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## *URBAN FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY*

Participatory approaches  
for  
community nutrition

**Dissertation for  
B. Sc. Nutrition and Home Economics**

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EUROPEAN HEALTH21 TARGET 11

## EUROPEAN HEALTH21 TARGET 11

### HEALTHIER LIVING

By the year 2015, people across society should have adopted healthier patterns of living

*(Adopted by the WHO Regional Committee for Europe at its forty-eighth session, Copenhagen, September 1998)*

### ABSTRACT

Urban Food and Nutrition security is a growing concern in Europe. Rapid urbanization creates new demands for food and nutrition, especial in low- and middle-income countries. This poses new challenges to food and nutrition intervention programmes. The rapid process of urbanization has led to the so-called double burden of nutrition, a situation where nutritional deficiencies exist side by side with the emergence of over nutrition among vulnerable groups in urban areas. This paper examines the applicability of participatory approaches as a tool for planning intervention programmes, and suggests guidelines for a participatory approach to address urban food and nutrition insecurity. Traditionally, nutrition programmes are designed using "top down" approaches. In contrast, community approaches argue that large-scale behavioural change can only be achieved by mobilization of the community. During the 1980's and 1990's a large number of participatory approaches have been developed with the intent of mobilizing rural communities to analyse their situation and take action to make improvements. Participatory approaches provide a valuable framework for enabling people to identify, analyse and mobilize resources within the community to overcome their problems. However, certain problems exist including the type and quantity of data collected and if it can be utilized by decision-makers. In addition, experience of practitioners suggest that participatory approaches are applicable in urban areas, but special attention is needed to address the differences between urban and rural communities.

### Keywords

NUTRITION  
– COMMUNITY HEALTH PLANNING  
URBAN HEALTH  
RURAL HEALTH  
FOOD HYGIENE  
FOOD CONTAMINATION  
CONSUMER PARTICIPATION  
EUROPE

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## **Foreword**

The WHO Regional Office for Europe Programme for Nutrition and Food Security has produced an Urban and Peri-urban Food and Nutrition Action Plan (UFNAP). The goal of this action plan is to provide communities with ideas that can lead to integrated policies for food, health and the urban environment.

The UFNAP highlights trends in production, processing, distribution and consumption of food, that not only may have negative health effects due to poor nutrition, but also may result in environmental harm, social isolation and depletion of local economies, especially effecting vulnerable groups. There is growing concern about food and nutrition security in central and eastern European countries (CCEE). Their problems may increase during the transition from centrally planned to free market economics. Because communities vary widely within the WHO European Region the best approach is to provide them with the tools to assess their own situation and to take action. To ensure that the assessment, analysis and action strategies are equitable, participation of the citizens themselves and not just the authorities, is a prerequisite. This paper is written to aid this process of citizen participation.

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## 1. Introduction

The issue of urban food and nutrition insecurity is an increasing concern. Europe is currently the most urbanized continent and the level of urbanization is expected to reach 90% by the year 2015. This rapid urbanization has led to deficiency diseases coexisting with over-nutrition among vulnerable groups. Rapid urbanization poses new challenges for urban households and their food and nutrition security.

Traditionally, interventions aimed at improving food and nutrition security relied on “top-down” strategies. Nutritional problems are conventionally defined by national agencies or experts through questionnaire survey, anthropometric measurement or dietary intake surveys. After defining the dietary deficiencies or problems, national strategies and policies are formulated. These strategies may include definition of dietary goals and public information or education programmes designed to promote healthier dietary habits.

Factors such as interfamily dynamics, inadequate time resources and food culture may be ignored by “top-down” investigative techniques. Although strategies have moved from “nutrient” based dietary guidelines to “food based” dietary guidelines in an attempt to provide multifaceted solutions, the participation of citizens rarely goes beyond answering standard questions. The complex underlying socio-economic factors are often ignored.

Centrally planned food and nutrition policies are necessary, but are inadequate in providing solutions to the complex problems that cause poor nutrition. In contrast, community approaches argue that large-scale behavioural changes are made through community “bottom-up” approaches. Emphasis should be on community mobilisation and organization rather than by the standard means of intervention.

Community mobilization entails the process of sustaining the coordinated participation of all sectors to accelerate an improvement in food security of vulnerable groups. Involvement of citizens may not only be effective in improving food and nutrition security, but may also create social development.

During the 1980s and 1990s, a rapid spread of new methods for inquiry, learning and community empowerment emerged. These participatory approaches seek to enable local people to share, enhance and analyse knowledge about their own situation, and then plan and act. These approaches have proved successful in defining the needs of vulnerable groups and addressing the complexities of their daily lives.

Most of these participatory approaches were conceived in rural areas in developing countries, but there have recently been applications of participatory approaches in urban settings in industrial countries. These participatory approaches can be used to address food and nutrition insecurity and seek solutions at community level in countries belonging to the WHO European Region.

## 1.1 Aim and objectives

The aim of this paper is to address the possibility of using Participatory Approaches to address urban food and nutrition insecurity by:

1. giving insight into the dynamics of participation and community development related to food and nutrition insecurity;
2. providing a partial inventory of existing participatory approaches in general and to examine special applications that could address food and nutrition insecurity at community level;
3. discussing the applicability of participatory approaches in WHO European Region countries; and
4. providing guidelines for improving community based food and nutrition security that incorporates principles of participatory approaches.

## 1.2 Scope and focus

The main focus of this paper will be on participatory approaches and their applicability to urban food and nutrition in security. Three specific methodologies will be focused on illustrating the basics of participatory approaches. The scope of this paper does not allow a thorough description of the issues of urban food and nutrition insecurity, but rather focuses on how participatory approaches can be used as an alternative or to supplement conventional methodologies.

### Methodology

Much of this paper will be based on the results of a questionnaire (Appendix 1) and the literature provided by and experiences of “Environment Technology and Culture” or ETC - Netherlands (Appendix II) with their work in participatory approaches, both in developing and developed countries.

In addition, information from a pilot project in three communities in London (*The Local Food Economy and Community Mapping: 1998*) and notes from the meeting, *Community Mapping – The Way Forward, Meeting to bring together partners with practitioners to discuss the best way forward for each area* (1998) will be used to illustrate some of the practical considerations in using participatory approaches to address food and nutrition insecurity in urban communities.

Literature on selected participatory approaches and community development is incorporated. Much of the literature on participatory methodologies has been supplied by ETC-Netherlands.

## 1.3 Definitions

The following definitions are intended, not only to give the reader a better understanding of the concepts of this paper, but also to clarify the specific meaning of these general terms.

### Sustainable development

Sustainable development is officially defined in *Our Common Future*<sup>1</sup> as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Perhaps a more complete definition is “positive socio-economic change which does not undermine the ecological and social systems upon which communities and societies are dependent” (*Our cities, our future*, WHO 1996).

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<sup>1</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development 1987, The Brundtland Report, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

## **Food and Nutrition Security**

Food Security is normally defined as “that all people at all times have physical and economic access to enough food for an active healthy life”(World Food Summit, FAO, 1996), and a more detailed definition encompasses the aspects of sustainable development:

- that production and distribution of food are sustainable
- production and consumption of food are grounded in and governed by social values that are just, equitable as well as morally and ethically sound
- that the ability to acquire food is assured
- that the food is nutritionally adequate, and personally and culturally acceptable
- that the food is obtained (and consumed) in a manner that upholds basic human dignity

(World Food Day cited in *Understanding Food Security through Community Mapping, 1995*)

## **Participatory approaches**

The terminologies used to describe participation are sometimes confusing and intermingled. The term participatory approaches will be used here as an umbrella term for techniques, methods and methodologies that have the primary aim of invoking participation, whether it is the participation of citizens, stakeholders or local authorities.

## **Stakeholders**

Stakeholders are not only actors in a process, but stakeholders are those affected by the outcome - negatively or positively - or those who can influence the outcome of a proposed intervention.

All parties should gain from the participatory process, rather than creating winners and losers. There will be an increase in mutual trust by helping to clarify problems and solutions.

## **Stakeholder dialogue**

Stakeholder dialogue should result in finding better solutions for and promoting awareness of social and environmental issues, in order to contribute to sustainable development.

## **1.4 Overview**

**Chapter 2: Defining Participation** will introduce the ideas of participation in general and within the context of the community’s need for organization and development.

**Chapter 3: Participatory Approaches** gives a brief history of the evolution of Participatory Approaches and a partial inventory of methodologies. Many of these have been devised and applied in rural development projects in developing countries, but will hopefully provide a basis for understanding how these methodologies can be used for intervention planning, assessment of needs, implementation, and evaluation and monitoring within a European context.

**Chapter 4: The Applicability of Participatory Approaches** is a discussion, both in terms of the applicability to urban settings in developed countries and developing a participatory methodology to address food and nutrition security within communities. This discussion will be based on both literature reviews and interviews with experienced practitioners using participatory approaches

**Chapter 5: A Participatory Methodology** will provide guidelines to help develop a methodology for a Participatory Approach aimed at improving the food and nutrition security at community level.





## 2. Defining participation

The word “participation” is a widely used and perhaps misused term. Participation has to do with democratic processes, or the degree of democracy within a given society. Participation is defined by the Human Development Report (UNDP 1993, p. 27) as *“people being closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political processes which influence their lives”*.

Participation is becoming a central issue of our time. This is influenced by: democratic transition; the collapse of socialist regimes; the transition to market economies; and the world-wide emergence of peoples organizations (UNDP 1993). This provides new opportunities for citizens to influence the processes that affect their lives and also presents new challenges. Participation is needed for human development and citizen participation has been called *“the most vital organizational problem of our time”* (Vandervelde 1983, p. 95).

### 2.1 Participation within the community

Participation must be seen within the context of the community where citizens live. Some theories of community organization perceive citizen participation and bureaucratic organizations as conflicting entities. Public participation, within the context of community organization, requires a formal structure for individual and group participation and provides a pragmatic way to achieve planning goals (Burke 1983). In other words, participation is a means of involving the general public in a consultation process where authorities maintain the control.

#### Community organization

Community organization is defined as a method, entailing a series of logically interlinked steps, which produces an intended outcome or achieves a desired goal, namely the prevention or amelioration of community problems (Rothman 1984). It is argued that citizens are not allowed any power or control, but merely are allowed to be involved in, or influence the decisions (Vandervelde 1983). In contrast, community development is based on the concept that the citizen formulates the needs and works to overcome the community problems.

#### Community development

Achieving meaningful participation means changing organizations and supporting the communities involved. Community development is especially important for disadvantaged communities or disadvantaged groups within the community, which have poor access to information and decision-making processes (WHO 1997).

Community development has been defined as a set of processes: (*Monitoring*: cited in WHO 1997 p. 59)

*“... directed in particular at people who feel excluded from society. It consists of a set of methods which can broaden vision and capacity for social change, and approaches, including consultation advocacy and relationships with local groups. It is a way of working which is informed by certain principles which seek to encourage communities - people who live in the same area or who have something else in common - to tackle for themselves the problems they face and identify to be important, and which aim to empower them to change things by developing their own skills, knowledge and experience and also by working in partnership with other groups and with statutory agencies. The way in which such change is achieved is crucial and so both the task and the process are important.”*

Community development can be defined in two different ways: one concept focuses on the locality and advocates strengthening community networks, building self-help activities and developing local leadership. It brings in such ideas as enablement, support and empowerment. Local government and semi-governmental organizations are committed, cooperative and sympathetic to the needs of the community in providing the necessary resources for local activity and new community services, or can be challenged to do so.

The other concept advocates campaigning and struggling for social change against the policies and organizations that create or support disadvantage. Both concepts have their strengths and their weaknesses (WHO 1997). Both community organization and community development demand that participation is more than just popular participation. The community should have power and their decisions must be considered.

## 2.2 Participation: deep and wide

Participation is also about the degree of influence that citizens achieve in the decision making process – or the depth and width of participation. Depth refers to the degree of influence that citizens are allowed to have in the decisions that affect their lives, and width refers to the scope of participants (stakeholders) or who can be involved in the decision-making process.

### Degree of participation

The degree of participation can be: 1) complete so that citizens have direct control over the processes which affect their lives or, 2) partial and indirect, or 3) none at all.

Figure 1: Degree of participation, participant's action and illustrative modes for achieving it. WHO 1997)


Control	Participant's action	Examples
 High	Has control	Organization asks community to identify the problem and make all key decisions on goals and means. Willing to help community at each step to accomplish goals.
	Has delegated authority	Organization identifies and presents a problem to the community. Defines limits and asks community to make a series of decisions which can be embodied in a plan which it will accept.
	Plans jointly	Organization presents tentative plan open to change from those affected. Expects to change plan at least slightly and perhaps more.
	Advises	Organization presents a plan and invites questions. Prepared to change plan only if absolutely necessary.
	Is consulted	Organization tries to promote a plan. Seeks to develop support to facilitate acceptance so that administrative compliance can be expected.
	Receives information	Organization makes plan and announces its plans. Community is convened for informational purposes. Compliance is expected.
Low	None	Community told nothing.

Figure 1 illustrates the degree of control, the participants' action, and examples from an organization's perspective.

Seen from an organization's point of view, giving more control to citizens may be primarily for facilitating the implementation of new plans. Giving total control to citizens can pose a threat to the status and existence of the organization. Working towards total control is not the whole answer. Possibly the most important issue is to weigh-up the advantages and disadvantages of the relative level of control in each phase of the decision making process.

### **Scope of participation**

When speaking of participation, it is often assumed that this is about "popular" participation, that is, participation of the poor and others who are disadvantaged in terms of wealth, education, ethnicity, or gender (The World Bank 1996). It is often the intention to invoke the participation of disadvantaged groups because, although the intended beneficiaries, they are usually without a voice in the development process.

Apart from the poor or other vulnerable groups (i.e. children, women and the elderly), who are the target of the intervention, a range of other stakeholders can affect the outcome of a proposed intervention (The World Bank 1996). In addition to those that are directly affected, it can be valuable to consider those who might be indirectly affected by an intervention.

Attempts to bypass powerful stakeholders may result in opposition from them; this opposition will complicate any likely accomplishments. Different stakeholders have different levels of power, different interests and different resources. Recognition is needed to understand the different stakeholders' backgrounds and their reasons for participating (Water-Bayer 1998). How the different stakeholders can interact on an equitable and genuinely collaborative basis is a challenge. In some instances distrust is so great that intermediaries may be required to bridge the gap or other measures may need to be taken to ensure the equity of participation (box 1).

#### **Box 1: Three approaches to involving directly affected stakeholders (The World Bank 1996)**

<b>Approaches to involving Directly Affected Stakeholders</b>	
•	<b>Working with the community</b> - the community working together to address individual and community needs and making commitments about what they are willing and not willing to do.
•	<b>Working with Representatives</b> - meetings with a wide representation from the community through members elected to a committee.
•	<b>Working with Surrogates</b> - intermediaries or surrogates may be any group or individual who has close links with the community and is capable of representing their views during the planning. This can be local or national non-governmental organizations or public interest organizations working to give weaker groups more "voice"

Achieving consensus and reconciling key stakeholder differences is not always easy; it may entail risks, such as generating conflicts among groups with competing interests. Dealing with conflict requires an understanding of the interests inhibiting consensus and putting into place negotiation mechanisms for resolving disputes.

### A model of participation

Both the depth and width of participation and how this affects the decision making process should be examined. Giving more control to citizens can facilitate the implementation of interventions, but may make the process more time consuming.

**Figure 2: Two dimensional model of participation within the community**

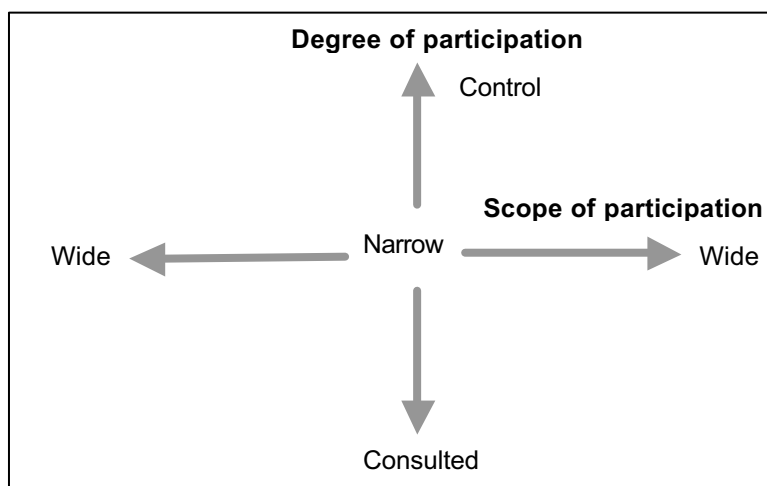


Figure 2 represents two dimensions of participation: degree of participation and scope of participation. A positive or negative inference is not intended. Instead Figure 2 presents a visual representation for examining the trade-offs between stakeholders, the degree of their participation and the effectiveness of the decision making process. Involving a wide scope of stakeholders can improve effectiveness, but the process may be less efficient and the degree of participation may be limited because too many stakeholders are involved.

### 2.3 Citizen participation strategies

The theories of community organization suggest that citizens can participate in a number of ways. Burke (1983) cites five major strategies for citizen participation.

#### 1. Education-therapy strategy

Participation is based on training where citizens, working together to solve community problems, not only learn how democracy works, but also appreciate that “cooperation” is a problem solving method.

#### 2. Behavioural change

Group Participation is a major force for changing individual behaviour. Individuals tend to be more influenced by groups to which they belong and will more readily accept group made decisions rather than lectures or individual advice to change. In addition, individuals or groups resist decisions that are imposed on them. In other words participation in the decision-making process can create commitment to new objectives.

#### 3. Staff supplement

Perhaps the most common reason for citizen participation is the recruitment of citizens to carry out tasks for an organization which does not have staff to carry out activities itself. The objective is to exploit the abilities, free time, and/or expertise of individuals to achieve a desired goal.

#### **4. Co-option**

Cooption has been defined as *“the process of absorbing new elements into the leadership or policy determining structure of an organization as a means of averting threats to its stability and existence* (Selznik cited in Burke, 1983). Co-option involves citizens in order to prevent anticipated obstruction.

#### **5. Community power**

Addresses the issue of power, or the ability of individuals to exercise their will even over the opposition of others. Centres of power exist outside the formal political structure of a community and such centres are influential in shaping community decisions.

### **2.4 Community-based food and nutrition**

Participation is influenced by the environment that citizens live in (the community), power bases, and local and national government. Food and nutrition policies are often left to “freedom of choice” to purchase the foods necessary for a “healthy diet”. However, consumers, through lack of purchasing power may be unable to participate in the social, economic, and political processes that affect their lives. Citizen participation related to their food and nutrition security may be possible and can give them greater control over this.

Improving food and nutrition security at the community level, not only takes the participation of citizens into account, but also involves:

- assessing the needs of the community in terms of food and nutrition;
- developing a response that takes account of all necessary levels of action;
- developing food and nutrition policy which supports these levels of action;
- promoting collaborative work between communities and agencies and organizations;
- supporting organizational development to make community involvement much easier;
- influencing the purchasing decisions of public institutions so that these are coherent with local goals for food and nutrition in the context of local economic, social and environmental sustainability;
- influencing the decisions of local authorities; and campaigning for national solutions pertaining to problems affecting food and nutrition security.

(Adapted from WHO 1997)

Citizen participation, involvement of all stakeholders and support from local government are all necessary for the improvement of food and nutrition security. However, interaction among them will affect their scope of interaction and participation of certain groups.

### 3. Participatory approaches

A wide variety of participatory approaches, methodologies and techniques have been developed during the 1980s and 1990s (Table 1). These have their beginnings in rural development projects where there was growing awareness of the failures of conventional ways of meeting the needs of poor people, or the most vulnerable. This has led to alternative methods for resource management, planning, implementation, and evaluating and monitoring of development projects.

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) has become an umbrella term for a wide range of similar approaches and methodologies (PLA notes 1997). These approaches share a common purpose. People learn about their needs, the constraints and opportunities and the action required.

**Table 1. Participatory approaches (Cornwall 1993)**

AEP	Agro-ecosystems Analysis
BA	Beneficiary Assessment
DELTA	Development Education Leadership Teams
FPR	Farmer Participatory Research
FSR/E	Farming Systems Research/Extension
MARP	Méthode Accéléré de Recherché Participative
PALM	Participatory Analysis and Learning Methods
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PD	Process Documentation
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRAP	Participatory Rural Appraisal and Planning
PRM	Participatory Research Methods
PTD	Participatory Technology Development
RA	Rapid Appraisal
RAAKS	Rapid Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge Systems
RAP	Rapid Assessment Procedures
RAT	Rapid Assessment Techniques
RCA	Rapid Catchment Analysis
REA	Rapid Ethnographic Assessment
RFSA	Rapid Food Security Assessment
RMA	Rapid Multi-Perspective Appraisal
ROA	Rapid Organizational Assessment
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
TFD	Theatre for Development
TFT	Training for Transformation

In some of the approaches, such as RAP, RCA, REA and RFSA (table 1) participation is limited to information gathering, and outsiders (experts) analyse this information and offer solutions to the community. Others, such as TFT, TFD, PRM and PALM (table 1), enable local people to explore their own visions and solutions, through forms they themselves generate. Some of the approaches deal specifically with certain phases of project planning, but the common theme is participation of people in the processes of learning about their needs and opportunities and the action required to address them.

In this chapter a critique of conventional appraisal methodologies is presented followed by three steps in intervention planning: a) appraisal b) planning and c) implementation. Three specific approaches will be discussed:

1. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is introduced;
2. Rapid Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge Systems (RAAKS) is discussed because it deals specifically with the need for a platform where stake-holders can identify problems and plan together; and
3. Participatory Technology Development (PDT) is discussed because of its orientation towards facilitating change and the transfer of technology or innovation based on local conditions and knowledge.

### **Conventional methodologies**

Scientists develop parameters within which interpretations can be made. Particular methodologies can be used for specific purposes. Different concerns may influence the choice of methodology, such as institutional, time or financial constraints. The aim of any methodology is to get data in the shortest period while minimizing the cost. In general, conventional approaches are based on assumptions, which limit the ability to deal with complex and changing realities. They normally assume stability and neglect local experiences and previous interventions (Cornwall 1994).

This “top-down” approach results in the creation of knowledge, separated from its use in decision-making and implementation. Information is aggregated and analysed by the researchers who then formulate the recommendations and objectives which may be insensitive to the context in which they have to be realized. While conventional research can contribute substantially to development, the most well meaning scientists may produce recommendations which are totally inappropriate (Cornwall 1994).

These criticisms also apply to the science of nutrition. Nutrition in the specific sense is the study of the impact of nutrients on health, but not necessarily dietary practices within the social context. Socio-cultural variability interacts with biological processes and creates nutritional health variability within sub-groups within a population. However, results obtained from the study of a population are averaged so that this variability within sub-groups can be lost.

The challenge for conventional methods is not to produce better knowledge and convey it to local people, but as Chambers (1992) argues:

*The idea is not to improve our analysis and learning, but to improve their (local people's) analysis and learning...it has been revealed again and again that they can do only what we thought only we (outsiders) could do and often they (local people) can do it better.*

Participatory approaches try to overcome some of the limitations of mainstream research by addressing these concerns.

### **3.1 Participatory rural appraisal**

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) facilitates interaction within local communities and assists understanding and learning (Mukherjee 1995). Along with other disciplines such as applied anthropology, PRA shares the common criticism of conventional methodologies.

## **Principles of PRA**

PRA is designed to help involve local communities in local knowledge building exercises. It is a way of helping the community investigate, analyse and evaluate constraints and opportunities and make informed and timely decisions regarding appropriate interventions. PRA allows communities to put forth their point of view enabling them to make their own analysis and contribution (Chambers, 1992). The principles of PRA are to improve the quality of participation; to ensure depth and breadth in the information generated; and to provide a mechanism for evaluation (Mukherjee, 1995).

PRA methods incorporate the following:

### *Optimal ignorance*

This is the principle of knowing what is worth knowing and knowing enough to satisfy the purpose. Associated with this is knowing the appropriate level of imprecision and avoiding an unnecessary high level of precision.

### *Seeking diversity*

PRA is the analysis of difference: assessing rather than seeking representativeness or the average. The emphasis is on assessing diverse events, and different processes which help to explain the situation within local communities.

### *Offsetting biases*

PRA attempts to offset the biases of conventional questionnaire surveys such as:

- expectations of the researcher
- wording of the question
- behaviour and characteristics of the respondent
- the setting of the interview
- the research design

by:

- being relaxed and not rushing
- listening and not lecturing
- probing and not speeding indifferently through the process
- seeking participation of poor and other vulnerable groups of people.

Data is cross-checked using various methods and by using different ways to validate information.

### *Listening and learning*

PRA emphasizes the importance of the local community's experiences, history and culture as well as their ideas, priorities and preferences. Learning can be facilitated by participation of those who are the subject of the inquiry. In PRA, communication is used not only to extract information, but also to seek interaction and clarification of what is expressed by the interviewee.

## **Practical tools**

Participatory approaches use visual analysis, interviewing and group work methods (Table 2). In the context of assessment, instead of answering questions directed by the researcher, local people represent their ideas in a form they can discuss, modify and extend (Cornwall 1994).



**Table 2. Visual analysis, interviewing and group work methods used in PRA**

Visual analyses	Interviewing	Group work methods
Participatory mapping and Modelling	Semi-structured interviewing	Team contracts
Aerial photograph analyses	Group walks	Buzz sessions and reviews
Seasonal calendars	Wealth ranking	Rapid report writing
Daily and activity profiles	Focus group interviews	Do it yourself (taking part in local activities)
Historical profiles and trend analyses	Key informant interviews	Villager and shared presentations
Timelines and chronologies	Ethnohistories	Self-corrected notes and diaries
Matrix scoring	Futures possible	
Preference ranking		
Venn and network diagramming		
Systems and flow diagrams		
Pie diagrams		

These techniques can help to overcome problems with communication where participants' qualifications and experiences are diverse.

### Similarities between PRA and conventional methods

Data collection in both nutrition (questionnaire) surveys and PRA have similar objectives (Mukherjee 1995):

- generate data for immediate or future use
- estimate trends and ascertaining conditions of the issues at hand
- validate or cross check of data collected from other sources
- learn about the impact of policies and programmes and to conceptualize new ones and
- know peoples perceptions and aspirations

PRA is generally conducted with additional objectives:

- greater involvement of local communities and so gain insight into their actions by understanding their perceptions, experiences and capabilities; and
- raising awareness and promoting participation by training people in the development process.

Conventional questionnaire surveys, including most nutrition surveys seek uniformity and identify patterns in a population by assessing a representative sample of the population. The validity and reliability of the results are of major importance. In contrast, in PRA the process of participation is as important as the actual output. PRA is based on principles which emphasize the process of investigation, analysis of the differences and evaluation.

It provides an alternative framework for data collection and analysis. Because of its participatory nature, PRA is a useful methodology to focus on people, their livelihoods and their inter-relationships with the socio-economic and ecological environment.

### 3.2 Rapid assessment of actors knowledge systems

Rapid Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge Systems (RAAKS) attempts to improve the accountability of and increase the number of stakeholders (Petty, Jules and Scones 1990).

Conventional planning is synonymous with interventions which imply the involvement of "outsiders" and external funding. Conventional planning has been criticized for being too narrow; that outsiders define

local needs and there is little use of local expertise; and that there is little capacity for adjustment once the process has begun. In contrast, adaptive planning implies:

- local people participate in agenda setting, resource allocation and controlling processes;
- the acquisition of knowledge by local people through the use of improved planning tools;

Involving a wide variety of stakeholders in planning can be beneficial in implementing plans. As described in 1.3 chapter 2, stakeholders with different biases have an influence on implementation - both positive and negative. RAAKS attempts to address this diversity and overcome conflicts between stakeholders.

RAAKS is a participatory action-research methodology that can help diverse stakeholders work together, enhancing information exchange and planning for innovation (Engel 1997). RAAKS attempts to increase understanding of problems and helps to develop a shared sense of purpose among stakeholders. This involves carrying out joint inquiry to transform people and/or organizations with an ill-defined sense of purpose, to a group with a shared perspective. Members agree upon a number of tasks and responsibilities and learn to respect each other. RAAKS promotes a shared conceptual framework that can facilitate the exchange of ideas, experiences and knowledge.

It is based on the concept that the *social organization of innovation* is characterized by the way in which actors (stakeholders) organize themselves. This can be defined as networking. Networking is characterized by:

- creation of joint learning opportunities
- mutual probing of relevant ideas
- options and contexts
- pooling energies and other resources to implement innovative strategies.

### **Detailed system of analysis**

One innovative feature of RAAKS involves providing a learning/understanding platform for stakeholders from diverse backgrounds with conflicting interests. This involves a detailed set of “windows”, or analytical perspectives for examining specific issues. For each window, specific tools and techniques can be applied to facilitate the understanding of the different stakeholders.

The methodology involves three basic steps: Problem Identification; Analysis of constraints and opportunities; and Action Planning. Windows and tools can be applied under each phase (Box 2). RAAKS is not intended as a step-by-step system, but rather a flexible system where the facilitator can choose the tools which are most applicable to the problem at hand (Mannintveld 1998).

**Box 2: Framework of RAAKS indicating the different tools**

<p><b>Three Phases in RAAKS</b></p> <p><b><u>PHASE A: Problem identification</u></b> <b>A1 Objective of the analysis (terms of reference)</b> What do we want to achieve? <b>A2 Identifying relevant actors</b> Who are they? <b>A3 Tracing diversity in actor objectives</b> What do they pursue? <b>A4 Context</b> What Factors are the most important? <b>A5 Redefinition of the problem situation</b> What are the problems to be assessed? What are the agreed terms of reference or redefinition?</p> <p><b><u>PHASE B: Analysis of constraints and opportunities</u></b> <b>B1 Actor analysis</b> What are their characteristics? <b>B2 Task Analysis</b> Who does what? <b>B3 Communication analysis</b> Do the stakeholders understand each other's jargon? <b>B4 Integration Analysis</b> Who has links with whom and why? What is its significance? <b>B5 Coordination Analysis</b> Who is the most influential actor(s)? <b>B6 Knowledge network analysis</b> What are sources of information? For whom is the information intended? <b>B7 Impact analysis</b> Does the system achieve what the actors expect? Is the system effective and efficient? <b>B8 Summarizing the knowledge system analysis</b> What clusters, networks or subsystems can be identified? What are the main constraints and opportunities?</p> <p><b><u>PHASE C: Action Planning</u></b> <b>C1 Knowledge and management analysis</b> What can the actors do to improve the system? <b>C2 Actor potential analysis</b> Who can do what? <b>C3 Planning</b> Who does what, when and how?</p>
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Source: Mannintveld 1998

**Potential problems**

RAAKS is a multipurpose tool, and has also been used outside the context of participatory applications (Corten 1998). Proponents argue that it can be used to provide a common vision, wherever conflicts of stakeholders exist (Manintveld 1998, Corten 1998), however, this system can be perceived as complex and difficult to implement (Waters-Bayer 1998). Practitioners, who have used RAAKS with success, emphasize the ability to pick and choose tools and are not necessarily familiar with all of them. As with

other Participatory methodologies, flexibility to redefine objectives, problems and newly discovered stakeholders is important, but can be time and resource consuming (Manintveld 1998).

Given the complexity of inter-relationships and diverse interests of the stakeholders involved with food and nutrition security, RAAKS could provide valuable tools to solve food insecurity.

### **3.3 Participatory technology development**

RAAKS, although a good methodology for multi-stakeholder analysis, has been criticized for not facilitating action (Manintveld 1998, de Zeeuw 1998). In contrast, Participatory Technology Development (PTD) is developed to achieve specific actions. PTD is defined as activities resulting in a change in the existing situation in a desirable direction. Applied to food and nutrition security and community nutrition, it is useful to think of this method as creating innovation (de Zeeuw 1998).

#### **Practical framework**

PTD provides a framework that brings together the knowledge and research capacity of local communities with that of the commercial and scientific institutions in an interactive way. They work together in the identification, generation, testing, application and diffusion of innovative ideas and practices. PTD seeks to strengthen the existing innovative capacity of the local community and attempts to sustain innovation. PTD is the process of creative interaction between local groups and outside facilitators.

- interests and activities of different formal and informal institutions are co-ordinated;
- validation of information gathering, recording, analysis and use is cyclical with continual re-evaluation, reflection and action.

This methodology seeks:

- a better understanding of the local situation
- to define priority problems
- and to experiment with selected “best-bet” options for improvement.

The improvements come from both indigenous (local) knowledge and formal science. PTD ensures that the generation of innovation, adaptation and communication is participative and that the interests of all institutions are co-ordinated.

The process helps to sustain the use of natural resources for future generations (*Learning in action* 1998). The method focuses on the creation of new knowledge rather than transfer of ready-made solutions provided by experts. Local people play a central role by sharing their tried and tested ideas with others.

#### **Innovation**

Innovation means introducing something new. In PTD this innovation is usually in the form of technologies to aid sustainable development of agriculture. Innovations related to food and nutrition security are new ideas which improve the availability to, access and consumption of “healthy foods” in sustainable ways. Box 3 gives a list of innovations relating to food security and community:

**Box 3: Innovations at community level**

**Examples of innovations related to urban food and nutrition**

- School lunch programmes
- Get cooking programmes – to teach cooking skills to the community
- Good food on a low-budget courses
- Organic purchasing policies by community institutions and local authorities
- Community transport schemes to help people shop
- Local Exchange and Trading Schemes that do not involve money transfer
- Drop box schemes – local producers deliver directly to the home of the consumer
- Creating Community Supported Agriculture – communities participate in local growing
- Community partnerships with supermarkets
- Food co-operatives – communities get together to buy food in bulk
- Food buying clubs
- Farmers markets provide retail outlets for local producers
- School gardens
- Community gardens
- Community operated market gardens

Source: Urban and peri-urban food and nutrition action plan, WHO EURO 2001

**Activities in PTD**

For analytical purposes five different phases in PTD can be distinguished. The sequence of the steps vary and in practice a linear step-wise sequence is not the goal. In practice, iterations laps and overlaps are desirable (de Zeeuw 1998). In table 3, these activities are adapted to food and security and community nutrition.

**Table 3. Framework of activities in participatory innovation development**

How to get started	Finding things to try	Trying out	Sharing Results	Sustaining the process
Build up relationships of confidence and lay basis for co-operation in analysis  Analyse existing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• environmental situation</li> <li>• food systems</li> <li>• problems</li> <li>• networks</li> </ul> Establish relationship with existing networks or form networks for participatory innovation development	Take stock of local knowledge and formal knowledge  Screen possible innovations related to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• food system</li> <li>• local processes</li> </ul> Select innovations as possible projects	assess and develop capacity of innovation of partners  Choose subject  Design dynamic operational plan for innovation  Manage the innovations  Assess the results  Analyse and understand the process	Carry out extension (project to project)  Carry out training in use of new technology and in methods of participatory technology development  Produce communications and training materials  Ensure relevant services  Ensure adequate inputs	Create favourable circumstances for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• citizen organization</li> <li>• local institutions</li> <li>• policy level support</li> <li>• physical infrastructure</li> </ul> Repeat the process  Analyse and document experiences

Adapted from Activities in Participatory Technology Development, Engel, P, Haverkort, B & Jiggins 1991

Through this framework, PTD facilitates action. By examining innovative practices at community level the most relevant solutions can be found and linked to the infrastructure within the community. PTD, in contrast to other participatory approaches, attempts to seek provisions for sustaining the process.

### 3.4 Challenges to participatory approaches

Participatory approaches offer certain advantages, nevertheless, certain limitations exist. However, by addressing these the limitations can be overcome.

#### Participation or pragmatic involvement

While participatory approaches provide a framework for participation, factors that limit the process have become apparent:

- Local government agencies, despite their rhetoric of support, have reasons to fear local participation. In addition, prejudice exists among professionals (i.e. nutritionists or community development workers) against the assumption that local people can contribute to the process.
- Certain groups may face special obstacles: women may face time/resource constraints that prevent them from taking part in meetings; cultural/personal restrictions or a sense of inferiority may prevail against speaking at open meetings and lack of confidence may inhibit participation.
- In many communities, resistance to ethnic minorities may exist. Thus, dominant groups may stop the participation of ethnic minorities.
- Poverty results in: social exclusion; a lack of access; an absolute scarcity of resources; and a lack of hope of any improvement. Communities may have developed certain coping strategies. These strategies should be taken into account (Haverkort et. al. 1991).
- Some stakeholders do not see themselves as stakeholders or accountable in alleviating the problems.

It has been suggested (de Zeeuw 1998) that it is important to weigh-up the benefits of participation against the pragmatic efficiency of reaching the goal. For example, trade-offs between powerful stakeholders and local government may be important, but may limit the ability of weaker groups to have a “voice” in the process.

### **Complementary methodologies**

Work with participatory methodologies have advantages over conventional methodologies, but there are questions related to their effectiveness. In particular, whether or not they are adequate in providing decision-makers, local people and professionals with appropriate information to make sound decisions (Abbot & Guijt 1997).

It is questionable whether participatory approaches can offer solutions for all levels of decision-making. Decision-makers at high levels need summarized epidemiological data, such as populations surveys on nutritional status and food intake. Such data provide a baseline against which evaluation and future planning can take place. However, participatory approaches offer insight into local diversity and opportunities linked to empowerment of the community. Participatory approaches can also help interpret the results of conventional surveys, understand the underlying causal factors and explain differences within the community.

Participatory approaches bring together a great diversity of perspectives. However, this can generate a huge amount of complex, context specific information (Abbot & Guijt 1997) which is unwieldy to analyse (Waters-Bayer 1998). This unmanageability of information can be a source of confusion and bewilderment. Empowering local communities while seeking information that carries political impact, means integrating conventional and participatory research approaches (Abbot & Guijt 1997).

Certain compromises are needed when combining the two methodologies (Abbot & Guijt 1997), and the purpose, objective(s), and expected outcome(s) should be considered in relation to:

- Acceptability of the information produced by officials (local, regional and national government) their agencies, and research institutes
- Acceptability of the information produced by end users (the community and its citizens)
- Does one methodology satisfy the need for information or should a combination of both conventional and participatory approaches be used.

### **Sustaining the process**

Both Waters-Bayer (1998) and de Zeeuw (1998) emphasize the importance of taking steps to sustain the process. Steps include: linking the process to existing infrastructures; linking with local government; and providing a platform for community ownership and accountability. This includes capacity building within the community, facilitating the formation of networks and information sharing (as described in PTD). The ultimate goal is that the community will continue using a participatory approach, with no help from outside facilitators.

In order to link food and nutrition strategies with local infrastructures the appropriate infrastructures have to be identified. This can be services which provide finances or technical assistance to sustain food and nutrition policies.

Linking to local, regional or national governments will offer sustainability. Linking Participatory Approaches to governmental agencies can be brought about in several ways. One is by involving local government from the start as partners in the process. Other ways involve presenting the data and lobbying to seek support at the community level. Some pilot projects in the United Kingdom (SAFE Alliance 1998) involve local government and their health promotion unit(s) to facilitate the use of participatory approaches. These projects have the goal of disseminating the information generated, by the pilot projects, to national government.

Other strategies involve national governments in the process. De Winter (1998) describes how national officials were involved in the data gathering. This made the officials receptive and willing to consider that their previous recommendations, based on interpretations of conventional data, might be inaccurate.

### **Overcoming the challenges**

Combining the different methodologies, offers solutions to community development. It appears that participatory approaches alone cannot satisfy all the needs. However, they offer the potential for understanding better the socio-economic- and environment factors that affect food and nutrition security. Sustaining the process so that it does not become just another isolated project involves linking supportive infrastructures. PTD and RAAKS both provide a framework where action is combined with seeking support within the community. Local and formal knowledge should be integrated wherever possible to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.



## **4. The Applicability of Participatory Approaches**

The approaches described in **section 3** have primarily been applied in rural areas in developing countries. There is a growing interest in using participatory approaches in developed countries, such as to improve food and nutrition security in cities.

### **4.1 Food and Nutrition Security**

Participatory approaches have been applied to improving food and nutrition security in developing countries. They have been effective in revealing the complexity of issues that affect nutrition at community level (Kashyap & Young, 1989, Haddad et. al., 1993). However, these approaches have rarely moved beyond information gathering, such as exploring patterns of complimentary feeding (*Community Assessment and Planning*, 1998) in young children in the community.

A community mapping toolkit has been developed by OXFAM-Canada (box 4), and is currently being piloted by SUSTAIN in the United Kingdom (*Community Mapping*, 1998). The major objective is to empower the poor and help them to understand their local food economy. The information will be used to lobby government to improve food and nutrition security.

**Box 4. Community Mapping Toolkit** (*Understanding Food Security through Community Mapping 1995*)

**Community Mapping:**

**A tool kit for assessing food security and action planning**

**The purpose of the tool**

The purpose of community mapping is to provide a starting place to critically examine the causes, consequences, and possible alternatives for improving food security in a local context. The toolkit is multidisciplinary involving all the major stakeholders (activists, nutritionists, urban planners, volunteers in food access projects, food insecure and concerned citizens) at the community level.

**Objectives**

- to provide people in local communities with tools to understand their own food security.
- to empower people to use this understanding to visualise what changes are needed to improve their food security, and where appropriate to take action and monitor progress.
- to help communities assess the possible impact of changes, and their impact on food security.
- to provide information to local and national government and other policy makers for use in developing better policies and practices in relation to food poverty.

**Phases**

*Phase 1: Preliminary*

- What are the physical boundaries of the neighbourhood or community the group plans to study?
- Who should be involved in what processes?
- What does the group hope to accomplish?
- How should the gathered information be used?
- What is a reasonable time frame to collect the data?
- What resources will be required and who will provide them?
- Who will co-ordinate the process?

*Phase 2: Identifying Relevant Data and Data Gathering*

The group decides upon which data is relevant to collect for the purpose of creating a socio-economic profile and a community map, and who is responsible for collecting it. Percentage of impoverished families, unemployment rates, averaging housing cost, etc. can be obtained from Census data, local health departments and municipal planners in most communities, but other data may have to be gauged more informally, through observation and community experience. This process will take approximately 1-2 weeks.

*Phase 3: Creating Socio-economic Profile and Community Map*

The information gathered for the socio-economic profile is shared and discussed by the group. It is recommended that people experiencing, or at risk of, food insecurity attend and participate in this phase. The main objective of this phase is to visualize the factors and conditions that affect food security, and their complex interaction. At a minimum the map should include:

- Retail Food Outlets
- Public Transportation Routes
- Low Cost Housing
- Key employers in the Community
- Food Donation Programmes
- Community Food Sources and Projects
- Important Natural Resources and Environmental Factors
- Other key Community features
- Information from the Socio-economic profile

The rest of this phase should be devoted to discussing what has been learned from the socio-economic profile and mapping process. How economic factors, housing and facilities, infrastructure, physical accessibility, adequate child care, location/type of retail, price of food, local and national policy, etc. affect food security, should be analysed to deepen understanding.

**Follow up Activities**

- Periodic reappraisal

- Sharing information within the community and with other communities
- Food Action Projects
- Changing Policy

## 4.2 Urban versus rural environment

Participatory approaches were conceived for rural areas and important questions underlie community participation in urban areas (Wratten 1994):

- What is the purpose of community participation? (and whose interest does it serve)
- What is an urban area? (and how does it differ from a rural area)
- Is the nature of participation different in urban and rural areas?

### Community development in urban areas

If the main objectives are related to community development, it can be useful to target certain group(s) of people. Limiting the sample to a homogenous group (i.e. lower socio-economic, ethnic minorities, children) has advantages in terms of participation. Using homogenous groups with a common vision can be effective in enabling them to understand and change their situation (Waters-Bayer, 1998). The community mapping project (*Community Mapping*, 1998) in the United Kingdom set a target that 50% of the participants should be food insecure.

### Defining the community

Within the urban context, the density and diversity of the population make it difficult to define the community. Norton (1994) suggests that the definitions of “community”, used in the rural context, such as mutual knowledge and homogeneity in livelihood patterns are not relevant to the urban context. Three criteria, can be used to define the urban community: geographic, socio-economic or administrative divisions:

#### *Geographic Criteria*

Geographical criteria can be useful in identifying shared services within urban areas. However, there could exist a great diversity between groups making it difficult to create an understanding between people from different backgrounds. Therefore geographical criteria can be problematic where a feeling of shared purpose and community does not exist.

#### *Socio-economic*

Definition of the community by socio-economic criteria in the urban context will result in a more homogenous group. Homogeneity breaks down some of the barriers to participation and provides a sense of shared purpose (Bayers-Water, 1998). However, important stakeholders may be omitted and sustainable change may be less likely. Weighing up the pros and cons between empowerment of those living in poverty and pragmatic involvement of influential stakeholders is an important consideration which will determine the success or otherwise of the strategy.

#### *Local government*

Defining the community to match local government area of responsibility has advantages for linking the process to local government. The experiences from a pilot project (*Community Mapping*, 1998) in the United Kingdom suggest that communities with a supportive infrastructure such as appointing a food poverty officer proceeded well, while other communities were unsure of their objectives, funding and how to move forward.

## 4.3 Separation of urban and rural

Mitlin and Thompson (1994) argue that despite differences between rural and urban communities the two have much in common, and linkages between rural and urban communities should be considered. Although there is a growing physical and psychological distance between food consumers in cities and rural producers, making efforts to link them may provide part of the solution for both rural and urban communities.

Participatory approaches in urban areas could include addressing the differences between rural and urban communities and also work towards making rural-urban linkages (Corten 1998). To promote sustainable development, the solutions that improve urban food and nutrition security should not have a negative impact on rural development. One goal of participatory approaches should be to establish links that benefit both urban and rural communities.

## 5. Guidelines for a methodology

In this chapter, guidelines for a methodology to improve food security and community nutrition will be suggested based on participatory approaches and their application. A standard sequence of steps or techniques is not intended. What is important is to consider the situation within each community, and then adapt the steps and techniques according to the local conditions. Some of the steps will overlap and reiteration of the steps may be necessary to give a “true picture” and provide solutions for problems.

### 5.1 Preplanning

Pre-planning is an important step when using participatory approaches. The philosophy of participatory approaches relies on flexibility, working with a conceptual framework and the ability to reiterate processes. The steps should be planned depending on the purpose, objectives, outcomes and scope of participation desired.

#### What are the objectives

The objectives of the community development will have an influence on the process including the composition of the team, how the community participates, and dissemination of the results.

#### Identifying the communities

Identifying the “community” is based on the objectives. For example identification of problems related to food and nutrition security would require choosing communities with socio-economic problems. If local authority support is an ultimate goal then considerations about governmental jurisdiction are essential. The “community” does not have to be defined according to one criterion, but each criterion should be considered with respect to the objectives, processes and expected outcomes (Box 5).

#### Box 5. Defining the community

##### Key questions when defining the community

**What are the objectives?** – the proposed objectives will influence the selection of communities. Is the objective to provide an illustration of the diversity existing within a city? Is it to enhance the understanding of food and nutrition security? Is the objective to empower vulnerable groups to understand their local food economy? The objectives influence the next step, of defining the community (s).

##### What criteria should be used to define the target community?

- Socio-economic
- Political
- Geographic

and how do the selected criteria affect the objectives, process and desired outcomes.

##### Do we need to redefine the definition of the community?

Do the intended objectives and outcomes clash with the criteria selection for the community?  
What can be done to overcome this?

#### Composition of the team

The composition of the survey team is strongly dependant on the objectives. If the goals are empowerment of local people, recruitment of local people to the team will help to gain the trust of the

community. If the emphasis is on providing data for policy-makers, the team should be composed of different disciplines, e.g. nutritionists, sociologists, environmental health and public health specialists.

### **Identifying partners**

Identifying partners is about establishing working relationships with the local community. If the objectives are community development, these partners can be local NGOs or public interest organizations working with food and nutrition security, local government, or individuals from the community. When choosing partners, document the following:

- What is their area of work?
- What are their reasons for being partners?
- How will they influence the process?

Establishing what partners can contribute is important. Their reasons for wanting to be involved and how they will influence the process must be addressed. Reasons for being involved can range from ideological interests to status (power) and can seriously effect the process. For example local government involvement from the start can be useful in supporting policy development, but where mistrust exists between the public and local government, it may be difficult to encourage the participation of all relevant groups.

### **What are the expected outcomes**

For planning purposes (Community Mapping, 1998, Waters-Bayer, 1998) formulation of expected outcomes is vital. These can be more qualitative and general:

- Empowerment of vulnerable people to understand the local food economy
- The creation of sustainable food projects or initiatives
- To provide a common platform for different stakeholders involved in the food supply chain
- To influence local policy towards more sustainable food security solutions
- To provide evidence on the degree of food insecurity to local policy-makers.

Formulation of the expected outcomes helps to determine the sequence and choice of techniques in the process.

## **5.2 Assessment of the situation**

Assessment of food and nutrition security involves identifying both the problems and assets that exist in the community. This can entail starting with a specific problem, such as dietary problems of school children or with allowing the community themselves to identify the problems. This can start with “What health problems exist within the community?” or “What food and nutrition problems exist?” and narrowing this down, to specific issues related to food and nutrition security. Regardless of the problem identified, exactly what is to be done should be agreed by consensus.

### Tools and techniques

A wide variety of tools and techniques (see also Appendix III) can be utilized. The tools and techniques can be chosen by asking:

- What do we wish to achieve during this phase?
- How can the specific tools be applied?
- What are the drawbacks?
- Would other tools enhance the process or provide better information?

Social mapping (Box 6) allows the facilitator(s) to get an overall impression of the community and demonstrate to the community members that the facilitators are interested in learning from them. Information about the available resources, community groups, and infrastructure can be obtained through the social mapping process.

#### Box 6: Checklist for Social Mapping

##### Checklist for Social Mapping

The participants are asked to make a map

- Overall layout of the defined community
- Location of retail food outlets such as local shops, discounts markets, super and hypermarkets, farmers markets etc.
- Food projects
- Main socio-economic groups (as defined by the community) and their location within the community
- Main ethnic groups and their location within the community
- Public institutions such as schools, churches, cultural centres
- General markets
- Major roads and transportation systems (private car, bus, railroad or subway, bicycle paths) and discuss the main features and what they have learned.

Brain storming helps to determine the priorities of the community (Box 7). Brainstorming and ranking matrices, allows the local community to agree on priority issues. It does not mean that the team can not introduce additional information. Efforts are taken to guarantee free exchange of information between the facilitator and the participants. Terminologies or “jargon” should be explained and knowledge shared, the idea is to be open to the participants’ knowledge and information.

#### Box 7: Brainstorm to identify community food and nutrition problems

##### Example of brainstorming

###### Participants are asked the following questions:

What are the main problems you face in the community in terms of food and nutrition? List all of the problems. More probing questions may be necessary “What factors influence the foods you purchase?”

###### The participants are then asked to:

- Use a matrix to rank the problems identified to show how common the problem is and indicate the severity of the problem.
- Of all the problems, which one is the most common? Which one is the most severe? If you could be free of any one problem which one would it be. Identify these problems in a special way.

The final outcome of the free brainstorming can then be summarized (table 4) into a composite matrix.



**Table 4: Example of food and nutrition problems listed and ranked by a community**

<b>Symptom or Problem</b>	<b>How Common is this?</b>	<b>How severely does this effect you?</b>
No money at the end of the month	5	4
High price of “quality foods”	5	3
Stressful purchasing situation (with kids during “rush hour”)	4	5
Don’t know how to prepare “healthy meals”	3	3
Difficulties in transporting food from “supermarket” (no public transportation, bags to heavy too walk with, etc)	2	1

The process of mapping and brainstorming can be done using disaggregated groups by gender, age, and socio-economic or ethnic criteria. This can be useful both for enhancing the equality of participation where the mix of the group limits the participation, and for identifying the diversity of the problems and assets.

During the assessment phase key issues may emerge that require more in-depth probing. Using the example in table 4, “no money at the end of the month” is of prime importance for the community. This can be further explored by examining the progress over the month, or by exploring the differences in perception of the problem by gender – Do men and women have the same perception?

### **Secondary information**

Situations can arise during the assessment phase, where additional information is required. This additional information can be acquired from secondary sources, such as demographic reports, files, aerial photographs and existing surveys. Access to secondary information can help save time and cost. Secondary information can be useful even before the assessment begins. Aerial photographs or existing maps of the community can help the process by being verified or refuted by the community. Another option is to engage the community in finding additional available data.

### **Complementary methodologies**

Using complementary methodologies can enhance the assessment of community food and nutrition security. If information cannot be generated through participatory approaches or secondary information, simple conventional surveys such as supermarket price surveys can be carried out. As mentioned in section 3.4, there are a number of ways to combine conventional with participatory methodologies.

## **5.3 Stakeholder analysis**

A stakeholder (see 1.3 for definition) analysis involves defining the constraints and opportunities for action by each stake holder in the community. There is a need to establish what the different stakeholders are willing or not willing to do. Successful development and implementation of food and nutrition plans of action requires the active participation of stakeholders. The stakeholders can be divided into two groups, although overlaps exist:

- direct stakeholders: those adversely affected by food and nutrition policy, or positively affected by interventions to improve food and nutrition security.

- indirect stakeholders: can influence the process both negatively or positively, and have a role in strategies which attempt to alleviate problems within the community.

The stakeholder analysis can overlap with the assessment phase and the action-planning phase and there can be benefits from the participants identifying relevant stakeholders.

### **Identifying stakeholders**

Definition of which stake-holders should be involved and at what stage, is largely dependant on the overall objectives (Box 8).

#### **Box 8: Key questions to identify stakeholders**

##### **Key questions to identify Stakeholders**

- Who might be affected (positively or negatively) by the concern to be addressed?
- Who are the “voiceless” for whom special efforts have to be made?
- Who are the representatives of those likely to be affected?
- Who is responsible for what is intended?
- Who is likely to mobilize for or against what is intended?
- Who can make what is intended more effective through their participation or less effective by their non-participation or outright opposition?
- Who can contribute financial and technical resources?
- Whose behaviour has to change for the effort to succeed?

Source: The World Bank 1996, p. 127.

There is no right or wrong way to identify stakeholders, but the number of stakeholders involved will influence the process. Experience (Manintveld 1998) indicates that starting with a limited number of stakeholders, and allowing them to identify more, based on their local knowledge situation is a good strategy.

Determining the relevant stakeholders depends on the situation and type of activity to be supported. If a participatory approach is used, getting the right stakeholders is essential to producing good results (World Bank 1996). However, a careful selection should be made and not all those identified should automatically be assumed relevant; food and nutrition policy involves a broad spectrum of stakeholders, ranging from those that are adversely affected to individuals, organizations and institutions with vested interests.

### **Problem definition and system identification**

One of the first steps for the stakeholder analysis is to define the terms of reference, or what the stakeholder workshop intends to achieve (Box 9). This can involve a discussion about the prioritizing exercise already carried out by the community. Stakeholders may present new problems or objectives. During this phase it may be necessary to redefine objectives, reiterate some of the processes, and highlight the reasons for the diversity of opinions among the stakeholder. After reaching a consensus on the terms of reference, the problems to be assessed can be redefined.

### Box 9: Problem Identification and System Identification

#### Checklist for problem definition and system identification

The group of stakeholders and representatives of the community are asked the following questions. The stakeholders can be divided into groups if the number of participants is too large, but it is beneficial to have diversity within the groups.

- What do we want to achieve?
- Do we need to involve other relevant actors?
- Why do the stakeholders pursue different objectives?
- What factors related to the problem are the most important?

The group then reconvenes and the groups present the findings and the following is discussed:

- What factors are the most important?
- Do the problems or objectives need to be redefined?
- What problems are to be assessed?

Source: Adapted from Engel, 1997.

### Analysis of constraints and opportunities

The main goal of the analysis of constraints and opportunities is to identify what the stakeholders are willing to do within their (institutional) constraints. Their patterns of interaction have to be clarified and whether or not their knowledge and communications can be effective in helping to provide solutions (Box 10).

### Box 10: Analysis of Constraints and Opportunities

#### Checklist for Analysis of Constraints and Opportunities

##### Who does what?

Stakeholders work in pairs interviewing each other (facilitators included) about what they do, the characteristics of their work, what they seek to accomplish, etc. The findings are presented and discussed in the larger group.

##### Who has links with whom and why?

Stakeholders are asked to prepare a Venn diagram (see appendix III) representing their relationships and intensity or significance of the relationship. The group is then asked to rank the relative power of the stakeholders and identify the key sources of knowledge. Probing questions: Who benefits from this knowledge? Can the community utilize this knowledge? Does the system effectively and efficiently achieve what the actors expect?

##### What are the main constraints and opportunities?

The stakeholders are asked to summarize what they have learned from the Venn Diagram exercise. Do certain groupings have more relative importance? Are there opportunities for networks or new channels of interaction that would be more effective in solving the problem? The stakeholders are then asked to summarize the main constraints and opportunities in a brainstorming exercise.

Source: Adapted from Engel, 1997.

Throughout the stakeholder workshop it is important to manage potential conflict and seek to involve everyone in the process. This includes flexibility to segregate the group or to promote equality of participation, knowing when to confront diversity, and knowing when to resolve conflict and work towards consensus.

## 5.4 Action planning

Action planning involves making plans that alleviate the defined problems, within the constraints and opportunities defined in the multi-stakeholder workshop. This may overlap with the multi-stakeholder

analysis. Much of this phase is adapted from the framework developed in Participatory Technology Development (PTD), because it seeks to actively promote and sustain the participation of local people.

### **Finding potential solutions**

Once the main priorities have been defined, and the constraints and opportunities analysed, the community can identify solutions to alleviate the problem by:

- Formulating strategies by all the stakeholders, followed by consultation with the community;
- Formulating strategies by the community, followed by consultation with stakeholders;
- Joint formulation of strategies by community and stakeholders.

Regardless of the option selected, the process should involve members of the community.

Finding solutions that are implementable involves identifying innovative practices that already exist, and sharing the lessons learnt from these practices (Box 11).

#### **Box 11: Finding potential solutions**

##### **Checklist for finding potential solutions**

###### **Finding innovations and innovative practice**

- simplicity
- accessibility by the resource poor, or other vulnerable groups
- low risk
- likelihood of generating results

###### **Screening**

- How do the innovations affect the food system?
- How do the innovations relate to local community?

###### **Selection of innovations or innovative practice**

- Win-win situations or best options
- Do other alternatives need to be sought?

### **Implementation**

Once potential innovative practices have been selected, the steps to implement them have to be clarified: Who will do what? Do the innovations require capacity development within the community, stakeholders or institutions? What resources or inputs are needed to put the innovations into practice (Box 12)?

#### **Box 12: Implementation**

##### **Checklist for implementation**

###### **Who does what?**

The Venn diagram from the stakeholder analysis is presented to illustrate, the constraints and opportunities of the stakeholders and a evaluation of who can do what is assessed by asking the participants to fill in a matrix: What steps do we need to take to get this project off the ground. Who can be considered to do what tasks? Who will be responsible for making sure this gets done?

###### **Assess and develop capacity for innovation**

The group is asked the following questions: Does everybody feel comfortable with the tasks and responsibilities? Do we know everything we need to progress? Where can this knowledge or assistance be obtained? Does anybody have experience with this or know where this information or service can be obtained? At this point it may be necessary to put additional information into the matrix or readdress tasks and responsibilities.

#### **Design an operational plan for innovation**

The participants are asked to summarize: who does what, when this should be done by, what inputs, additional information, resources are needed and where will this be attained? A time frame and initial budget are prepared with the help of the facilitators, if necessary.

### **5.5 Sustaining the process**

Taking steps towards sustaining the process is recommended. Unless efforts are made to sustain the process “one off” isolated projects are created and they lose impetus and fade away. Sharing the results, creating favourable circumstances for participation by other citizen organizations, and seeking support from local authorities all contribute to sustaining the processes.

#### **Sharing the results**

Sharing the results entails documenting the process and the results, and sharing these with other members of the community, other communities and local government. In addition local tours guided by local people showing the innovative strategies to officials or citizens from other communities may be equally beneficial. Perhaps, the most important aspect is making a convincing argument for what has been done and demonstrating how this has benefited the community. This includes actual results, but also the capacity building that has taken place during the process.

#### **Local institutions**

Seeking the support of local institutions (those not involved from the start) can help in providing technical assistance for the community. This involves raising the awareness of relevant institutions, such as schools, churches, community centres, local research institutes. Involving local institutions can have a positive affect on the scope of participation within the community, and create a forum for sharing information.

#### **Citizen organizations**

Creating a supportive environment means passing the initiative to the community and allowing them to continue the work with a minimum level of outside interference. This may require capacity building to give the community the necessary confidence, inputs and resources. Establishment of citizen organizations (Box 13) can help to institutionalize the process and ensure its continuity.

#### **Box 13: What Makes Community Organizations Work?**

##### **Five common characteristics of well-functioning community groups**

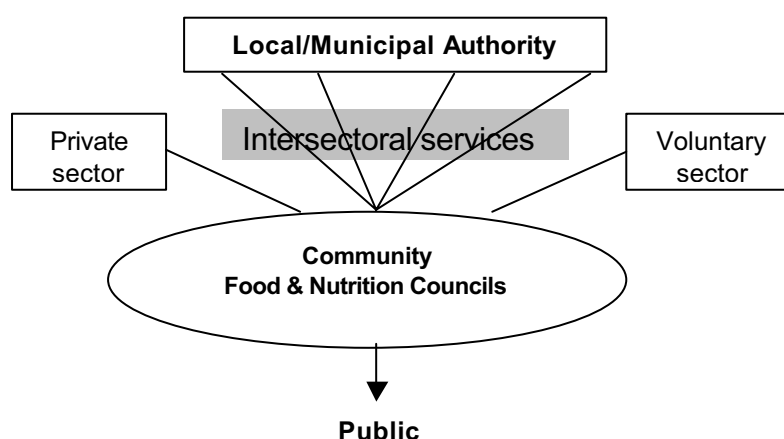
- **The group addresses a need and a common interest.** When people share a common problem that can be addressed by group action (such as a lack of affordable, sustainable food supply), they are more likely to mobilize themselves and work with support agencies.
- **The benefits of working together outweigh the costs.** Benefits may be economic (cash savings, increased production, income, and time savings), social capital formation (increased ability to collectively solve problems), increased individual capacity (knowledge and skills), psychological (sense of belonging and confidence), or political (greater access to authority, greater authority, and reduced conflict).
- **The group is embedded in the local social organization.** Community organizations are most successful when based on existing relationships and groupings or when members share a common identity such as kinship, age, gender or livelihood.
- **The group has the capability, leadership, knowledge, and skills to manage the tasks.** As noted above, special attention needs to be given to ensuring groups have the necessary capacities for the tasks at hand.
- **The group owns and enforces its rules and regulations.** Internalized rules and regulations that are known by its members characterize all successful groups and associations.

Source: The World Bank, 1996.

### Food and Nutrition Councils

Establishment of food and nutrition Councils and Coalitions for Community Food Security can help in the development of policies to ensure that municipal food systems are sustainable, equitable, and affordable. Ideally Food Policy Councils and Community Food Security Coalitions are composed of representatives from civic, private and public sectors, and have the potential of bridging the gap between diverse interests towards a common goal. A good example of this can be seen in Toronto. (see [http://www.city.Toronto.on.ca/health/tfpc\\_index.htm](http://www.city.Toronto.on.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm))

**Figure 3: Intersectorality of Community Food and Nutrition Councils**



### Policy level support

Seeking policy level support can be the most difficult, especially in communities where local policy makers are indifferent to food and nutrition policies. Lobbying for policy level support can include:

- Using the results of participatory approaches to inform policy-makers;
- Linking local people to policy formulation through democratic processes.

These two options can stand alone or can be used in combination. Each has its advantages and disadvantages.

Using participatory approaches to inform policy requires sensitizing local politicians to the resulting information since it is different in style to that generated by conventional methodologies. Often local politicians, are bombarded with information and “new innovative” projects to improve the community, and so perseverance and patience will be needed to convince them.

In order to attract media attention local journalists, representatives from commerce, council members, the mayor, school board officials, community civil servants and others can be invited on a guided tour to see the results of the process. Features, projects and processes pertinent to food and nutrition security can be illustrated. Such tours can provoke great interest in community food and nutrition security by local politicians, especially if there is good media coverage.

Sustaining the process is not necessarily the end of the process. The most important aspect is the evaluation of success. The following questions can be asked:

- Why were the specific methods and techniques chosen?
- Why have certain steps of the participatory process been more and other steps been less successful?
- What steps are considered necessary for an effective participatory approach for your work situation?
- Are there any suggestions for a better introduction to participatory approaches?
- What are the main obstacles for participatory approaches? Are there any ideas on ways to set priorities to overcome them?

By documenting these answers to these questions, the participatory framework can be refined offering better solutions for future work.

## 6. Conclusion

Effective participation requires: (1) examining the degree of control citizens have in the decision making process, and also (2) involving all stakeholders that have an effect both negative and positive on the outcome. Real change is made by sustaining the active and co-ordinated participation of all sectors of societies to facilitate improvements for vulnerable groups. The involvement of these vulnerable groups is necessary to provide viable solutions to alleviate their problems.

Participatory community approaches to provide a framework for participation, including tools and techniques for involving local people in defining and analysing their own problems. However, participatory approaches alone cannot supply all the information needed by decision makers. Using participatory approaches alone to address all aspects of food and nutrition security is not realistic. Therefore combining both conventional surveys and participatory methodologies allows information to be analysed and formulated into intervention strategies which take the complexity and diversity of problems into account.

Participatory approaches supplement conventional surveys measuring food intake and nutritional status by offering an understanding into the complexities of food and nutrition in security in the community. Participatory approaches cannot replace traditional nutrition investigation surveys but offer methods to mobilize the community to take action.

Participatory approaches for the most part, were conceived and refined in rural development projects. Difficulties relate to demographic, social, political and economic differences between rural and urban settings. However these differences can be complimentary and it is important to consider the interaction between rural and urban communities, and how they can be linked more closely.

The guidelines suggested for a participatory methodology are formed in an open and flexible way, so that they can be adapted to local circumstances. For such a methodology to evolve, more work, experience and applications in community food and nutrition security within a European context need to be done and documented.

The WHO Regional Office for Europe will be pleased to receive documented examples of experiences and application of participatory approaches to improve community nutrition and to disseminate these through our networks.



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# **Annex I: Interview Checklist**

## **Interview Checklist**

### **What Participatory Methods have you worked with?**

#### **How did this work proceed?**

- Preplanning
- Objectives
- Action orientation
- Visualization tools used
- Monitoring and Evaluation

### **What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Approaches?**

- data collection
- planning intervention
- facilitating action
- evaluating and monitoring
- what are the advantages of the specific methodologies

### **Applicability of Participatory Approaches in urban settings?**

- Are they applicable?
- What are your experiences?
- What difficulties can be expected?

### **What are the major differences between working with PA in developed and underdeveloped countries?**

- participation
- learning
- action

### **Urban Food and Nutrition Security**

- how might PA's be applied to approach this problem
- are there relative advantages
- potential problems
- can PA be applied to topical subjects

### **General**

- are there specific situations where PA should not be applied
- what are the most important aspects of facilitating participation
- why is participation important
- additional comments

## **Annex 2: Description of ETC and interview schedule**

### **Environment, Technology and Culture (ETC)**

ETC is a not-for-profit organization active in the field of sustainable resource management and ecological agriculture in both Western and developing countries. ETC's experiences in this field include research, information and documentation services, training, technical and policy advice and project implementation

ETC has experience in using a variety of participatory approaches in both Western and developing countries and offers tailor made courses on participatory approaches. The courses are intended for professional working with - or starting work where these approaches are useful. The level of experience of the participants will determine the specific level and focus of each course. Most courses only have one participant to whom an individual course is offered. Group courses can also be arranged.

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### **Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Subject</b>
<b>19 October 1998</b>	Kees Manninveld	Introduction to Rapid Assessment of Agriculture Knowledge Systems (RAAKS)
<b>20 October 1998</b>	Irma Corten	RAAKS and Urban-Rural Integration
<b>21 October 1998</b>	Anne-Water Bayer	Intro to Participatory Rural Appraisal and Participatory Technology Development (PTD)
<b>22 October 1998</b>	Jaap de Winter	Participatory Poverty Assessment and Resource
<b>23 October 1998</b>	Henk de Zeeuw	More PTD and differences and advantages of different participatory approaches

## Annex 3: Participatory appraisal methods

### Menu of methods<sup>2</sup>

**Secondary sources:** such as files, reports, maps, aerial photographs, articles and books

**Do-it-yourself:** asking to be taught to perform community tasks - shopping, taking public transportation, transporting food, preparing food.

**Key informants:** enquiring who are the experts and seeking them out.

**Semi-structured interviews:** This has been regarded by some as the *core* of good RRA. It can entail having a mental or written checklist, but being open-ended and following up on the unexpected. Increasingly it is using participatory visual as well as traditional verbal methods

**Groups:** involves using different kinds of groups (casual, specialist/focus; deliberately structured; community/neighbourhood) Group interviews are part and activities are part of many of the methods

**Sequences or chains of interviews:** from group to group; or from group to key informant; or a sequence of key informants, each expert on a different stage of a process (e.g. women on food preparation, children on mealtime habits, men on income distribution...etc.).

**They do it:** residents of the local community as investigators and researchers - women, poor people, school teachers, volunteers, students, farmers, local specialists. They do transects, observe, interview other residents, analyse data and present the results.

**Participatory mapping or modelling:** in which people use the ground, floor or paper to make social, demographic, health, natural

resource (soils, trees and forests, water resources etc) or community maps or three dimensional models.

#### **Participatory analysis of aerial**

**photographs:** (often best at 1:5000) to identify retail outlets, transportation routes, services, vacant areas that could be used for food growing, etc.

**Transect walks:** systematically walking with informants through an area, observing, asking, listening, discussing, identifying different zones, local technologies (innovations), seeking problems, solutions and opportunities, and mapping and diagramming resources and findings.

**Time lines:** chronologies of events, listing major remembered events in a community with approximate dates.

**Trend analysis:** people's accounts of the past, of how things close to them have changed, ecological histories, changes in land use (zoning), changes in customs and practices, changes and trends in population, migration, services used, education, health, credit ...and the causes of changes and trends.

**Ethno-biographies:** local histories of a basic food, household livelihood strategies, local retail outlets, transportation etc.

**Seasonal diagram:** by major season or by month to show diet food, consumption, availability of certain foods, types of sickness, prices, distribution of income, expenditure, debt etc.

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<sup>2</sup> The methods are adapted from: Chambers, Robert, *Rural Appraisal: Rapid, Relaxed and Participatory*. Discussion Paper 311, Institute of Development Studies, London, 1992.

**Livelihood analysis:** stability, crises and coping, relative income expenditure, credit and debt, multiple activities.

**Participatory diagramming:** of flows, causality, quantities, trends, rankings, scorings - in which citizens make their own diagrams - systems diagrams, bar diagrams, pie charts, etc. Venn diagramming is one form, a method for identifying individuals and institutions important in and for a community, and their relationships.

**Wellbeing or wealth ranking:** identifying clusters of households according to wellbeing or wealth, including those considered poorer or worse off

**Analysis of difference:** especially by gender, social group, wealth/poverty, occupation and age. Identifying differences between groups, including their problems and preferences. This includes contrast comparisons - asking one groups why another is different or does something different, and vice versa

**Scoring and ranking:** especially using matrices to compare through scoring, for example different health issues, foods etc.

**Estimates and quantification:** often using local measures, judgements and materials sometimes combined with participatory maps and models.

**Key local indicators:** such as poor peoples criteria of well being, what a healthy diet is, etc.

**Key probes:** questions which can lead direct to key issues such as - "What do you talk about when you are together? What new practices have you experimented with lately? What vegetables, fruits, types of foods, do you normally eat - What would you like to try? What do you do in times of inadequate finances?"

**Team contracts and interactions:** contracts drawn up by teams with agreed norms of behaviour; modes of interaction within teams, including changing pairs, evening discussions, mutual criticism and help, etc. (The team may be just outsiders or a joint team with villagers)

**Presentations and analysis:** where maps, models, diagrams, and findings are presented by villagers, or by outsiders and checked, corrected and discussed

**Participatory planning, budgeting and monitoring:** local people prepare their own plans, budgets and schedules, and monitor progress

**Brainstorming:** by local people alone, by villagers and outsiders together, or by outsiders alone

**Short simple questionnaires:** (if at all) late in the process, designed to fill dummy tables which are by then known to be needed.

**Report writing:** at once, either in the field before returning to the office or headquarters by one or more people who are designated in advance to do this immediately on completion of the RRA or PRA.