

**THE WORLD BANK'S EXPERIENCE WITH LOCAL
PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIPS**
Lessons from an OED Evaluation

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PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION



This was the first OED evaluation of participation by primary stakeholders (individuals and their community-based organizations that are directly affected by World Bank projects and programs).

Objectives of the evaluation:

- to report on the current state of the World Bank's work on participation
- to improve future work on participation

The main questions of the evaluation:

- What difference is participation making?
- To what extent has participation been mainstreamed in the World Bank's work?
- What is working, what is not, and why?
- What are the benefits and costs of participation?
- What are the implications for World Bank participation policy?
- What are the recommendations for further World Bank work on participation?

DEFINITIONS OF PARTICIPATION AND LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

The accepted definition within the World Bank :

“Participatory development is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, and the decisions and resources which affect them.” (1994 Report of the Participatory Development Learning Group)

The four levels of participation in the World Bank typology are:

low level participation	(1) information sharing (2) consultation	one-way communication two-way communication
high level participation	(3) collaboration (4) empowerment	shared control over decisions and resources transfer of control over decisions/resources

Only high level participation qualifies as partnership.

A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO THE EVALUATION

During OED's October 1997 retreat the Director of OED committed OED to a more participatory approach to evaluation. The evaluation itself reflected the shift, summarized by the following:

- From individualism → to partnership
- From product → to interactive product development
- From expert → to participant in learning
- From research → to facilitation/negotiation
- From dissemination outputs → to creating a safe learning environment

OED'S PARTNERS AND PARTICIPANTS IN THE EVALUATION

International partners and participants (partial list)

- GTZ - full partner throughout evaluation including field site visits
- SDC - December 1997 workshop on Issues Paper
- IDS - December 1997 Participation Workshop provided evaluator training
- nine member advisory panel from academia, NGOs, and development agencies

Local partners and participants (partial list)

- local consultants from NGO backgrounds in 6 of 8 project case studies in the field
- group meetings with NGOs/civil society in 5 of 6 case study countries
- interviews and group meetings with over 1500 primary stakeholders in the field
- primary stakeholder self-evaluation not doable due to lack of time and capacity

World Bank partners and participants (partial list)

- two peer reviewers from SDV central unit and from SDV regional unit
- evaluation design workshop with 20 World Bank staff and managers from all areas
- SDV collaborated on staff survey, focus groups, random sample, data analysis



THE IMPACT OF ADOPTING A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO THE EVALUATION



The evaluation adopted an action learning approach in which design, action, and learning occurred in all evaluation phases.

- The research design evolved during the evaluation.
- Interim products were shared with partners to accelerate learning and action.
- Results and impacts were achieved before the final report was drafted.



KEY COMPONENTS OF THE EVALUATION



Key components of the evaluation methodology (partial list):

- analysis of databases on participation in all 1268 projects approved since 1994
- a random sample of 189 projects to verify the accuracy of the database data
- desk reviews of 22 projects and Country Assistance Strategies
- field-based case studies of 8 projects and 4 Country Assistance Strategies
- an electronic survey of 561 World Bank task managers (192 respondents)
- two focus groups with 17 World Bank task managers
- interviews and research on institutional processes (e.g. recruiting, training)



MAIN FINDINGS

Progress and Shortcomings



There has been significant progress on participation since 1994.

- The share of new projects with primary stakeholder participation increased from 40% (FY94) to 70% (FY98). This increase has been in all regions and sectors.
- Projects with high levels participation increased from 18% (FY94) to 41% (FY98).
- The share of CASs prepared with high or moderate level participation increased from 24% (FY95-96) to 73% (FY99-00).

Some dimensions of participation have advanced further than others.

- The quality of participation has not kept pace with the increasing quantity.
- Only 12% of projects had participation in identification and 9% in evaluation.
- For any single project phase, less than 40% of the projects were participatory.
- There was very little participation in CAS follow-up (monitoring implementation).
- Participation in projects had only a modest impact on institutional development.
- Participation has not been sufficiently scaled up, replicated, or had a broad enough impact (“the enclave effect”).



MAIN FINDINGS

Factors Constraining Participation



In-country factors (partial list):

- None of the factors was perceived to be a major constraint (moderate at most).
- The largest constraint is central government attitudes about participation.
- High entry barriers to getting started (perceived or real; also a Bank factor).
- Other factors are lack of government (and community) capacity and experience.

World Bank factors (partial list):

- Three were perceived as major constraints.
 - insufficient funding
 - pressure to process operations rapidly
 - inadequate time during missions for work in the field
- Other constraints
 - insufficient incentives, support, and understanding from management
 - insufficient training, skills, and relevant experience
 - the rigidity of World Bank operations, especially the project cycle



MAIN FINDINGS

Factors Supporting Participation



In-country factors (partial list):

- World Bank persistence in encouraging or insisting on participation
- learning by doing or building upon experience or models
- starting small and slowly in order to pilot participatory approaches
- implementing agency flexibility and adaptability
- champions of participation within government agencies
- partners (e.g. donors, NGOs, etc.) in facilitating and promoting participation

World Bank factors (partial list):

- task manager and manager belief in and dedication to participatory approaches
- growing number of TMs that have seen participation improve their projects, CASs
- NGO-civil society liaison officers, resident missions

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop country-level approaches to increase the impact of participation.

Among other things, the World Bank should:

- Encourage and support government commitment to participatory approaches and to creating an enabling environment for participation.
- Use Bank instruments as mechanisms for developing participatory approaches in concert with government and other stakeholders.
- Develop a more systemic, governance approach to participation, including policies to improve representativeness and inclusion, transparency and accountability.

2. Shift the current focus on facilitating participation to support World Bank operations (such as projects and CASs) to more of a capacity-building approach to institutionalizing participation. Efforts should be made to:

- Work with, rather than bypass, existing government institutions, although sometimes it is necessary to create new institutions to pilot participation.
- Support government and community capacity-building for participation.
- Increase capacity for participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E).



RECOMMENDATIONS (continued)



3. Work more with partners to implement participatory approaches. The World Bank should:
 - Work with international, intermediate, and local development partners to promote participation.
 - Support existing champions of participation.
 - Recruit local experts with experience in participatory processes to establish in-country teams that can support communities on participatory tasks.

4. Improve the quality of participatory processes in projects and CAS preparation. For example:
 - Develop benchmarks, standards, and guidelines for participation.
 - Conduct local institutional analysis as part of the design process.
 - Take a long-term, results-oriented, partnership approach to participation.
 - Move participation further upstream in Bank activities, to the extent possible.



RECOMMENDATIONS (end)



5. Reduce constraints on, and improve Bank institutional support for, participation. For example, the World Bank should:

- Determine institutional responsibility for leadership on participation.
- Create incentives for task managers to accommodate and experiment with participatory approaches, especially their first time.
- Make skills and experience in participatory processes explicit criteria for Bank staffing, recruitment, and human resource development.
- Develop more effective training and knowledge management on participation.
- Improve project documentation on participation.
- Determine the benefits and costs of various types of participation with sufficient precision to guide its use.