



TECHNOLOGY OF PARTICIPATION (ToP)

Basic Group Facilitation Techniques



MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND
PROVINCIAL COUNCILS



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AND PROVINCIAL COUNCILS**



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PREFACE

The Asia Foundation (TAF) implemented the Transparent Accountable Local Governance (TALG) Program with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) from January 2005 - September 2007. The Foundation's main counterparts were the Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils and the Sri Lanka Institute of Local Governance. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and Environmental Management Lanka (EML) provided additional technical assistance and support.

The TALG Program developed a number of training modules and publications as part of its institutional strengthening programme for Local Authorities (LAs) in Sri Lanka. Each of the TALG training modules was used to train officials in thirty-five Local Authorities in Southern, Eastern, Central, North Western, North Central and Uva provinces. These were very successful in promoting effective, transparent and accountable local governance. Preparing the training modules was a painstaking process and support from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) enabled The Asia Foundation to complete and publish this and the other publications in the series.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This participants' guidebook on the Technology of Participation (ToP) is a collective effort of several TALG partners. The sample course materials and resource persons for the first series of ToP training workshops were drawn from the Governance and Local Democracy Project, Philippines. Subsequently, the TALG team of trainers headed by the Program Manager (Citizen Participation) in association with ICMA and EML consultants integrated the Sri Lankan experience into this guidebook. This guidebook was further enriched by drawing from the implementation experience of master trainers selected from LAs, Sri Lanka Institute of Local Governance (SLILG) and partner Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs).

The Asia Foundation therefore wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the valuable contributions made by all those who helped in the preparation of this guidebook. A special word of thanks is due to the Governance and Local Democracy Project of Philippines for sharing their experience in the application of ToP. The Foundation also extends its sincere appreciation to the participating LAs, trainers, NGOs and the TALG resource persons for their valuable input.

It is the Foundation's hope that the contents of this guidebook will contribute in setting a participatory process to realize transparent, accountable and democratic local governance in Sri Lanka.

INTRODUCTION

Sri Lankan LAs have the opportunity and mandate to promote citizen participation to improve service delivery, and in doing so, to strengthen democratic governance at local level. In order for LAs to effectively engage with citizens, and fulfil their core functions, staff and council members are expected to use facilitation skills. This involves conducting participatory citizen consultations, identifying and analysing problems through participatory processes and seeking and implementing solutions developed on the priorities set by citizens.

The Foundation realized that many LAs lacked trained and skilled human resources for this purpose. Therefore, TALG offered to improve the facilitation skills of key staff and elected council members in selected LAs. As a result, the Foundation conducted a series of island-wide ToP training workshops and Participatory Community Consultations (PCCs). The ToP workshops gave participants a clear understanding of the theory of citizen participation and showed them how to use basic facilitation tools to promote citizen participation. At the end of the ToP training workshops, participants were able to use these skills to support citizens to help themselves by conducting effective discussions, analyzing and reaching consensus on the issues commonly identified and seeking solutions collectively, rather than lecturing, telling and dictating what to do. The participants also learnt that facilitation for citizen participation requires patience, discipline, special skills, reasonable practice and conceptual clarity with a long-term vision to transform unsatisfactory situations into positive ones.

The resource persons for the ToP training workshops were initially drawn from the Local Governance Program, Philippines. Subsequently, the TALG team of trainers headed by the Program Manager (Citizen Participation) undertook this responsibility. Training a batch of master trainers from selected LAs and NGOs further expanded the resource pool of trainers. The ToP training was mainly restricted to key staff and council members of the selected LAs where TALG had commenced its interventions. However, opportunities were given from time-to-time for other LAs to participate in the ToP training workshops.

As a result of the training, there was a dissemination of ToP skills to a wide range of LAs in the country. The majority of the ToP trained facilitators used their new skills to identify, analyze and seek solutions for a wide variety of issues affecting the lives of different citizen groups. The majority of the LAs' Provincial Local Government Commissioners have encouraged their ToP trained staff to use their skills for conducting public consultations in the local planning, budgeting and priority setting process.

One of the major contributions made by ToP trained facilitators, through a participatory consultative process, was the assessment of problems and issues faced by the tsunami-affected people. Many LAs have used ToP tools effectively to generate community participation in planning and implementing interventions. LAs have made use of this opportunity to bridge gaps between the people and themselves, as the training provided a framework for promoting inclusiveness, democracy, transparency and efficiency, the elements of which are intended to be embedded in programmes of good governance.

This guidebook is about how to conduct participatory training sessions in ToP workshops. The users are advised to consider it as a guide to creating action-orientated processes for generating effective civic participation.

Overview of ToP Training

Overall Purpose

To improve the capacity and participatory skills of LA staff, to enable them to utilize their own implicit and explicit resourcefulness and those of citizens and other stakeholders to promote citizen participation in local governance.

Training Objectives

The objectives of the workshop are summarized below.

- To develop conceptual clarity on facilitation, citizen consultation and stakeholder participation.
- To define and internalize critical elements of a successful participatory event.
- To enhance specific skills enabling the use of effective participatory tools to consult communities and stakeholders and to identify problems, reach consensus and plan solutions.
- To enhance the skills of LA staff, to enable them to design an effective participatory event for immediate implementation.

Training Contents

Contents of the training workshop are summarized below.

- Self-assessment of participants' conceptual clarity on the participatory concepts leading to improved new knowledge on the benefits of citizen and stakeholder participation.
- Brainstorming on the concept of facilitation and redefining the role of facilitation and facilitators.
- Introducing the elements of a successful participatory event.
- Introducing tools for citizen and stakeholder consultation and consensus building:
 - Tools for participatory discussions - opening, reflecting, interpreting and decision-making (ORID).
 - Probing, listening, rephrasing, understanding, interpreting body language and building relations.
 - Tools for consensus building in workshop situations.
 - Tools for action planning for teamwork.
- Skills practice for using the participatory tools introduced.
- Overview and understanding the integrated village planning process.
- Reaching consensus on the process of incorporating village plans into LA annual and mid-term plans.

Performance Criteria

At the end of the workshop, participants will be able to do the following:

- Highlight salient features of participatory concepts and internalize the value of participatory approaches.
- Enumerate major benefits of citizen and stakeholder participation and appreciate team effort in generating effective participatory designs.
- Define the role of facilitation and facilitators. Demonstrate knowledge and apply tools for citizen and stakeholder consultation, consensus building and action planning.
- Conduct citizen consultations and reach consensus.

1. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

What is it?

- Citizen participation is a process through which citizens influence public decisions that affect their lives and the lives of other citizens.
- The participation is active when citizens interact with their elected officials or the staff of a local government to influence a public policy decision.
- The participation can also be passive when citizens simply attend a public meeting to receive information on the status of a new government programme or when they show up to vote at an election.
- The most effective citizen participation brings people together to learn, discuss and give their input. These opportunities are particularly useful for building a consensus that can be a meaningful guide for government action.

Why Citizen Participation in LAs?

- To build a stronger understanding of community needs, perspectives and priorities leading to better designed solutions, where the public are consulted at the early stage of problem identification, and then throughout the planning and decision-making processes.
- To build community 'ownership' of problems and solutions.
- As an effective administrative tool.
- Solutions are more durable when the public have invested their time in them. When members of the public feel included and listened to, they are more likely to invest in the outcome of the decisions that are made.

How to Start?

Identify your goal - To select the most appropriate approach to citizen participation, it is important to identify your purpose. Typical purposes are to:

- **Inform** the public about LA initiatives and keep citizens informed as they take part in the decision-making process.
- **Educate** the public about a problem, or the rationale for a local initiative, and the advantages and disadvantages of various alternatives.
- **Solicit information** from the public to augment other sources of information.
- **Consult** with the public to learn what they know and how they feel about a municipal problem or initiative.
- **Involve** the public in planning to develop programme goals, strategies and visions for the future.
- **Obtain responses** from the public about the impact of a municipal initiative on them or their neighbourhood.
- **Provide comments** on how public responses were considered on issues or the impact of municipal initiatives and activities.
- **Involve members of the public directly** in decision-making through participation in on-going committees.

Once your purpose is clear, it will be easier to determine which outreach and involvement techniques will be most effective.

Basic Principles

The goal of citizen participation is to develop effective citizen and LA collaboration on a project or process. To be successful, it is critical that all parties involved convey their respect for each other and for the value of citizen involvement and citizen/municipality collaboration in general.

The following strategies will ensure more successful citizen outreach and involvement.

Plan the Events Ahead

Few things are more frustrating than being asked for feedback or involvement without enough time to respond. It can feel disrespectful, as if the participation is not really wanted or valued. Make sure there is enough time built into your public process to provide citizens with a meaningful opportunity to participate.

Explain the Process, Expectations and Time Lines

When you communicate with citizens during an outreach and involvement process, clarify early on what you expect from them and what citizens can expect from you. Clarity will help avoid frustration and unrealistic expectations.

Go to the People

When setting up participatory events, wherever possible, look for locations that are convenient to the people. Generally, you will have better attendance and people will feel more comfortable when meetings are located in familiar and convenient settings.

Listen to People

At public meetings, record public comments on flipcharts. This technique provides you with a useful written record of the feedback that you received at the meeting, and at the same time, visibly conveys that you are taking people's comments seriously. As the project progresses, describe how citizen participation has helped to shape and influence the process and project outcomes.

Follow Checklist Based on Foundation Principles

Use the following checklist as you begin to plan a public involvement effort. It is designed to jump-start your thinking and help you make sure you haven't overlooked anything significant. It will help you clarify your goals for the outreach project. Once your goals are clear, it will be much easier to determine which outreach and involvement strategies will be most effective. Guiding principles can be as follows:

- Mutual respect
- Teamwork
- Knowledge and ability
- Coordination
- Cooperation
- Respect for differences
- Leadership
- Patience
- Positive attitudes

Example of a Checklist

What is the Goal of the Public Involvement Effort?

- What will be different if the effort is successful?
- What are you trying to achieve with the effort? How does the effort help fulfil your municipality's mission?
- What are the key objectives of the involvement process? Are they measurable, specific and achievable?

Who are you Trying to Reach?

- What specific group or population will be affected?
- Which other groups will have related concerns? For example, is there another government or private agency whose partnership should be sought?

What Information do you Need to Share?

- In order for citizens to provide informed thoughtful involvement, how much of an educational effort is needed? In many municipal decisions there is a need to inform or educate citizens about technical or other complexities inherent in the issues. To obtain thoughtful citizen input and perspective, municipal staff may need to prepare and present background materials. Take care not to assume the average person knows all about the proposed action.
- What is the most effective and efficient way to communicate that information?

What Kind of Involvement/Input do you Want From Citizens?

- If the emphasis is on informing, don't use a process designed for feedback collection.
- If the emphasis is on involving, think carefully about when and how citizens should be involved. Consider if you want citizens to generate initial ideas or just give feedback. For example, what should a new programme include? It may not be appropriate to ask if the programme should be carried out, but the public can help shape the programme. Should citizens review and comment on a draft plan or final version? Should citizens develop recommendations, approve recommendations or suggest modifications?
- Are there phases in the project during which there are different types of opportunities for citizen input? How best to get input?
- What process will be used to review and act on the input when you receive it?

What Resources and How Much Time is Required?

- What staff resources will be required? Have you arranged for the resources to be available for your project?
- How much time and effort is expected from citizens who are involved in the project? Are you prepared to communicate clearly to citizens regarding time commitments, meeting dates and other issues so that citizens making the effort to be involved will be well supported?

2. THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

Ideally, a good facilitator who wants to promote citizen participation should be able to guide people to analyze their problems and find practical pathways to resolve them by themselves, with or without outside support. Experience shows that playing the role of a facilitator requires patience, discipline and special skills acquired through reasonable training and practice. In order to make the programme a success, facilitators need to be skilful to handle the following tasks.

- Conducting participatory community consultative sessions to assess situations and pulling out community ideas relating to problems/issues.
- Presenting systematically, the problems/issues identified.
- Analyzing problems/issues together with community members so that community solutions to problems can be identified.
- Using participatory methodologies/tools effectively to generate community participation in planning and implementing interventions.
- Moderating participatory planning sessions and placing all suggested interventions together in the form of a plan.
- Writing project proposals on the basis of the data/information generated at the participatory community consultations.
- Incorporating village plans into the LA's annual planning, implementation and management.
- Implementing proposed interventions/solutions to resolve the problems/issues of citizens.
- Drilling deep down into problems and reaching needy people for extending assistance and benefits, without depending on the superficial data/statistics.
- Minimizing personal identity to prevent the facilitator's own personal ideas and agendas having an influence in sessions.

To assist facilitators, participatory methodologies and related tools can be used at ToP workshops. However, the following points have to be kept in mind by facilitators in using these tools.

Create Conditions to Enable People to Speak Out

At the beginning of a consultative process, the facilitators may allow participants to air their grievances and encourage them to make statements and express ideas on their pressing issues. Skilful facilitation of such a session will give a lot of emotional relief to participants. For this purpose keep the agenda flexible.

Develop Trust with Partnership Attitude

The benefits of various projects do not always reach the needy citizens due to the lack of close and constant dialogue with them from the planning through to the implementation stage. As a result, supporting agencies lack confidence in LAs and citizens become frustrated with the situation. If the objective is to ensure effective service delivery, the facilitators have to develop a trust and partnership attitude to be close to the people.

Strengthen the Learning Process

In many projects, attempts are made to develop institutional capacity through a structured learning process. It is therefore very useful to capture and share such lessons learnt at different layers of the LA.

Understand Limitations

Facilitators require extraordinary commitment and a huge voluntary component in their work. This is essential for success. However, voluntary work has its own limitations and one should be mindful to what extent it can be sustained in the long run.

Improve Professionalism

While voluntarism is encouraged with high commitment, it is important for facilitators to develop professionalism in their work. The institutionalization of participation and participatory approaches within LAs forms a part of this professionalism. Facilitators should understand that work relating to development projects couldn't be carried out in the normal institutional culture, where routine duties are performed restricted to the standard eight-hour day.

Keep Interventions Free from Bias

Projects may be kept free from political bias, but it is important to obtain the blessings and support of all political parties. Facilitators should, therefore, emphasize the involvement of both government and opposition party leaders in the participatory community consultations.

Emphasize the LA/Community Partnership

Many development projects do not belong to the category of relief and rehabilitation programmes. They are often partnerships between the LA and citizens. Therefore, it is important to identify the tasks that cannot be accomplished without joint effort and partnership between the LA and citizens.

Understand the Process of Change

It is important to understand the process of change, particularly planned interventions for positive change. Learning and education should be included as essential dynamic elements of the process of change.

Good Coordination is Essential

The mediation role of the LA is crucial. Equally important is to convert the LA into an effective coordination unit.

Incorporate Village Plans with People

Participatory community consultations can be treated as an opportunity to initiate a process for incorporating village plans and inviting resources from different sources. In this exercise, it is also important to create an environment that is conducive by following a step-by-step process to utilize existing capacities.

Final Outcomes

It is necessary to visualize final outcomes of your efforts in community consultations. One of the points to be aware of is ensuring there is effective and sustainable delivery of services.

3. ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPATORY EVENT

A successful participatory event always produces good results. In designing participatory events, make careful preparations so that most or all of the following success factors are met.

Key Elements

- Everyone attending the event is actually involved in the discussions and workshops.
- Previously 'marginalized' groups are adequately heard and involved in the event.
- Next-step activities are generated.
- There is effective management of group dynamics in a way that:
 - Participants feel honoured and respected.
 - Participants experience a safe and level playing field or atmosphere.
 - Participants feel free to express themselves in a manner they are comfortable with.
 - Discussions are focused on issues, not on personalities.
 - Participants are not engaged in either attacking or defending ideas.
- There is a sense of accomplishment among the participants throughout, and especially at the end of the activity.
- Participants experience a sense of shared ownership of the event output.
- Participants' time is maximized through proper pacing, adequate time allocation and breaks.
- The event catalyses individual commitment, responsibility and initiative.
- The event may be easily replicable at various levels in different areas.

Critical Factors for a Successful Participatory Event

- Meets the group's purpose.
- Right stakeholders present (representative).
- Event and activity objectives are clear and agreed upon.
- Procedures are realistic and clearly understood and communicated.
- Adequate time (but no more) is allotted for each activity.
- Methods are appropriate for level of technical difficulty.
- Skills of facilitators.
- Adequate supplies and materials.

4. PARTICIPATORY MODEL - FIVE-STEP DESIGN

The key to a successful participatory event is good design. The 5-Step Model below is a basic framework for designing ToP participatory events. It presents a logical and easy to follow step-by-step approach, which allows even the beginner to appreciate the participatory elements of the event.

Since the 5-Step Model is a guide, it offers the facilitator flexibility and a lot of room for creativity. It does not list 'Do's' and 'Don'ts'; rather, it offers points to consider which open a horizon full of other possibilities.

Step 1- Overall Context of the Event

What is the participatory event and what are its parameters?

Step 2 - Stakeholder Analysis and Participants' Profile

Who are the stakeholder participants and what are their expectations and attributes?

Step 3 - Specific Objectives of the Event

What are the outputs that the event is expected to produce?

Step 4 - Key Activities of the Event

What are the key activities planned and expected to take place? What are the means of achieving them?

Step 5 - Procedures and Preparations

How are the activities organized and facilitated to ensure a successful participatory event?

1. Overall Context of the Event

Consider the context of the event by talking to persons most concerned, reading background information and carefully analyzing the situation. This is an exercise to identify the 'givens' of the event and build an operating context for actually designing the event.

Points to consider:

Purpose

- Why is the event being held?
- What do the key organizers say about the event?
- What are the given needs/concerns/expectations the event is responding to?

Relationship with Past and Future Events

- How is the event related to previous events/activities/expectations?
- How is the event expected to relate to future events?
- What are the follow-up activities anticipated after the event?

Constraining Factors

- Are there issues affecting the event? For example, need for pre-event education or training, level of technical difficulty expected of the event activities etc.
- Any logistical or site concerns? For example, lighting, furniture, materials, equipment etc.

Organizational Needs

- What are the development objectives of the organization?
- Is the event at the beginning, middle or end of the organization's programmes, and how does the event strengthen the organization?
- How does the event strengthen community/Community Based Organization (CBO) initiatives and efforts?

Results/Outputs

- What are the tangible results expected?
- Do different stakeholders expect different results?
- How is general agreement reached on what are realistic results?

Step 1 - Worksheet		
OVERALL CONTEXT OF THE EVENT		
Event:	Project/Site:	Date:
1. Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	2. Relationship to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-Event Post-Event Follow-up Activities: 	
3. Constraining Factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	4. Organizational Needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	
5. Results/Outputs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 		

2. Stakeholder Analysis and Participants' Profile

Consider the people who will be involved in the event. This exercise will help tailor-fit the design to the requisites of the group's dynamics.

Points to consider:

Expected Participants and Their Attributes

- Who is expected to participate? How many?
- What levels or positions do participants represent?
- What is the educational level? What is the language proficiency?
- Are they experienced in the topic and the process involved?
- Is there a desired mix of participants from different sectors?
- How are participants being selected?
- Are all critical stakeholders adequately represented and actively recruited?
- Are there potentially too many participants for the event's purpose and limitations?

Participant Expectation of the Event

- What are participants expecting of both the process and outcome of the event?
- Are participants' expectations realistic? Are there unrealistic expectations?

Participants' Interest in the Event

- What are the general positions or agenda that individuals may bring to the event?
- Are there natural/logical groupings or work teams among the expected participants?
- In what ways are the expected participants similar or different?

Group Dynamics and Relations

- Are there potentially some group-dynamic issues? For example, dominating personalities, angry participants, etc.
- Are there political or status relationships to be considered?
- Are there guest speakers or other non-participating people attending?

Step 2 - Worksheet

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS AND PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

Event:

Project/Site:

Date:

1. Expected participants and their attributes:

2. Participant expectation of the event:

3. Participants' interest in the event:

4. Group dynamics and relations:

3. Specific Objectives of the Event

Clearly articulated objectives are critical to a well-designed participatory event.

Points to consider:

- Based on the 'Overall Context of the Event' and 'Stakeholder Analysis and Participants' Profile', develop objectives that the event intends to achieve.
- There are two types of objectives: Rational Objectives and Experiential Objectives.
- There may be several different objectives for each type.

Rational Objectives	Experiential Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the group should be able to: Know Understand Plan/produce Do/decide on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the group should be able to: Experience Appreciate Celebrate Get excited about

Step 3 - Worksheet

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE EVENT

Event:

Project/Site:

Date:

Rational Objectives

At the end of the event, participants will have been able to:

Experiential Objectives

At the end of the event, participants will have been able to:

4. Key Activities of the Event

At this step, identify the key activity modules that will form the framework of the event.

Sequential Steps:

- List key activities/topics.
- Determine intended output/product for each activity.
- Select the methods to be used for each key activity.
- Allot time for each key topic/activity.

- Arrange the key activities in logical sequence.
- Formulate the focus question for each key activity.
- Select and create templates and other visual aids.

Designing each of the key activities and deciding on the appropriate sequencing and flow of the participatory event is an iterative process. Once the overall framework becomes clear, use the following template to prepare the 'activity agenda' for the event.

Step 4 – Worksheet			
KEY ACTIVITIES OF THE EVENT			
Event:		Project/Site:	Date:
Time	Activity/Topic and Method	Expected Outputs	Special Requirements

5. Procedures and Preparations

Points to consider:

- Formulate written procedures, notes and helpful hints for key activity modules.
- Produce session guides.
- Practice all handouts, overhead acetates, templates and pilot procedures as necessary, including:
 - Review each activity - starting steps, products and transitions from one activity to the next.
 - Adjustments where necessary, e.g., tighten schedule, remove steps, etc.
 - Visualization - imagine the event, what's happening, what participants are doing, what the facilitator is doing, etc.
 - Facilitation team meet to 'walk through' the procedures and clarify roles.
- Prepare administrative details.
- Obtain information on venue, e.g. lighting, furniture, ventilation, etc.
- Use checklist for supplies and materials.
- Arrange for all equipment needs and ensure equipment is delivered on time.
- Arrive early at venue to check and test equipment and arrange appropriate room set-up.
- Carry back-up supply of basic materials (facilitator's tool kit).

- Check meals, materials and arrangements for these.
- After the event, review, assess and re-design as necessary.
- Use participants' feedback form, especially if the event is to be repeated.
- Evaluate event for improvement and document impact of participatory procedures.
- Relate results to objectives.
- Focus on process and qualitative aspects - design and facilitation method and style.
- Participant-observer evaluation.
 - Use facilitator self-evaluation tool.
 - Team evaluation - schedule de-briefing session. Possibly use designated evaluator. Formulate the rational and experiential objectives for each major module.
- Consider appropriate feedback and monitoring to evaluate effectiveness of activities.

5. PARTICIPATORY METHODS AND TOOLS

Discussion ORID (Opening, Reflecting, Interpreting and Decision-Making) Method

Purpose

- Encourages all group members to contribute thoughts and ideas.
- Provides setting for focused and meaningful dialogue.
- Invites a variety of perspectives to be shared in an open manner.
- Deepens collective insights of the group.
- Takes the group on a journey, from surface to deep thinking.
- Is a structured process of asking open-ended questions.
- Provides an opportunity to reflect on important topics and experiences.

Key Steps

Context/Opening: Sets the stage, introduces the objective of the topic, establishes facts and data.

Reflective: Explores initial reactions and responses: emotions, memories, associations.

Interpretative: Invites critical thinking on the topic: value, meaning, significance.

Decisional: Probes the new insights, future resolves, opinions and intentions.

Strengths

- Allows the group to move easily and quickly to a deeper discussion level.
- May be used to effectively discuss difficult or tense issues.
- Allows for careful progression for collective consciousness to take place.
- Enables group to discuss important topics in a non-confrontational style.
- Sets a clear and strategic context for a topic.

Limitations

- It may not yield a consensus.
- Effective only for specific and commonly shared topics.
- Effective only for short periods of time - difficult to go beyond 45 minutes without losing the group's attention.
- Verbal method - no visuals or kinaesthetic to engage participants.
- Requires all participants to carefully pay attention and track all comments.

Applications of the Discussion ORID Method

- Opening group discussion for a workshop.
- Facilitator designs introductory conversation related to the topic.
- Re-cap discussion on morning of second day, using ORID as basis for group reflecting on first-day activities.
- Planning team discussing and evaluating recent event or meeting.

- Conversation after a cross-visit, to glean the key insights and critical next steps.
- Discussions with groups to initiate focused thinking around an important concept, e.g. tree farm project.

Other Creative Applications of the ORID Method

The ORID Method has also been applied in situations where groups have completed flip-chart templates.

Use a pre-formatted template that follows the ORID levels. Groups or sub-groups complete the template to create activity reports. An example is shown below.

Activity Arena	
Principle Accomplishments	Major Experiences
Key Learning	Current Challenges

Workshop Method

Purpose

- Encourages all group members to contribute thoughts and ideas and participate in a structured brainstorming and consensus building process.
- Builds practical group consensus.
- Facilitates the formulation of innovative and creative solutions to problems and issues.
- Infuses the group with a strong sense of stakeholderhood and responsibility.

Key Steps

Context: Sets the stage and introduces the Focus Question.

Brainstorm: Generates ideas individually in small groups and in a plenary session.

Cluster: Forms new relationships.

Title: Articulates the group consensus.

Reflect: Confirms the group resolve.

Strengths

- Allows groups to move easily and quickly from individually generated brainstorm ideas to consensus, and then onto the Focus Question.
- Harnesses participation of group members towards a common focus.
- Effectively generates collective thinking on creative solutions, insightful decisions and innovative planning.
- Involves dynamic, fast-paced interaction between and among group members.
- Builds group consensus and moves it towards joint action.

Limitations

- Involves a 5-step process that may be confusing to participants who are not experienced in the method.
- Requires careful preparation to ensure the quality of the outputs.
- Generates clear consensus only around the specific concern defined by the workshop Focus Question.

Application of Workshop Method**The Focus Question**

- A well-formulated Focus Question is critical to an effective and successful workshop.
- Ensure that the Focus Question is not open to several interpretations - be specific on the issue/concern, the participants, those who are going to be most affected and indicate time frame where appropriate.
- Take care to have a Focus Question that is clear, concrete and concise.
- Ask an open-ended question - usually a 'what' or 'how' question that inspires creativity.
- Clearly write the Focus Question on flipchart paper. Be careful not to use abbreviations. Use bullet points to further explain the Focus Question and/or define terms and ensure that the Focus Question is visible throughout the entire workshop.

Facilitating the Reflect Step

The Reflect Step of the Workshop Method is a powerful tool for confirming the group's resolve on the consensus points that have been developed. There have been several creative innovations applied to the facilitation of the Reflect Step.

The final arrangement of the title cards generated in a workshop provides a visual representation of hierarchies of importance, relevance or urgency. The arrangement of title cards can also denote their relationship with each other.

Action Planning Method**Purpose**

- Engages all the group members to contribute thoughts and ideas and participate in generating a clear plan of action for a specific event or activity.
- Enables the group to define the various task areas required for the activity being planned.
- Facilitates clearer appreciation of all tasks by all members of the group.
- It factors in targets and resource allocation requirements.
- Translates output into a practical monitoring guide to determine progress during the implementation stage.
- Generates individual and collective commitment to play and initiate group action.

Key Steps

Context: Sets the stage and contracts the group members.

Victory Circle: Defines victory/success of the activity.

Current Reality: Grounds the action plan on the realities of the present situation.

Commitment: Develops a 'mini' mission statement specifically for the activity being planned.

Key Actions Workshop: Identifies the required actions and forms work teams.

Calendar and Assignments: Schedules the required actions by work teams and establishes coordinative mechanisms required for effective implementation.

Reflect: Confirms the group resolve.

Strengths

- Generates a realistic and achievable plan for undertaking a particular event or activity.
- Allows members to volunteer for implementing the plan on the basis of individual strengths and experiences.
- Steps of the method may be 'detached' (described below) from the 7-step process and creatively applied to other situations.

Limitations

- Requires sufficient time to complete all steps.
- Effective for planning specific events and activities but may not be useful for planning complex programmes or for strategic planning.
- Requires careful preparation to ensure quality of output.

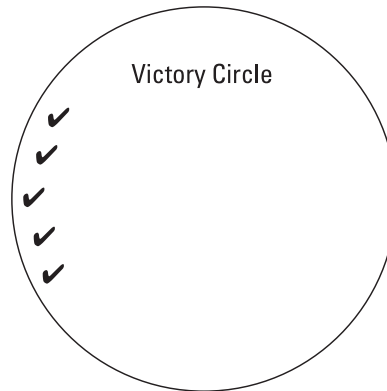
Application of Action Planning Method

Steps of the Action Planning Method

While the Action Planning Method is an integral 7-step process, particular steps of this method have been creatively applied as 'stand alone' methods for certain situations, depending on the context of the facilitated event and the outputs that a group needs to generate. Some of these creative applications include the following:

a. Victory Circle

The Victory Circle step of the ToP Action Planning Method may be used as a short-term 'cut' of an existing vision of a group. Prepare a template for your use. Ask the group what they want to see in place within a specified time frame. Each one individually reads out their ideas and as these are read out, the facilitator writes these down on the Victory Circle template prepared.



b. Transect Mapping

The Transect Map is an innovative way of getting groups to focus on the current reality of selected ecosystems. Have a master Transect Map (see below) drawn on the front board, identifying the coastal, lowland and upland ecosystems. Divide the participants into groups that will correspond to the various ecosystems identified. Each group is then instructed to discuss the 'Major Trends', 'Recent Accomplishments', 'Challenges and Obstacles' and 'Strengths and Advantages' of their assigned ecosystem. The outputs of the group discussion are then posted in the spaces below their ecosystem on the Transect Map.

	Coastal	Lowland	Upland
Major Trends			
Recent Accomplishments			
Challenges and Obstacles			
Strengths and Advantages			

c. Reports

Several groups can be set up and a specially designed template may be used for asking groups to prepare and deliver reports.

d. Facilitating the Current Reality Dialogue

Some creative applications of the Current Reality Dialogue not only involve specially designed templates, but also the manner by which groups and sub-groups complete these templates.

One application divides groups by sectors and has each sector carry out a Current Reality Dialogue for its arena and report insights to the entire group in plenary.

Another variant, asks the group to cluster ideas generated by a Victory Circle exercise. Teams are then assigned to complete a Current Reality Dialogue for each of the clusters formed.

Creative Combinations

The basic methods can also be used in creative combinations to meet specific purposes. Bear in mind that these combinations are designed in consideration of 1) the output groups' need to generate and 2) strengths and limitations of the methods being combined.

In some instances, the combinations involve only the ORID, Workshop and Action Planning. In other combinations, other tools and exercises can be used to further enhance the outputs of the participatory methods used to help groups generate consensus.

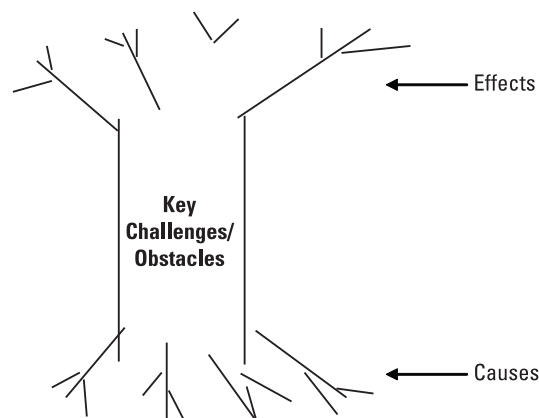
A few examples are provided below.

1. Modified Victory Circle Workshop

The Victory Circle exercise may be modified in certain cases to incorporate a workshop within the exercise. Again, this is useful to obtain a short-term 'cut' of an existing vision statement, usually for one year. Prepare a large Victory Circle template. Run a workshop with the following Focus Question: "Given our stated vision ____, what do we want to see in place at the end of one year?" When calling in the idea cards, start posting these within the bounds of the Victory Circle template, then organize clusters of similar ideas, and have the group generate titles for each cluster.

2. Cause-Effect Diagramming

This method may be used to further explore key challenges/obstacles identified in a Current Reality dialogue exercise. It provides the group with the chance to identify (a) the root cause(s) that have given rise to key challenges/obstacles and (b) their resulting effects. After agreeing on the key challenges/obstacles, have the members of the group volunteer for one key challenge/obstacle. Then have the participants identify the causes behind the issue. A chain of causes is traced by asking them to further identify the causes of the first set of causes. This network of causes then becomes the 'root' of the issue tree. The process is then repeated for effects. The results will look like this:



3. Project/Activity Planning Exercise

Specially designed templates can be used to gain broader involvement in project planning and jump-starting a group into taking action on a project or activity. After the workshop, sub-groups can complete a template for each of the workshop title cards.

Templates for project/activity planning will vary depending on the nature of the activity for which the plan is intended. Sample templates are shown below.

Action Planning	
Strategy:	Action Priority:
Long-Term Goal (4 years):	Short-Term Outcome (1 year):
Key Activities: * *	Major Roles and Responsibilities: * * LA: * * * Other Sectors: * *
Planning Team:	

Planning and Budgeting			
Activity Title:		Sector/Sub-Sector:	
	Estimated Costs		
	CBOs	LA	Total
Activities/Components:			
Total			
Roles and Responsibilities:		Planning Team:	
Province	LA		

6. CREATING A PARTICIPATORY ENVIRONMENT

It is important to create an atmosphere that allows participants to feel comfortable to contribute to a facilitated session. The five key areas to consider when developing a participatory environment are Space, Time, Eventfulness, Product and Style.

Space

Participatory events take place in all kinds of places, but the really successful ones are preceded by careful preparation and arrangements. Before an event, visit the proposed setting and review the following:

- Can the space comfortably accommodate all participants?
- How will the seating be arranged? Are there enough tables and chairs available?
- Is the space relatively free of distracting decor not related to the upcoming events? If not, can these be removed at the time of the event?
- Can the products of the event be easily displayed on the walls? Is there also room for special decorations?
- Is there adequate space for small teamwork as well as whole group reporting, as required by the meeting format?

Time

Participatory events sometimes takes place without due regard to the time factor. Therefore in fixing the timetable for events, the participants' agenda should be taken into consideration. It is important to sense when it is necessary to speed up and when to slow down. Carefully estimating time in advance is a useful guide.

Eventfulness

Boredom, when it occurs, undermines participatory events. Work to keep the sessions exciting and interesting. A good session, builds-in additional ways to nurture the active interest of the participants.

- Maintain a good balance between different kinds of activities. Good sessions balance the emphasis between presentations, discussions and workshops. Participants need time to do their own thinking, share and work together in small groups, and report their work to each other in the whole group. Varying space and having adequate breaks is important in meetings that go beyond an hour.
- Keep all participants engaged. On many occasions, small teams are asked to make reports to the larger gathering. It is a good idea to have these reports made by as many different people as possible, rather than allowing one person to emerge as the team's spokesperson. Similarly, when questions are asked from the group, a facilitator should encourage different participants in the team to answer.
- Make use of humour (without telling jokes). Discussions become more interesting when people endue themselves through common laughter. Humour can be used very effectively in group events. The chief caution here, is to be sure that the humour never belittles a participant. Humour is usually used in the early parts of a session. As discussions become more intense, humour may be out of place.
- Celebrate a group's output. When teams present their work, allow the rest of the participants to affirm their work with applause or positive comments. For longer meetings that include a number of sessions, such as a 'Retreat', special snacks at breaks, awards etc., both serious and humorous, can help to celebrate the group's work.

Product

Careful documentation of participatory sessions heightens a group's sense of accomplishment. Far too often, participants depart interesting events only to have conclusions and decisions fade into vague memories because no tangible products were ever produced. Be sure to design the event in such a way that there are specific products.

Explain the objectives and anticipated products(s) at the beginning of the event. Participants are more confident to enter into discussions when the destination of the session has been clearly stated. People want to know the objective of their work together. Explaining the end product(s) of the session also helps to keep discussions on track.

Document the results. The final product of all the various meetings and planning sessions will be a written plan. Be sure there is a scribe committed to capturing the results and producing a document.

Style

The personal style of the individual leading a participatory session, usually the facilitator, will quite often determine the working environment. While each individual will bring a unique style to the role, there are several things to be conscious of that encourage participation.

Honour individual contributions. Affirm participants' work. Receive all answers and assume that wisdom lies behind every contribution. It is the responsibility of facilitators to ask sensitive questions that enable deeper thinking. These questions are asked with respect and communicate a sincere desire to discover additional insights.

Honour the group. Attend to everything that the participants have to say. Quite simply, pay attention. This is as important whether you are sitting at the side of the room or standing at the front.

Demonstrate the power of teamwork. The core team members and/or the facilitation team can begin to give the community a feel for the excitement of being involved in both the planning and the implementation of the plan by operating as an effective team during the planning sessions. Be ready to assist in whatever way possible. Take notes and ask appropriate questions from the side of the room when a discussion gets bogged down. Get feedback and suggestions for improvement.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A - HOW TO CONDUCT BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS

Brainstorming is a group creativity technique designed to generate a large number of ideas on a given subject or a problem to be resolved. There are four basic rules in brainstorming (described below). These are intended to reduce the social inhibitions that occur in groups and therefore stimulate the generation of new ideas. The expected result is a dynamic synergy that will increase the creativity of the group.

Focus on Quantity

This rule is a means of enhancing divergent production of ideas, aiming to facilitate problem-solving through the maxim, quantity breeds quality. The assumption is that the greater the number of ideas generated, the greater the chance of producing a radical and effective solution.

No Criticism

It is often emphasized that in group brainstorming, criticism should be put 'on hold'. Instead of immediately stating what might be wrong with an idea, the participants focus on extending or adding to it, reserving criticism for a later 'critical stage' of the process. By suspending judgment, one creates a supportive atmosphere where participants feel free to generate unusual ideas.

Unusual Ideas are Welcome

To develop a good and long list of ideas, unusual ideas are welcomed. They may open new ways of thinking and provide better solutions than regular ideas. They can be generated by looking from another perspective or setting aside assumptions.

Combine and Improve Ideas

Good ideas can be combined to form a single very good idea. This approach is assumed to lead to better and more complete ideas than merely generating new ideas alone. It is believed to stimulate the building of ideas by a process of association.

The following steps are recommended.

- Explain the purpose of brainstorming and invite participants in a friendly manner to express their ideas and perspectives on the vision, objectives and what needs to be done in order to realize them.
- Begin brainstorming in the larger group pulling out one idea at a time.
- Ask probing questions to trigger new ideas.
- If someone is not willing to talk but nevertheless able to write, provide him/her with some idea cards and a marker pen.
- All ideas need to be recorded and grouped into different subject or problem areas.
- After the plenary discussion, set up small groups for each subject area and ask the groups to further refine the ideas and make presentations.
- Eventually, a common consensus may be reached on the priority needs, key activities and major responsibilities.

ANNEX B - HOW TO CONDUCT PARTICIPATORY COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

One of the problems faced by LAs is the scarcity of resources in skilled personnel to implement community-based sustainable development programmes. This may have limited the capacity of LAs to identify, analyze and understand realities of problems affecting members of communities. These limitations have also affected resource allocation, based on the needs/demands of citizens.

Ironically, the identical limitations have at times become the strengths of some LAs to improve their situation. Therefore LAs deserve support to 1) improve their ability to practice good governance demonstrating more democratic and participatory elements and 2) enhance effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of urgent and priority development activities.

The Objectives of the PCC Workshops

- Identify the problems/issues faced by citizens through a participatory consultative process.
- Analyze problems identified and list priority issues to be resolved.
- Plan solutions to identified issues in a participatory manner by using the ideas generated by citizens.
- To provide guidance on preparing a brief project proposal for resource generation and implementing planned solutions.
- To introduce a participatory process and commence a continuous dialogue between the LA and community members/stakeholders. Stimulate joint initiatives for long-term partnerships and promote good governance elements.
- Incorporate basic governance principles into the LA so that better partnerships can be developed between the LA and citizen groups.

Target Group/Participants: Representative(s) of citizen committees, Traders' Associations, CBOs, NGOs, Women's Groups, Environmental Groups, Senior Citizens, Community Leaders, Members of the Clergy, School Community and other relevant organizations.

Facilitators: Senior trainers, trained facilitators attached to the LA.

Expected Outputs: Following a participatory community consultation, problem analysis and community planning for solutions, identify a brief project proposal to resolve a burning issue (e.g. solid waste management).

Dates/Time : To be decided.

Venue: e.g. a village training centre/community hall.

Tentative Agenda

Date/Time	Session	Description/Activities
	Background work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background/preparatory work. • Discussions with key staff. • Field visits/understand issues. • Interviewing a cross-section of participants. • Revisiting PCC modules. • Reviewing previous experience. • Logistical arrangements.
	Background work	<p>Briefing programme for the facilitators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of the workshop (e.g. identification of a priority issue through a community consultative process). • Workshop procedure. • Participatory process to be followed. • Major steps to be followed - templates to be used. • Major content of the workshop. • Priority and focus areas. • Role of the facilitators. • Role of the participants. • Groupwork. • Process documentation. • Logistical arrangements (seating, food/refreshments, financial limitations). • Questions/answers. • Consensus and wrap-up. <p>(Facilitators will prepare detail session plans/templates etc.)</p>
	Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening ceremony. • Welcome. • Lighting traditional oil lamp. • Introduction to the workshop. • Keynote address – by Chairman Pradesha Sabha. • Address by opposition leader, council members present.
	Session 2	<p>Participants' expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming participants' expectations. • Matching participants' expectations with the workshop objectives.

	Session 3	<p>Problem identification, assessment and analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of major/priority problem (e.g. solid waste generation, collection and transport). • Presentation of problems in the visual form (e.g. artwork). • In-depth analysis/problems at group level. • Listing down/prioritizing/summarizing issues (problem tree).
	Session 4	<p>Objective setting at group level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further/deep analysis of identified issues. • Objective setting (objective tree)/priority objectives. • Setting specific objectives. • Identification of possible interventions. <p>Note: Pay attention to citizen participation, role of the LA, gender balance approach, good governance, legal requirements and marginalized groups. Also look at the integrated approach and collaborative efforts with other agencies.</p> <p>Group presentations.</p>
	Session 5	Interim consensus and wrap up.
	Session 6	<p>De-briefing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini ORID for revisiting the proceedings of previous day. • List down participants' responses. • Bridge gaps and set up groups for planning.
	Session 7	<p>Planning interventions/activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisiting objectives. • Identification of relevant activities. • Planning details (activities, time, responsibility, resource requirements). <p>Note: Pay attention to resources available at community level and contributions from other stakeholders. Also, identify sub-activities.</p> <p>Priority setting and budgeting (prepare estimated expenditure and possible contributions) and prepare a tentative time frame.</p>
	Session 8	<p>Discussion on project preparation and management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a group to prepare the proposal. • Assign group responsibility and time frame. <p>Note: Discuss elements in the project proposal - governance principles, LA/citizen partnerships, citizen representation in committees and participatory management of project activities.</p>
	Session 9	<p>Wrap-up workshop - agreement/consensus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite political leadership to make a statement of commitment. <p>Conclude the workshop and thank everyone for their participation.</p>

ANNEX C - HOW TO COACH AND EXTEND BACKSTOPPING SUPPORT

Experience shows that coaching helps LAs improve, develop, learn new skills, achieve aims and manage organizational change and challenges.

Coaching

The process of coaching is different from training. Coaching draws out rather than puts in. It develops, rather than imposes. It reflects, rather than directs. Coaching is reactive, flexible and enabling, not prescriptive or instructional. Coaching is non-judgmental. It helps people and organizations to develop and grow in a variety of areas, resulting in self-fulfilment and self-discovery. Coaching is about getting the very best out of organizations and enabling them to make decisions that will improve their performance. Coaching is unlike training, consultancy, advising or providing a professional service in which work is completed on behalf of a client.

In coaching, listening is more important than talking. By listening, people can be helped to overcome their fears, be offered complete objectivity and given undivided attention and unparalleled support. This leads to the intuitive questioning that allows the client to explore his/her own situation.

Coaching is a two-way process. While listening is crucial, so is being able to interpret and reflect back in ways that remove barriers, pre-conceptions, bias and negativity. Communicating well enables trust and meaningful understanding on both sides. Good coaching uses communication, not to give the client the answers, but to help the client find the answers for themselves.

A coach's ability to build rapport with people is vital. Compared to other services, rapport-building is made far easier in coaching because the coach's only focus is the client.

Coaches motivate and inspire people and this ability lies within us all. It is borne of a desire to help and support. People who feel ready to help others are normally able to motivate and inspire. When people receive attention and personal investment from a coach towards their well-being and development, this in itself motivates and inspires them.

Coaching patterns vary according to a person's need, circumstances and timing. There is no single set formula for a coaching relationship. Remembering that everyone is different and has different needs is an essential part of being a coach.

Coaching is client-led, which means that emotions have to be tapped-into from the very beginning of the process. It is crucial to have the flexibility to react to people's differences, along with the curiosity and interest to understand fundamental issues in people's lives.

Coaching in LAs

Coaching in LAs focuses on promoting a democratic dialogue. It emphasizes expression of democratic values, and as a generative mechanism, a means of creating efficient discourse using strategic measures and solutions, transparency and consensus. It also focuses on learning processes, which strengthen participation and communication and thus leads to broadly-based skills enhancement.

The ideal results of coaching:

- Development of attitudes and skills.
- Creating an atmosphere of trust and confidence.
- Listening to counterparts (active listening).

- Clarifying problems, needs and challenges.
- Communicating and exploring options.
- Prioritizing between options and reach conclusions.
- Implement conclusions.
- Offer feedback.
- Evaluating personal and organizational performance.

Coaching will also develop fertile approaches for participatory development processes and unite different parties, groups and levels of administration and/or community to work towards common goals.

Coaching takes place in the following areas:

- Improvement of efficiency and effectiveness in management systems.
- Citizen Participation and incorporation of their priorities into planning.
- Effective service delivery for citizens.

