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Developing a Participatory Community Goal Identification Process
Foundation for Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Detailed in this paper is the process followed by a project team of graduate students in the MNA and MPA program at the University of San Francisco. They worked cooperatively with the Foundation for Sustainable Development (FSD) on a consulting project for a pilot Development Practicum course under faculty advisor Dr. Marco Tavanti. The purpose of the project was to develop a community goal identification process that would serve as a baseline for FSD to better evaluate their effectiveness in completing their mission of pursuing community-driven goals founded on an asset-based methodology. The project resulted in the production of a *Participatory Community Goal Identification Process Facilitator Handbook* piloted at FSD's Jinja, Uganda site office to great success.

The development of the process began with an extensive literature review where the project team defined the Human Rights Based Approach and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) as a framework and Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as the methodology they would use to build the tool. The tools and format used in PRA were combined with the question formation of AI to create a six phase process for identifying community goals. Some challenges identified by the project team were ensuring project goal alignment, the issue of distance from the site, understanding community power dynamics, limited sampling, and the use of technical language.

Keywords: Asset Based Community Development, Participatory Rural Appraisal, Appreciative Inquiry, International Development, Community Empowerment

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Introduction

Foundation for Sustainable Development (FSD) is a San Francisco-based nonprofit dedicated to achieving community-driven goals through asset-based development and international exchange in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Foundation for Sustainable Development, 2015).

Through the University of San Francisco's Social Impact Practicum course, instructed by Marco Tavanti, Ph.D., FSD partnered with graduate student project team: Molly Brennan, Shelly Helgeson, and Danielle Lam. Together, FSD and the project team worked collaboratively to identify the most effective partnership solutions with consideration to resources, time constraints, and implementation.

This report chronicles the scope of work including the project issue, literature review, methods, data analysis, and recommendations for future student project teams collaborating with FSD. The following sections detail the evolution of the project team and FSD's partnership in creating the final deliverable -- *Participatory Community Goal Identification Process: Facilitator Handbook*.

Issue

Consultative Process

In September 2015, the project team interviewed FSD Executive Director, Lisa Kuhn, and exchanged emails regarding project expectations and scope of work. The project team worked diligently to catalogue concerns, challenges, and limitations conveyed by Director Kuhn. Based on initial correspondence and provided materials, FSD sought to measure and track its impact in their eleven international program

locations spanning across Argentina, Bolivia, India, Kenya, Nicaragua, and Uganda. Director Kuhn emphasized the importance of understanding and measuring the local residents' progress towards attaining its community-driven goals.

In October 2015, Director Kuhn involved program managers, Keiko Pines and Devin Graves, to contribute and shape the evolving project. The project team met at the FSD headquarters to discuss the timeline and deliverables. At this meeting it was decided that the project team would develop a participatory process and supporting materials to collect the community priorities in all of FSD's program locations. The participatory process would be piloted in Jinja, Uganda. Feedback was solicited from the program staff in Jinja, Margaret Nassozi Amanyire and Jonan Nandolo, to adjust for cultural sensitivities and implementation purposes. The project team continued to drive efforts towards creating applicable and effective community priority survey tools for FSD.

Issue Identification

The project team and FSD identified the overarching partnership goal to be measuring FSD's impact in all of its program sites located. FSD has overseen development programs for twenty years, but they have lacked accurate data and tracking mechanisms. The organization has not yet proven its impact and social return on investment (SROI). FSD requested that the project team create solutions to address this issue. While strategizing, the project team faced four main barriers: 1) identifying an appropriate project, 2) theoretical integration of the mission statement, 3) creating an instrument for international communities, 4) timeline constraints.

- 1. *Identifying an Appropriate Project.*** Given the limited time-frame, the project team and FSD faced challenges in identifying an appropriate project that served the organization's needs and provided a meaningful student learning experience. It was important to create a scope of work that was a useful tool for the organization but still applicable for a graduate student group project of 12 weeks.
- 2. *Theoretical Integration of the Mission Statement.*** The overarching project goal was to measure FSD's impact on multiple communities in an international context. Therefore, measuring external organizational impact involved marking achievement rates and alignment with the mission statement. FSD's mission statement is to achieve community-driven goals through asset-based development. For example, if Jinja, Uganda residents identify public safety as a community goal, it then becomes FSD's organizational goal to empower Ugandans in making their neighborhoods safer. Also, FSD embraces asset-based development, meaning solutions are created from strengths that already exist within the community. It was important for the project team to understand FSD's mission statement in order to propose effective solutions.
- 3. *Creating an Instrument for International Communities.*** The project team was challenged with creating solutions that were culturally appropriate, accessible for staff, and resource-appropriate. It was difficult to develop a participatory tool for a foreign, international community with limited cultural insight and experience. The project team relied heavily on the feedback and suggestions from on-site Ugandan program staff, Margaret Nassozi Amanyire and Jonan Nandolo. Cultural nuances that impacted the project design included: the separation

between genders to ensure survey integrity, collecting feedback from illiterate participants, and the specific wording of survey questions.

4. *Timeline Constraints.* The project design, implementation, and pilot feedback was condensed in three months to fit within a school semester. Additionally, FSD proposed a complicated and long-standing challenge to be addressed within a limited time frame. Even with the given constraints, the project team scaled the project and created solutions and deliverables that proved useful to FSD in accordance with the described timeline.

Plan Outline & Timeline

- **September 10, 2015** - Through an online forum, the project team met with Director Kuhn to discuss FSD's needs and project expectations.
- **September 25, 2015** - The project team presented a preliminary plan to Director Kuhn and the FSD team.
- **October 15, 2015** - The project team met with Director Kuhn and program staff, Keiko Picnes and Devin Graves, to present the first revised plan and timeline.
- **November 5, 2015** - The project team presented the second revised plan to Director Kuhn, Devin Graves, Keiko Picnes, and on-site program staff, Margaret Nassozi Amanyire and Jonan Nandolo.
- **November 16, 2015** - The project team delivered final project plan including revisions/feedback from the Executive Director, San Francisco Program Staff, and On-site Jinja Program Staff.
- **December 1, 2015** - The project team received feedback from FSD staff on Jinja pilot implementation.

- **December 5, 2015** - The project team submitted the final report, presented the project with presentation and poster visuals.

Research Question

The project team was required to address numerous challenges when tasked with designing a participatory survey tool for an international community to be piloted in Jinja, Uganda. The challenges were centered around cultural sensitivities, resource limitations, and validating data accuracy and authenticity. Despite minor barriers, the main research question that drove the project design was described as:

What methods and tools are used to create an asset-based participatory instrument to acquire community goals and priorities that are appropriate and culturally flexible in multiple international settings; and what does that instrument look like?

Cultural Sensitivities

FSD operates eleven program locations in six countries. Creating a tool that is flexible and adaptable for multiple international cultures is important for effectiveness and implementation. Questions that shaped the project design in terms of cultural sensitivities include:

- How should survey participants be grouped?
- What is the most comfortable technique to answer open ended questions?
- How are food or other incentives viewed in terms of participatory events?

Resource Limitations

It was challenging to design a tool that was cost effective, required minimal staff time, and wasn't duplicative of existing efforts. The project team constantly designed with awareness to limited budgets and stretched staff bandwidth. FSD staff emphasized the need for clarity and step-by-step instructions to ensure accurate implementation and minimize speculation. Questions that shaped the project design in terms of resource limitations include:

- What materials are available at FSD's Jinja, Uganda site?
- What is the percentage of staff time available for project implementation?
- What steps require more detail and clarification?
- Will there be challenges in recruiting community members as participants?

Data Validation

The project team worked rigorously to create safeguards that vetted the accuracy of the submitted data. FSD staff raised concerns about the authenticity of answers from community members. According to the SF FSD staff, the culture of Ugandans is to typically provide responses they believe are desired by the administrator rather than true reflections of their feelings/thoughts. Questions that shaped the project design in terms of data validation include:

- How can the project team collect raw data from the participatory survey?
- What techniques can be used to encourage honest responses from community members?

- What training methods are recommended for on-site staff data interpretation and project implementation?

Literature Review

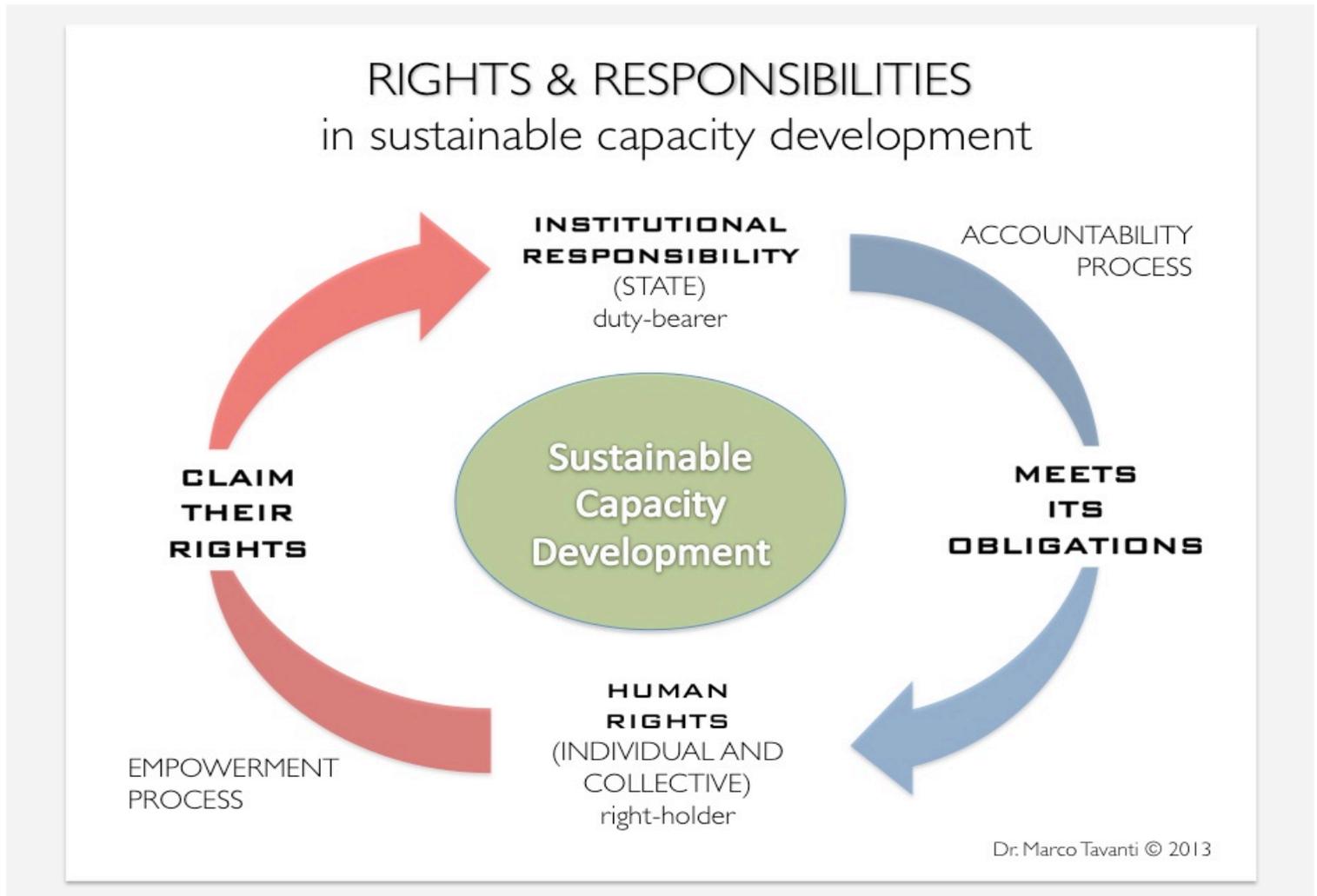
To gain further insights into the research question, the project team extracted the following sub-questions which guided their extensive literature review.

- What are the accepted approaches for international development and how does FSD's Asset-Based approach guide the search for applicable methods and tools?
- What method or methods will ensure that survey results are community-driven?
- What questions will extract the largest number of genuine answers about community priorities?
- How does one respect cultural norms and empower community residents while still obtaining desired outcomes?

Each question led the team to different areas of study concerning the design and implementation of an evaluation conducted in developing communities. Limited research has been conducted on specifically acquiring community-driven goals and even less in underdeveloped communities. Therefore, the project team consulted industry accepted international development theory and methods that could provide cross-over to a participatory community goal identification process. The literature review spanned topics including needs and asset-based assessments, capacity building, and impact evaluation methods employed in rural and/or underdeveloped regions.

Human Rights Based Approach

When designing the Participatory Goal Identification Process requested by FSD, the project team sought to identify whether FSD's asset-based approach aligned with internationally accepted and recommended development practices. Through research, the project team chose the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to use as a lens to view the process of development as recommended by the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights. Human rights are applied in HRBA as defined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* drafted at the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 (www.un.org, n.d.) The HRBA is based on the theory that nonprofits and NGO's should work to build the capacity of the duty bearers, generally defined as government actors, to provide the human rights of the rights bearers, defined as the citizens. Additionally, NGO's should also build the capacity of the rights bearers to claim their rights from the duty bearers (www.ohchr.org, 2007).



The principles of HRBA include; recognizing that the fulfillment of human rights is the goal of development; people are recognized as agents of their own development; participation is a means as well as a goal; strategies must be empowering; monitoring and evaluation are required; programs must focus on marginalized groups; development should be owned by the local people; development programs should reduce disparities; identification and analysis of root causes is necessary to solve development issues; analysis should involve all stakeholders; programs must build strategic partnerships; national accountability must be built to support human rights; and

human rights should guide measurable targets, goals, and indicators (www.unfpa.org, n.d.). The asset-based approach of community-driven development used by FSD qualifies as one of many HRBAs.

Asset-Based Community Development

Prior to developing the process, the project team gained a comprehensive understanding of FSD's asset-based approach with its community groups and residents. The asset-based approaches to community development, also referred to as asset-based community development (ABCD), may be categorized as an HRBA. ABCD focuses on identifying and building upon existing assets and capacities of individuals, communities, associations, and institutions (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). The needs-based, also known as, the "top down approach" is commonly used in development projects. The needs-based approach concentrates on what a community lacks, often discouraging and disempowering the people from acting on their own behalf (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1996). Alternatively, ABCD, "a bottom up strategy", nurtures strengths and assets, leading to a common vision created by community members who then take positive action to improve their lives (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003).

The five building blocks of ABCD are 1) mapping a community's assets and capacities, 2) convening a broadly representative community group, 3) building relationships, 4) mobilizing community assets, and 5) leveraging activities, resources, and investments from external sources (Community Assets 2010). During implementation, the role of the outsider (an NGO in FSD's case) is that of the facilitator to catalyze the process of community driven development through trainings and support

(Butterfield & Yebeabat, 2012). When the outsider listens, they can then learn what financial, human, and technological resources can be provided (Green, 2006).

Additionally, ABCD is considered to be an ongoing process, not just a means to an end. This process is composed of a number of methods, such as appreciative inquiry and community organizing to enable the process (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003).

ABCD was originally developed in an urban setting in the United States during the 1990's. There was initial distrust of ABCD's utility for developing countries in both urban and rural settings because it was initially used in the United States. Nevertheless, it has been successfully applied internationally in economic, agricultural, and social capital projects, such as self-reliant village developments in Zambia, Kenya, and Tanzania (Bergendall, 2003).

Additionally, ABCD has been applied to community developments in the urban slums of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and rural San Juan La Laguna, Guatemala to reduce malnutrition in indigenous populations (Butterfield, Kebede & Gessesse, 2009; Kadetz, 2014). It has been used in larger organizational contexts by Oxfam Canada in Ethiopia, in Tanzania by World Vision, and in Nepal by Private Agencies Cooperating Together (Coady International Institute, 2002). Since ABCD can be successfully applied in international rural and urban development contexts, the project team moved forward with research about participatory approaches, methods, and tools used in community-driven international development.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

The project team selected Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) as the foundational framework for the project design based on the insights provided by FSD staff in regards to the varied populations living in their program sites. According to Luo and Liu (2014), evaluation needs to be culturally responsive and rooted in the setting where the program will be implemented. They suggest that the appropriate use of methods derived from a PRA approach help generate data that is relevant and meaningful for evaluation purposes (Luo & Liu, 2014).

PRA is defined as an “intensive, systematic but semi-structured learning experience carried out in a community by a multidisciplinary team which includes community members” (Theis & Grady, 1991, p. 23). In their article on conducting program evaluation in rural China, Luo and Liu propose that PRA has two distinct elements (2014). It must be facilitatory and participatory in nature and have the intended outcome of empowering the local people of a community. PRA also refers to a family of methodologies that enable local people in both rural and urban areas to share, discuss, define, and analyze knowledge of their own lives and conditions. PRA can facilitate the process for local people to plan and take action to improve their communities. It’s general methods include but, are not limited to, site mapping and modeling, diagramming, matrix scoring, seasonal calendaring, wealth ranking and goal defining (Chambers, 1994a).

PRA was born out of more outsider-dominant approaches such as activist and action participatory research, agro-ecosystem analysis, applied anthropology, field research on farming systems, and rapid rural appraisal (RRA). Its methods emphasize

the exact opposite principles of its predecessor practices from “top-down to bottom-up, from centralized standardization to local diversity, and from blueprint to learning process” (Chambers, 1994a, p. 953). Due to the xenophobic attitudes of past researchers, it was not until the 1990s that PRA was recognized as a valid approach to development. The paradigm behind PRA is that local people must be the dominant participants in all steps of the method and own the entire process.

The 3 Pillars of PRA

PRA paradigm of local involvement consists of three mutually reinforcing pillars. “PRA done well generates synergies: the three pillars – methods, behaviour, and attitudes, and sharing and partnership – reinforce each other; participatory training sets the style for participation in the field; and adoption of the behaviour and principles of PRA, like the methods, can spread and catalyse other good changes” (Chambers, 1997, p. 210).

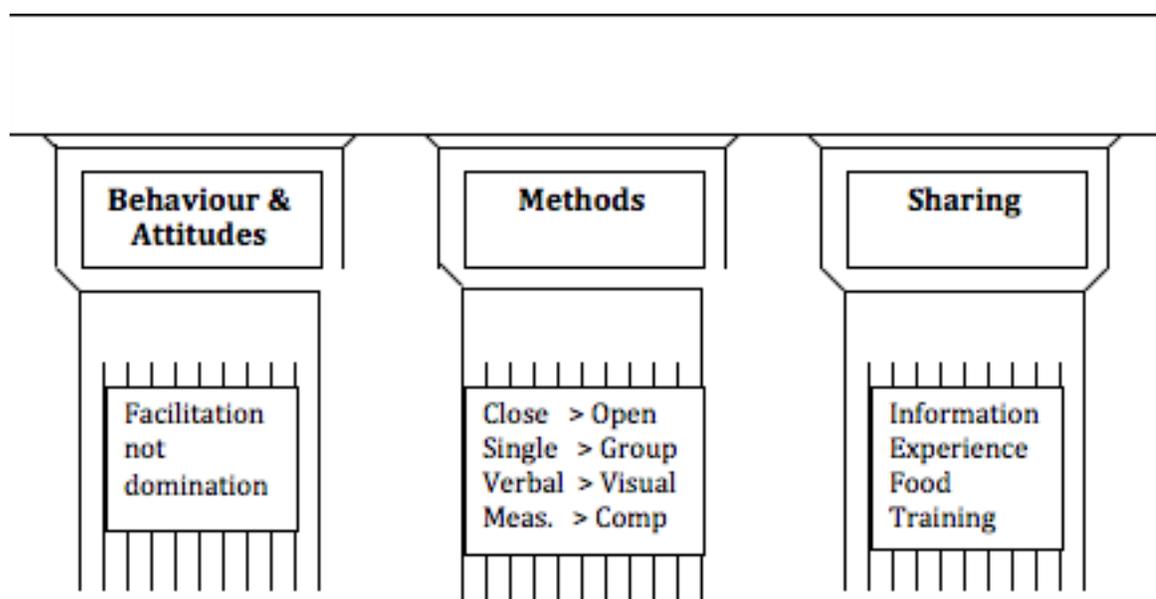


Image: (adapted from Mascarenhas *et al.*, 1991)

Ideally, PRA should be used by facilitators during all stages of a project cycle including: identification, analysis, planning as well as monitoring and evaluation. According to Luo and Liu's accounts conducting PRA approaches in rural China (2014), PRA encourages participation of all stakeholders, empowers the disadvantaged and women, and enables a great deal of information to be generated relatively quickly. Additionally, the validation and feedback meeting aspects within PRA methods engage relevant stakeholders in the evaluation process, increasing their buy-in results.

However, if a community was influenced by previous non-participatory development projects, its members may be skeptical of new evaluation efforts due to unmet expectations in the past. Harnessing the three pillars of PRA can help to build trust and ensure the participation of local people throughout the entire project cycle.

The Role of Facilitator in PRA

The turning point that enabled PRA to flourish was the realization that the validity of results extracted from PRA methods rely more heavily on the behavior and attitudes of outsiders facilitating than on the method of evaluation employed (Chambers, 1994b). Ison and Webber (1994) explained that each step of PRA must be conducted through the perspective of the local people, and not through the lens of the facilitators, even at the early problem formulation stage. The facilitator's role in PRA is to learn about the local people and observe outcomes, as opposed to interjecting their own opinions or conceptual understandings onto the people. Throughout the participatory process, it is vital to ensure that not one participant voice, facilitator voice, or participant sub-group be

viewed as more important. Rather all voices should be assigned the same weight (Ison & Webber, 1994,). In a later review of the innovations produced by PRA, Chambers identified four salient activities defined by facilitators of PRA that often bring success: a trust in local people's capabilities, the value of relaxed rapport exuding from facilitators, the use of diagramming and visual sharing, and the power of sequencing in phases and methods. (Chambers, 1994b).

Accuracy of Data within PRA

Chambers' analysis identifies the advantage PRA methods have over traditional survey collection and other methods of quantitative analysis. PRA often values group discussion and workshops over individual interviews. They tend to be dominated by one or two minority voices, but the advantages of group discussion outweigh this risks. Group discussions have the ability to provide a larger frame of reference, with more perspectives and shared knowledge. Also, contrary to common conceptions, local people are sometimes more willing to talk about sensitive or taboo topics in groups as opposed to interview situations, where they are alone (Chambers, 1994b).

In their formative article "Reversing the Paradigm," Chambers and Mayoux (2005) indicate that participatory approaches have the ability to generate accurate quantitative data and capture, "local priorities, different experiences of poor people and potential innovation in relation to causality and attribution" (Chambers & Mayoux, 2005, p. 272). The authors argued that past quantitative methods such as survey taking and measurement of, "before and after situations for random samples with control groups," rarely met the full needs of a community evaluation (Chambers & Mayoux, 2005, p.

272). Rather, with pro-poor development in mind, participatory approaches generate data that more accurately reflects the reality of the community by ensuring perspectives of all subgroups of a population are considered. PRA offers various tools that can be used for data collection and data validation. One such tool is triangulation, which occurs in PRA during community workshops and when participatory visualization tools are employed, including semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, mapping and modeling, seasonal calendar creation, and diagrams (Abdullah, et. al 2012; Mayoux, 2003).

However, Chambers (1994c) warns that a common mistake facilitators make in PRA is empowering some groups to further disempower others. Chambers, as well as researchers Swift and Umar (1994), make the suggestion to use methods that identify the weak and minority populations, so they are empowered and equity is served. Differentiating participants by sub-group (i.e. gender, interest, socioeconomic status) is one method that can be used in PRA to empower the weak by providing a comfortable atmosphere for minorities to form a collective voice. This applied to the project team's development of the community-driven goal identification process in that they provided the option for facilitators to divide discussion groups according to power dynamics defined by community social norms, thus increasing the likelihood that minority voices would be heard.

Transformative Reflection

Reflection is a key principle of PRA in effecting long-term change and facilitating collaborative action towards meaningful community outcomes (Brown, Edwards &

Roberts, 2015; Ison & Webber, 1994; Maturana, 1988). Ison and Webber (2015) drew on their work in the rural Kyeambe Valley in Australia to guide the design and implementation of PRA within a community workshop context by linking the notion of theory to practice. They warned that “interpretation by others can be as distorted from our own understanding as in a side-show ‘funny’ mirror” (Ison & Webber, 2015, p.114). This risk indicates that when designing a PRA workshop, it is easy for facilitators to mistakenly invite participants to reflect on their own understandings “in the light of other people’s (the team’s) interpretations” and that the role of a facilitator should be to “merely to throw their ideas and interpretations into the ring” when facilitating a reflection exercise (Ison & Webber, 2015, p. 115).

Ison and Webber suggest the use of critical reflection on two levels of PRA: on opportunities for action and on the process itself. The purpose for the latter reflection is for the facilitators to emphasize the value of the participants’ understanding and to incorporate the received feedback into improving the process design as the project team hopes to do with the FSD community participants. The authors remark that an invitation for participants of PRA to reconceptualize their perspectives on local issues is “a key step in initiating a process of taking action. Implicit in the workshop process design is the acknowledgement that people are not to be divorced from the process of assimilating and making sense of data in their own right as they develop their own themes or issues” (Ison & Webber, 2015, p. 115).

Heron and Reason’s (2001) Cooperative Inquiry (COI), a strand of PRA that used inquiry cycles to move participants several times between reflection and action, has influenced recent research in transforming collective change. Brown et al., (2015)

adapted COI to develop a four phase participatory process that invited local participants in rural Tanzania to reflect on the process, how to improve the process, and what was learned at each stage of the exercise. “The goal of this inquiry process was to generate practical knowledge that produced change in the lives of all co-researchers and those with whom they interacted in the inquiry process such as their community” (Brown et al., p. 370). The use of COI was also effective in creating democratic dialogue when addressing community issues within the group of participants, while also encouraging the creation of supportive community networks among participants with differing experiences and backgrounds, a concept introduced in “Introduction to Action Research” (Greenwood and Levin, 2007).

Webber and Ison (2015) note that change is multidimensional in PRA and can be hard to define or attribute to a traditional cause-effect relationship. Rather, they postulated that change, in regards to PRA, has longer term implications that include the willingness of local people to be involved in an ongoing conversation, altered relationships among participants, and participants feeling valued. The authors state that these changes occur when a facilitation team invites participants to ‘critically reflect’ (p. 129). The argument that critical reflection creates a deeper relationship between participants and participatory evaluation, and serves as a catalyst for action, convinced the project team that reflection was a necessary phase of their goal identification process.

Appreciative Inquiry

PRA provided an effective structure to build the framework for the Participatory Community Goal Identification Process, but while all asset-based approaches are required to be participatory, not all participatory approaches are necessarily asset-based. In this case, the project team needed to find a methodology for a qualitative data collection instrument to combine the structure of PRA with the philosophy of ABCD. In her response to the *Appreciating Assets* report by the International Association for Community Development (2011), Ingrid Burkett (2011) stated that there is a danger in highlighting techniques and tools above methodology and stressed the needs for combining approaches and finding points of intersection. Burkett believes that without, “an intentional articulation of the processes and principles that guide developmental work, such tools may only be partly useful (p.576).” The project team made an effort to blend the components of existing approaches, methods, and tools, by choosing Appreciative Inquiry as the underlying methodology for the *Participatory Community Goal Identification Process: Facilitator Handbook*.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a strengths-based methodology rooted in positive psychology, developed in the 1980's by David Cooperrider under the tutelage of Suresh Srivastva, at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio (Cooperrider, 1986). The first successful use of AI was at a clinic in Cleveland, OH (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). Appreciative Inquiry was first developed as a method of Participatory Action Research (PAR) to be applied in organizational development. PAR is a combination of Action Research, the search for practical knowledge to help people's daily lives, and Cooperative Inquiry, working *with* and not *for* people (Reason & Bradbury, 2008; Heron

& Reason, 2001). As an asset-based participatory method, AI fit the needs of FSD and the project team.

The theoretical underpinnings of the research method are based on grounded theory and the paradigm of social constructivism. Grounded theory is a strategy of qualitative research used to determine general abstract theories by analyzing common categories, themes, and patterns from observational data (Creswell, Hanson, Clark & Morales, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The inquiry process used by grounded theory works in the reverse of traditional scientific approaches, first collecting data and then forming a hypothesis after the analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The social constructivist theory combines the concepts of relativist ontology, transactional and subjectivist epistemology, and hermeneutic and dialectic methodology. In other words, this set of methods functions with the assumption that there are multiple realities, the researcher and participants were interactively linked, and that reality can be drawn out and clarified through the interactions of the researcher and the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Nyaupane & Poudel, 2012). This method parallels the community driven participatory basis of ABCD and PRA.

AI engages the above concepts of inquiry, participation, and co-creation and combines them with positive psychology, the study of strengths and virtues in individuals and societies (Seilgman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The combined concepts were used to create a set of five principles that guide the practice of AI. See the table below created by Carazas, Mann, and Silbert that they used to guide an appreciative consulting process regarding Liberian community forestry (2011).

| AI Principle | Definition |
|-------------------------------|--|
| The Constructionist Principle | Knowledge and destiny are interwoven. The way we know is fateful. |
| The Principle of Simultaneity | Inquiry and change are not separate. Inquiry is intervention. |
| The Anticipatory Principle | Our images of the future guide our current behavior. Positive image, positive action. |
| The Poetic Principle | Human organizations and systems are open books. What we choose to focus on grows. |
| The Positive Principle | Momentum for change requires a great deal of positive affect. Organizations move in the direction of the questions they ask. |

(Carazas, Mann & Silbert, 2011)

The principles are meant to guide the researcher/facilitator's perspective on how they interacted with participants as well as their behavior and question construction for data collection.

AI The 4-D Model

The 4-D Model, also known as the 4-D Process or Cycle, is defined by the four D's of Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999; Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2003). This model provided a framework to create questions from an asset-based perspective. The first phase in the cycle is "Discovery", beginning with an appreciation of what gives life. This phase guided the creation of questions that seek to divine what is the best of what has been and what is. The second phase, "Dream", invited participants to imagine what could be. This phase facilitates the creation of questions that can foster visioning a positive future. The third phase, "Design", encourages participants to develop innovative ideas of what should be. Questions can be formulated to encourage participants to elucidate exactly how their vision can manifest in concrete form. Phase four, "Destiny", involves the participants delivering an action plan of how they will make their dream a reality. Facilitation

questions are formulated around the theme of “What will we do?” (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2003).

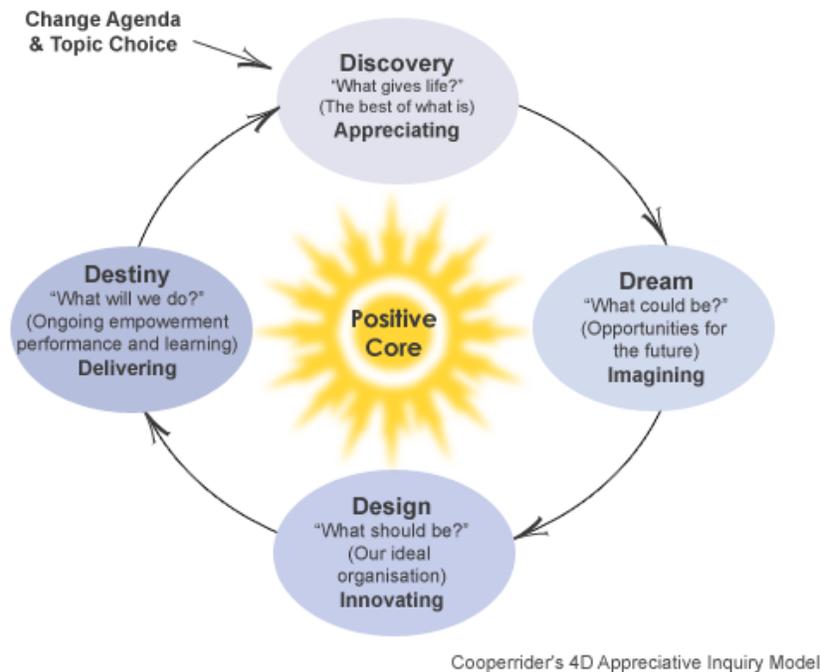


Image: http://www.tmiaust.com.au/what_we_do/appreciative_inquiry.htm

There are also two other models constructed around the 4-D process, namely, the EnCompass Model and the Mohr/Jacobsgaard 4-I Model. These two models follow a similar cycle, but use the terms Inquire, Imagine, Innovate, and Implement (Preskill & Catsambas, 2006; Watkins & Mohr, 2001). In their analysis, the project team focused on the first two phases of the 4-D model to formulate their questions for the community goal setting process.

Appreciative Inquiry: Application in International Development

AI began in the United States as a tool of organizational development, but Cooperrider saw its potential in international development from the beginning. In 1990, Cooperrider was part of a team along with Ada Jo Mann, Jane Watkins, and Claudia

Liebler to create an AI focused program to increase the capacity of leaders at international development organizations (Mann, 2011). From 1994 to 2000 the United States Agency for International Development funded the Global Excellence in Management (GEM) Initiative providing their AI leadership training for over 1,000 NGO leaders, in over 200 organizations in 52 countries (Mann, 2011). Since that time the use of AI has spread throughout the developing world as an effective method of inquiry and community development.

The first case studies were published in 1999 when Charles Elliot wrote *Locating the Energy for Change*, a book detailing his success using AI in a rural international development context in Mauritania Villages. One of his arguments was that AI considerably enriched PRA because the use of problem focused thinking was hampering the motivations of the people to be benefited by development projects. He proposes that sustainable development can only result from a community vision of a positive future building on the reality of what is (Elliot, 1999). AI continues to be used around the world in a multitude of locations such as Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nepal, South India, South Africa, and Ecuador (Figueroa, 2015; Jacobsgaard & Norlund, 2011).

Following the literature review, the project team integrated the AI method as a basis for the development of the survey instrument in the Participatory Community Goal Identification Process. The final decision was made when they encountered Elliot's statement regarding his experience in applying AI in a rural development context. "What made the difference was the form of the questions and the ensuing conversation, rather than the precise design of the research tool (1999, p. 200)." Additionally, Jacobsgaard and Norlund (2011), two long-time practitioners identify AI as, "not only participatory but

also inclusive and empowering. Furthermore, it does not negate other approaches rather it supplements human capital very nicely (p. 81).”

The project team used a framework of PRA that allowed for a culturally competent approach to create a participatory atmosphere. The design succeeded in creating a comfort level and power dynamic of increased equality between program staff and community members. The integrated AI method developed a line of questioning that would promote the visioning and creation of a positive sustainable future for community members by identifying community goals and priorities. FSD can use these goals and priorities to develop their organizational strategy for the future and communicate this information to their donors with the knowledge that their work and priority setting is community-driven and asset-based in both theory and action.

Methodology

Part One:

Understanding the importance of the implementation of theory into practice, the project team conducted interviews with several seasoned practitioners within the field of international development. They also conducted an extensive analysis of case studies (Abdullah, Awang, Bakar, Liu, Noor, & Sulehan, 2012; Adamowski, Halbe, Inam, Prasher, 2015; Brown, Edwards, & Roberts, 2015; Ison, & Webber, 1995; Kuzmin, 2012; Lui & Luo, 2014; Mayoux, 2009; Swift & Umar, 1994) involving participatory needs assessment, trainings, and evaluation conducted in rural or developing communities. These insights into the design and implementation of participatory processes provided the project team with best practices and common pitfalls when

designing and implementing a participatory method in a developing community. Two professionals interviewed by the team, Alexandria Wise, Associate Director of Shuraako and Alexander Marr, Project Coordinator at UCSF's Center for AIDS Prevention Studies, were particularly candid with their insights, and divulged a plethora of "lessons learned" from their personal experiences working with various rural and urban communities on the African continent. They offered guidance on culturally sensitive approaches and provided samples of industry handbooks and tools for conducting participatory evaluations developed by leading organizations in international development including the U.S. Peace Corps, One Earth Future Foundation, and the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of California, San Francisco. The case studies outlined in detail the methodology employed by researchers in communities with similar characteristics to the program sites of FSD.

The project team dissected each methodology and retained the elements that were relevant to identifying community goals in communities. These two sources of information, along with the scholarly research outlined in the literature review, became the key factors that informed the project team in developing their Participatory Community Goal Identification Process for the use of FSD.

Part Two:

The second phase of methodology consisted of piloting the newly designed Participatory Community Goal Identification Process in Jinja, Uganda. The local FSD staff conducted the process four times, with four different community subgroups including a men's group, a women's group, elders, and youth. Each time they collected

valuable participant feedback to deliver to the project team. In addition, the FSD staff provided an evaluation of the process, indicating the successes and challenges of the methodology and design. They also identified areas that needed improvement. The project team analyzed this feedback and made enhancements to the final *Participatory Community Goal Identification Process: Facilitator Handbook*, which will serve as the key tool for FSD to obtain community-driven goals in all of its program sites.

Data Collection

At the 2008 World Bank Independent Evaluation Group Conference, *Measuring Development Effectiveness: Progress and Constraints*, Michael Patton stated “the methodological gold standard here is appropriateness, not any one particular method” (Patton, 2008, cited in Rogers, 2009, p. 218). This remark inspired the researcher team to collect data from many evaluation methods that fell under the umbrella of PRA to inform them on the best method or methods to implement in their participatory community goal identification process. The following table reflects the organization of their research during the data collection phase of this project.

Data Analysis

See data tables of tool analysis below.

| Tool Name/ Developers | Method(s) | Locations of Implementation | Summary | Intended Outcomes | Key Components | Advantages & Disadvantages |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| <p>The Diamond Method: Linda Mayoux (2009)</p> | <p>Gender Action Learning System (GALS) - Adapted from Participatory Action Learning System (PALS)</p> | <p>Uganda, Sudan, Pakistan, India & Peru</p> | <p>Explores, identifies & compares women & men's criteria for issues around gender, happiness & empowerment. Ranks & prioritises these as issues for individual, collective & organisational action. Quantifies where participants currently are in relation to each criterion or level</p> | <p>To progressively build organisational structures for collective action & community-led gender advocacy</p> | <p>1. Participants write on cards 3 'best case' & 'worst case' criteria 2. Sharing, grouping & voting of criteria 3. Placement of criteria on the diamond 4. Quantification & Impact Assessment: Participant marks each criteria that relates to them 5. Identify aspects where participants want to see improvement</p> | <p>Advantages: • Flexible • Best when integrated into other methodologies Disadvantages: • Hard to write instructions for novice facilitators</p> |
| <p>PAR Tool (No formal name given): Alistair M. B. Bain, Jandra Edwards & Daniel M. Roberts (2015)</p> | <p>Participatory Action Research/ Cooperative Inquiry</p> | <p>Two rural Tanzanian primary schools (poorest district in nation)</p> | <p>Used to create a community of co-learners, designing the curriculum, collecting data about community identified problems, & requiring all participants to contribute; Student groups disseminate their findings through presentations & an ongoing support system for teacher development in applying a student-centered pedagogy</p> | <p>To increase student school attendance & active engagement, confidence, self-esteem & to teach teachers to incorporate participatory methods of instruction in classrooms</p> | <p>1. Determine issues & problems participants wish to investigate 2. Participants engage scientific data collection, then reflect on methods 3. Participants collect data & analyze findings, then reflect 4. Disseminate findings to others in group & reflect on the process</p> | <p>Advantages: • Involves participants every step of process • Integrates reflection in every phase • Evaluation occurs in real-time Disadvantages: • Has limitations in its application • Hard to implement in large group of participants</p> |
| <p>The Problem & Solution Game: Jeremy Swift & Abdi Noor Umar (1994)</p> | <p>Participatory Pastoral Development</p> | <p>Isiolo, Kenya (rural)</p> | <p>Ranking game based on a well-known & commonly played board game in community; Played by different groups formed by socio-economic status & sometimes gender. Aims to allow these groups to identify their problems, rank them & then list possible solutions in order of priority</p> | <p>To obtain different, yet related, groups of farmers to identify & rank their own problems, & then suggest ways of solving them. Identify how the different wealth groups perceive their problems.</p> | <p>1. Researchers rank community by wealth in order to form groups to play game 2. Researcher makes holes in ground & group labels each hole a problem 3. Group ranks problems by importance 4. Following the theme of game, group prioritizes elements of each problem</p> | <p>Advantages: • Groups are free to select their own problems & priorities • Several groups have expressed enthusiasm for approach to planning Disadvantages: • Time consuming since only small groups can participate at one time • Selected representatives may not give accurate presentation to all individual perspectives</p> |
| <p>PRA Tool (No formal name given): Mehdi Yusef H. Abdullah Noor, Rahmah H. Abri, Bakar, Juneanah, Suleha, Abd Hair, Awang & Ong Puiy Liu (2012)</p> | <p>Participatory Rural Appraisal (no particular str& of PRA was identified)</p> | <p>West Java, Indonesia (rural)</p> | <p>Two level data collection process to gather valuable & reliable primary information from the community</p> | <p>Discover needs & priorities of community for development by program.</p> | <p>1. Group discussions to explore the socio-economic needs of community 2. Researchers conduct transects to identify community problems, similarities</p> | <p>Advantages: • Allows for active participation of community members • Community presents own ideas for development • Facilitates mutual understanding among subgroups - Increases trust & understanding between community & program staff Disadvantages: • Participants need prompting to stimulate discussion • Tend to be dominated by own agenda • Certain voices dominate with own agenda • Failure to take account of stratification in community</p> |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| <p>PATEM: Alexey Kuzmin (2012)</p> | <p>Participatory Training Evaluation Method</p> | <p>Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Russia, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan</p> | <p>A 5 phase participatory process where participants interview each other, analyze data & present on the experience of an evaluation training</p> | <p>To collaboratively evaluate participants' reaction to a given training</p> | <p>1. Introduction & process description - Small groups are assigned one question pertaining to evaluation 2. Data collection- Individuals from each group takes their question & interviews people in another group 3. Data analysis-Participants process & review the collected data, analyze & prepare a presentation 4. Feedback- Representatives of each group present their findings 5. Reflection (optional)- Facilitator poses questions to all participants to evaluate the evaluation training</p> | <p>Advantages: • Provides rich information • Allows to document evaluation findings; • Becomes organic part of training • Makes sense to participants • Is an interesting & exciting group activity • Becomes a part of the learning process • Is flexible enough to accommodate what are often dynamic & less-than-predictable training contexts • Can be used in groups of various sizes Disadvantages: • Requires some preliminary work to identify intended use & users • Not intended for short training events • Limited time for answering questions limits participant's ability to reflect in depth</p> |
| <p>H-Diagram: Lin Liu & Laura Pan Luo (2014)</p> | <p>Participatory Rural Appraisal methods: participatory visualization through diagramming</p> | <p>Hainan, China (rural)</p> | <p>Utilizes "H" diagramming to encourage farmers to present their realities & preferences in regards to an agricultural intervention</p> | <p>To evaluate an agricultural biodiversity management project & assess how the project has affected the community & farmers' lives.</p> | <p>1. Introduction & explanation of purpose 2. Data Collection- Record benefits under "Happy Faces" & pitfalls under "Frown Faces" 3. Data Analyses- Facilitator summarized findings with group & made corrections & additions 4. Scoring- Participants score the success of the project, differentiating answers between men & women 5. Summary- Facilitator review results of scoring & group discusses discrepancies between men & women's scores</p> | <p>Advantages: • Obtains both quantitative & qualitative data • Enables a shared, mutual learning process for all • Rich, important background knowledge, including local culture & customs is obtained • Participants improve their public speaking skills Disadvantages: • Single voices can dominate group discussions • Only obtain bad & good aspects of program • Hard to capture dissenting view points</p> |
| <p>Causal Loop Diagram (CLD): Jan Adamowski, Johannes Halbe, Azhar Imam, & Shiv Prasher (2015)</p> | <p>Stakeholder Analysis & Participatory modeling</p> | <p>Rechna Doab, Pakistan (rural)</p> | <p>Individual causal loop diagrams developed by key stakeholder groups to comprise an overall causal loop diagram of the entire system to support the preparation of an integrated systems perspective</p> | <p>To gain an understanding of all stakeholder perspectives in addressing soil salinity problems</p> | <p>1. Problem definition 2. Stakeholder analysis 3. Stakeholder interviews 4. Construction of individual CLD models 5. Digitize data using Vensim software 6. Construction of an overall group CLD 7. Preparation of simple thematic models from the final merged CLD group model</p> | <p>Advantages: • Alternative to large group discussion setting • SJ stakeholder perspectives are considered Disadvantages: • Complex diagramming • Experienced facilitators are a must • Difficult to follow only written instructions if no prior experience to causal loop diagramming methods • Time consuming • Requires software to compute data collected</p> |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| <p>Semi-Structured Interviews & Participatory Community Workshop (No formal name given): R. L. Ison & Lynn M. Webber (1994)</p> | <p>PRA: Semi-Structured Interviews (SSIs)</p> | <p>Kyeambe Valley, Australia (rural)</p> | <p>Two par approach consisting of data collection through interviews & a community workshop to gauge community identified key problems & needs</p> | <p>To understand community problems & to inform the researchers on an existing program's new direction</p> | <p>Part 1 1. Select landowners at random after grouping by criteria 2. Conduct SSI & transects with selected landowners 3. Research team analyzes interview data & group it into themes Part 2 1. Hold workshop for all landholders 2. Introduction & re-cap what has been learned from SSIs 3. Small Discussion Groups to discuss what has been said & identify concerns & issues 4. Participants nominate most important community issue 5. Participants break into different small groups & discuss each individual's chosen issue 6. Small group discussion on how to improve situation 7. Representative from each small group gives report of results of discussions 8. Thank all participants</p> | <p>Advantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many opportunities for cross checking to ensure accuracy of data • Planning for action/change • Networking opportunities in small groups for participants Disadvantages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming • Some participants may feel excluded or less important than those interviewed • Selected representatives may not give accurate representation of all individual perspectives </p> |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|

Results: Production of the Community Participatory Goal Identification Process

Preparation

Sampling Methodology

The proposed sampling methodology for the Participatory Community Goal Identification Process was intended to create the closest representation of a random sample as possible while accounting for FSD staff limitations, ensuring representation of all community subgroups, and observing cultural norms. Random sampling is not the first priority in PRA. Chambers and Mayoux (2005) explain, “random sampling is not necessarily the best way of countering bias, much less of ensuring that the voices of very poor people are heard (p. 283). Instead the authors suggest that more “carefully designed purposive samples” are more effective in producing useful data to understand the different perspectives within a community and to develop recommendations for pro-poor development. For example, in their work with pastoralists in Kenya, Swift and Umar (1994) found striking differences between subgroups in their PRA priority identification process. Ranked on a scale of 100 being the maximum, a focus group of rich participants scored livestock management as a high priority with 87, while the poor focus group only scored it with only seven (p. 56). Differentiating research communities by interest group, gender, or socio-economic status can empower the typically disempowered by providing “collective awareness and confidence to confront others and argue their case” (Chambers, 1994c). Equipped with this knowledge, the project team did not deem a true random sample as the highest priority for their Participatory

Goal Identification Process. Ensuring the voices of all participants were heard, reigned as most important.

Thus, the project team devised a method of first dividing the community into subgroups that best aligned with the social dynamics of the subject culture (i.e. gender, socioeconomic status, age, interest) and then drew a random sample from each subgroup. This technique of differentiated groups was utilized extensively in the case studies the project team analyzed, including the Diamond Method (Mayoux, 2009), the Problem and Solution Game (Swift & Umar, 1994), the Semi-Structured Interviews (Adamowski, Halbe, Inam, Prasher 2015), and the Causal Loop Diagram and the Participant Community Workshop (Ison & Webber, 1994).

Phase I: Introduction

In designing the elements of the introduction phase, the project team followed the standard PRA recommendation of developing rapport at the onset of the process to set the tone throughout remaining activities. “Rapport is a key to facilitating participation. Relaxed rapport between outsider and villager and some measure of trust are minimum predisposing conditions for PRA” (Chambers, 1994b, p. 1256). The project team suggested establishing rapport by beginning the process with a facilitator led introduction that included a participatory “icebreaker”. The “icebreaker intended to foster name recognition and camaraderie amongst the entire group (Abdullah et al., 2012, Mayoux, 2005).

The project team then recommended that the facilitator review the agenda for the day as exemplified by Ison & Webber (1995) in Kyeambe Valley, Australia. Ison &

Webber's evaluation work suggests that an agenda be displayed in a visible area so that literate participants are able to reference it during the duration of the workshop. Reviewing the agenda provides participants, "an outline of approximate timings and the components of the activity" and invites "participants to seek clarification or confirmation at any time" (Ison & Webber, 1995, p. 121). During the agenda review, the facilitator should also set the tone for the day, emphasizing that the Community Participatory Goal Identification Process is not a typical community meeting, but an opportunity for all participants to discuss their experiences and the issues they wish to address in relation to their own community (Ison & Webber, 1995).

The project team also drew from the experiences of the Diamond Method case study that recommends the group establish ground rules before beginning the data collection phase of the process (Mayoux, 2009). Mayoux stresses the importance of making it known that everyone in a participatory evaluation is respected and equal. "Make it clear to everyone that everyone's word is to be valued and respected, particularly the views of those who may be more disadvantaged than others in the group. This includes women, illiterate people and also men if they are in a minority and not in leadership positions" (Mayoux, 2003, p.12). The researchers in the Tanzanian case study found success, "establishing trust and rapport through reviewing club rules each day and giving students opportunities to speak through assigning certain roles and responsibilities in small group work" (Brown et al. 2015, p. 379). They also remark that it sets an environment of mutual respect and democratic dialogue among participants where all voices are encouraged to speak. The project team suggested setting ground

rules to counter the common challenge of dominant single voice and to set an equitable tone for the duration of the process.

Phase II: Data Collection

In this section of the process, community members sat in a circle as they were invited to do in the introduction phase. Participants received a random number when they entered the discussion space. This was done because power dynamics were challenging to navigate and could skew data collected in a discussion. Every effort was made to separate groups in such a way that it would reduce power differences and produce an environment where participants would feel comfortable. Also, exposing situations of subordination and domination within a community, even in subgroups divided by gender and age, are ultimately important to social justice (Naples, 2013). However, the process of AI and other participatory methods used to expose and process these power dynamics are very time consuming. The FSD team had limited time and resources for this goal setting process; and a solution was needed to further reduce the risk of silencing through power without engaging in this additional process (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2012).

The facilitator began by explaining that they would be asking the group some questions about what is important to them and what their hopes are for their community. The facilitator also explained that the group would be creating symbols for community goals. The methodology of creating symbols was chosen because of the benefits that participatory visualization tools create in PRA methods. Symbols or pictures are employed in PRA discussion, both for the purposes of community engagement and the

involvement of those with low literacy or no literacy skills (Abdullah, et. al 2012; Mayoux, 2003). Also, visual sharing was found by Chambers to be a PRA approach that often brought success in data validation (Chambers, 1994b).

AI was integrated into this visual sharing approach because it is commonly used in the “Dream” phase of the process and does not require a text-based survey instrument, as was requested by the FSD staff (L. Kuhn, personal communication, September 10, 2015; Nyaupane & Poudel, 2012). Using this method to create a tool also ensured that, “data are presented in such a way that community members understand and have more control over the process” (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2012 p.986).

Additionally, AI enables validation and appreciation of, “the richness of rural knowledge, and helps to empower rural communities, since they are often alienated by the use of technology and technical jargon” (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2012 p. 986). This evidence was corroborated by the comments made by partner organizations in regards to a previous sustainability survey administered by FSD (FSD, 2014). Preferably, an artist should be chosen from the group in the interest of the participatory nature of the goal identification process.

AI was chosen as a research tool for the process because of the alignment with FSD’s mission and the general agreement of scholar practitioners that AI tools should be used , “with the necessary adaptations (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2012 p.981).” Using this tool, participants went around the circle alternating between the provided AI questions in the order of the numbers distributed. In this case, everyone has an opportunity to answer a question. For the purpose of a demonstration, the facilitator began the process by describing their idea of the good life. The community then had the

opportunity to identify themes and create symbols using their own concepts and language relating to the example, such as food, employment, or health. The chosen artist drew the decided upon symbols.

In accordance with AI, questions were constructed with the intent of inspiring storytelling and personal narrative, identifying and learning from the best of one's past, and moving toward the vision of the best possible future (Figueroa, 2015; MacCoy, 2014).

Questions:

1. What is the good life?
2. What is your favorite thing about your community?
3. How would you like your children's lives to be different from your own? OR,
How would you like your life to be different from your parents?
4. What does your perfect day look like?
5. If you could have one thing for your community, what would it be

Question Development: Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Cycle

The project team used the process of the 4-D model of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to develop the Participatory Community Goal Identification Process questions listed above. They used the concepts in the first two stages of "Discovery" and "Dream" to guide their choice of questions (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). The basis for the questions was to identify the best of what already existed in the community, to define their assets, and then to frame priorities through future visioning. The project team took inspiration from MacCoy (2014) by using some of his questions as guides. They

adjusted them to fit the goals of their community goal identification tool and formed them in a culturally appropriate manner.

For the “Discovery” questions, (numbers two and four above) the project team drew from the question, “In your experience with Dusk Dances, what has been the high point for you personally? Share a story of this in detail.” (MacCoy, 2014, p. 114) and, “What do you most value about this organization?” (MacCoy, 2014, p. 114). Questions one, three, and five, were constructed around the “Dream” phase. They were inspired by the question, “What “three-wishes would you make to heighten the vitality and health of this organization?” (MacCoy, 2014, p. 114). These questions sought to elicit the community’s vision for the future. This exercise would not only identify priorities, but would also provide the beginnings of an action plan. For example, in Elliot’s (1999) study of Mauritian Villages the community identified, “We were determined to have a high-quality school which offered a full primary cycle and a well-furnished mosque to guarantee education in the village.” as one of their goals (p.196).

Phase III: Community Priority Identification

After the goal setting phase, participants used the provided stickers to identify the top three goals by placing them under the selected symbol. The project team created a ranking method based on similar projects: City of Santa Maria General Plan Update (K. Main, personal communication, March 6, 2011) and SF Chinatown Community Development Center - Central Subway City Hall Forum (C. Wu, personal communication, August 17, 2010). Both case studies worked with cultural and limited-English speaking communities in Santa Maria, CA and San Francisco, CA. As

recommended by the case studies, ranking community goals with visual tools provides more opportunity for diverse community members to participate (i.e. monolingually isolated residents, low literacy residents, etc).

This choice was also supported by the use of voting systems in the case studies using the H diagram and the diamond method (Luo & Liu, 2014; Mayoux, 2009). In the handbook the project team provided the option of using a writing implement to make checkmarks or X's as an alternative voting method in the absence of stickers. However, in the pilot process, stickers were appropriate since the FSD team had used this method in Jinja in the past (Amanyire, personal communication, November 5, 2015). After the participants voted, one of the facilitators tallied all of the votes.

Phase IV: Review of Priorities

The project team determined that it was important to have the community participants review the results of the group identified goals after the ranking phase based on the PRA concept of triangulation. Triangulation takes place when participants are invited to analyze a situation and discuss it within a group. This mechanism allows for cross-checking and correction from within the group and is form of data validation (Chambers, 1994). Recording the results of the data collection and ranking phases in a visual manner enables all participants to reference, discuss, and manipulate the data. The data can be amended if the group deems it necessary. It should be fully owned by the participants and allow for validation from those who generated the data (Chambers, 1994b).

According to the PRA case study in Java, Indonesia, “The role of the outside experts and development planners in PRA is to encourage local people to carry out their own analysis, come to their own conclusions, and design their own development programs” (Abdullah et al., 2012. p. 18). As FSD aimed to develop programming from community-driven goals, the project team deemed this second layer of participant review and analysis an integral part of the overall goal identification process.

Phase V: Reflection & Thank You

Heron & Reason’s (2001) method of Co-operative Inquiry (COI), where all participants “are fully involved as co-researchers in all research decisions - about both content and method - taken in the reflection phases,” (p. 145) and Kuzmin’s (2012) emphasis on participants processing their experience individually and as a group in the PATEM case study, led the project team to include a reflection phase in the goal identification process. The project team attempted to stay true to the empowerment approaches of COI and PRA by valuing participants’ roles as ‘co-researchers’ during the goal identification process. Presented in “Research *with* Rather than on People,” Heron and Reason (2001) remark that the act of reflection aided participants in understanding their world, making sense of their life, and developing unique perspectives. It also encouraged participants to “learn how to act to change things [they] may want to change and find out how to do things better” (p. 1).

Additionally, the reflection phase was incorporated because it is important to involve the participants in an evaluation of the process itself. Scheduling time for participants to, first, reflect on the process and, second, discuss what they learned as a

group, what they enjoyed, and how they felt, provided valuable feedback for the project team to consider when improving the Participatory Community Goal Identification Process in its final iteration. The project team also recognized that many complex issues, conjuring up high emotions, were likely to be discussed during the data collection and priority phase. Therefore, ample time for the participants to internalize their experience and reflect on what they had learned was necessary to create lasting impact and encourage future action.

Traditional COI, as it is exemplified in the Tanzanian case study (Brown et al., 2015), involved four phases that cycle through action and reflection at each interval. When considering the phases for reflection in the goal identification process, the project team factored in Heron and Reason's (2001) recommendation that, "Each inquiry group needs to find its own balance between action and reflection, and, within the reflection phase, between presentational and propositional ways of making sense" (p. 18). Given the time constraints imposed upon both the staff and the participants, the project team concluded that one reflection period at the end of the process would be sufficient.

Phase VI: Report & Evaluation

The project team identified the importance of report and evaluation as a close-out measure for the community participatory survey process. The report and evaluation section was intended to track all the data from the workshop event while providing opportunities to collect feedback from the on-site program staff facilitating the process.

Internal Evaluation

It was critical to include an evaluation component to the process in order to ensure compliance with intended goals and objectives (Mallonee, 2010). Furthermore, since the project team originally designed the process as a pilot, it was important to collect feedback from staff and improve project components for the next implementation phase. The evaluation piece is intended to be conducted internally between staff members to prompt reflection and discuss lessons learned (C. Wu, personal communication, August 17, 2010). The internal discussion prompts were inspired by a previous case study involving SF Chinatown CDC:

- What solicited the most involvement from participants?
- Did you learn any new goals from the community?
- What validated community goals you already knew?
- What worked and didn't work in each of the phases?
- What was most challenging?

Report Form & Documentation

The project team provided a tool to document and report all the discussion anecdotes between participants and internal staff evaluations. The report form was adapted from Salinas Chinatown Renewal Project (P. Nelson, personal communication, February 11, 2011). The report form prompted questions about overall effectiveness and workshop logistics in order to catalogue process improvements. It was designed for tracking purposes and data consistency. Ideally, the reporting form can be used throughout all of FSD's international locations, streamlining the data collection.

Challenges & Recommendations

As the project team moved through the process of research, data collection, and process design they encountered five challenges.

1. Ensuring project goal alignment between Foundation for Sustainable Development headquarters and field office
2. Distance from the site of Participatory Community Goal Identification Process application
3. Understanding community power dynamics
4. Creating a feasible, yet statistically relevant sampling method, and
5. Reducing the use of technical language in the survey instrument

Below, the challenges are presented along with how the project team addressed issues and recommendations for future USF and FSD partnership teams. Additionally, the project team included suggestions for the next steps of the project such as the identification of indicators coinciding with the community priorities identified by the goal identification process discussed in this paper.

Ensure Project Goal Alignment Between Offices

It is important to ensure that all involved teams are aligned in project expectations and outcomes prior to distributing preliminary plans and soliciting feedback. The project team encountered a misalignment of organizational goals at the initial meeting involving FSD headquarters staff and the FSD Jinja field office.

Originally, the FSD headquarters staff indicated that the project goal was to create a process to identify community priorities at all FSD international program sites. The process would be facilitated by FSD staff instead of the community partner organizations in order to reduce the potential of skewing data toward the priorities of the organizations. Special care would be given to using the process to identify potential gaps in FSD's project investment focus. The information could also be used to assist partner organizations in serving the community by identifying potential goals they were unaware of.

When the first draft of the process was completed, the project team sent it to the FSD teams in San Francisco and Jinja for feedback. A skype call was organized to present the plan and catalogue requested changes. During the call, it was clear that the Jinja staff had a different understanding of the process goals compared to the project team. Jinja staff understood that the project's purpose was to identify whether the goals of the community partner organizations were being met, not just an identification of the communities goals independently.

It was necessary for Director Kuhn to clarify the goals for the project during the skype call. If the Jinja staff had been clear on the goals of the project prior to this meeting, it would have allowed them more time to prepare their response to the process draft and potentially feel more engaged and included in the development of the Participatory Community Goal Identification Process.

Distance From Site of Application

Distance created challenges in relationship building with the Jinja staff. It also produced difficulty in the process of building a culturally appropriate process for the social and environmental structure of the community. Another barrier created by distance was the lack of direct engagement with the community in the creation of the goal identification process as required by PRA. Ison & Russell argued the importance of moving beyond the initial PRA phases and establishing 'co-researching communities' with the participants who would be undergoing a PRA evaluation (Ison & Russell, in preparation, as cited in Ison & Webber, p. 112). In alignment with a true PRA approach, local participants should be involved in every step of the evaluation method, including the process design (Rhaman, in Salas et al., 1989, p. 49). Because the project team was unable to be on location in Jinja, involving the local participants in the process design was not possible.

The project team did have the opportunity to brainstorm with Margaret and Jonan, the FSD Jinja staff, during the design phase of the goal identification process, making the design more cooperative. However, not being able to involve more local community members in the design process was a deep concern for the project team. They were concerned that not being on location in Jinja would further challenge the power relationships involved in the PRA and create vulnerability in the results of the process.

A lot of information was also lost by not being on location. Some of the gaps the project team experienced were as follows:

- Types and amounts of available materials for the facilitation were unknown,

- The literacy level of the community
- Kind of spaces available to hold discussion groups,
- Existing communication systems within the communities
- Level of infrastructure
- Community dynamics

The project team worked with information available through research and the local FSD staff until they could ask the Jinja staff directly.

Generally, to receive open and honest feedback, some level of trust needed to be built between the project team and the FSD Jinja staff responsible for applying the process (Nyaupane & Poudel, 2012). This was difficult to do over email and a single skype call. The project team's contact with the Jinja staff started somewhat late in the evolution of the process. An incident that exposed this lack of trust occurred when Director Kuhn mentioned that she thought the way the project team had structured a meal into the process wouldn't work. The Jinja staff agreed with her and stated they had already decided that they weren't going to include that component in their implementation of the process but felt it unnecessary to inform the project team. This omission raised concerns for the project team regarding the entire process, as other project components could be susceptible to implementation change without project team notification. Shortly after this occurrence, the project team expressed how important and valuable the Jinja staff's feedback and input were to developing an effective process.

The project team suggests that future student groups reiterate the importance of open feedback and provide questions upon sending any materials to be reviewed. If

there are any parts of a process that require cultural competencies the team does not possess, such as gender, literacy level, or use of symbols, it is recommended they consult with the local FSD staff in the program location. In addition, the project team suggests viewing the process from every possible angle to produce questions for feedback from onsite staff.

It is understandable that FSD would want to establish the priorities of the headquarters office before engaging those in the field. However, now that contact has been established with the University of San Francisco, the project team recommends that communication with both local and global FSD staff start early and continue often, once a new group of students continues the next stage of the project.

Understanding Community Power Dynamics

Identifying social norms was a necessary step in creating appropriately grouped discussion sessions for the Participatory Community Goal Identification Process. Originally, the team had the idea of grouping discussion sessions by gender, but didn't include it in the original process plan because they were unsure about the social dynamics in Jinja. However, during the conversation with the Jinja staff the project team learned it would be necessary to separate the men from the women to obtain their genuine opinions, because if grouped together, domestic disputes could occur that may cause later repercussions in the home. Additionally, the Jinja staff recommended that there be separate groups for youth and elders to increase the participant's' level of comfort and increase their willingness to share their thoughts.

Be aware that social norms and power dynamics vary from community to community and that if they are not taken into account, data may be heavily influenced, reflecting the interests of a single group or only a few people. The processes developed for FSD were to be used at multiple sites, therefore working a flexible component into the process where the site staff can adjust group separation was important. In addition to gender and age, staff could potentially divide groups based on income, race, ethnicity, sexuality, or religion. Also, the project team's inclusion of a method that allows everyone in the group to speak was another way to make sure that everyone's voice is heard.

Finally, the project team suggested that all future student teams maintain an awareness of organizational, educational, and first/third world, developed/underdeveloped country power dynamics that existed between and within the organization. A power imbalance may exist between the FSD and the partner organizations they work with, between the project team and FSD, in both San Francisco and at their international site locations as well as between FSD and the communities their partners serve. If any process created for FSD must be participatory, an awareness and an attempt to reduce, eliminate, or work around these power dynamics must be made.

Sampling Methodology

It would have been ideal to use a probability sampling method that would have been completely random and therefore more useful in an academic analysis and future arguments for the potential value of the process. When selecting the methodology, the

project team was cognizant of the limited time and resources and the availability of infrastructure and communication technology at FSD program sites. If there were more resources allocated to the project in the future, it would be beneficial to FSD to confirm the effectiveness of their approach and academically useful in demonstrating the potential effectiveness of the created evaluation instrument by using a probability sampling methodology. Also, if a future project team has the opportunity to apply the goal identification process in a location that has the communication infrastructure to support a random anonymous selection of community members the project team would highly encourage this.

Technical Language

After researching academic approaches, methods, and tools of evaluation, it can be a challenging to exclude technical language in a user-friendly handbook or tool. Through a recent survey, one of the primary complaints of FSD's local partner organizations was that there was too much technical language. The project team designed the *Participatory Community Goal Identification Process: Facilitator Handbook* with this criticism in mind. The goal was to make this tool easily understandable for a low-literacy audience. The handbook is also going to be translated into different languages for FSD's separate sites, requiring the language to be fairly simple for the purposes of translation. The project team partially solved the issue of technical language by simplifying concepts and terms so that they were easily understandable.

Also, the project team recommends a glossary of terms at the end of any tool, like the one included in the *Participatory Community Goal Identification Process*:

Facilitator Handbook, for efficient reference purposes. When asked, the Jinja staff agreed that a glossary is necessary for this type of tool especially for the purposes of translation.

The project team recommends having a non-expert read through any developed instructional tools to learn if there is too much technical language included. If this person identifies words that are not familiar or difficult to understand, the team should either simplify the language or add the terms to the glossary.

Next Steps: Identifying Indicators

The next step in creating a social impact evaluation process for FSD, is the identification of indicators related to the goals identified by the communities where FSD partners with existing organizations. Once they identify the indicators they would then create another tool for evaluation, potentially building off of the process discussed in this report. Because the priorities are community-driven and must be defined by the community, it is important to maintain their level of ownership over their experience to retain the participatory nature of the methodology.

The project team suggests that future student teams use a method applied by Hausman et al. (2013) explained in their article, “Developing Measures of Community-Relevant Outcomes for Violence Prevention Programs: A Community-Based Participatory Research Approach to Measurement”. The method includes a discussion with community members to define their goals and then match those goals to existing indicators accepted by the academic and development community (Hausman et al, 2013). When performing the evaluation process, one can use the community defined

terms and then convert them, during the analysis, into internationally accepted poverty or gender empowerment indicators, for example. In the Appendix of this paper you will find a sample of an indicator chart that serves as a good model for a final deliverable to FSD. Additionally, there is a list of resources the next project team may use to begin research on indicators.

Conclusion

The project team produced the *Participatory Community Goal Identification Process: Facilitator Handbook* as a deliverable for the Foundation for Sustainable Development. The purpose of the handbook is to identify community priorities, so that FSD could better pursue its mission of achieving community-driven goals. The handbook was developed using a combination of research, experiential knowledge, and expert interviews, as well as feedback from a piloted process in Jinja, Uganda. The project team was guided by FSD's commitment to an asset-based approach and developed the discussion questions using the method of Appreciative Inquiry. The instrument was created using a combination of tools drawn from participatory approaches and methods such as participatory rural appraisal, participatory action research, and Cooperative Inquiry.

The result was a six step process beginning with an introduction, followed by data collection, goal identification, review of priorities, reflection and appreciation, and ends with a report and evaluation of the process to be completed by the facilitators. By following this process, FSD will be better equipped to identify the goals of their partnered communities. Going forward, FSD should be able to identify indicators

necessary to develop an evaluation process intended to monitor and evaluate its social impact in the future.

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Appendix A: Sample Indicator Chart

