways of life;
- Where they live i.e. geographic location and characteristics of the area;
- The people's culture, i.e.. language, religion, beliefs, customs, social/economic groups; political structure;
- Segment the population in the project area according to, but not limited to the following criteria:
- gender
- age
- types of occupation
- scale of farming: subsistence, small scale commercial large scale commercial etc.
- educational level;
- Describe, if possible, the people's sources of information about various things;

Please list all the sources you contacted or reviewed to get the information above.

3. Field communication research goals and objectives

(a) State clearly the overall goals of the field communication research project;

(b) State clearly the objectives and sub-objectives of the field communication research;

(c) Indicate why the field communication research is feasible within the estimated time and funds budgeted.

4. Study areas

(a) List and define the study areas;

(b) Briefly describe the specific project and non-project areas you are using for the field communication research;

(c) Briefly state reasons for your choice of research sites.

5. Study samples

(a) List the specific groups you will interact with during the research;

(b) Briefly describe the specific groups of people you are interacting with during the field communication research;

(c) Briefly state reasons for your choice of research participants.

6. Information to be collected

(a) List the information you intend to gather during the research;

(b) Briefly describe the specific information you intend to collect with the help of the study participants;

(c) Attach a list of discussion topics/questions to help you collect the information above.

(d) Attach a check-list to help you remember to collect the information above.

7. Research methods, tools and techniques

(a) Give all relevant details about the research method, tools and techniques you intend to use for collecting the information above (PRCA tools and techniques) with indication of relatedness to information to be collected and activity flow.

(b) Attach a flowchart of activities.

(c) Briefly describe how you are going to inform local people and authorities about your research, plans for approaching and engaging the communities.

(d) Describe procedure for selecting groups for research activities especially the in-depth interviews, KIPs and focus group discussions.

8. Itemised budget

8.1 Budget details

8.1.1 SALARIES: Only allowed for non-salaried workers hired temporarily

8.1.2 TRANSPORTATION:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Total Transportation

8.1.3 PER DIEM:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Total Per Diem

8.1.4 EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Total Equipment & Supplies

8.1.5 MISCELLANEOUS: (SPECIFY)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Total Miscellaneous

8.1.6 CONTINGENCIES: (%)

1. _____

Sub-Totals

Grand Totals

Each budget line under 8.1 should be concisely justified.

9. Complete timetable of activities

Major activities during each week/day of field communication research and team member responsible::

First week

Day 1 Date: Month, Day, Year

2 Date: Month, Day, Year

3 Date: Month, Day, Year

4 Date: Month, Day, Year

5 Date: Month, Day, Year

6 Date: Month, Day, Year

7 Date: Month, Day, Year

Second week

Day 1 Date: Month, Day, Year

2 Date: Month, Day, Year

3 Date: Month, Day, Year

4 Date: Month, Day, Year

5 Date: Month, Day, Year

6 Date: Month, Day, Year

7 Date: Month, Day, Year

Third week

Day 1 Date: Month, Day, Year
2 Date: Month, Day, Year
3 Date: Month, Day, Year
4 Date: Month, Day, Year
5 Date: Month, Day, Year
6 Date: Month, Day, Year
7 Date: Month, Day, Year

Fourth week

Day 1 Date: Month, Day, Year
2 Date: Month, Day, Year
3 Date: Month, Day, Year
4 Date: Month, Day, Year
5 Date: Month, Day, Year
6 Date: Month, Day, Year
7 Date: Month, Day, Year

10. Contact person/desk

Headquarters:

Name: _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Provincial/District: _____

Name: _____ Phone _____

Address _____

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