WHO COUNTS REALITY?
PARTICIPATORY MONITORING AND EVALUATION:
A LITERATURE REVIEW

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SUMMARY

With more and more opportunities to promote broad-based participation in development, there is increased recognition that monitoring and evaluation should also be participatory. This paper presents a literature review of experiences in participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) from around the world, used in differing contexts and involving all kinds of stakeholders – NGOs, donors, research institutions, government, people's organisations, and communities. It introduces the key principles of PM&E, its applications for differing purposes, and a number of tools and methods used, including participatory learning methodologies as well as more conventional approaches. Finally, it raises key issues and broad challenges emerging from the literature, and outlines potential areas for future research.

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

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At the workshop, additional cases and experiences were presented which further enriched understanding of participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E). These discussions and case studies may be found in the Workshop Proceedings, available from IIRR, as well as in **PLA Notes 31, Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation,** available from IIED in London. A forthcoming book on will further explore the major issues and challenges in the field, drawing from lessons and the range of experiences that emerged during the workshop.

1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, 'participation' has become a critical concept in development. Internationally, donors, governments and NGOs are insisting upon participatory approaches in assessing needs and in implementing programmes. In his recent book **Whose Reality Counts?**, Robert Chambers (1997) describes the new approach, which starts with people's knowledge as the basis for planning and change.

With increased emphasis on the importance of participation in development, there is also a growing recognition that monitoring and evaluation of development and other community-based initiatives should be participatory. As institutions become more inclusive in the 'front-end' of project development – that is, in promoting participation in appraisal and implementation – then questions of 'who measures' results and 'who defines' success become critical. '**Who counts reality?**' may prove as significant a question as 'whose reality counts?'.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) is part of a wider historical process which has emerged over the last 20 years of using participatory research in development. PM&E draws from various participatory research traditions, including participatory action research (PAR) spearheaded by the work of Paolo Freire (1972), Fals-Borda (1985), and others; participatory learning and action (including Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and later Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) drawing on the work of Robert Chambers (1997) and many others; and farming systems research (FSR) or farming participatory research (FPR) developed by Amanor (1990), Farrington and Martin (1988) and others.

While internationally we have seen a greater interest in participatory approaches to research and development, we have also seen an increased concern with monitoring and evaluation by donors, governments, NGOs and others. This is affected by several factors: the trend in many management circles towards 'performance-based accountability' and 'management by results'; growing scarcity of funds, leading to a demand for demonstrated success; a move towards decentralisation and devolution, providing a need for new forms of oversight; and the growing capacity of NGOs and community-based organisations as actors in the development process. Since the 1980s, concepts of participatory monitoring and evaluation have entered the policy-making domain of larger donor agencies and development organisations, most notably the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the UK Department for International Development [formerly the ODA] (DFID), the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), the Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD), and the World Bank (Howes 1992: 386; see also Rudqvist and Woodford-Berger 1996).

While there may be growing interest in PM&E, the concept itself is not new. Documented experiences of PM&E in the development field began to surface as early as the 1970s. Howes (1992) discusses some of these early experiences in PM&E, citing work in this field sponsored by Oxfam in the 1970s, Feuerstein's work (1986) with rural women in Honduras to develop primary health care systems, as well as participatory forms of M&E established in Francophone countries under the name 'animation rurale' (Pratt and Boyden 1985). While many organisations continued to carry out more conventional forms of M&E, some NGOs such as World Neighbours, Users' Perspectives With Agricultural Research and Development (UPWARD) and the Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD) have long been experimenting with more innovative,

participatory approaches (see Armonia and Campilan 1997; Campos and Coupal 1996; Rugh 1986). Some of the earliest publications on participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluation include work by the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) (1981), **Participatory Research and Evaluation: Experiments in Research as a Process of Liberation**; and by Marie-Therese Feuerstein (1986), **Partners in Evaluation: Evaluating Development and Community Programmes with Participants**.

As interest has grown in participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluation, so has the range of terms used to describe it. There is great variation in the way organisations, field practitioners, researchers, etc. understand the meaning and practice of participatory monitoring and evaluation. The literature review found that there is no single, coherent conceptual definition of PM&E; rather, there is wide scope for interpretation, as PM&E may mean different things to different people (Abbot and Guijt 1997; Campilan 1997; PRIA 1995). Some of the terms used to describe different PM&E approaches are:

- Participatory evaluation (PE)
- Participatory monitoring (PM)
- Participatory assessment, monitoring, and evaluation (PAME)
- Participatory impact monitoring (PIM)
- Process monitoring (ProM)
- Self-evaluation (SE)
- Auto-evaluation
- Stakeholder-based evaluation / Stakeholder assessment
- Community monitoring / Citizen monitoring (CM)

Though there has been growth in the use of PM&E approaches in a variety of settings and contexts, there has been little work that has studied or documented the process and impact of PM&E itself. This paper attempts to make a contribution towards this end by reviewing the available literature on PM&E, focusing on how and where it is being used (Chapter 2), its underlying concepts (Chapter 3), and issues and challenges for the field (Chapter 4). In addition, we have compiled an annotated list of manuals and resources on the 'tools' and methods in PM&E (see Appendix 2). Additional information about these resources may be found in the PRA abstracts, which are available from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS).

This literature review is drawn from a number of sources, including journal articles, unpublished 'grey' literature, manuals and guides, policy documents, academic papers, annotated bibliographies, and other overview papers on PM&E, especially those by Abbot and Guijt (1997) on monitoring environmental change, by the Center of Concern (CONCERN) (1996) and by Armonia and Campilan (1997) who were supported by IDS to do a review of Asian experiences. Other regional and country overviews were considered, including a study of PM&E experiences in Bolivia (Alcocer, Lizárraga, Delgadillo, *et al.* 1997) and a PM&E workshop report of African experiences (PAMFORK 1997). We have relied heavily on materials found in the PRA reading room at the Institute of Development Studies, the IDS library, the IIED Resource Centre, materials collected by John Gaventa through his earlier work with the National Learning Initiative in the United States, and our own

personal files and collections. In addition, we have benefited from conversations with a number of PM&E practitioners and colleagues at IDS and elsewhere.[1]

After compiling and reviewing as much of the available literature as possible, we selected 20 case studies for closer analysis (see Appendix 1). In selecting these cases, we sought to achieve a representation of the different sectors, regions, purposes, tools and methods, actors and participants in which PM&E is being used. The cases provide insights into the rich diversity of PM&E experiences that exists globally, as well as into issues and challenges for the field.

This paper is what the title implies: a literature review. We do not seek to make a particular argument about PM&E, other than to select a series of issues for future work, both conceptually and in practice. We have been constrained by time, and discovered very quickly that the huge amount and diversity of the published and unpublished literature would make a comprehensive 'state of the art' review impossible. We have also been heavily constrained by a focus on literature available in English, though we have sought materials in Spanish and French as well. Regardless of its limitations, we hope that this overview will also contribute to the further strengthening of concepts and practices in the participatory monitoring and evaluation field.

2 THE PURPOSES OF PARTICIPATORY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Increasingly around the world, participatory monitoring and evaluation is being used for differing purposes and in differing sectors. Farmers in India, Brazil, Vietnam and Mexico are becoming more effective planners and decision makers, choosing and learning from alternative production strategies. Women in India are becoming involved in health planning and in establishing and managing their own savings and credit programmes. Community leaders in the United States are developing their own vision of change and actively seeking to influence and reform government policy. Funding and supporting institutions based in Bangladesh and in the UK are experimenting with participatory approaches to strengthen and improve their own performance in providing development assistance.

In this section we explore the range of ways in which participatory monitoring and evaluation is being used in a development context. Appendix 1 presents a summary of 20 case examples which we selected in our review of the literature to illustrate the types of projects and programmes using participatory monitoring and evaluation in differing sectors and regions. As the matrix shows, the majority of documented experiences of PM&E surveyed occur in the agricultural, environmental, and rural development sectors. Although conscious attempts were made to achieve a balanced representation of case studies for the purpose of this overview, we found that documented experience of PM&E in the health and education sector was less readily available.

Given the variety of approaches to PM&E, it is difficult to develop categories which distinguish between its types and uses, though several studies have tried to do so (see Abbot and Guijt 1997; Armonia and Campilan 1997; CONCERN 1996). In their survey of experiences in Asia, Armonia and Campilan (1997) noted that there exists a great diversity in concepts, methods and applications adopted. They survey cases drawn from different sectors of the 'development' field including agriculture, public service/government, health, enterprise/livelihood, environment or resource conservation, and integrated community development. However, the authors point out that the most common experiences of PM&E pertained to agricultural research and community development. In addition, reporting and documentation of PM&E processes and findings were usually undertaken by individuals

and institutions from the non-government or private sector rather than from government sectors. NGOs and community or people's organisations (POs) were also regarded as key actors in introducing and sustaining the PM&E process. One other observation was that PM&E generally was carried out in a project context and in support of either research, outreach, or training goals.

The South–South Sharing Forum, which brought together PM&E experiences in Africa, found that PM&E may be used for: the management of projects, self-assessment, project reviews, organisational assessment, and capacity building. PM&E is generally carried out by different stakeholders, including community-based organisations, NGOs, governments and donors, consultants and researchers (PAMFORK 1997.)

Similarly, in their survey of Bolivia, Alcocer, Lizárraga, Delgadillo *et al.* (1997) find that a diverse range of actors become involved in these participatory processes, namely indigenous groups, social organisations (or people's organisations), leaders (*dirigentes*), and local and central government officials. Principal sectors represented in the survey include: agriculture and livestock (*agropecuaria*), forestry, natural resource conservation, micro-enterprise, basic infrastructure, primary health care, education as well as inter-sectoral and political development (i.e. capacity building and political organising) (1997: 2-3).

In another review of monitoring and evaluation in the environmental field, Abbot and Guijt (1997) make similar observations with regard to the settings and circumstances under which PM&E is practised. However, they point out that the majority of development literature on PM&E surveyed describes participatory approaches within a project-related context, reflecting externally led approaches. The authors note that few examples describe community-led approaches to M&E, especially those which address continuous monitoring of the wider natural environment and tracking of local changes.

Our own survey of PM&E literature also demonstrates that PM&E thinking and practice is widespread and extremely diverse. Rather than identifying and classifying the various 'types' of PM&E, we have tried to group the range of experiences in terms of the purposes for which PM&E is being used, and in what kinds of projects and settings. Based on our survey of cases and key literature, five general functions of PM&E may be identified:

- Impact assessment
- Project management and planning
- Organisational strengthening or institutional learning
- Understanding and negotiating stakeholder perspectives
- Public accountability

Of these, the survey of literature (see Appendix 1), finds that PM&E is primarily used in development for the first two areas of impact assessment and project management. However, the case studies also demonstrate increased use of PM&E for newer purposes, including organisational strengthening, understanding and negotiation of stakeholders' perceptions and increased public accountability. In practice, of course, these functions of PM&E are interdependent and often overlap. Ultimately, the uses and purpose of PM&E will depend on the particular objectives and information needs of the project or programme initiative (UPWARD 1997).

2.1 PM&E for Impact Assessment

One common function of PM&E is to evaluate the impact of a given programme and the changes that have occurred as a result of programme initiatives (PRIA 1995: 11). The emphasis is on the comparison between programme objectives and actual achievement. Assessing project impacts can help distinguish whether or not (a) project interventions are in fact achieving their identified objectives, whether or not (b) programme objectives remain relevant over time, (c) the best action strategies have been pursued.

CONCERN (1996) refers to this approach as participatory impact monitoring (PIM), which may be characterised by the way different actors or stakeholders at various levels – grassroots organisations, NGOs, and funding agencies – work together in order to assess and reflect on project impacts. However, this function of PM&E highlights the active involvement of the local population, especially people likely to benefit and gain from the programmes or those with direct programme involvement, e.g. field-level staff (see Gohl, Germann, and Schwarz 1996; PRIA 1995).

Similarly, Jackson (1995:6) defines the concept of participatory impact assessment (PIA) 'as a process of evaluation of the impacts of development interventions which is carried out under the full or joint control of local communities in partnership with professional practitioners . . .. In PIA, community representatives participate in the definition of impact indicators, the collection of data, the analysis of data, the communication of assessment findings, and, especially, in post-assessment actions designed to improve the impact of development interventions in the locality'.

Several experiences on PM&E may be drawn upon to illustrate how it may function as an impact evaluation tool. In Northern Ghana, impact evaluation was used to track progress and change as a result of project interventions over time (see Box 2.1).

Thompson and Pretty (1995) also describe a participatory impact study of a soil and water conservation programme supported by the government of Kenya. In this particular experience, government field workers collaborated with local people living on or near programme sites to assess the linkages between the process of project implementation and the subsequent impacts in terms of soil and water conservation adoption by the communities. The study found that the implementation rates for soil and water conservation were substantially greater when participation in planning and implementation was interactive and interdisciplinary between government extensionists and local people, and were less so when participation was simply consultative.

2.2 PM&E for Project Planning and Management

While one purpose of PM&E may be to assess the impact of a project or programme over time, another may be to gain in a timely and effective way information which can be used for improving project planning and implementation (see Brown 1993). As a project management tool, PM&E is used by different stakeholders to analyse and reflect systematically on their experience, and to plan for future goals and activities (UPWARD 1997: 10).

Campos and Coupal (1996: 8) argue that one of the main functions of participatory evaluation is to provide stakeholders and programme managers with information to assess whether project objectives have been met and how resources have been used, in order to help improve programme implementation and make

Box 2.1 Developing an evaluation framework for tracking project impacts over time

A participatory impact assessment approach was used to evaluate the Northern Region Rural Integrated Programme (NORRIP) in Northern Ghana. It assessed the impact of local capacity building on access to improved water supply and sanitation services by using an evaluation framework known as the Village Development Capacity Index (VDCI). The VDCI framework was developed by an external evaluation team commissioned by NORRIP after intensive consultations with different project stakeholders, including village representatives. This index attempts to rank communities in the project area in terms of their performance on poverty indicators and on village development capacity indicators.

Data was collected through interviews with households and key informants, focus group discussions, and field observation. Rural residents provided feedback on collected data. The major stakeholders – who include village representatives, implementing agencies, the donor and other allied agencies – participated in the process of allocating scores (ranging from one to five) on each of these indicators to the villages under study. The scoring process facilitated dialogue and consensus building among the various stakeholders, with village representatives providing feedback on the findings of the VDCI scoring exercise. Scores on the VDCI for each village can then be used by monitoring teams to track changes and impacts over time to assess progress.

Source: Gariba 1995; Jackson 1995

critical decisions about project funding (see also PRIA 1995: 11–13). This is illustrated in Gujarat, India, where PM&E was used to aid village communities in decision making for improved planning and management of a watershed programme (see Box 2.2).

Box 2.2 PM&E as an internalised process for project planning and management

The Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP), a non-governmental organisation promoting natural resource management, works collaboratively with village communities in rural Gujarat in developing a watershed management programme. The programme integrates a participatory planning and monitoring component, which includes the following broad sequence of steps:

- Village extension volunteers engage farmers in discussions to identify their priority concerns, which become key variables for information gathering.
- Farmers are encouraged to make 'ground maps' of their fields which serve as base line and impact study maps, showing before/after conditions of soil and water conservation treatments.
- These 'before' and 'after' maps are collected, followed by intensive discussions among farmers regarding the findings and inconsistencies in data collected.
- Presentation of findings leads on to a discussion of alternative technologies. For instance, experiments may be carried out to compare different types of soil and water conservation techniques.
- Generation of technology and production strategies, which are then adapted to village, circumstances.

This approach encourages farmers to become more reflective and conscious about different strategies for improving productivity and managing scarce resources. PM&E becomes an internalised process for local communities who use this approach in order to make decisions regarding production, investment, and technology choice. In this context, participatory monitoring is linked to project planning and management, leading to decision-making and identifying alternative action strategies.

Source: Shah, Hardwaj, and Ambastha 1993

Other cases have also used PM&E for this purpose. For example, in the Siavonga Agricultural Development Project (SADP) in Zambia, PM&E is designed mainly for the purpose of improving project management, comparing planned and actual achievements in order to suggest improvements for future planning and implementation (Nagel *et al.* 1992). In addition, the information generated through the MILS system of the Mountain Rural Development Programme (MRDP) programme in Vietnam (see Box 3.4) is also used generally for project management and planning future activities.

2.3 PM&E for Organisational Strengthening and Institutional Learning

Another major function of PM&E is to create a learning process to strengthen organisational and institutional learning. In this context, self-evaluation as one approach to PM&E is undertaken for people to evaluate the very objectives of the project themselves and to assess their own organisational capacities: 'were objectives too limited (or overly ambitious)? Did they reflect the felt needs (or real needs) of members of the community?,' etc. (Rugh 1992: 9).

One of the main objectives of self-evaluation is to enhance the sustainability, replicability, and effectiveness of development efforts through the strengthening of people's organisational capacities. It aims to enable people to keep track of their progress, by identifying and solving problems themselves and by building on and expanding areas of activity where success is recognised (CONCERN 1996).

The participatory impact study of a soil and water conservation programme in Kenya illustrates how PM&E can contribute to organisational learning. While the impact study was useful in revealing local farmers' perspectives and criteria for assessing project impacts, the findings are also being used to help improve the Ministry of Agriculture's own operating procedures in terms of involving local farmers more actively in project planning, implementation, monitoring, and analysis (Thompson and Pretty 1995). In another example, in the Participative Integrated Development of Watersheds (PIDOW) project (see Box 3.3), self-evaluation served to strengthen partnerships between different stakeholders, as participants increased their understanding of project processes and outcomes and clarified their roles within the project. Sommer (1993) describes the process as 'an inter-institutional learning approach', whereby joint reflection encourages project partners to carry out a more direct and in-depth analysis of project achievements, of their own performance within it and to draw significant lessons from them for future planning' (see also Humbert-Droz 1992: 2).

In another case, the Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE) Zambia established a participatory monitoring and evaluation process which aims at building organisational capacities at both the project and the community level (see Box 2.3).

Box 2.3 Building a learning organisation

Since 1994, CARE Zambia has promoted the concept of a 'learning organisation' in order to encourage more innovative and adaptive learning, especially among CARE staff members. CARE pursues seven major strategies, which are considered benchmarks or 'building blocks' for a learning organisation:

- thriving on change
- encouraging experimentation
- communicating success and failure
- facilitating learning from the surrounding environment (i.e. from communities and beneficiaries)
- facilitating learning from staff through training and group learning
- rewarding learning
- promoting a sense of caring

CARE promotes various initiatives as part of the process of becoming a learning organisation, which have important implications for project monitoring and evaluation. Staff receive training in using participatory approaches and methods, and work together with communities and beneficiaries in learning how to plan and monitor project activities, analyse results and use information to modify activities.

In the Livingstone Food Security Project (LFSP), CARE Zambia staff established and trained community based teams – known as village management committees (VMCs) – to design, implement and monitor community-driven development activities. In the LFSP project, local participants identify different levels of wealth and different categories for ranking wealth in each village. The information provides staff and VMCs a basis for tracking changes experienced by individual households in each wealth or well-being category over time. Hence, capacity building and institutional learning not only takes place at the project level among field staff, but also at the community level. This is important for monitoring the impact of project activities and determining actions to overcome challenges.

Source: Ward 1997

2.4 PM&E for Understanding and Negotiating Stakeholder Perspectives

PM&E may also be used as a process which allows different stakeholders to articulate and present their needs, interests, and expectations. This process can be shaped in ways that enable people to understand 'the views and values they share and work through their differences with others, develop longer-term strategies, take carefully researched and planned actions which fits their contexts, priorities, and styles of operating' (Parachini and Mott 1997: 10).

Rajakutty (1991) elaborates on the concept of stakeholder-based evaluation (SBE) which he describes as an ongoing dialogue and negotiation among stakeholders. However, he also points to the difficulties of resolving competing (and conflicting) stakeholder perceptions, especially when particular stakeholder groups are powerless *vis-à-vis* others. Nevertheless, the value of this approach is in learning about peoples' concerns and enabling primary stakeholders – the beneficiaries – to speak for themselves.

In their overview, Abbot and Guijt (1997) concentrate on community-based monitoring of the wider environment, which describes how communities track local environmental changes. They focus on local

perceptions of and experiences in noting, recording, and monitoring change, but with emphasis on building partnerships between multiple stakeholders.

One case example in Kenya describes a participatory evaluation experience that specifically looked at how different stakeholders perceived the impacts of a health project and their own experiences as project participants (see Box 2.4).

Other case studies show how PM&E is used to negotiate between different stakeholder perceptions and interests, especially with respect to identifying evaluation objectives and indicators. For example, ACORD in Mali attempts to establish project objectives consistent with criteria selected by both the local community and the agency, with the agency evaluating project achievements against community-determined indicators (Roche 1993). In Mexico (see Box 3.7), different stakeholders identify their own evaluation criteria and indicators, which are later grouped together under a general evaluation framework (Blauert and Quintanar 1997).

2.5 PM&E for Public Accountability and Policy

Traditionally, monitoring and evaluation have been used by donor and government agencies to hold beneficiaries and programme recipients accountable to agreed goals and performance targets. In this conventional context of M&E, supporting or outside agencies usually define what is monitored and evaluated and how monitoring and evaluation is to be conducted. Much of participatory monitoring and evaluation grew

Box 2.4 Understanding project impacts and processes: what stakeholder perspectives revealed in Kenya

Participatory evaluation of the Makueni Community-Based Nutrition Project (MCBNP) was undertaken in order to investigate stakeholder perceptions of the project. An external evaluation team facilitated the process, which looked at project outcomes, project benefits, potential negative impacts on diverse groups, and how various groups felt about the project and their suggestions for improvement. The key participants of the participatory evaluation exercise included donor representatives, government officers, project field staff, nutrition-related community organisations and their members, as well as non-project community members.

The participatory evaluation exercise demonstrated that focusing mainly on project impacts only revealed a partial view of a project that seemed so successful: a conventional nutrition rehabilitation centre was transformed into a community-based nutrition project, using participatory approaches and methods to plan and implement programme activities. However, looking more closely at different stakeholders' perspectives showed that there were several areas for further improvement related to the process of project implementation, namely:

- increased equity in terms of who benefited from project activities;
- maximising existing resources and capacity building for project sustainability;
- more participatory decision-making procedures;
- meeting unmet expectations of different stakeholders;
- clarifying confusion over the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in project management.

The participatory evaluation exercise not only helped highlight significant and problematic issues based on stakeholders' perspectives, but it also allowed different participants to reflect, compare, and learn from each other's experiences and perceptions. In turn, people are better able to assess the process of project impacts and suggest what they would do differently to modify the current process.

Source: Cornwall, Gashigi, Kabutha, and Sellers 1997; Cornwall 1997

in response to such top–down and outside approaches to assessment, insisting that stakeholders or beneficiaries be involved in the process of M&E.

Increasingly, as a more diverse base of participants learn the skills of evaluation and monitoring, conventional approaches to M&E are being challenged. PM&E is regarded not only as a means of holding project beneficiaries and programme recipients accountable, but also as a way for project participants and local citizens themselves to monitor and evaluate the performance of donor and governmental institutions.

Marsden and Oakley (1990), for instance, point out that there needs to be a 'fundamental realignment of the relationship between donor agencies and beneficiaries'. They propose building partnerships between these major stakeholders, which would allow **reciprocal evaluations** to take place, so those donors themselves are subject to some form of accountability. In this context, accountability becomes a two-way exchange relationship between those who provide financial resources and those who legitimise the disbursement of those resources. This realignment would allow beneficiary groups to better present and articulate their own needs, criteria and expectations, thus providing them with wider opportunities to negotiate their objectives with donors and supporting institutions.

In the United States, citizen monitoring has been one approach through which local citizens hold governments accountable and assess the extent to which public programmes meet the needs of the community. Parachini and Mott (1997) survey a number of these experiences that focus on community-based monitoring for increased public accountability. Their overview looks at community monitoring and evaluation of government and private sector institutions, policies, programmes and practices. Emphasis is placed on building research and monitoring skills and capacities for local people to hold higher-level institutions and policy makers accountable for effectively meeting and responding to their needs. These experiences demonstrate how local communities themselves gather and analyse data in order to determine their own policy priorities and develop common strategies for action and change. For instance, in the 1970s, the National Citizens Monitoring Project trained 43 urban neighbourhoods in the United States to monitor how city governments spent financial resources allocated specifically for community development (Kotz 1981). More recently, the EZ/EC Learning Initiative worked with grassroots 'citizen learning teams' to monitor the rural Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community programme, a national community revitalisation programme of the Clinton administration (see Box 3.6).

These efforts to strengthen local capacities for ensuring public accountability in turn become a means for people to influence policy-making decisions. In the United States, Health Care For All (HCFA) is an organisation that supports community-based research and learning to strengthen local advocacy of health care reform and policy (see Box 2.5). Elsewhere, PRIA in the past two decades has been working with grassroots and non-governmental organisations in India and South Asia to promote participatory evaluation. More recently, PRIA has applied the PM&E approach to assess nationally implemented programmes to inform future government policy (Acharya, Kumar, Satyamurti et al. 1997). One particular case refers to a participatory evaluation of a 10-year, government health project in India, which involved 21 beneficiary organisations in the evaluation process (*ibid.*)[2]

Box 2.5 Building stronger and healthier communities

Among health care reform circles, HCFA has built an exemplary reputation as an organisation which transforms consumers – especially of low- and middle-income groups – into highly motivated and informed activists who become a powerful and credible voice in tackling health care issues and policies. Through various HCFA programmes, local people gain capacities and skills in 'thinking through what health means to them, how the present health care system works and affects their lives, how it might be changed, and what issues they should tackle collectively in order to improve the quality and responsiveness of health care' (p. 28).

Successful HCFA programmes include, among others:

- *Health Care Helpline* – a telephone network service which assists people to access care and mobilises those callers with the same concerns to explore common strategies for action. The helpline also allows HCFA to stay on top of issues and investigate new areas for research and advocacy.
- *Community needs assessment/Financial analysis* – which helps communities to understand their needs and assets, and analyses the financial resources of institutions, such as hospitals and health centres. It helps people relate their priorities and needs to the financial assets and conditions of health care institutions, and subsequently takes action on the basis of such analyses, e.g. in terms of allocating health care resources.
- *Distribution of training and other educational materials* – helps consumers understand their legal rights, how to redress grievances, how to improve or defend programmes through the legislative process, etc.

Source: Parachini and Mott 1997

Internationally, civil society-based monitoring and evaluation of multilateral development banks (MDBs) and lending policies have proliferated over the past decade, with civil society-based institutions generating reliable, field-based information to assess the effectiveness of project lending (Fox 1996). A recent initiative is one undertaken by the NGO Working Group of the World Bank to monitor the implementation of World Bank participation policies. Key projects in Asia, Latin America, and Africa have been chosen for monitoring, with local NGOs trained to show how participation actually occurs in programme implementation at ground level. These findings will then be presented back to the NGO working group and to World Bank leaders for discussion (IDR and PRIA 1997).

Also, as part of a growing trend worldwide to move towards decentralisation and local governance, nation-state governments and large public institutions are giving greater importance to local participation. For example, in Bolivia, state legal reforms now allow local communities, especially in rural regions, to play a larger role in defining local development and the allocation of state resources (Alcocer, Lizárraga, Delgadillo, *et al.* 1997: 1–2). Laws on popular participation now make it compulsory for municipal governments to formulate and carry out their own development plans. Significantly, legal reforms further stipulate that locally elected representatives, known as *Comités de Vigilancia* ('vigilance committees'), implement and monitor development plans generated at the municipal level (Alcocer, Lizárraga, Delgadillo, *et al.* 1997).

As evidenced in the survey of literature, PM&E is applied in a wide variety of contexts and settings and used for various purposes. Determining how PM&E is used and for what purposes will depend essentially on the objectives of the monitoring and evaluation process itself. Ultimately, the choice of objective comes back to

the question of who is participating and who is negotiating in the process. Those questions take us to the core values and principles of PM&E itself.

3 PRINCIPLES AND PHILOSOPHY OF PARTICIPATORY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Our literature review uncovered many different terms for participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluation, and a wealth of experiences developed in particular cases. Although there is a wide variation in the practice of PM&E, perhaps more commonality is found in its principles. This section begins by reviewing key differences between participatory evaluation and other more traditional approaches. Then, we turn to a discussion of four broad 'principles' of participatory monitoring and evaluation identified in the survey of literature: participation, learning, negotiation, and flexibility.

3.1 Emerging Approaches to Evaluation

In the last decade particularly, interest has been growing in participatory monitoring and evaluation to counter more traditional 'top–down' approaches to evaluation. While there are many variations within what we will call 'conventional' approaches to monitoring and evaluation, they can be broadly characterised as follows:

- focused on measurement;
- an orientated to the needs of programme funders and policy makers, rather than participants or local people;
- striving for objectivity, and distance between evaluator and participants;
- conducted for the purpose of making judgements rather than empowerment.

Advocates of participatory approaches point out that conventional approaches draw from the (generally Western) tradition of scientific investigation (McArthur 1997: 19; Tandon 1981: 15). They attempt to produce information that is necessarily 'objective', 'value-free' and 'quantifiable' – terms that are all being challenged. Historically, these traditional approaches emphasise achieving programme effectiveness and practical utility (Greene 1994). They remain externally oriented, geared towards enhancing cost efficiency and accountability, and usually require quantitative methods for overall programme assessment (*ibid.*). Since outsiders are usually contracted to conduct the evaluation for the sake of enhancing 'objectivity', participants who may be affected by the findings of an evaluation, have little or no input in the process, either in determining questions asked and types of information obtained or reflecting on and using evaluation findings (Rubin 1995: 20).

In their book **Fourth Generation Evaluation**, Guba and Lincoln (1989) argue that past traditions or 'generations' of evaluation typically adopted a scientific, technical, and more managerial approach, in order to obtain 'objective' data for evaluation purposes. They characterise the first three evaluation traditions as measurement-oriented, description-oriented, and judgement-oriented (see Box 3.1). Fourth generation evaluation, in their argument, is characterised by negotiation between various stakeholders, participation in every stage of the evaluation process, and a focus on action. In the international development community, as elsewhere, there has been growing dissatisfaction with conventional monitoring and evaluation approaches. The arguments against blueprint, top–down approaches to development, especially with respect to M&E, are

discussed widely in the literature (see for example, Feuerstein 1986; Greene 1994; Guba and Lincoln 1989; PRIA 1995, 1981; Rubin 1995; UPWARD 1997). The following summarises the major criticisms of conventional approaches to M&E made in the literature:

- They have proven costly and ineffective in terms of measuring and assessing project achievements.
- They have failed to involve actively project beneficiaries and others who may be directly affected by M&E.
- Project evaluation has become an increasingly specialised field and activity, conducted and controlled mostly by outsiders and removed from the ongoing planning and implementation of development initiatives.
- They serve primarily as a tool to control and manage programmes and resources, alienating intended beneficiaries and others involved in programme planning and implementation from taking part in project appraisal.
- Emphasis on quantitative measures tends to ignore qualitative information which helps provide a fuller understanding of project outcomes, processes and changes.

Box 3.1 'Four generations' of project evaluation (Guba and Lincoln)

First generation evaluation emerged in the 1900s and may be characterised as measurement-oriented. It is associated with the tradition of educational research and scientific management in business and industry. Tests were commonly used to measure the progress of students in schools or to determine the most productive methods to make working environments more efficient and effective. The role of the evaluator was generally technical – to provide and apply tools or instruments for measurement.

Second generation evaluation focused more on description and led to programme evaluations. This tradition of evaluations emphasised the achievement of objectives and the analysis of programme strengths and weaknesses, which were utilised to guide refinements and revisions. The role of the evaluator became essentially that of describer, although earlier technical functions were also retained.

Third generation evaluation included judgement as an integral part of evaluation. Judgement required that the programme objectives themselves be taken as problematic; hence, goals and not simple performance were subject to evaluation. The development of standards against which the judgement can be made assumed prominence. Consequently, evaluators also assumed the role as judges and helped 'clients' (decision makers for whom the evaluations were ultimately geared) determine standards for judgement.

Fourth generation evaluation refers to the most recent evolution in evaluation practice. Its key emphasis is on evaluation as a process of negotiation, incorporating various stakeholders more centrally into the evaluation process. Fourth generation evaluation takes into account stakeholders' consensual and competing claims, concerns, and issues. It recognises that peoples' diverse perspectives and interests are shaped in a major way by their particular value systems, which in turn are influenced by their specific physical, psychological, social and cultural contexts. Through negotiation, fourth generation evaluation helps identify a course of action for stakeholders. The evaluator plays a role primarily as a facilitator or 'orchestrator' in the negotiation process with stakeholders, who participate in the design, implementation and interpretation of the evaluation as full partners.

Adapted from Campos and Coupal (1996) and Guba and Lincoln (1989)

In response to the problems that have become associated with conventional approaches to M&E, new ways of thinking about and practising monitoring and evaluation have gradually evolved. These innovative approaches aim to make monitoring and evaluation more responsive and appropriate to people's needs and real life contexts. They reflect growing experience with grassroots-based experiences and 'bottom up' strategies that employ participatory methodologies. These participatory approaches, therefore, recognise the importance of including beneficiaries and other project participants in the monitoring and evaluation process itself. Emphasis is shifted 'away from externally controlled data-seeking programmes towards the recognition of locally-relevant processes for gathering, analysing, and using information' (Abbot and Guijt 1997: 9). This fourth generation of evaluation highlights the importance of context – social, political, and value systems – in the evaluation process. In summary, the main arguments generally made for participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluation (drawing on Abbot and Guijt 1997; CONCERN 1996; Feuerstein 1986; Rugh 1992; Sommer 1993) are:

- Enhanced participation, especially of beneficiaries, in M&E helps improve understanding of the development process itself;
- Increased authenticity of M&E findings that are locally relevant;
- Improvement of the sustainability of project activities, by identifying strengths and weaknesses for better project management and decision-making;
- Increasing local level capacity in M&E, which in turn contributes to self-reliance in overall project implementation;
- Sharing of experience through systematic documentation and analysis based on broad-based participation;
- Strengthened accountability to donors;
- More efficient allocation of resources.

Narayan-Parker (1993) summarises how she sees the differences between conventional and participatory approaches to evaluation (see Box 3.2).

Box 3.2 Differences between conventional and participatory evaluation

	Conventional	Participatory
Who	External experts	Community members, project staff, facilitator
What	Predetermined indicators of success, principally cost and production outputs	People identify their own indicators of success, which may include production outputs
How	Focus on 'scientific objectivity'; distancing of evaluators from other participants; uniform, complex procedures; delayed, limited access to results	Self-evaluation; simple methods adapted to local culture; open, immediate sharing of results through local involvement in evaluation processes
When	Usually upon completion of project/programme; sometimes also mid-term	More frequent, small-scale evaluations
Why	Accountability, usually summative, to determine if funding continues	To empower local people to initiate, control and take corrective action

Source: Narayan-Parker 1993: 12

In practice, as the cases reviewed here show, the differences between these two approaches to evaluation are not as clear as in theory. Participatory approaches often engage outside experts, but in different roles and relationships. Sometimes they use pre-determined indicators of success. Qualitative research methods may be used in both approaches. The timing of participatory evaluation is not always ongoing. And the question of whether participatory approaches can meet the purposes of accountability (including accountability to whom and for what) is an issue we will return to in the final section of this report.

3.2 The Principle of Participation

Perhaps what most distinguishes PM&E from more conventional, 'traditional' approaches to monitoring and evaluation is its emphasis on participation. Based on the review of literature, one major 'core' feature of PM&E identified is its recognition of who actually participates. PM&E acknowledges that there are multiple stakeholders who are or should be participants in monitoring and evaluation. Stakeholders are those who directly or indirectly become involved in deciding what a project or programme should achieve and how it should be achieved. They may include beneficiaries, project or programme staff and management at local, regional, national or international levels, researchers, government agencies, and donors. Feuerstein (1986) describes the essential feature of PM&E as a 'real partnership in development' whereby people are involved in deciding when and how to monitor and evaluate, analyse, communicate, and use information' (see also Gohl 1993; Scott-Villiers 1997a). The South–South Sharing Forum hosted by PAMFORK in August 1997 established a common definition of PM&E, premised on the idea that stakeholder participation is interactive and collaborative (PAMFORK 1997: 4, 6).

Despite the common emphasis on collaboration and consultation, many point out that different people give very different meanings to the concept of 'participation'. In practice, there is considerable variation in the level and degree of participation being sought among the various stakeholders. (See UNDP, 1997, Table 1). The purpose, methods, and the role of the 'evaluator', and the impact of the evaluation will vary considerably depending on the type of evaluation and the level of participation.

There are two main ways to characterise participation in monitoring and evaluation: by **whom** it is initiated and conducted, and **whose perspectives** are particularly emphasised. The first distinguishes between monitoring and evaluation that is externally led, internally led, or jointly-led. The second distinguishes between which stakeholders are emphasised – all major stakeholders, beneficiaries, or marginalised groups.

Several key references identify different 'modes' of conducting PM&E in terms of who the major actors are in initiating and facilitating the M&E process (see CONCERN 1996; Feuerstein 1986; Gosling and Edwards 1995; Rugh 1992; Scott-Villiers 1997a; UPWARD 1997; Wadsworth 1991). There is usually a continuum across these different 'modes' of PM&E depending on the degree and nature of participation by various stakeholder groups in M&E (Campilan 1997: 58). These 'modes' may be categorised as follows:

Table 1 Levels of end–user participation in evaluation			
Dimensions of evaluation/ Levels of participation	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**
Evaluation initiator	Commissioned or obligatory evaluation typically part of programme development. Meets institutional needs. Evaluation done to, on or about people.	External evaluator invites end-users to assist in one or more evaluation task(s).	Evaluation in which end-users collaborate with external facilitator or among themselves to assess, review and critically reflect on strategies formulated for them.
Purpose	Justify or continue funding. Ensure accountability. Levels of funding or sustained support.	Gain insights into development activity from end users' perspective. Shift focus from institutional concerns to end-user needs and interests.	Promote self-sufficiency and sustainability by linking end-users to evaluation planning cycle. Develop relevant, effective programme decision-making based on end-user views, opinions, and recommendations. Increase ownership in and responsibility for success-failure of development interventions.
Question – maker(s)?	Agency heads, administrators, outside clientele, persons and distances from evaluation site.	End-users with external evaluator at various stages of evaluation generally determined by the evaluator.	End-users, external facilitator, persons most affected by development intervention.
5 Method(s)	Established research designs, statistical analyses, reliance on various quantitative methods. Product (findings) orientated (mathematical in nature). Dominated by math whiz kids.	Qualitative methods favoured but also include quantitative methods. Values a process focussed on open-ended inquiries. Uses methods that give voice to voicelessness.	Relies on highly interactive qualitative methods but does not disregard quantitative tools. 'The process is the product.' Inventiveness and creativity encouraged to adapt the methods to the context being evaluated.
Evaluator's versus Facilitator's Role	Evaluator takes lead in designing evaluation. Formulates questions/survey forms with no input from those evaluated. Steers by setting design. Assumes objective, neutral, distant stance.	Evaluator works collaboratively at various stages with end-users. Is partner in evaluation and imparts evaluation skills. Shares lead with end-users.	Evaluator becomes more of a facilitator. Facilitator acts as catalyst, confidante, and collaborator. Takes lead from end-users. Has few if any pre-determined questions.
Impact/ Outcome	Reports, publications circulated in house. Findings rarely circulated among end-users. Findings loop into planning stage with little input from end users.	Shared data-gathering but limited participation in data analysis. End-user views loop into planning stage. Increased understanding of end-user experiences.	End-user more capable of meaningful decision-making based on effective involvement in evaluation. Findings become property of end-users or community. Participation in analysis is critical.

Source: UNDP, 1997, ***Who Are the Question Makers? A Participatory Evaluation****, Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning, p.14*

Externally-led PM&E: These efforts are generally organised and initiated externally and conducted mainly by individuals or groups considered as having no direct involvement or no direct personal or institutional interest in the outcome of the project or initiative. As outsiders, they are commissioned usually by project donors and supporting agencies to present a more 'objective' and 'unbiased' point of view and achieve a more balanced facilitation of opinions between all the stakeholders (Campilan 1997; Rubin 1995; Scott- Villiers 1997).In this context, the outside evaluator serves primarily as a facilitator to provide insights from his/her experience into the PM&E process and to help stakeholders determine and conduct their own M&E activities (Rugh 1992).

In one example, an external evaluation team was commissioned by the donor agency to conduct a participatory impact assessment of poverty alleviation programmes in Ghana which provided information regarding project impacts on local livelihoods and capacity building. Through extensive consultations with village representatives and project stakeholders, the team designed a Village Development Capacity Index in which to rank progress and status of different villages (see Box 2.1). In another case, Cornwall, *et al.* (1997) describe the experience of an externally commissioned evaluation team which attempted to identify the perceptions of the various project stakeholders regarding the impact and process of a health-related project (see Box 2.4).

Internally-led PM&E: These efforts are carried out mainly by those directly involved in project or programme planning and implementation. They include local people and field-based staff who are considered 'insiders' (Campilan 1997: 59; see also Davis-Case 1990). Some would consider this to be an ideal form of PM&E, whereby community members themselves initiate M&E and play a major role in its implementation. Internally led M&E are perceived as contributing to local capacity building and organisational strengthening (Rubin 1995: 44; Rugh 1992: 5). As local people gain greater control over the M&E process, internally initiated M&E are also considered more likely to be sustained and become an integral part of community activities (*ibid.*).

Several of the cases reviewed involve internally-driven PM&E, including ACORD's and the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme's (AKRSP) experiences in which field-based staff and farmers themselves designed and carried out the M&E process (see Box 2.2), and community-based initiatives in the United States, such as those undertaken by the HCFA and the EZ/EC Learning Initiative (see Boxes 2.5 and 3.6). Other experiences of community-based monitoring are documented by Redd Barna Uganda, whereby local village councils are developing indicators to monitor changes occurring in their communities, i.e. the presence of pit latrines, immunised children, deforestation and reforestation, poverty alleviation initiatives and their impacts, adoption of family planning, etc. (Guijt 1997).

Joint PM&E: These combine approaches of internal and external M&E, and aim to assess project or community-based efforts from the viewpoints of both insiders and outsiders. The underlying objective is to achieve a more holistic perspective and involve a more diverse set of stakeholders (Campilan 1997: 59; see also Rubin 1995). Examples include PIDOW in India (see Box 3.3) and the CCDB in Bangladesh who undertake self-evaluation, in which externally-commissioned advisors/facilitators as well the major project stakeholders (donors, project officers and field-based staff) participate in M&E planning and implementation.

In their review of literature, Armonia and Campilan (1997:16) observe that many of the cases surveyed are carried out jointly by team members from within and outside the project or institution, although they point out

that there is a continuum between internally- and externally- led forms of PM&E. In many cases, the external evaluator serves as a facilitator-trainer for internal capacity building and sustainability of the M&E process. However, the authors also identify a trend towards more internally led M&E for the following reasons: (1) increased attention to the process of learning as an essential component of any development activity, and (2) the need for greater cost-efficiency. External evaluations were used when there was a need for greater 'objectivity' in reporting and when information was needed as inputs into project management and policy. They observe that in these contexts, the participation of most stakeholder groups was limited, mainly as sources of information using consultative and participatory methods.

Participation in M&E may vary not only in terms of the level and degree of participation, but also of the emphasis placed on particular groups of stakeholders. CONCERN discusses the different types of participation in M&E and distinguishes between those that involve all stakeholders and those that focus on the local community or individual involvement (1996: 10). Based on the survey of literature, PM&E efforts may be distinguished to the extent that they highlight the involvement of:

- Major stakeholders, including those who may be directly and indirectly affected by or involved in the project or programme interventions;
- Beneficiaries of project or programme interventions;
- Marginalised groups, including women, the very poor, children, people with disabilities.

While in theory these should be inclusive categories – major stakeholders, for example, should include beneficiaries, who should in turn include marginalised groups – in practice this is not necessarily so. Projects that focus on major stakeholders may have only a small role for direct beneficiaries. Projects that focus on beneficiaries may in practice pay little attention to marginalised groups. Again, the literature shows wide variation in the application of PM&E, and in the emphasis given to the involvement of different groups of stakeholders.

Some writers choose to emphasise the participation of **all the major stakeholders**. For instance, Abbot and Guijt describe PM as 'monitoring approaches that develop partnerships of multiple stakeholders for efficient, effective, and socially inclusive monitoring' (1997: 4). In addition, Narayan-Parker defines PE as a collaborative problem-solving process that involves all levels of users – local community members, government and community officials, project and programme staff – in shared decision making (1993: 9; see also Gosling and Edwards 1995; Rubin 1995, Rugh 1992). By involving all the relevant project stakeholders, the outcomes and findings of monitoring and evaluation are expected to cater to information needs of a variety of user groups within and outside the project (Campilan 1997: 58). How different stakeholders become active participants in PM&E is illustrated in the number of case studies surveyed in the literature, including the PIDOW Project in Karnataka, India (see Box 3.3).

Other approaches to PM&E, however, highlight the involvement of **beneficiaries**, especially those stakeholders who are directly involved and affected by programme interventions. For instance, PRIA (1995) holds the view that in participatory evaluation, people who are directly involved in development programmes either as planners, implementers or beneficiaries, should take part in and control the evaluation process. In this

Box 3.3 Stakeholders of the PIDOW project become their own evaluators

The Participative Integrated Development of Watersheds (PIDOW) Project seeks to promote sustainable land use of semi-arid zones in Karnataka, India. During the mid-term review of the PIDOW project, project partners agreed to conduct a joint participatory self-evaluation exercise. The major project stakeholders included:

- local rural communities, represented by Watershed Organisations (Sanghas)
- the Karnataka state government, represented by the Dryland Development Board (DLDB)
- the voluntary agency MYRADA, and
- the funding agency, the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC).

The self-evaluation process was carried out by teams whose members comprised the various project partners (government and NGO field staff with SDC project advisers). A series of village workshops were held which involved extensive discussions with Sangha members. The self-evaluation process provided an opportunity for all major stakeholders to jointly assess project achievements and constraints, but it was also a means for project partners to exchange their views regarding the current operation of PIDOW. The process also allowed project partners to look into their own performance and clarify each partner's responsibilities within PIDOW. The findings of the SE-experience later served as a basis for making adjustments in the overall project design and structure and for planning the project's next implementation phase.

Source: Humbert-Droz 1992; Sommer 1993.

way, PE 'is an attempt at redefining and reaffirming development as a 'bottom-up', 'people-centred', and 'people-controlled' process and not a technocratic, top-down intervention' (PRIA 1995: 8).

It should be noted, however, that among the case studies surveyed, no documented experience of PM&E was observed occurring **solely** at the village or community level. Although this finding does not necessarily reflect a general condition of PM&E practice, especially since most experiences at the grassroots are rarely documented, it does, however, indicate to some extent that the practice of PM&E takes place across institutional levels. These case studies illustrate how PM&E facilitates inter-institutional linkages and collaboration among various stakeholders. All of the cases surveyed involved project-level staff and beneficiaries in conducting PM&E, while fewer cases involved stakeholders located at all institutional levels, including donors and policy makers (see Appendix 1).

Davis-Case (1990) argues that Participatory Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation (PAME) should be based primarily on the information needs of the insiders, responding to what they need to know. She defines insiders as those who identify with and belong to a community or with sustained relationships with the community. Through PAME, insiders set objectives and activities, and monitor and evaluate whether these have been achieved and whether these continue to hold relevance to insiders' needs. The role of outsiders is mainly to encourage and help insiders identify their needs, set objectives, monitor and evaluate the activities.

The Vietnam Sweden Mountain Rural Development Programme (MRDP) serves as an example of a 'people-centred' process, whereby monitoring and evaluation is based primarily on the information needs and concerns identified by farmer-beneficiaries themselves (see Box 3.4).

Box 3.4 A 'bottom–up, top–down' strategy of M&E that begins with farmers

The Vietnam Sweden Mountain Rural Development Programme (MRDP) is an integrated rural development programme that seeks to regenerate green productive uplands in Northern Vietnam, while promoting sustainable and secure local livelihoods. The underlying principle of the MRDP is that 'people are willing and capable of taking responsibility for their own development'. Based on this underlying premise, the MRDP established the Management Information and Learning System (MILS) which is designed to facilitate the exchange of information and experience between participating organisations at different management levels (farmer, village, commune, district, province and ministry).

However, what is unique about MILS is the central role local farmers occupy in project planning, monitoring, review, and documentation of all programme activities included in the MRDP. The process of planning, monitoring, and evaluating programme activities begins at the farmer and village level. Information and experience generated at the local community level is then communicated up to the next level, which allows for a continuous 'bottom-up, top-down' dialogue between different management levels. MILS helps provide useful information and understanding between management staff at all levels which allows for more effective project planning and implementation that is responsive to local needs and experiences.

Source: Vietnam Sweden Mountain Rural Development Programme, Management Information and Learning System, Province Level Training Document No.1

Other approaches to PM&E especially stress the importance of involving relatively **marginalised groups**, such as the very poor, women, and children, people with disabilities, among others. According to these perspectives, participatory evaluation is about involving the least powerful, visible, and assertive actors in evaluating development efforts (Campos and Coupal 1996: 22; see also Gosling and Edwards 1995: 28–38). In their overview, CONCERN (1996) discusses PM&E in relation to gender issues and surveys the literature pertaining to women and equity. Walters *et al.* (1995) also present guidelines for developing gender-conscious monitoring and evaluation, arguing that projects and programmes must be assessed in terms of their effects on the power balance between men and women.

Kar *et al.* (1997a, 1997b) describes an experience in participatory impact monitoring which especially involved the urban poor, including women, in assessing the impacts of an urban project on their own living environments and social conditions. The urban project had sought to improve infrastructure, primary health care, and community development (Box 3.5).

3.3 The Principle of Learning

The concept of learning is the second major underlying principle of PM&E. The key emphasis is on 'practical' or 'action-oriented' learning. For instance, PRIA (1995) characterises participatory evaluation as a process of individual and collective learning, describing it as an 'educational experience' for those various parties involved in a development programme. People become more aware and conscious of their strengths and weaknesses, their wider social realities, and their visions and perspectives of development outcomes. It is this learning process that creates conditions conducive to change and action.

Box 3.5 Identifying local residents' own perceptions and criteria in assessing the Calcutta Slum Improvement Project (CSIP)

One of the main objectives of the participatory impact assessment (PIA) was to understand local residents' perceptions and criteria for assessing the impact of CSIP interventions, in order to suggest ways for improving project management. It was felt that the existing means to evaluate the impact of the CSIP, which relied primarily on conventional surveys, only generated quantitative data which did not provide enough information on how the project truly made an impact on people's lives. Therefore, PIA was used to identify local residents' views regarding project achievements and impact on their livelihoods and status.

For instance, with respect to family planning and contraceptive use, one indicator was the percentage of eligible couples using a family planning method (i.e. condoms, oral pills, etc.). Through PRA and other participatory methods, it was found that the percentage of couples ranged from 46% to 60% in different slums. However, the PIA process also revealed different preference criteria for different family planning methods among men and women. For example, positive perceptions of the condom included easy availability, greater comfort for the woman, and lack of need for medical consultation, while negative perceptions included lack of control by the woman over its use and the impossibility of it being kept confidential from the husband. The importance of including both men's and women's views was highlighted.

Source: Kar et al. *1997a.*

The process of learning in PM&E is further perceived as a means for local capacity building. Participants involved in PM&E gain skills which strengthen local capacities for planning, problem solving and decision making (Wadsworth 1991; UPWARD 1997). Participants obtain greater understanding of the various factors (internal and external) that affect the conditions and dynamics of their project, the basis for their successes and failures, and the potential solutions or alternative actions (Campos and Coupal 1996). The experience of the EZ/EC Learning Initiative also serves to demonstrate how community-based M&E strengthens local capabilities (see Box 3.6). The learning process in PM&E is premised upon the principle that it supports existing community skills and resources. Feuerstein (1986: xi) argues that participatory evaluation builds on what people already know and do, using and developing people's current abilities and skills to monitor and evaluate their own progress (see also Campos and Coupal 1996; Davis-Case 1990). For instance, in Gujarat, India, the AKRSP has worked with farmers in promoting soil and water conservation. Through participatory methods, farmers themselves identify agricultural problems, and learn how to monitor and evaluate conservation measures tested by making 'ground maps' of their fields using local materials (i.e. stones, sand, etc.). Farmers then together compare and discuss findings based on their maps, which allow them to make production decisions and generate technologies that are adapted to village circumstances. (see Box 2.2).

The concept of PM&E as an experiential learning cycle serves to emphasise the point that in PM&E participants together learn from experience and gain the abilities to evaluate their own needs, analyse their own priorities and objectives, and undertake action-oriented planning. An essential feature of this learning cycle is for stakeholder groups to reflect continuously on the impact of their evaluation and where the process is leading them, learning from their own successes and mistakes (Pfhol 1986). Evaluation then becomes part of an ongoing process of community learning and capacity-building. For example, in the case of the MRDP in Vietnam (see Box 3.4), PM&E is undertaken on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis by different stakeholders at different management levels, which allows for constant feedback, review, and adjustments to implementation plans.

Box 3.6 Learning as capacity building

The EZ/EC Learning Initiative is intended to monitor and measure the impact of the Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community programme, a major federal programme under the Clinton administration in the United States. The EZ/EC programme provides financial and institutional support for rural communities to develop their own community development initiatives.

The EZ/EC Learning Initiative was designed to provide the means through which community representatives themselves learn how to monitor and measure the progress of their EZ/EC programme as it develops, and suggest midcourse adjustments to the agencies running the EZ/EC programme. Learning team members gain new skills and enhance their capacities in monitoring change indicators and analysing their implications, in facilitation of meetings, and in public speaking. Local skills development has led to increased self-confidence, which in turn has enhanced the abilities of people to develop their own strategic goals for change and pursue leadership roles in effecting change within their communities. Learning team members have successfully analysed and presented their findings and recommendations concerning programme implementation to EZ/EC administrators and government officials.

Source: Gaventa, Morrissey, et al*. 1997; Parachini and Mott 1997*

However, learning may also take place at an organisational and institutional context, as demonstrated by the case of CARE Zambia (see Box 2.3). As part of its process of becoming a 'learning organisation', CARE Zambia promotes various strategies and initiatives to develop higher levels of knowledge and skills, especially of CARE staff members. Four levels of learning are identified (Hamel and Prahaled 1994, cited in Ward 1997):

- Level 1: Learning facts, knowledge, processes and procedures
- Level 2: Learning new job skills that are transferable to other situations
- Level 3: Learning to adapt and to derive lessons from success and failure
- Level 4: Learning to be innovative and creative - designing the future rather than merely adapting to it.

Moving to higher levels of learning within an organisation 'requires creativity, innovation, adaptive thinking and a deeper understanding of participation as an ongoing process, rather than as an individual activity' (Ward 1997: 3).

3.4 The Principle of Negotiation

The survey of literature also suggests that PM&E is increasingly perceived as a social process for negotiating between people's different needs, expectations, and world-views. For instance, De Raedt (1997) describes PM&E as a 'social enterprise of public discourse and interaction', engaging various stakeholders with diverse interests in negotiating and achieving their objectives. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989: 8), 'fourth generation evaluation' essentially is a process of negotiation, based on the premise that different stakeholders will have different claims, concerns and issues, which in turn are shaped by the context-specific social values of the different stakeholders (see also Marsden and Oakley 1990). Even when there is an emphasis on one particular group of stakeholders – beneficiaries, for example – the approach recognises the complex set of inter-relationships involved.

When multiple stakeholders are involved in the monitoring and evaluation process, negotiation is perceived as contributing towards the building of trust and changing perceptions, behaviours and attitudes among stakeholders, which affect the way they contribute to the project. Scott-Villiers writes that 'the purpose of working together on consultative M&E is to improve all parties' understanding of their own and each other's interests, perceptions and roles in the project in order that the project outcome can be continuously improved for all parties' (1994: 4). In the case of the PIDOW project (see Box 3.3), the self-evaluation exercise allowed project stakeholders to increase their understanding of their own roles and responsibilities, which in turn helped strengthen collaboration and instill trust among project partners (Humbert-Droz 1992; Sommer 1993).

Many writers also acknowledge that the negotiation process of PM&E is a highly political exercise, which necessarily addresses issues of equity, power, and social transformation. For instance, Scott-Villiers emphasises that the process involves more balanced representation among the various stakeholders: 'Consultative skills aim to enhance equity, recognising the importance of the opinions of normally silent members of the project as well as the important opinions of those who lead the project' (1997: 3).

In addition, Guba and Lincoln (1989) argue that the process of negotiation will either 'enfranchise or disenfranchise' stakeholder groups in various ways, i.e. through the selective involvement of these stakeholders in the design, implementation, reporting and use of evaluation. Hence, negotiation can become an empowering (or disempowering) process. Empowerment is defined in terms of the degree to which 'full participative' involvement in every aspect of design, implementation, interpretation and resulting action is achieved.

Cousins and Whitmore (1997) further elaborate on the issue of power and raise key questions focusing on who creates and who controls the production of knowledge and information in monitoring and evaluation. They argue that the main aim of 'transformative' participatory evaluation is to empower people through an educational, learning process by which various social groups produce knowledge about their reality, clarify and articulate their norms and values, and reach consensus about further action ('conscientisation') (Cousins and Whitmore 1997: 7). The evaluation process is therefore used to transform power relations and ameliorate social inequities by promoting social action and change.

The politics of negotiation become evident particularly in the context of developing indicators and criteria for monitoring and evaluation, especially in determining whose perspectives are represented in selecting indicators. These cases demonstrate the underlying political dynamics inherent in stakeholder relationships and interaction. For example, the Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB) experimented with a participatory monitoring framework which attempted to include the interests and concerns of all stakeholders in the organisational hierarchy by asking them to identify significant changes as a result of their work. The process revealed that almost all changes reported by the stakeholders were positive. Field level staff explained the rationale in terms of perceived risks to their job security if they engaged in more critical reporting to senior level staff; on the other hand, senior staff indicated their concern about donor and governing board responses to negative changes (Davies 1998: 8). A similar experience was found in Mexico where farmer-beneficiaries initially remained reticent, 'often cautious and polite', in articulating their criteria for evaluating agricultural programmes in the presence of extensionists and donor representatives. Use of participatory methods later enabled farmers to express their views more directly and more constructively, which helped explain to extensionists falling participation by villagers in field and evaluation work (Blauert and Quintanar 1997) (see Box 3.7)

Box 3.7 Establishing common objectives based on different stakeholder interests

A project between two partner organisations – CETAMEX-N, an NGO based in southern Mexico, and World Neighbours, an international development agency based in the US – was undertaken to design an evaluation framework that would feed into ongoing farming and research development work, as well as current issues facing local farmer-extensionists associated with CETAMEX-N and village participants. The framework sought was to allow different actors in the programme – including farming families, communities, extensionists, NGO funders, etc.– to evaluate, separately and jointly, project activities for socio-political, environmental and economic processes and impacts. Specifically, focus was given to changes in roles and attitudes in the CETAMEX-N institution itself, impact of extension work, and on the participation by different stakeholders in the programme's work.

Identifying participants' evaluation criteria was regarded as a preliminary step to establish indicators for the evaluation framework. However, it was recognised that it would be impossible to evaluate a project by indicators responding to all these criteria. One alternative to collate and combine stakeholder criteria was to group together 'loosely' external and internal criteria according to the six broad categories developed originally by the Inter-American Foundation's 'Cone' framework. Adopting this approach still allowed different stakeholders' views to be represented.

Source: Blauert and Quintanar 1997

3.5 The Principle of Flexibility

Flexibility and experimentation are regarded as integral aspects of PM&E. Many concur that there is no blueprint or prescribed set of approaches to carrying out PM&E; rather, they view the process PM&E as continually evolving and adapting according to project-specific circumstances and needs. One aspect of integrating flexibility in the design and practice of PM&E is in making the process itself responsive and relevant to the needs of stakeholders. Specifically, PM&E should be contextual, which takes into account local conditions (socio-cultural, economic, political, institutional contexts) (see Marsden and Oakley 1990; UPWARD 1997). This accounts for the very wide range in the practice of participatory monitoring and evaluation, as revealed in the case studies.

Pfohl (1986) illustrates this evolving and adaptive process in the form of an 'evaluation chakra', drawing from the symbol of a chakra or wheel. The chakra represents cyclical repetition of reassessment and self-evaluation in order to allow for adjustments in the evaluation process itself. However, Jobes (personal communication) suggests that a cyclical view may not adequately capture the changing form of PM&E and would rather describe the actual process of PM&E as 'a very slow, multi-layered, backward and forward, stop-start experience'. The degree to which PM&E incorporates flexibility in its design and implementation has been documented in several project-related experiences. For example, in her work with highland agricultural communities in Peru on technology development and validation, Fernandez (1991) learned that assessing and evaluating production problems with farmers required a high level of creativity and flexibility on the part of the researchers involved. Researchers had to continually adapt research methods of assessment to the local realities of farmers – taking into account ecological, economic, social, and organisational factors.

Another example is the Management Information and Learning System (MILS) of the MRDP programme in Vietnam Sweden Mountain Development Programme (MRDP) (see Box 3.4) which uses a flexible planning design that enables farming communities continually to reassess and adjust activities based on their needs and

demands. Also, the EZ/EC Learning Initiative, which is designed to monitor and measure the impact of the EZ/EC Programme (see Box 3.6) adopts an evaluation framework based on a collaborative process that is purposefully designed to review and improve programme implementation on a relatively current basis.
One experience in India illustrates how a flexible PM&E system can effectively monitor changes and impacts, as well as respond to needs and capacities of different stakeholders (see Box 3.8).

While these principles are important, putting them into practice represents enormous challenges. The following section will focus on tools and approaches used to PM&E activities.

4 TRANSLATING PARTICIPATORY MONITORING AND EVALUATION INTO PRACTICE

As the value of PM&E is more broadly recognised, there is growing need to systematise its practice, in order that the process itself may be shared, replicated and improved. What are the key steps or stages in a PM&E process? What tools and techniques should be used? Who should be involved and how? To explore these questions, this section draws upon a survey of literature and a number of manuals and guidebooks which are now available for PM&E (see Appendix 2). Although there is wide variation in actual PM&E practice, some common guidelines and methods are emerging which help define the process for establishing and conducting PM&E. This section provides a brief overview of PM&E methodology, followed by a description of some of the tools and techniques commonly used.

Box 3.8 A flexible approach to group-based savings and credit

A prototype internal learning system was used in India for operating group-based savings and credit programmes with poor women. The tasks of 'internal learning' are decentralised to all levels within the savings and credit programme – at the level of individual members, self-help groups, cluster or federation of groups, area organisers, programme staff, etc. – so that all members are actively involved in the process of planning, data collection, analysis, and documentation. One of the distinguishing features of the system is its use of pictorial diaries, known as 'learning diaries', in which information is shared, aggregated and forwarded at every level of the programme. Women use the diaries to record and reflect upon changes in their lives as shown in the diaries. These learning diaries are organised into chapters, which address different areas relating to personal, social, economic, and institutional aspects of women's lives.

Although the learning diaries suggest and organise what could be monitored, the system is designed in a way that allows for considerable flexibility in choosing the structure and content of the diaries. The diaries may be tailored differently and used purposefully to answer specific monitoring and evaluation questions. Different levels of users can select and modify the various chapters or dimensions of change to respond to their own unique experiences, capacities, and needs. As members and groups become more skilled, other chapters can be added later on. This degree of flexibility enables users at all levels to carry out evaluation experiments and conduct more in-depth sub-analyses, which still allow for general inferences to be made across the various programme levels.

Source: Naponen, n.d.

4.1 What are the Steps or Stages of PM&E?

Drawing from CONCERN's (1996) overview, there are four major steps or stages of applying PM&E in practice:

- Planning or establishing the framework for a PM&E process, including identification of objectives and indicators
- Gathering data,
- Data analysis
- Documentation, reporting and sharing of information.

These main stages of PM&E are well-illustrated in the experience of the Learning Initiative, where learning teams have developed and applied the 'Learning Wheel' for citizen monitoring (see Table 2). Team members work with a regional researcher who helps facilitate the process and provides research support and training. Each phase is broken down into distinct activities that are undertaken in a series of work sessions.[3]

4.1.1 Planning a PM&E process: establishing objectives and indicators

The planning stage is generally considered the most critical to the success and effectiveness of the PM&E process, because it requires a lengthy process of negotiation, contestation, and collaborative decision making among various stakeholders. It is at this stage that different stakeholder groups come together and voice their concerns, needs, and expectations.

At this stage, establishing the objectives of the PM&E project becomes critical. The relevant stakeholder groups initially need to be identified and selected, and several major questions then need to be clarified. These key questions include: **what information, for whom, and how it shall be incorporated into project or programme implementation** (see Scott-Villiers 1997a). This process should entail intensive negotiations between stakeholders regarding the needs and objectives of the different parties (Scott-Villiers 1997a; see also Abbot and Guijt 1997; Campos and Coupal 1996; UPWARD 1997).

Identifying objectives and monitoring indicators can be the most difficult part of planning a PM&E process. Scott-Villiers (1997a: 3) points out that, in general, many people do not give much thought to why they are participating in M&E and simply accept that a project has been designed for them by someone else, as it was in most cases traditionally. Therefore, a consultation process among the various stakeholders to determine objectives and indicators is regarded by many as critical to successfully carrying out and sustaining PM&E.

Although much attention is often focused on indicator development, Abbot and Guijt (1997) stress the importance of first establishing objectives as a key step **before** indicators are defined (see also Scott-Villiers). In order to determine the objectives of PM&E, one must know who the actors are in the process, and who the end-users will be, why the project is to be carried out, and how the results and process are to be used. End-users may be at multiple levels, including community members; project (local) staff; donors; development agencies; research; national level policy makers (GOs and NGOs), or even indirect beneficiaries in a community or the wider general public. What is to be monitored and evaluated, and how the process is to be used, will essentially

depend on **who needs the results and information** of PM&E and who is involved in determining the process (see Box 4.1).

Having agreed upon objectives of PM&E, indicators can then be established. There are many varied definitions for indicators (see Feuerstein 1986; Gosling and Edwards 1995; Hart 1995, cited in Abbot and Guijt 1997). Essentially, indicators are distinguished from objectives in that indicators are said to be relatively tangible and specific, while objectives may represent the broader overall perspectives of the project or initiative, reflecting its values, visions, and long-term goals (PRIA 1995).

Several criteria for selecting indicators suggest that indicators be: valid, cost-effective, relevant, sensitive, verifiable, simple, meaningful to all involved, among others (see Abbot and Guijt 1997; CONCERN 1996). A relatively simpler set of criteria for determining indicators is based on the acronym 'SMART': specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, and time-framed[4] (Abbot and Guijt 1997: 23; see also Scott-Villiers 1997a). Scott-Villiers (1997a) argues that indicators seldom need to be extremely precise and that they should be easy to collect and be useful to the project decision-making process (see also Pfohl 1986: 28). However, others argue that defining indicators may not be as straightforward, since they need to be 'suggested, adapted, negotiated, and approved' by all the relevant stakeholders (Abbot and Guijt 1997: 23; see also Rubin 1995: 41). The selection of different kinds of indicators will ultimately depend on what is being assessed, who the end-users are, and how information will be used, as already demonstrated by Assessoria e Servicos a Projetos em Agricultura Alternativa's (AS-PTA) experience in Brazil (see Box 4.1; see also McArthur 1997: 16–17).

For instance, one particular case showed how indicators can reflect differing concerns of stakeholders **within** local communities, particularly differences between intended beneficiaries. The case describes an NGO's experience in Mali and highlights how different indicators were defined according to age, gender, occupation, and wealth status of participants (see Box 4.2).

Box 4.1 For whom is information intended?

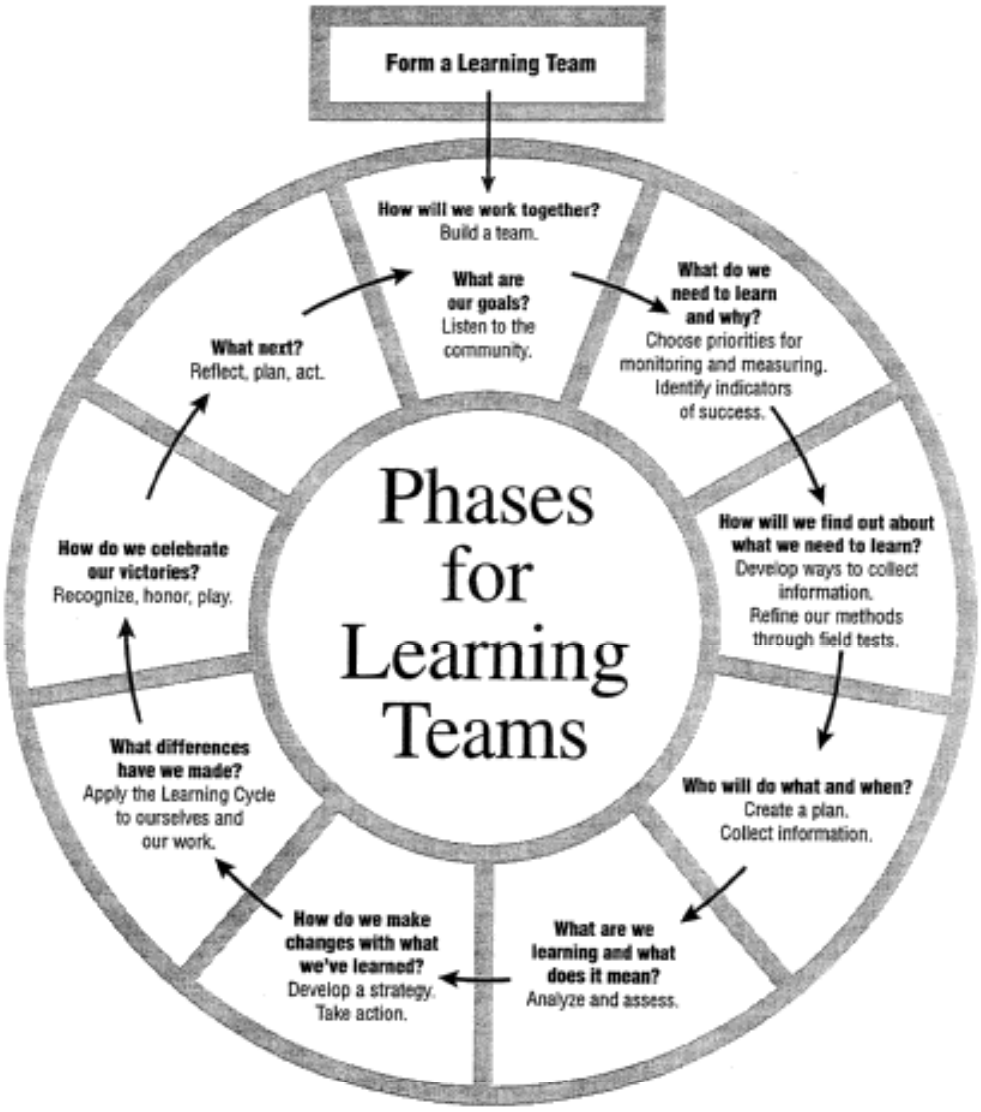
The AS-PTA has worked in partnership with farmers and local rural organisations in promoting economically and ecologically sustainable forms of agricultural development. One of the most significant lessons identified in monitoring and evaluating the impact of their work has been **knowing the end use of the data collected.**

Initially, the focus of data collections was on the direct measurement of biophysical properties. For example, some of the indicators identified for measuring 'soil and water conservation' were degree of soil retention, moisture retention, and organic matter content. However, these were found to be impossible to measure given the limited human and financial constraints of an understaffed and under-fundedd NGO, and especially given that these indicators were not considered a priority by farmers.

After discussing for whom and for what purpose the information was intended, it became apparent that such precise scientific data were unnecessary. The information was intended for farmer-to-farmer extensions and donor reporting, both of which did not require scientifically valid data. Instead, indicators were chosen that gave a rough estimation based on farmers' own observations; consequently, rather than obtaining exact organic matter content, indicators reflected the frequency with which farmers noticed a significant change as a result of project interventions.

Source: Guijt and Sidersky 1996

The Learning Cycle



Community Partnership Center, The University of Tennessee/Knoxville

Box 4.2 Recognising local differences in indicator development: ACORD's experience in Mali

ACORD began working with agro-pastoralists in Mali on a project that aimed to regenerate a riverine fodder crop (Panicum bourgou) along the Niger river. In the process of establishing indicators for crop regeneration, ACORD learned that differences existed within households and between social groups in terms of how success is measured.

It had been assumed by most people – particularly by field extensionists and external aid agencies working in the area – that the primary reason that groups were interested in this regeneration project was to ensure adequate fodder for their animals during the dry season. This was true for many individuals, especially men whose criteria for success would be their ability to offer ACORD staff a calabash of milk. However, discussion with women revealed that they would judge success by asking the children if they had drunk more *kundou* – a sweet drink also made from this grass. Discussions with beneficiaries found this criterion for success to be a key indicator that would allow rapid appraisal of several objectives of the project: if the *kundou* was available to children, it would then indicate that there had been enough to satisfy the needs of animals.

ACORD further learned that differences in criteria not only revealed different priorities between men and women, but also between women who owned livestock and those who did not, between female-headed and male-headed households, and between pastoral groups, depending on their levels of sendentarisation and social origins of the household.

Source: Roche 1993: 29–30.

4.1.2 Gathering data

Once information needs and objectives are identified, determining how to collect and gather information is the next major step in the PM&E process. A wide variety of tools or techniques may be used for data-gathering purposes. Many emphasise that the choice of tools will very much depend on context and project-specific criteria. Several key questions that need to be addressed at this stage include: Where can the information be found? Which tools should be used? Who will gather the information and when? A brief summary of the different kinds of tools available for PM&E and the general guidelines for choosing among these techniques will be discussed later in this section.

4.1.3 Data analysis

This next stage of PM&E involves processing or analysing data that has been monitored and collected, although ideally analysis should take place throughout the PM&E cycle (see Gosling and Edwards 1995). Traditionally, data analysis is often taken over by outsiders or by stakeholders located at higher institutional levels. The idea of PM&E is to involve at all levels all end-users and stakeholders – including beneficiaries in data analysis.

At this stage of PM&E, stakeholders groups engage in critical reflection and thinking about the problems and constraints, the successes and outcomes of their efforts and activities which they have undertaken. Scott-Villiers (1997a) suggests some of the following areas of discussion in analysing information:

- Analysing the relevance of project or programme objectives to the needs and interests of the stakeholders;
- Learning the impact of the activities undertaken;
- Reviewing the process by which the project operated and how decisions were made.

It is argued that part of establishing PM&E includes defining the scope of data analysis, specifically what is to be analysed, how and by whom (see Gosling and Edwards 1995; Pfohl 1986). How data will be analysed will depend primarily on the tools or techniques chosen for gathering data and on the information required by participants (for a more detailed discussion, see Pfohl 1986; Wadsworth 1991).

4.1.4 Documentation, reporting, and sharing

The final stage of PM&E includes documentation, reporting and sharing of information generated from the PM&E process. Presumably, records of collected information are kept from the very start of the project in order to present a 'holistic' picture over the project lifetime. Several key references and manuals discuss in greater detail guidelines on how to document, report and disseminate M&E information (see for example, Feuerstein 1986; Rugh 1992; Scott-Villiers 1997a; Stephens 1990). Some of the main criteria for documentation and reporting include: clarity, simplicity, brevity, use of visuals, timeliness, familiarity, and accessibility.

At this stage, several important issues need to be considered, specifically pertaining to the ownership and use of information and findings. Rubin argues that clear rules should be established on how information will be used and disseminated, especially when several parties with differing needs and interests are involved (1995:54–55). For example, in most cases, information is disseminated in a written format or more formal language, which may not be appropriate for reaching local audiences. Therefore, a key emphasis is placed on communicating results and findings of PM&E in different ways, responding to end-user needs. Forms of communication may include more informal styles of reporting, namely adopting the local language or using more visual techniques (CONCERN 1997).

In the case of the MRDP programme in Vietnam, villagers communicate their findings to higher management levels by presenting visual-based information in the form of graphs, tables, maps and diagrams generated from their PRA activities. Shah *et al.* (1993) also describe how farmers use ground maps of their fields to present results of farm experiments and to stimulate group analysis and discussion.

While it is important to understand the basic framework and features of a PM&E process, one will also need to know how to facilitate this process. The following g discussion turns to the methods – the 'tools' and techniques – commonly used for putting PM&E into practice.

4.2 'Tools' and Techniques for PM&E

There are now a wide variety of tools and techniques for PM&E discussed in the literature and described in a number of key manuals and guidebooks on PM&E (see Appendix 2). While these tools for PM&E have generally been applied for data-collection purposes, these techniques are also used for planning, analysis, documentation and reporting (see Feuerstein 1986; Davis-Case 1992, 1990; Gosling and Edwards 1995; Pfohl 1986). They may be categorised as follows:

- PRA and PRA-related tools
- Audio-visual tools
- Quantitative tools
- Tools derived from the 'anthropological' tradition

4.2.1 PRA and PRA-related techniques

Participatory assessment (PRA), also known as 'participatory rural appraisal' and 'participatory rapid assessment', comprises a range of visualisation, interviewing and group work methods (see Box 4.3)[5]. These techniques have proven valuable in enabling people to express their views and share information, in uncovering their realities and priorities, and in stimulating discussion and analysis (**IDS Policy Briefing** 1996). Based on our survey of literature and case studies, PRA methods are commonly applied for monitoring and evaluation (see also Ford 1994; Ford, *et al*. 1996; Mukherjee n.d.; Osuga and Mutayisa 1995; Welbourn 1993).

Box 4.3 Methods used in participatory rural appraisal (PRA)

Visualised analysis

- Participatory mapping and modelling
- Aerial photograph analyses
- Transect and group walks
- Seasonal calendars
- Daily and activity profiles
- Historical profiles and trend analyses
- Timelines and chronologies
- Matrix scoring and preference ranking
- Venn and network diagramming
- Flow diagrams on systems and impact
- Pie diagrams

Interviewing and sampling methods

- Semi-structured interviewing
- Direct observation
- Focus group
- Key informants
- Ethno-histories
- Futures possible
- Well-being and wealth ranking
- Social maps

Group and team dynamics method

- Team contracts
- Team review sessions
- Interview guides
- Rapid report writing
- Work sharing (taking part in local activities)
- Villager and shared presentations
- Process notes and diaries

Source: Cornwall, Guijt, and Welbourn 1993: 22

Diagramming

One of the key strengths of PRA is its emphasis on visualisation techniques, such as diagramming (Cornwall, Guijt, Welbourn 1993: 23). Visualisation techniques provide opportunities for creative reflection because they enable people to 'represent their own ideas in a form that they can discuss, modify and extend' *(ibid.*). As PRA usually takes place in groups, this encourages wider participation from people and allows for cross-checking of information generated.

In India, for example, farmers drew 'ground maps' of their fields in order to observe changes over time as a result of adopting soil and water conservation measures (Shah *et al.* 1993). These ground maps allowed farmers to compare 'before-and-after' conditions on their fields and subsequently develop more effective production strategies. Also, in Vietnam the MRDP programme employed a diverse range of PRA techniques, including mapping and diagramming, for monitoring and evaluating village activities (MRDP 1997). Finally, sketching, Venn (institutional) diagramming, and other PRA methods were used in Kenya to assess and strengthen organisational capacities of a government agency in promoting soil and water conservation (Thompson and Pretty 1995).

Another form of diagramming is the use of pictures in journals and diaries. While written journals (i.e. record keeping, reports, etc.) are common, picture journals are a unique innovation for recording information. One experience in India describes how women use pictorial diaries to keep track of their group savings and credit performance (see Box 3.8). Women identify their needs and assess their socio-economic status by marking choices using familiar pictures and symbols. Diaries are designed to be simple, user-friendly, and visual-based, which fit the needs of poor women who lack literacy and numeracy skills.

4.2.2 Audio-visual techniques

In addition to PRA, there are other tools that specifically use audio-visual techniques for monitoring and evaluation. These are discussed in greater detail in the literature (see Cornwall, Guijt and Welbourn 1993; Feuerstein 1986; Gosling and Edwards 1995; Kramsjo and Wood 1992). Some of them are listed here:

- Use of videos
- Story-telling
- Popular theatre
- Songs
- Photovoice

Several case studies describe the application of audio-visual techniques for PM&E. For example, in the participatory impact evaluation of the Nepal Resource Management Project, drama performances and songs were used to help identify villagers' perceptions of changes in their communities as a result of the project. These tools also helped villagers define what should be evaluated and what they prioritise as the objectives of the project (Wigboldus 1995).

A more recent innovation is the use of 'photovoice' for PM&E as described by Wang, Yan Ling, and Ming Ling (1996). In this process, local people themselves produce visual images through the use of an instamatic

camera. The photographs then serve as a catalyst to depict, reflect on and discuss social conditions affecting people's lives. In rural China, village women used photovoice as a tool to talk about their social status and living conditions and to show the extent to which development programmes benefited their community.

4.2.3 Quantitative techniques

While quantitative methods are traditionally associated with more conventional, non-participatory approaches to M&E, more recent attempts have tried to make these methods more participatory and accessible to local people. Some of these quantitative techniques which have been adapted to fit a participatory process include: (1) community surveys and (2) methods used for ecological assessment.

Community surveys

Feuerstein (1986) describes how surveys could be developed and carried out with community involvement in order to fit local needs and contexts. In community surveys, local members should be involved in deciding what information to obtain, how and when to obtain information, and for what purpose. Some examples of community-based survey forms are described by Rugh (1992). These include the 'Health Happenings survey form which can be used by preliterate health volunteers to keep records of health-related information in their communities. Another example is the 'farmer's own record' form which helps farmers test new ideas and conduct on-farm experiments.

In the Siavonga Agricultural Development Project in Zambia, farmers themselves design their own record sheets for monitoring and comparing different farming practices. These records serve to facilitate discussions between field extensionists and farmers and help to make farmers' needs and interests more transparent (Nagel *et al.* 1992: 102).

Ecological assessments

Ecological assessments have also been adapted to integrate a more participatory approach. In their overview, Abbot and Guijt (1997) describe how local people are learning how to use standard ecological methods to make an inventory of and monitor animal and plant populations. Although the authors recognise that, in some cases, local people remain excluded from the research design and data analysis (due largely to the statistical requirements of the ecological assessment methods used), attempts to ensure that participants understand each stage of the research process help build local capacities to collect data and analyse environmental change.

Another promising approach is bio-resource flow diagrams. Building on participatory mapping and agro-ecosystem analysis, bio-resource flow diagrams help farmers assess current farm conditions and plan how to monitor experimental changes in their farming systems (UPWARD 1997: 20). In one study in the Philippines, farmers designed conceptual models of their own farming systems, which they used to record resource flows, farm inputs and outputs (Lightfoot, Dalsgaard, and Bimbao 1993). Farmers used these models to help them monitor changes on their farms and improve resource management and experimentation skills (*ibid.*).

4.2.4 Tools from the 'anthropological' tradition

Other PM&E techniques have also evolved from the tradition of anthropology. These include participant observation and the use of oral testimonies.

'Participant observation' is a term commonly used by anthropologists to describe observation techniques when studying the lifestyle and behaviours of local communities in different cultural contexts **while** taking part in day-to-day local activities. In the context of PM&E, participant observation should take place with the knowledge of the people being observed, and may even be undertaken as a group activity, with local people themselves functioning as participant observers (Feuerstein 1986: 55).

Oral testimonies can allow people to articulate their own perspectives and present their own accounts about the history of a place or a particular event, or about their own lives. Personal testimonies help build a picture of what has happened over time, or illuminate problems, differing perspectives and interests for discussion (Gosling and Edwards 1995; see also Rugh 1992; Slim and Thompson 1993). For example, in the Nepal Resource Management Project, oral histories of villagers presented local accounts of the project's impact, which reflected varied experiences and changes that occurred in different communities as a result of the project (Wigboldus 1995).

4.3 Choosing PM&E Tools and Techniques

Given the range of tools considered potentially useful for PM&E, some criteria should be kept in mind for deciding which techniques would be most appropriate. Guidelines for choosing the most appropriate and relevant techniques for PM&E are provided in the literature (see CONCERN 1996; Feuerstein 1986; Gosling and Edwards 1995; Narayan-Parker 1993; Rugh 1992; Scott-Villiers 1997a). In general, tools and techniques should:

- Complement the approach and philosophy of the project;
- Be perceived by community participants as a way to help them address their questions and problems, not simply as information about them gathered by or for outsiders;
- Involve end-users in both data gathering and in analysing data;
- Match the skills and aptitudes of participants;
- Adapt to fit peoples' day-to-day activities and normal responsibilities;
- Provide timely information needed for decision making;
- Produce results which are reliable and, even if not quantitative, credible enough to convince others;
- Be consistent in complexity and cost to match the level of evaluation called for (e.g. simple, routine versus more comprehensive, major evaluations);
- Reinforce community solidarity, co-operation and involvement;
- Be gender-sensitive with special efforts to include women;
- Only obtain the information needed.

(adapted from Rugh 1992: 17 and Narayan-Parker 1993: 16–18)

Depending on the methods chosen, each tool will generate particular kinds of information and require different resources and skills (Pfohl 1986: 29; Rugh 1992: 17). Hence, many usually recognise the importance of combining different methods, depending on the information required, the purpose of the exercise, and the availability of resources (Abbot and Guijt 1997; CONCERN 1996; Gosling and Edwards 1995; Pfohl 1986; Scott-Villiers 1997a). Combining techniques is considered useful for data 'triangulation' which allows information to be compared, confirmed, refuted, or substantiated (*ibid.*).

Of course the PM&E process does not end with the information gathering process. Equally important are the steps of analysing and assessing the findings, reporting and using the findings for action, improvement and change, learning and reflecting on next steps, evaluating the process, recognising and celebrating the accomplishments made (see, for instance, the Learning Cycle developed by the Community Partnership Center, the University of Tennessee, 1998, p.17). Throughout each stage of PM&E, deciding who should be involved and on what terms is perhaps the most critical activity for sustaining the PM&E process. The next section explores some of these problematic issues and points to challenges for improving the practice of PM&E.

5 CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Clearly there are no single formula or fixed guidelines that explain 'what PM&E is' and 'how to do PM&E'. Nevertheless, much of the literature and case studies reviewed here demonstrate a concerted effort to develop and contribute towards a more coherent body of knowledge about the practice of PM&E. In this context, ideas and actual experiences of PM&E are gradually emerging which provide wide scope for more creative thinking and learning. However, this process of experimental learning is rarely a trouble-free undertaking (CONCERN 1996: 42), and a number of common concerns and pressing issues are already being raised with respect to improving the practice of M&E.

This section highlights several of these broad challenges and issues from the literature and case studies reviewed. We thus hope to stimulate further discussion and point out potential areas for future research and action. The issues to be explored include:

- **Understanding PM&E as a social process**, including the role of power, conflict and conflict resolution, as well as translating participation into practice;
- **Methodological issues**, including developing new standards of 'rigour', choosing appropriate indicators, and the role of the facilitator;
- **Institutionalisation of PM&**E, including issues of resources and scaling up;
- **The need for more documentation of PM&E** experiences, including the need for participatory monitoring of PM&E, identifying enabling factors, and documenting outcomes.

5.1 Understanding PM&E As a Social Process

The concept of PM&E as a socially negotiated process – not simply as a method or set of techniques – is generally recognised in the literature. In this context, PM&E is viewed as a process whereby different groups of

stakeholders articulate and present their own views, needs and expectations. This process is generally characterised as a collaborative decision-making endeavour, which takes into account the multiple objectives and interests of stakeholders, but with the overall aim of reaching group consensus.

5.1.1 The role of power

In spite of this general recognition of PM&E as a social process of negotiation, there is a need for a more explicit and open discussion about the complex social dynamics and power relationships that underlie and constitute the actual practice of PM&E. Marsden and Oakley (1990: 13) point out that: 'Behind such a negotiation are questions about ownership and control of knowledge, and the uses to which it might be put.' Rubin (1995: 23) further observes that there is 'a need for greater clarity between all the parties involved regarding how, by whom, and against what criteria, [development] work is going to be measured.' Hence, a key question that is raised pertains to issues of power: **who controls and who influences the M&E process?**

Addressing the issue of power in PM&E implies recognising unequal social relationships and positions – either between different actors (stakeholders, including the facilitator) or at different institutional levels (village, programme, or policy levels) – that underlie the PM&E process itself. In their overview, Armonia and Campilan (1997: 20) point out that involving a greater number of actors in PM&E may have implications for changing or reinforcing power relations among them, especially with respect to the influence which donors and implementing agencies traditionally hold over the M&E process. The critical issue is to determine to what extent these traditionally more influential stakeholder groups would willingly share this privileged status with other participants, specifically with local people.

Rubin (1995: 39) makes a similar point in questioning **who chooses the criteria for determining 'success'**. She notes that a great deal of openness and transparency is required between funders and the funded in negotiating which criteria will be used for determining change and progress. More exploration, therefore, is needed of the means by which participants at the grassroots (village) level would be able to state what 'measures they will use to judge the progress of projects designed to benefit them' (Rubin 1995: 39–40).

However, Abbot and Guijt (1997) point out the need to recognise not only differences in influence and status between stakeholders' groups, but also **within** stakeholder groups themselves. As highlighted in ACORD's experience in Mali, indicators for monitoring project impacts differed among community members, according to gender, individual and household status (Roche 1993). Also, while villagers in Vietnam assume a paramount role in designing, planning and implementing M&E activities, they also acknowledge that the process has tended to exclude marginalised groups (i.e. poorer households), and are therefore taking this into account in planning future activities (Scott-Villiers 1997a, pers. comm.). In addition, Kar *et al.* (1997b: 11) point out in the Calcutta case that the problem of domination by certain stakeholder groups – especially by the more educated and politically-connected participants – had to be resolved by 'pleading with people to leave the [PIA] exercise on the grounds of needing to discuss urgent and private issues with others'.

5.1.2 The role of conflict and conflict resolution

It should perhaps be self evident that, as new voices and new measures of success enter an evaluation process, conflict might also emerge over 'whose reality counts' (Chambers 1997). As conflict emerges, there is a need to better understand its basis, as well as processes for conflict negotiation.

The emphasis on participative consultation and collaboration between stakeholder groups in PM&E literature leads us to believe that group consensus is readily achieved in the negotiation process of PM&E. However, the real potential for conflict and mechanisms for resolving conflict is seldom explicitly discussed in the literature and case studies reviewed. For instance, in reference to the SADP agricultural extension project in Zambia, Nagel *et al.* (1992) include conflict analysis as part of the PM&E process 'to identify potential areas of conflict at all levels', yet no concrete proposals or procedures are provided on how to solve or alleviate these problems. Based on their survey of experiences in Bolivia, Alcocer, Lizárraga, Delgadillo *et al.* observe that only in some cases is there explicit recognition of conflict, which some would argue reflects the 'more political' dimension of participation. The authors emphasise the need to arrive at a deeper understanding of conflict, especially within the context of decentralisation and legal reforms that support participation (Alcocer, Lizárraga, Delgadillo *et al.* 1997: 7–8).

An exception is the case study in Brazil, which describe potential conflicts between stakeholder groups – the NGO AS-PTA, rural worker's trade union representatives, local farmers – and the means for their resolution. In this case, differences in priorities and needs by the different stakeholders made it difficult to decide how best to monitor indicators. While stakeholders eventually agreed through joint discussions to use less quantitative measures, one way of resolving this conflict was for the NGO staff to recognise that they should take on the responsibility of monitoring their own indicators if they wanted to obtain more scientific and rigorous data to fulfil their own information needs (see Guijt and Sidersky 1993).

5.1.3 Translating participation into practice

While one of the core principles of PM&E is its emphasis on participation, there is still great ambiguity in translating the concept and objectives of participation into practice. Several overviews on PM&E make these observations. For example, Armonia and Campilan (1997: 16) point out that the interpretation of 'participation' varies widely among the case studies of Asian experiences reviewed, and that there is no accepted minimum standard when M&E may qualify as participatory. Also, in their survey of donor agency documents and experiences with participatory evaluations, Rudqvist and Woodford-Berger (1996: 48) argue that participation is often defined very generally or taken to mean a range of stakeholder roles. In general, there is a recognised need to clarify and refine the concept of 'participation' – specifically with respect to the roles of different stakeholders within and outside communities, and the levels and degrees of participation at different stages of PM&E throughout the project cycle (Abbot and Guijt 1997; Armonia and Campilan 1997; Rudqvist and Woodford-Berger 1996; see also Brown 1993; Marsden and Oakley 1990; UPWARD 1997).

Hence, the extent to which participation in M&E is achieved in practice remains a contested issue. For instance, Marsden, Oakley and Pratt (1994: 96) point out that there is currently little documented experience of programmes and projects that demonstrate a truly participatory approach to evaluation. Parachini and Mott further note that building partnerships among project stakeholders is still very much an exception rather than

the rule in community-building initiatives (1997: 11–12). Rudqvist and Woodford-Berger's (1996: 45) assessment of donor experiences with participatory evaluation revealed that only a few cases actively involved primary stakeholders – the beneficiaries – in shaping development decisions, i.e. in determining evaluation objectives, analysis and interpretation.

Several overviews of PM&E suggest that participation may vary at different stages of the PM&E and project cycles, with **less involvement** by all stakeholders, particularly local participants, at **early stages** (design and planning) as well as at **later stages** (analysis and dissemination) of M&E. For instance, Armonia and Campilan (1997: 20) point out that, in general, local participation decreases as the project progresses from the planning stages to implementation and to monitoring and evaluation. Abbot and Guijt (1997: 5, 43) also found this to be evident in their overview of participatory monitoring of the environment. While all cases reviewed were highly participatory during the data collection stage, few involved all stakeholders in early and later stages. However, the authors observe that those cases which **did include all stakeholders throughout the PM&E process** produced more relevant and useful information for stakeholders than those approaches which only included local people as data gatherers.

Several case studies show the difficulty of ensuring local participation, especially in using and analysing information. For example, CARE Zambia's most significant challenge in implementing a participatory monitoring system is to overcome tendencies of extracting information, and to empower project beneficiaries by genuinely involving them in the analysis and use of collected information (Ward 1997: 10). Similarly in reference to the Calcutta Slum Improvement Project (CSIP), Kar *et al.* (1997b: 99–100) point out that one major problem of the PIA process was its 'lack of systematic involvement of the participants in the analysis of the data', which was carried out by outsiders. Hence, there was a concern that 'the process was extractive rather than empowering', particularly for the slum dwellers. The authors recommend that future PIAs should seek to facilitate analysis of findings with community groups and that local participation be integrated in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Such a process would create a greater sense of local ownership, which in turn would enhance project sustainability and effectiveness.

On the other hand, other case studies demonstrate how to operationalise the idea of participation. For example, Guijt and Sidersky (1993) describe how the participatory monitoring in Brazil involved identifying three levels of farmer participation arranged according to increasing group size, which help clarify the specific roles and activity areas for various local farming groups and address their different monitoring needs and interests. Other case studies – including the EZ/EC Learning Initiative, the Health Care for All (HCFA), and the MRDP programme in Vietnam – further illustrate how intended beneficiaries become actively involved at all stages of the PM&E cycle, including planning, analysis, and documentation.

5.2 Methodological Issues

While it is important to recognise the social and political issues embedded within the practice of participatory monitoring and evaluation, there are also methodological issues that need further discussion and elaboration/refinement.

5.2.1 Developing new standards of rigour

Some of the literature suggests that to use a participatory evaluation approach, rather than a more traditional approach, is to accept trade-offs between scientific rigour, on the one hand, and locally meaningful and participatory approaches on the other. It is often assumed that quantitative data represents a certain degree of objectivity and replicability that can be generalised and scaled up, while qualitative information reflects a more subjective interpretation that is context specific and locally relevant.

However, viewing trade-offs in terms of achieving participation and rigour has serious limitations. First, questions may be raised about the objectivity even of conventional scientific approaches. Similarly, we cannot make assumptions that quantitative measures will not be used in participatory approaches, nor that they are necessarily more objective than qualitative measures. There is, therefore, a need to re-examine whether or not there are inherent trade-offs in combining 'traditional' and 'participatory' approaches, and to identify the implicit assumptions surrounding the quantitative and qualitative debate, how they are resolved or avoided, and under what conditions and circumstances. Rather than pose the issue as **either** scientific rigour **or** participation, more important is to develop new standards of validity for PM&E.

However, in their overview, Abbot and Guijt (1997) observe that there is a 'constant tug-of-war between 'being participatory' and 'doing rigorous monitoring' (as conventionally perceived)'. As monitoring moves away from a scientist-dominated approach towards greater community involvement, 'what is lost and what is gained' often becomes a key dilemma during the PM&E process. Given that there is very little information available in the literature, which explores these key concerns, the authors raise the question whether, in fact, trade-offs necessarily exist between rigour on the one hand, and participation on the other, or whether they can be combined (Abbot and Guijt 1997). In the case of CETAMEX-N in Mexico, for instance, the flexible use of the Grassroots Development Framework developed by the Inter-American Foundation is one attempt to establish 'a data base that allows quantitative presentation of results on qualitative indicators' (Blauert and Quintanar 1997: 12).

Marsden and Oakley (1990) argue that the decision to use either quantitative or qualitative data is not a paramount issue, but, rather, determining the purpose and the **interpretation** of information is considered more important. Similarly, Abbot and Guijt (1997) argue that in practise, the balance between seeking scientific rigour and community participation will depend greatly on the objectives of the monitoring process itself. For example, more conventional scientific approaches may be used if consistency and proof of impact is required, while more flexible, qualitative methods may be used where learning is emphasised (*ibid.*; see also UPWARD 1997).

Others, however, view the combination of different approaches in PM&E potentially a much more problematic process, as it attempts to incorporate the diverse expectations of multiple stakeholders and balance differing objectives. Several case experiences can help illustrate and define some of these problematic issues. For instance, Campilan (1997) highlights the potential tension between gathering quantitative data and securing local participation based on UPWARD's experiences working with farmers in the Philippines. In this case, farmers found the systematic recording of soil loss measurements to meet research data requirement too cumbersome and therefore hardly participated in data collection. Subsequently, researchers from UPWARD had to modify their initial quantitative approach towards a more open-ended appraisal of changes in soil conditions, in order to take into account local capacities and involve local farmers in collecting and analysing information.

5.2.2 Choosing and developing indicators

Much of the literature also highlights the importance of identifying indicators as an integral part of the PM&E cycle. However, the procedures and principles for developing M&E indicators are not always clear or straightforward in practice. Several major points may be raised which pertain especially to the decision-making process of indicator development.

The first major issue relates to who is involved in setting monitoring and evaluation indicators. In other words: **who** sets the criteria for developing indicators? **Who is involved** and **who holds influence** in deciding what types of information will be collected, how information will be used, for whom and for what purpose. These questions will again need to address underlying social and political processes in negotiating indicators among the various stakeholders.

As the case with farmers in Brazil demonstrates, knowing who the end-users of information would be – in this case, local farmers and donors – was a critical factor in deciding what and how to monitor and evaluate (Guijt and Sidersky 1996). Also, the experience of PIA in Ghana highlights how divergent interests of different stakeholders make it difficult to identify what to evaluate. In Ghana, in order to satisfy both donors and project implementers at the village level, contending objectives of building village-level capacity and of ensuring the immediate delivery of improved water supply were eventually combined into one objective: assessing the impact of capacity building on access to improved water supply and sanitation services (1995: 3–4).

One other significant issue is the need to find new kinds and types of indicators to assess non-traditional approaches in development, especially those pertaining to participation, empowerment, and social processes. Several innovative approaches to indicator development are illustrated in the case studies. For instance, in the CETAMEX-N project in Mexico, Blauert and Quintanar (1997) describes an M&E framework that allows for systematic data recording but based on the flexible development of indicators which combine the different criteria of the various stakeholders (see Box 3.7). Also, the experimental approach adopted by the CCDB in Bangladesh demonstrates how monitoring of change need not be based on indicators *per se* but rather on how the different stakeholders at various levels perceive those changes (Davies 1995). The case of the community-based nutrition programme in Kenya further shows how participatory evaluation can elicit different stakeholders' criteria for evaluating programme impact based on their perceptions of the process of project implementation, their own expectations and experiences, as well as their thoughts and ideas about future changes and action.

A third key area in question is knowing the extent to which baseline information is required for indicator development. Baseline information may be used to provide a basis for identifying priority needs and for assessing how a programme is changing and progressing (Feuerstein 1986: 162–163). In most cases, baseline data is often missing or incomplete, making attempts towards comparisons over time very difficult and reliant on historical reconstruction. On the other hand, protracted baseline studies may be too cumbersome and thus result in 'community fatigue' in terms of data gathering, unless accompanied by other relevant project activities (CONCERN 1996: 43).

Obtaining baseline information was a pertinent issue in several of the case studies surveyed. For instance, in the case of PIDOW's self-evaluation, Sommer (1993: 12) notes that one major limitation of the process was not having enough available information about the historical background and context prior to project

implementation, which made it difficult to relate the current situation to project interventions. Similarly, Wigboldus *et al.* (1995: 11) point out the difficulties of evaluating the impacts of the Nepal Resource Management Project due to the lack of documentation at the beginning of NRMP's involvement in local communities. In reference to the PIA experience in Ghana, Gariba (1995: 21) argues that the challenge is to simplify the parameters of baseline data collection in ways that can provide a consistent mechanism for tracking performance over time. She notes that more often baseline studies tend to be complex and diffuse, providing detailed information that is less useful over time as a baseline for assessing future impacts.

5.2.3 The role of the facilitator

In general, the literature survey revealed that a 'good' facilitator serves mainly as a catalyst or stimulator, bringing together varied experiences and perceptions of the various participants. Moreover, facilitators should be able to be flexible, ask good questions at the right time, listen well, build group rapport and trust among participants, encourage participation and sharing of ideas, and focus on important issues for group analysis and action planning (see Campos and Coupal 1997; Feuerstein 1986; Scott-Villiers 1997a).

However, as the survey of case studies shows, the documentation of actual PM&E experiences rarely elaborates on or recognises the role of facilitators, the necessary skills in shaping the outcome of the PM&E process, or how those skills are developed. Furthermore, there is much less consideration given to particular skills that pertain to negotiation and conflict resolution. Finally, there is need to assess the potential usefulness of building an evaluation team, rather than relying on individual facilitators, as a means of taking advantage of multiple skills and experiences in effectively carrying out the PM&E process. In this regard, Kar *et al.* (1997a) emphasise the importance of building an evaluation team in conducting PIA in Ghana. With respect to the Horizons Project, Merrifield, Lancaster and Kirkham (1995) also recognise the value of team building, but discuss some of the advantages and disadvantages of different evaluators working together.

5.3 The Institutionalisation of PM&E

As PM&E involves a wider base of participants, partnerships have evolved, not only amongst individual actors, but also amongst stakeholder groups at different institutional levels. The survey of literature and case studies shows that inter-institutional linkages between different stakeholders in carrying out M&E are becoming much more evident.

In spite of these mounting efforts, there is still a need to address issues pertaining to the institutionalisation and sustainability of PM&E practice. Armonia and Campilan (1997) found few cases that actually document how the institutionalisation of PM&E is carried out over the long-term. A key question that remains is whether PM&E can be sustained beyond the project or programme life cycle, fully taken over by local people and/or built into the standard operating procedures of formal institutions (*ibid.*). UPWARD (1997) raises a similar point concerning the uncertain fate of PM&E beyond the life of the project, and stresses the need to pay greater attention to how PM&E is institutionalised as part of the norms and standards of agencies and local communities. In their survey of Bolivia, Alcocer, Lizárraga, Delgadillo *et al.* further point out that, while many recognise the importance of institutionalising participatory approaches, there is no agreement regarding what

systematising PM&E actually entails, how it might be achieved, by whom and for whom it should be undertaken (1997: 5).

The case studies highlight some of these problematic issues. For example, Thompson and Pretty (1995) describe how the practice of participatory impact assessment is now regarded by government institutions in Kenya as a fundamental part of soil and water conservation (S&WC) initiatives. Significant changes in the operational features of government agencies have occurred, including widespread support at all levels within Kenya's S&WC branch for the use of new participatory methods in planning and implementation involving local farmers, and for collaboration between different government departments (Thompson and Pretty 1995: 11–12). Also, in reference to citizen-based monitoring initiatives in the US such as the HCFA and EZ/EC Learning Initiative, Parachini and Mott (1997) describe how grassroots-based M&E are building local capacities so people in their own right may become effective public policy analysts and 'outside advocates for change'. In the case of CCDB's experimental approach to participatory monitoring, Davies (1995: 7) observes that while the monitoring process itself has demonstrated the capacity to evolve in terms of changes in its procedures and perceived functions (as identified by stakeholders), its future remains uncertain due to differences in opinion among senior level CCDB staff regarding the value of the process.

5.3.1 Resource requirements of PM&E

Related to issues of institutionalisation and sustainability is the need to better assess the 'costs' of PM&E in terms of resource requirements. The availability of resources is a critical factor that affects the way PM&E is conducted. While the resources required for carrying out PM&E are discussed widely in the literature (see for example, Campos and Coupal 1996; Feuerstein 1986; Gosling and Edwards 1995; Rubin 1995), few cases actually document the amount of resources needed **over time** and when and how these resource requirements are specified. Ideally, resource requirements should be agreed upon from the outset and integrated into project planning and scheduling (see Campos and Coupal 1996; Feuerstein 1986). Resource requirements include the following: (1) financial resources; (2) time availability; and especially (3) human resources in terms of level of commitment, effort, and capacities.

With respect to time availability and constraints, many have argued that adopting participatory approaches to M&E that involve more stakeholders will generally require substantial time commitments (see Campos and Coupal 1996; Feuerstein 1986). In the case of PIDOW's self-evaluation exercise, which took over 7 months, Humbert-Droz (1992) highlights how a self-evaluation exercise is much more time-consuming, especially in terms of project staff days as compared to the external evaluation previously carried out for PIDOW. However, he notes that the considerable time investment should be weighed against the quality of the SE outputs and the greater likelihood that findings and recommendations can be operationalised. In addition, he estimates that time requirements may be reduced considerably as the methodology is better understood and more fully integrated into project evaluation over time.

Finally, human resources of PM&E also need consideration, especially as the participatory process will require greater degrees of co-ordination, administrative efforts and long-term commitment on the part of stakeholders at all institutional levels (UPWARD 1997). Human resources include acquiring the necessary skills for carrying out and sustaining PM&E. In this regard, training for PM&E has recently received considerable

attention in the literature. However, in their overview, CONCERN (1996) notes that there seems to be very little available documentation on training in PM&E, although some experiences in this area include training workshops conducted by several NGOs, namely ACORD, ActionAid, OXFAM, and CONCERN itself. Recent experiences in training for PM&E include workshops organised for the MRDP programme in Vietnam (see Scott-Villiers 1997b, for the training manual used).

5.3.2 The scaling up of PM&E

As participatory approaches to M&E are increasingly based on inter-institutional linkages, there is need for more open discussion about the scaling up of PM&E at higher institutional levels, especially at the level of national and international policy. There are two issues with regard to scaling up PM&E: (1) the scaling up of micro-level information generated at the village and project levels; and (2) the implications of integrating participatory approaches, specifically in terms of requiring systematic attitudinal and procedural changes at all higher institutional levels of planning, implementation, and evaluation practice.

McArthur (1997: 22) raises the question of how micro-level data produced at the village and project level can best be analysed and used for developing national and macro-level management strategies and policies. He argues that the usefulness and cost-effectiveness of PM&E may be open to question, unless site-specific research and innovations can provide the bases for developing planning at higher institutional levels. In a case study of community-based resource management practices in Kenya, Ford *et al.* (1996) indicate that there are promising prospects of taking participatory findings at local levels and using them in regional information systems. Local findings, in turn, create possibilities for organising data that can inform central government/donor policy and decision makers about why resource users perform in particular ways or adopt specific practices. The MRDP programme in Vietnam also presents one successful experience in using micro-level information for annual planning at district and provincial levels.

In Bolivia, the PDCR (Rural Community Development Project or *Proyecto de Desarrollo de Comunidades Rurales*), under the Vice-Ministry of Popular Participation (*Viceministerio de Participación Popular y Fortalecimiento Municipal*) established and implemented a system of monitoring and evaluating programme operations which may be applied at national, provincial, municipal and local community levels (Alcocer, Lizárraga, Delgadillo, *et al.* 1997).

Another significant issue of scaling up pertains to changes in organisational procedures and 'culture' (attitudes) at higher institutional levels with respect to M&E. This involves assessing to what extent higher-level institutions – donors and government agencies – agree to a wider sharing of power and control, especially over funding resources and decision making.

As demonstrated in a survey of donor policy documents, there seems to be concerted interest and receptivity on the part of donors and funding agencies to integrate participatory techniques and the concept of participation in evaluation practice (see Rudqvist and Woodford-Berger 1996). Several case studies – such as those which describe PIDOW's experience with self-evaluation, CCDB's participatory monitoring approach, and the MRDP's evaluation framework – further illustrate how participatory decision making is occurring at all management levels.

However, many argue that real stumbling blocks still remain with regard to systematising PM&E practice into policy. For instance, Armonia and Campilan (1997) note in their survey that people found it difficult to carry out participatory evaluations within bureaucratic organisations, because of institutional resistance to the sharing of decision-making power, e.g. between supporting organisations and project implementers/ beneficiaries. Alcocer, Lizárraga, Delgadillo *et al.* also found in their survey of Bolivia that, despite state legal reforms promoting participation in local government, there still remain within organisations a general lack of awareness and inappropriate use of participatory methods, especially with regard to monitoring and evaluation (1997: 5). Marsden and Oakley (1990) further comment that funding constraints and linkages in PM&E may actually discourage real mutual partnerships from developing between stakeholders at different levels, therefore creating problems for scaling up the PM&E process. Rudqvist and Woodford-Berger (1996: 53) argue that participatory evaluation still remains very much an approach **separate** from the mainstream of evaluation, where conventional quantitative methods are still valued by donor and government agencies in terms of generating 'objective' and 'precise' data.

5.4 The Need for further Documentation of PM&E

While the literature on PM&E generally recognises the value and importance of documenting experiences, the systematic documentation of PM&E is rarely undertaken in actual experience. Based from the case studies we surveyed, greater emphasis appears to be on the documentation of the findings and results of participatory evaluation, rather **than the process of carrying out PM&E itself**. While the documentation of PM&E processes is rarely highlighted in the literature, it seems evident that these processes – in other words, **the very nature of how PM&E is actually conducted** – very much influences and shapes the outcomes of what is learned and what information is obtained from PM&E practice.

Armonia and Campilan (1997) also point out this gap in their survey of Asian cases. They found little evidence of deliberate efforts to document PM&E experiences. They observed that processes are not explicitly discussed and are barely reflected in general project reports, where they are mentioned in passing, or found in unconsolidated field notes as 'raw data' (see also Rudqvist and Woodford-Berger 1996: 47). Most case studies describe the steps and approaches used for carrying out PM&E, but without elaborating on how and under what conditions and contexts various stakeholders come together to make critical decisions about the process; nor do most cases elaborate on how stakeholder perceptions, attitudes and behaviours affect the way they contribute to PM&E activities. Similarly, while there are multiple reasons given to affirm the benefits of PM&E, we have found relatively few studies which document its impact and outcomes over time.

As raised during the South–South Sharing Forum, the form of documentation should address the needs of different stakeholders based on the following key questions:

- who needs the information?
- what is the most appropriate mode of documenting data?
- whose analysis?

Depending on who needs the information, the results of PM&E should be disseminated in a format and language that is appropriate to the user's existing capacities, resources and needs. Documentation also reflects gaining ownership of information. In this regard, analysis of documented data should be undertaken by stakeholders themselves, according to their interests and needs (PAMFORK 1997: 8).

5.4.1 The need for participatory monitoring of PM&E

While PM&E offers many potential benefits in terms of project or programme success, if it is carried out poorly or inappropriately, time and resources may go to waste and problems may very well go unnoticed, subsequently hindering project performance and community building. In order to guard against these inherent dangers, there also seems to be broad agreement in the literature regarding the need for systematic and participatory procedures to monitor and evaluate the PM&E process itself (see CONCERN 1996; Feuerstein 1986; Rubin 1995; Scott-Villiers 1997a). 'PM&E of PM&E' is regarded as a means to continuously update and improve the process itself, or as a mechanism whereby participants can gauge whether they are obtaining the information they need, the techniques used are appropriate and the process as a whole is operating as planned. Adapting PM&E according to changing circumstances may also prevent the process from becoming a static system which discourages innovation, creativity and critical reflection. However, in practice, these 'self-review' feedback mechanisms are rarely undertaken, or not clearly specified in terms of actual operational procedures, and are usually only carried out by country or international head offices (see CONCERN 1996: 46).

Several of the case studies reviewed here serve to illustrate how 'PM&E of PM&E' may be conducted and what it might contribute to the overall PM&E process. Abbot and Guijt (1997: 45) describe how one important objective of monitoring the monitoring process in Brazil was to assess the quality of the work carried out thus far by involving the various stakeholders. In this case, representatives from the NGO and Rural Workers' Trade Union, as well as the facilitator, selected several criteria to assess the methods and indicators used. Referring to the same case study in Brazil, Guijt and Sidersky (1996) further point out that allowing for continual change and improvement to the PM&E system ultimately rests on building local capacities, so that farmers know when and how to adapt the current system. In the case of PIDOW, Sommer (1993) emphasises that one important feature of the self-evaluation exercise was to allow for correction and modification midway through the SE process, in order to prevent the process from becoming mechanical and to use preliminary findings for achieving more in-depth analysis.

5.4.2 Identifying the enabling and capacity-building factors

If we are concerned with spreading the practice of PM&E, we also need to understand a great deal more about the enabling factors, i.e. the kinds of conditions and contexts which enable or make possible a successful undertaking of the PM&E process. Currently there is no consensus identifying under what circumstances PM&E is appropriate and effective (Cousins and Whitmore 1997: 22). As McArthur (1997: 22) states, 'Evaluations need to indicate not only what has worked and why, but also under what social, economic, and environmental conditions can a particular technology or innovation be replicated'.

During the South–South Sharing Forum of African experiences, several factors were identified as important for a sustainable and effective PM&E system, namely:

- community involvement and ownership
- accountability and empowerment
- active lobbying and advocacy for PM&E.

However, participants also identified several key constraints to PM&E practice which highlight problematic issues related to methodology, resource requirements (including capacities and time availability), as well as socio-economic and political conditions (PAMFORK 1997: 9).

Based on our review of literature, there still remain differences in opinion regarding the particular contexts in which PM&E may be appropriate and inappropriate. Some argue that PM&E may not be as effective and useful in projects that do not already incorporate a participatory approach in its design and implementation. For instance, Rudqvist and Woodford-Berger (1996: 22) argue that 'the introduction of participatory techniques in projects that have not followed a participatory approach in planning may have to find ways (i.e. re-scheduling prescribed time-frames and reorienting decision-making procedures) to deal with certain inherent contradictions and practical difficulties.' Alcocer, Lizárraga, Delgadillo *et al.* also found that in Bolivia 'structural' limits to participation are varied, including socio-cultural, economic, geographical, environmental, political, and legal factors, i.e. limited human and economic resources and capacities, apathy, formal bureaucracies, etc. (1997: 6–7).

Others take the view that PM&E may still be carried out even if projects were not initially designed in a participatory manner. The degree of incorporating participation in M&E will depend on various factors including degree of willingness and commitment of all stakeholders, availability of time and resources, external constraints, and the availability of baseline data (Campos and Coupal 1996). As the CSIP project in Calcutta demonstrates, a participatory impact assessment could still be conducted effectively, even if the project were initially designed top–down, without prior consultation with local people (Kar *et al.* 1997b: 99). Although in this case there were certain limits to local participation (i.e. local elite groups dominating information gathering and limited local involvement in data analysis), the PIA process nevertheless did result in local people becoming more aware of community conditions and in some instances, people themselves taking action to improve their surroundings (*ibid.*).

5.5 Conclusion

Over the last two decades, participatory monitoring and evaluation has been used in hundreds of projects in differing contexts and programmes across the world. In this paper, we have provided a review of some of these experiences, drawing from them discussions of the purposes and principles that underpin the practice of participatory monitoring and evaluation. Finally, in this last section, we have identified four broad themes – understanding PM&E as a social process; methodological issues; the institutionalisation and scaling up of PM&E; and the need for more documentation – which pose challenges for future research and implementation. These are large issues, which also face broader aspects of participatory research as well. The issues cannot be addressed easily, but as and when they are, we will deepen our knowledge and our practice in the field.

NOTES

1. These include Patta Scott-Villiers, Esther Mebrahtu, Katja Jobes, James Blackburn, Andrea Cornwall, and Jutta Blauert. Thanks also to Juliet Merrifield for reading and commenting on earlier drafts and to Sinnet Weber and Jenny Edwards for word processing assistance.

2. A paper on 'Participatory Evaluation – its role and contributions in improving public services' – is forthcoming.

3. Developed by the Learning Initiative, Community Partnership Center, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Similar 'wheels' have been developed by Woodhill and Robins (1998) and New Economics Foundation (1997).

4. Other versions of this acronym include: Simple, Measurable, Attractive, Reliable, Timely – or Simple, Measurable, Accurate, Reliable, and Time-bound.

5. More detailed discussions about PRA, its history and practice are available in the literature (see for example, Chambers 1997; 1994a; 1994b; Chambers and Guijt 1995, Cornwall and Jewkes 1995).

Appendix 1: Case Example of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation					
Features Case Study	**Country Region**	**Sector**	**Primary Functions/Purposes**	**Key Actors/Participants**	**Tools/Methods Used**
1. Self-evaluation in PIDOW project	Karnataka, India	Integrated watershed development	Organisational/ Institutional learning	SDC donor; Government agencies; NGO MYRADA; Local watershed organisations	– semi-structured group discussions – village workshops – field transects – historical profiles – ranking – mapping
2. Projecto Paraiba, AS-PTA (NGO)	Northeast Brazil	Agriculture	Impact assessment; Project management and planning	AS-PTA project staff; Rural Workers' Trade Union representatives; Local farmers	– biophysical (scientific) measurements – mapping – diagramming – critical incident analysis to assess institutional relationships – 'objective tree' for identifying priorities
3. Vietnam Sweden Mountain Rural Development Programme (MRDP)	Northern Vietnam	Integrated rural development	Programme management and planning	National, provincial and district government authorities; Village management group/commune authorities; Local farmers	– household interviewing – field surveys – interest group discussions – village meetings – photo-documentation – diagramming – wealth ranking – household livelihood analysis – land use transects, etc
4. Nepal Resource Management Project (NRMP)	Ramechap and Dhading districts, Nepal	Forest conservation and management (environment)	Impact assessment; Stakeholder perspectives	NRMP project team; Villagers	– case histories – life histories – mapping – diagramming – drama – songs

Appendix 1: Case Example of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation					
Features Case Study	**Country Region**	**Sector**	**Primary Functions/Purposes**	**Key Actors/Participants**	**Tools/Methods Used**
5. Family Life Training Programme (FLTP)	Kenya	Health/Nutrition/ Childcare	Stakeholder perspectives	External evaluation team; Provincial and divisional government authorities; Project mgmt. Staff; Community organisations and villagers	– timelines/trends – venn diagrams – key informant interviews – focus group discussions – observation – ranking – card sorting exercises
6. CETAMEX-Nochixtlán (CETAMEX-N)	Oaxaca, southern Mexico	Agriculture	Organisational/ Institutional learning; Programme Mgmt and planning	External evaluation team; CETAMEX and World Neighbors (NGO funders); Project farmer extensionists; Local communities and farming families	– organisational ethnographies (focus on groups w/more clearly defined boundaries, as opposed to studies of whole societies) – oral histories – diagramming (including venn diagrams) – seasonal calendars – trend analysis – matrix ranking – mapping
7. Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB)	Bangladesh	(Women) Group based savings and credit, mainly directed towards women	Organisational/ Institutional learning	CCDB donors; Head office staff; Project office senior and junior staff; Local beneficiary representatives	– monthly reporting and meetings/feedback sessions

Appendix 1: Case Example of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation					
Features Case Study	**Country Region**	**Sector**	**Primary Functions/Purposes**	**Key Actors/Participants**	**Tools/Methods Used**
8. Catchment approach to soil and water conservation (S&WC) of the Ministry of Agriculture	Kenya	Environment/ Agriculture	Organisational/ Institutional learning; Programme Mgmt & planning	Gov't ministry officers; Programme staff; Local farmers	– public meetings – personal diaries/process notes – focus group discussions – key informant interviews – oral histories – trend analysis – transect walks – wealth ranking – mapping – diagramming, etc
9. Calcutta Slum Improvement Project (CSIP)	India	Urban/Community development	Impact assessment/Process evaluation	Joint evaluation team including consultants and project staff; Local residents by social grouping (women, youth, political leaders, elders etc.)	– time lines – social mapping – seasonal calendar – venn diagrams – flow diagrams – group discussions
10. Health Care for All (HCFA)	USA	Health	Public accountability	Programme staff; Local citizens	– telephone network/information helpline – organise groups into single issue campaigns – training in research and financial analysis – distribution of training/educational materials

Appendix 1: Case Example of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation					
Features Case Study	**Country Region**	**Sector**	**Primary Functions/Purposes**	**Key Actors/Participants**	**Tools/Methods Used**
11. Community Partnership Centre Learning Initiative	Rural regions of the USA	Community development	Public accountability	Learning team members/ Coordinators; Regional researchers assigned to learning teams; Local leaders and communities, governmental authorities at local and national levels	– interviews – focus group discussions – public documentation review – content and media analysis – questionnaires – mapping – personal observation – windshield surveys – oral histories – educational test scores, etc.
12. Northern Regional Rural Integrated Programme (NORRIP)	Ghana	Rural development (water supply and sanitation improvement)	Impact assessment	External evaluation team; CIDA (donor): Government line agencies; NORRIP staff; Village leaders and residents	–household quantitative surveys –focus group discussions/village meetings/workshops –Village Development Capacity Index tool (VDCI)
13. Prototype Internal Learning System for Livelihood and Micro-Credit Programmes	India	(Women) Group-based savings and credit programmes for poor women	Impact assessment: Programme management and planning	Programme staff of implementing NGOs (SEWA, PRADAN, FWWB); Women's groups and individual members	– group discussions and monthly meetings – pictorial diaries
14. Farmer Participatory Procedures – Farming Systems Research	Philippines	Agriculture/Natural resource management	Impact assessment; Programme management and planning	Outside researchers; Local farmers	– bio-resource flow diagrams – farmer groups – time series data analysis

Appendix 1: Case Example of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation					
Features Case Study	**Country Region**	**Sector**	**Primary Functions/Purposes**	**Key Actors/Participants**	**Tools/Methods Used**
15. ACORD's experience with auto-evaluation	Mali	Agriculture/Natural resource management	Organisational/ Institutional learning: Impact assessment	ACORD (an NGO) project staff; Local agro-pastoralists and other community members; At the end of the 3-year programme will also involve external evaluators, State local development committees	– village meetings and workshops – individual group data and activity files – animation techniques
16. Village-level soil and water conservation programme supported by the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP)	Gujarat, India	Agriculture/Natural resource management	Programme management and planning	AKRSP programme staff; Locally-elected village extension volunteers; Local farmers	– mapping – farmer group discussions
17. Horizon Project	Maine, USA	Adult education	Programme management and planning	Horizon Project facilitators ('catalysts') and interagency project staff at state, regional, and local levels: Learners in local Adult Education programmes	– learners focus groups (phone, in person, on-line chats) – interviews – surveys (phone, in person) – journals
18. Siavonga Agricultural Development Project (SADP)	Zambia	Agriculture	Programme management and planning	Field extensionists; Village extension groups; Local farmers	– farmers' own records – recording sheets and booklets – extension agents' work diaries – extension preference ranking

Appendix 1: Case Example of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation					
Features Case Study	**Country Region**	**Sector**	**Primary Functions/Purposes**	**Key Actors/ Participants**	**Tools/Methods Used**
19. Project for the Validation of Technology for Highland Communities	Peru	Agriculture	Programme management and planning	Interdiciplinary team of project researchers (agriculturalists and social scientists): local farming communities and households	– group discussions b/w farmers and research team – use of graphs, posters for recording, documentation, and presentation of findings – preliminary community meetings on project orientation – participant observation/descriptive recording by research team
20. Monitoring participation in World Bank programmes	Global	Multi-sectoral	Public accountability	World Bank; Governments; NGO Working Group (from Africa, Asia, Latin America); Communities	– workshops on participatory monitoring – regional meetings – global participation conference – data should reflect qualitative and quantitative aspects of participation

APPENDIX 2

MANUALS AND TOOLKITS FOR PARTICIPATORY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

An Annotated Bibliography

ACORD. 1990. Mali Auto-Evaluation Project. London: ACORD

Contact information:

ACORD or SOS Sahel

Available for photocopying from PRA reading room, IDS

SOS Sahel: 1 Tolpuddle Street, London N1 OXT

This document describes the auto-evaluation programme in the Gao and Tombouctou regions where ACORD-Mali is working to support informal village groups and associations. A methodological approach is outlined that involves communities from project design to evaluation . The paper describes the stages of the auto-evaluation process in which both ACORD staff and communities set criteria and indicators as well as take part in the evaluation.

Aubel, Judi. 1993. ***Participatory Program Evaluation: A Manual for Involving Program Stakeholders in the Evaluation Process*****. Senegal: Catholic Relief Services.**

Contact information:

Available through PACT, New York

Based on experience in Latin America, Asia and Africa, the author details the various steps involved in participatory evaluation and draws examples from field experience.

Davis-Case, D'Arcy. 1990. ***Community Forestry. Participatory Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation*****. Rome: FAO.**

Contact information:

Available at the PRA reading room, IDS, for photocopying.

This volume provides a good overview and discussion of the conceptual and methodological issues related to participatory assessment, monitoring and evaluation (PAME) approach. Six methods are used which fall under PAME: 'community site selection', 'community problem analysis', 'participatory baselines', 'participatory monitoring and on-going evaluation', and 'information analysis', and 'communication of results'. Each of the methods are discussed at length which includes their description, purpose, guidelines for use and implementation. The tools or instruments (a total of 23) used by the PAME approach are then discussed in detail specifying their objectives, resources required, their potential applications, their benefits and advantages, and their limitations. An annotated bibliography presents a survey of the literature related to PAME. Other applications for PAME are identified in other sectors, such as health care, fisheries and agriculture.

Davis-Case, D. and P.Grove. 1990. ***The Community's Tool Box: The Idea, Methods, and Tools for Participatory Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation in Community Forestry*****. Rome: FAO.**

Contact information:

Food and Agriculture Organization	**OR**	**UNIPUB**
Via delle Terme di Caracalla		**4611 F Assembly Drive**
00100 Rome, Italy		**Lanham, Maryland 20706-4391**
Tel: 396 522 54608		**Tel: 301 459-7666**
Fax: 396 522 55155		

The field manual is divided into three sections. Section 1 introduces the idea of participatory assessment, monitoring and evaluation (PAME) and provides two-way communication exercises for field staff. Section 2 discusses how to determine information needs, and how to analyse and present information. Section 3 describes the tools for information gathering and provides guidelines for the selection of tools. There are 23 tools listed in this latter section, including semi-structured interviews, ranking, mapping, drawing, etc.

Feuerstein, Marie-Therese. 1986. ***Partners in Evaluation. Evaluating Development and Community Programmes with Participants*****. Hong Kong: MacMillan Education Ltd.**

Contact information:

Teaching Aids at Low Cost

P.O. Box 49

St. Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 4AX

UK

This book provides a comprehensive discussion of the conceptual and methodological issues related to PM&E with frequent references to real-life field experiences. The first chapter looks at the main questions to be asked as a preliminary step in participatory evaluation. Chapter 2 details the planning and organising of evaluation and presents different types of evaluation methods or tools that may be employed, depending on evaluation objectives. The third chapter considers the use of existing resources and knowledge for evaluation purposes. Chapter 4 looks at various kinds of evaluation tools, such as surveys, interviews, questionnaires, drawings (mapping), videos, etc. It provides simple, visual instructions on how to apply different evaluation methods. The final chapters (chapters 5 and 6) examine the ways in which evaluation results can be analysed and reported, and subsequently contribute to strengthening and making programmes more effective.

Gosling, Louisa and Mike Edwards. 1995*. Toolkits. A Practical Guide to Assessment, Monitoring, Review and Evaluation*. London: Save the Children.

Contact information:

Save the Children

Mary Batchelor House

17 Grove Lane

London SE5 8RD

UK

Discusses the broad underlying principles of assessment, monitoring, review and evaluation. Describes different approaches to assessment, monitoring, review and evaluation, including participatory, non-participatory, and joint approaches in terms of their merits and weaknesses. The range of tools presented include: PRA; surveys; logical framework analysis; cost-effectiveness analysis; Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Constraints (SWOC) analysis, among others. Includes specific questions to consider when planning assessment, monitoring review and evaluation.

Guijt, I. 1998. *Participatory Monitoring and Impact Assessment of Sustainable Agriculture Initiatives. An Introduction to the Key Elements*. Discussion Paper No. 1, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Programme, IIED. UK: IIED.

Contact Information:

International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

3 Endsleigh Street

London WC1H 0DD

UK

Tel: (44) 171-3882117

Fax: (44) 171-3882826

This document is a practical introduction on the methodology of establishing a participatory monitoring and evaluation process for sustainable agriculture initiatives. It was initially written to guide the first stage of an action research process on monitoring and impact assessment with small-scale producers, rural workers unions, and non-governmental organisations engaged in sustainable agriculture in Brazil. The paper introduces key concepts and outlines key steps in developing a monitoring system. It discusses the complexity of developing indicators, and the range of possible methods with examples from agriculture. This paper will be of interest to those working in natural resource management but also to others interested generally in participatory action research, monitoring and evaluation.

Hope, Anne and Sally Timmel. 1995 (revised edition*). Training for Transformation. A Handbook for Community Workers. Volumes 1–3*. Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press.

Contact information:

David Philip Publishers

PO Box 23408

Claremont 7735

South Africa

or

IT Publications

103–105 Southampton Road

London WC 1B 4HH

UK

Also available in Spanish and French:

(1) for the Spanish edition, contact: **Semilla, Zona 7, Apdo. 371–I Montserrat, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala 01907. Fax: 502-2-717790**

(2) for the French edition, contact: **The Roman Catholic Diocese of Port-Luis, c/o Caritas Internationalis, 3, D'Estaing Shut, Port-Luis, Mauritius. Fax: (230) 208 6607**

All language editions can be purchased from: **Grailville Bookstore, Loveland, OH 45140, USA. Fax: (513) 683-4752.**

Volume 1 deals mainly with helping local communities identify and reflect upon issues which trouble them most and on which they would like to strive for change. Volume 2 addresses group leadership skills and group dynamics, including decision making, planning for action and evaluation. Volume 3 moves from the local level to the wider context. It provides tools for analysing how forces operating at national and international levels affect local efforts towards development and change, as well as tools for organisational strengthening and for planning workshops.

Narayan-Parker, D. 1993*. Participatory Evaluation: Tools for Managing Change in Water and Sanitation*. World Bank Technical Paper 207. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Contact information:

UNDP PROWWESS, Program Manager

304 East 45th Street, Room FF-12-108

New York, New York 10017

Tel: 212 906-5862

Fax: 212 906-6350

This book is part of the PROWWESS series on water supply and sanitation projects. PROWWESS stands for 'Promotion of the Role of Women in Water and Environmental Sanitation Services'. It elaborates on the concept of participatory evaluation and the guidelines for using participatory methods in evaluation, especially with respect to the development of M&E indicators. Detailed examples of experiences are

provided within the context of water and sanitation programmes.

[not as good in terms of presenting range of tools for PM&E use, but elaborates on indicator development]

***Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation. A Handbook for Training Field Workers*. 1988 (1990). Bangkok: Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAPA), FAO.**

Contact information:

Alexander Stephens

Regional Sociologist and Women in Development Officer

FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

39 Phra Atit Road

Bangkok 10200, Thailand

This manual focuses specifically on village-level participatory monitoring and evaluation. The manual provides a sample of various tools that employ simple numeric and visual techniques in documenting project outcomes as well as processes (i.e. attitudes, values, extent of participation). The different PM&E tools discussed give less emphasis on how to establish an M&E framework and how to analyse generated information for participatory learning and action.

Pfohl, Jacob. 1986. *Participatory Evaluation: A User's Guide*. New York: Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT).

Contact information:

Attn: Daniel Santo Pietro

777 United Nations Plaza

New York, NY. 10017

Tel: 212 697-6222

Telex: 424272

An outcome of a workshop sponsored by USAID/Sri Lanka and conducted by PACT, a US PVO, this manual is designed to provide broad guidelines for establishing a participatory evaluation process that meets the needs of different stakeholders (donors, project staff, beneficiaries, etc.). It looks at the key concepts defining participatory evaluation, and elaborates on a step-by-step approach for carrying out participatory evaluation. The methods discussed include: the design of an evaluation framework; sample indicators; evaluation tools; data analysis and reporting. The manual provides a final section on training and sample monitoring and evaluation exercises.

Pretty, Jules N., Irene Guijt, Ian Scoones, and John Thompson. 1995*. A Trainer's Guide for Participatory Learning and Action*. London: IIED Sustainable Agriculture Programme.

Contact information:

Sustainable Agriculture Programme

IIED

3 Endsleigh Street

London WC1H 0DD

UK

Although primarily a trainer's guide, it includes a range of games and exercises which may be used in carrying out PM&E. These tools are geared for enhancing group dynamics, improving listening and observation, improving analysis and reflection, conducting evaluation for self (group)-assessment and for action planning.

Process Monitoring (ProM). Work Document for project staff. 1996 Escgborn, Germany: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH.

Contact information:

Pilot Project: Natural Resource Management by Self-Help Promotion (NARMS)

Wachsbleiche 1

D- 53111 Bonn

Federal Republic of Germany

Tel: (+49) 228-98 57 00

Fax: (+49) 228-98 57 018

Describes the methodology of process monitoring, including detailed discussions of various techniques that may be applied. Four basic functions of ProM are outlined: process selection, observation, reflection, and action. ProM is perceived as a monitoring and evaluation process that takes place at different levels, involving different actors. ProM may occur at or between the level of individual activity, relations of cooperation within an organisation, cooperation with other actors and institutions, and the wider socio-economic and political context. Tools for ProM emphasise learning and reflection through systematic analysis, conflict negotiation and group collaboration, as well as planning for action.

Rugh, Jim. 1986. *Self-Evaluation: Ideas for Participatory Evaluation of Rural Community Development Projects*. Oklahoma City: World Neighbors.

Contact information:

World Neighbors, Inc.

4127 NW122 Street

Oklahoma City, OK 73120-8869

The manual describes the conceptual/theoretical, methodological, institutionalisation issues related to project evaluation. The premise of the manual is that evaluation is undertaken for decision-making purposes, with a focus on beneficiaries and local staff as decision makers and evaluators in order to increase

commitment to the entire evaluation process. The manual distinguishes between different levels of evaluation and the different time frames for the various levels of evaluation. The final sections discuss the basis or considerations for deciding which techniques to apply and to communicate findings. The appendix presents participatory evaluation case studies and several evaluation tools.

Selener, Daniel, with Christopher Purdy and Gabriela Zapata. n.d. *Documenting, Evaluating, and Learning from our Development Projects: A Participatory Systematization Workbook*. Ecuador: IIRR.

Contact information:

International Institute for Rural Reconstruction.

Regional Office for Latin America.

Casilla 17-08-8494

Quito, ECUADOR

Tel/Fax: (593-2) 443-763

email: daniel@iirr.ecx.ec

This workbook describes 'systematisation' as a method of instituting a continuous process of participatory reflection and evaluation. It elaborates on the concept of systematisation as well as the methodological procedures to follow in planning of systematisation. The final section includes a number of 'tools' that may be used for conducting the systematisation process. Although the tools used for obtaining and recording information tend to emphasise the use of written exercises/worksheets and tables rather than more open-ended and visual techniques, the questions and issues raised with respect to methodological procedures are instructive.

Wadsworth, Yoland. 1991. *Everyday Evaluation on the Run*. Melbourne: Action Research Issues Association.

Contact information:

Action Research Issues Association

4th Floor, Ross House

247-251 Finders Lane

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3000

This book is a useful guide for developing and conducting a project evaluation framework. Conceptual issues related to evaluation are initially discussed. The process of 'doing evaluation' is then explored with reference to developing a 'culture of evaluation' through daily, weekly, monthly, and annual informal/formal evaluation procedures. These procedures may either be informal and/or formal, individual and/or collaborative efforts. Final chapters provide an evaluation 'toolbox' of models and techniques, as well as references for further useful reading.

***Who are the Question-makers? A Participatory Evaluation Handbook*. New York: OESP.**

Contact information:

Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning

United Nations Development Programme

One United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017

This handbook on participatory approaches to project evaluation is written specifically for UNDP staff. It discusses conceptual as well as practical considerations for applying participatory evaluation, including the tools and methods used in participatory evaluation, i.e. focus group discussions, log-frame analysis, mapping, PRA techniques, among others. The final section presents a case study of a UNDP experience and highlights the challenges, obstacles and insights.

Woodhill, Jim and Robins, Lisa, *Participatory Evaluation for Landcare and Catchment Groups: A Guide for Facilitators*. 1998. Australia: Greening Australia

Contact information:

Greening Australia Limited

PO Box 74

Yarralumla ACT 2600

Email: general@greeningaustralia.org.au

An excellent recent facilitator's guide with much broader application than land-care. Good on the steps of monitoring, and an excellent toolbox for participatory evaluation.

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Acharya, B., Y. Kumar, V. Satyamurti and R. Tandon, 1997, **Reflections on Participatory Evaluation – the Private Voluntary Organisation for Health-II (PVOH) Experience**, Paper prepared for the 'International Workshop on Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: Experience and Lessons', Cavite, Philippines, November 24–29

Alcocer, Joel, Pilar Lizárraga, Jhonny Delgadillo *et al.*, 1997, **Sondeo Sobre Utilización de Métodos Participativos de Monitoreo y Evaluación en Bolivia** (A Survey of the Practice of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Methods in Bolivia), Paper prepared for the 'International Workshop on Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: Experience and Lessons', Cavite, Philippines, November 24–29

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Community Partnership Center EZ/EC Learning Initiatives, Volume I, Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee

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Ford, Richard, Barbara Thomas-Slayter, Francis Lelo *et al.*, 1996, 'Conserving Resources and Increasing Production: Using Participatory Tools to Monitor and Evaluate Community-Based Resource Management Practices', Center for Community-Based Development, Clark University

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—— 1998. **Impacts and Institutions, Partners and Principles: Third Review of the Development and Use of Participatory Rural Appraisal and Planning by Redd Barna Uganda**, London: IIED and Kampala: Redd Barna Uganda

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prepared for inclusion in a book on evaluation in developing countries to be published by the International Development Research Centre of Canada and the International Service for National Agricultural Research

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