

USING PARTICIPATORY DIAGRAM TOOLS



PART 1: INSTRUCTIONS FOR FIELD VISIT

Questions to be addressed

- 1) *What are women's own aspirations in relation to empowerment?*
- 2) *How far has micro-finance enabled them to fulfil these aspirations?*
- 3) *How successful has the programme been in poverty targeting?*
- 4) *In what ways could the programme improve its contribution to women's empowerment and poverty reduction?*

Tools to be used:

- 1) *Gender equity diamond (women and men separately with groups of 5-10 women/men 1 and half hours)*
- 2) *Empowerment vision journey collectively all together 1 and half hours*

Stage 1: Preparation: identification of questions and tools

- ✓ Participants should be asked to choose one of the field trips to form groups. It is important that these groups are gender balanced.
- ✓ In these groups they should divide into pairs to use one of the following four tools:
 - 1) Empowerment diamond (women and men separately)
 - 2) Gender equity diamond (women and men separately)
 - 3) Empowerment road journey (women only)
- ✓ Those participants from each group using the same tools should then form a group in order to test out the

tools on each other before going to the field.

- ✓ They should consider the advantages and challenges in using participatory tools and the guidelines discussed earlier in the session
- ✓ They should think particularly about how they will make sure that the women they are interviewing will benefit from the exercise
- ✓ The workshop facilitator should go round all the groups giving encouragement, ideas and assistance as required but without dominating the discussion in any way.



Stage 2: Fieldwork

- ✓ Participants should ensure that participatory process is followed
- ✓ Participants should ensure that there is a clear Key on each chart
- ✓ They should ensure that there is a narrative of the discussion, and what the drawings mean as well as a final diagram
- ✓ They should ensure that some conclusion has been reached and agreed with participants regarding the impact question asked and ways forward before the close of the exercise
- ✓ They should also tell the women/men that the diagram will be returned to them once it has been photographed and used at the workshop

Stage 3: Feedback to plenary

- ✓ Feedback is 15 minutes per group and 10 minutes for questions. That there is also some time during the following break for people to go round and have a good look at the different diagrams and question the moderators. Feedback to the plenary focuses on:
 - ✓ brief description of the diagrams produced
 - ✓ summary of the main findings and conclusions

- brief summary of advantages and problems of tools used

This is an exercise in succinct and clear presentation as well as conveying content.

**WHAT TO DO WITH THE FLIPCHARTS
VERY IMPORTANT!!**

NB For photographing avoid folding the paper in any way and ensure there is good light and avoid using Flash as this makes subsequent editing more difficult.

Once the diagrams have been photographed and used for the workshop, they should be given to staff of the programmes involved to be given back to the groups which produce them.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR USING PARTICIPATORY TOOLS

SOME BASIC DIAGRAM TYPES

There are many different types of diagram and new ones are continually being invented. Innovation is a key feature of using diagrams so that they can continually be adapted to new situations and new questions.

It is possible to distinguish a number of basic types which present the same type of logical relationship or question addressed. Only two are used here:

◆ **Diamonds**

Identify a scale of criteria starting with extremes and then moving inwards to average or majority characteristics. Then the numbers of people in each level of the scale are quantified.

◆ **Road journeys**

Chart a journey from point a to point b, generally over time. This may be a forward-looking journey to the future, or a backward looking one to the past.

Others which are commonly used include:

◆ **Trees**

Start from a trunk representing an issue or an institution like a household or community. Inputs are then shown as roots and outputs as branches.

◆ **Circle or Venn diagrams**

Show the relationships between different elements represented as overlapping circles.

◆ **Community maps**

Show the geographical locations of things like households, resources, markets and also add qualitative and quantitative information.

◆ **Matrices and calendars**

Show the relationship between two variables as a table.

USING SYMBOLS

One of the advantages of diagrams is that symbols can be used as well as words. This means that they go beyond language groups and beyond literacy.

Nevertheless, it is important to always use a key to show what the different symbols mean. It is also advisable to use symbols which are likely to have meaning for a wider audience. This is particularly important where many diagrams from different groups are going to be brought together for advocacy and lobbying. It is also important where diagrams are used for monitoring and evaluation and the people re-examining the diagrams at a later date may not be exactly the same people as those involved in the original diagrams

PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

It is important to pay attention to the participatory process in each activity. Whichever type of diagram is used, it is not the tool itself which is the most important. The aim is not to produce a 'perfect product'. It is to facilitate an empowering and participatory process. Diagrams help people to participate on a more equal footing. However this cannot be taken for granted and certain procedures are advised in order to ensure that participation takes place.

◆ Participatory energiser: Begin with some sort of energiser which encourages people who might not otherwise speak to come forward.

◆ Everyone is respected and equal: Make it clear to everyone that everyone's word is to be valued and respected, particularly

the views of those who may be more disadvantaged than others in the group. This includes women, illiterate people and also men if they are in a minority and not in leadership positions.

- ◆ Passing the stick: Introduce some sort of tool like a stick, or some groups prefer a banana or other object to represent a microphone. It is only the person holding this tool who is allowed to talk. It is then possible to ensure that everyone has a turn to hold the stick and limits on the numbers of time or length of time anyone can hold it can also be introduced.
- ◆ Make sure everyone has contributed: at the end anyone who has not spoken must be given the stick and also asked to comment on the diagram.

RECORDING THE PROCESS

If participatory methods are to be credible as evidence for outsiders eg in advocacy and lobbying it is important to make sure that not only the diagrams are reproduced, but that the process, meanings and analysis are also documented.

- ◆ Check that the key is clear and understandable by all.
- ◆ Who was present? (numbers, gender, poverty status, ethnicity, generation, names where appropriate, specific key individuals present)
- ◆ Who participated? How did they contribute to the discussion? Did this change during or between exercises? Were there any people who remained silent? Do we know why?
- ◆ What exactly was the content of the discussion generated while the exercise was being carried out? What were the key quotations from participants?
- ◆ Are there any points of interpretation essential to understanding the visual

output? e.g. degrees of consensus, whether the diagram was jointly produced for the product of combining a number of separate diagrams, points of disagreement

- ◆ Were any of the exercises changed to respond to circumstances? What and why?

REFLECTION AFTER THE PLA EXERCISE

- ◆ Are there any relevant aspects of the context which are key to understanding the process of investigation? e.g. aspects of the social context known to be relevant, power relations. Do any of these require further investigation?
- ◆ Which of the findings are considered reliable and credible in themselves? How do we know?
- ◆ Which of the findings require further investigation by other methods? Which and how?
- ◆ Which of the findings clearly indicate possibilities for improving the intervention/s under investigation? How can this be followed up?

TOOL 1: DIAMONDS

WHAT ARE THEY? SOME EXAMPLES

Diamonds are used to investigate criteria extent and patterns of differentiation within communities and/or groups. They start by identifying what criteria characterise extreme opposites of an issue or spectrum eg poverty, equity, violence. Then they progressively move inwards to obtain a scale towards the average situation or majority of a population as the middle of a diamond. Then the numbers of people within each band scale are plotted as before, after and/or target situations. This is then used as the basis for discussion of how the situation of those at the bottom of the diagram can be substantially improved.

TYPES OF DIAMONDS

Diamonds may be of many different types including, but by no means only:

◆ **Poverty diamond**

Looks at whether most people are above or below the poverty line as identified by a community, then how many people are very rich or very poor, what criteria are used and why. This can also focus on particular dimensions of poverty eg food security.

◆ **Empowerment diamond**

Looks at whether most people consider themselves, or could be considered, powerful, how many people are very powerful or very powerless, what criteria are used and why.

◆ **Household equality diamond**

Looks at concepts of household equality, where the most households are above or below this ideal, the criteria used and the numbers and characteristics of ideal households and very bad households.

◆ **Violence diamond**

Starts by examining the types of domestic, caste or community violence to which most people are subject. Then it looks at what an ideal state would be, and the very worst cases. Then the incidence can be quantified. For violence like domestic violence where even women suffering from it may deny its existence it may be best to start with extreme cases and then move up to awareness of generalised levels of violence or harassment.

VARIATIONS: FLAT OR TALL DIAMONDS, TRIANGLES AND SQUARES.

Some types of difference may have different shapes of diamonds depending on the pattern of distribution, or different shapes altogether eg the overwhelming majority of some refugee populations may be destitute and so better represented by a triangle. However in general it is best to start with a diamond in order to first identify the extremes. Otherwise experience shows that where poverty-targeted benefits are available everyone will say they are poor! – precisely the situation which diamond diagrams are designed to tackle.

HOW TO DO IT: GENDER EQUITY DIAMOND

STEP 1: NB In what follows the participants themselves should draw the diagram.

STEP 2: Draw the diamond shape with a line across the middle.

◆ Draw a vertical line down the middle with symbol for women on left and men on the right (or whichever order would challenge local symbolism of gender hierarchy).

STEP 3: What are the characteristics of the ideal or top of the diamond ie a woman's role/rights/responsibilities in the ideal position in the household? Characteristics of male

role/rights/responsibilities in this ideal household.

- ◆ Participants should draw symbols in the appropriate position to right and left of the central line. If this does not get a ready response then some prompting may be necessary with examples of eg the types of decisions which women may control or have an equal say in.

STEP 4: *What are the characteristics of the worst situation or bottom of the diamond? What is women's position? What are men doing in a very unequal household where women are most subordinate?*

- ◆ Participants should draw the symbols in the appropriate position. Again some prompting may be needed.

STEP 5: *Mark a progressive scale of criteria above and below the middle line with the middle line representing the average.*

- ◆ Mark in the criteria for women and men in the appropriate position.
- ◆ Put on programme impact information
- ◆ How many of those present would identify themselves at each level before they entered the programme? Mark those in one style.
- ◆ Mark in a different style the current position of those present.

STEP 6: *How does this analysis affect the shape of the diamond?*

- ◆ Should the average line be nearer the top or bottom of the diamond ie are most women nearer to the ideal or the worst position? Draw the new shape in a different colour.

STEP 7: *What are the general conclusions?*

- ◆ Has the programme led to significant changes?

STEP 8: *Identifying processes*

- ◆ For those women where there has been significant change discuss how this happened
- ◆ For those where there has been little or no change, why has this happened?

STEP 9: *Identifying ways forward*

- ◆ How could the situation be improved for those where there has been little change?
- ◆ What further changes would all the women like to see? What could the programme do?

TOOL 2: ROAD JOURNEY

WHAT ARE THEY?

Road journey diagrams chart a journey from point A to point B, generally over time. They show the starting point, ultimate aims, ups and downs of the journey and opportunities and obstacles along the way.

The author learned the Road Journey tool from ANANDI in India where it is used for group level planning.

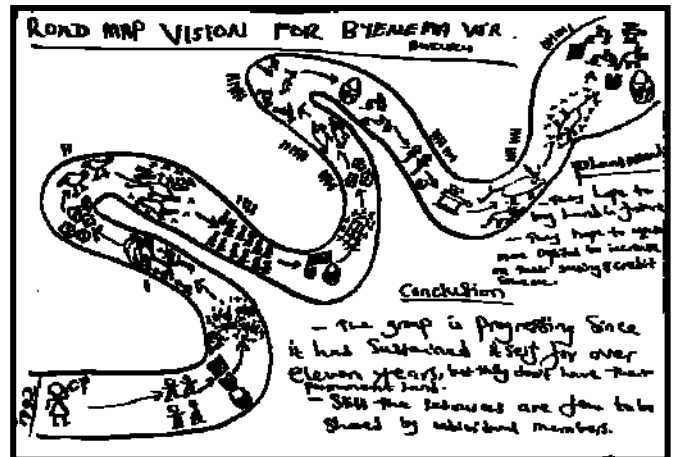


Figure 1: Byenema Wa Bubuku Road Journey showing the sequence of activities which led to the growth of their group. Conclusions and ways forward are also marked.

TYPES OF ROAD JOURNEY

Road journeys may focus on one or both of:

◆ **Road from the past:**

Charts the history of a group from its origin, showing the different achievements and steps or interventions which have helped or hindered them.

◆ **Journey to the future:**

Charts the ultimate goal of a group, identifies the steps along the way and whether or not the journey is expected to be easy and straight upwards, or up and down.

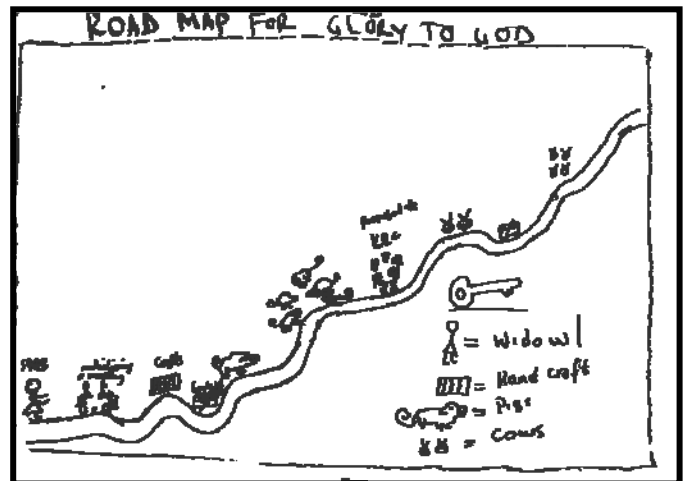


Figure 2: Glory To God Road Journey showing the foundation of the group by a widow and the gradual increase in livestock.

HOW TO DO IT

NB In what follows the woman herself should draw the diagram.

STEP 8: *How does the woman think she could get there? How does she think the programme can help?*

Draw different stages or necessary inputs and make notes on what is said.

STEP 1: *Draw the road outline*

Choose an appropriate starting point at the beginning, middle or end of the 'journey' and start to draw the road. Is it straight diagonally upwards, does it go down? Does it have ups and downs?

STEP 2: *How would the woman characterise where she started from?*

Draw appropriate symbols at the beginning of the road.

STEP 3: *How would she characterise where she is now?*

Draw the relevant symbols at the mid point on the road.

STEP 4: *What are the key events, opportunities and constraints along the way?*

Divide the road into appropriate time intervals depending on how long the woman has been in the programme. Mark on loan amounts, savings growth, training etc. Mark on ups and downs in enterprise growth/well-being, status in the household.

STEP 5: *What are the reasons for the ups and downs?*

Draw buildings, bridges or other symbols to mark key events, achievements, crises etc.

STEP 6: *What are the key conclusions?*

Does the woman feel she has fulfilled her expectations from the programme? Put a sad or smiley face on the diagram.

STEP 7: *What is the woman's vision for the future?*

Draw symbols representing different aims and vision at the end of the road.