

THE WORLD BANK OPERATIONS EVALUATION DEPARTMENT



**A Review of the Literature on Participatory Approaches  
to Local Development for an Evaluation of the  
Effectiveness of World Bank Support for Community-  
Based and -Driven Development Approaches**

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## Executive Summary

Over the past three decades, participatory approaches to local development have gained increasing importance in the development arena. This has led to the flourishing of numerous experiments throughout the developing world and the creation of innovative participatory spaces at the local level. A broad distinction is made in the literature between *community participation* and *citizen participation* initiatives. While the former typically aim to involve communities as partners in the implementation of a specific project, the latter entail further-reaching institutional reforms aimed at making governance more participatory by engaging citizens directly in policy-making. The World Bank has thus far primarily invested in community participation initiatives, and only recently, and in a limited number of countries, it has begun promoting participatory governance. Consequently, this review focuses primarily on the first type of participatory interventions, although an attempt is made to cover some of the literature on participatory governance.

The World Bank's support for community participation has been manifested in the design and implementation of either community-based development (CBD) or the comparatively recent community-driven development (CDD) projects.<sup>1</sup> One of the key premises of the World Bank's CDD approach is that by enabling communities and citizens to define investment priorities, the development process will become more inclusive and responsive to the needs of the poor. The underlying assumption is that creating fora in which people can meet to discuss and collectively decide is sufficient to ensure the inclusion of poor and hitherto marginalized social groups. This however ignores the multiple constraints which may prevent the latter from entering such fora, and that asymmetries of power and resources amongst participants impinge on the process of collective decision-making. A useful distinction can be made between two different, yet inter-related dimensions of inclusion. *Formal inclusion* captures the extent to which community members and citizens are able to gain access to decision-making fora. *Substantive inclusion* reflects the extent to which participants are able to voice their opinions and the extent to which these are taken into consideration by other participants.

The evidence from the literature on community participation points to a 'double exclusion' of weaker social groups from decision-making fora. Exclusionary membership norms, the considerable opportunity costs and the eagerness of the local elite to control new sources of power and patronage often means that participants are relatively better-off. Moreover, weaker social groups tend not to speak up against the views expressed by more powerful members of the community, and their voices can be easily silenced by better-educated and more powerful participants. The literature on participatory governance points to a greater level of formal inclusion of hitherto excluded citizens, but similar low levels of substantive inclusion. While legislative provisions have made considerable strides in promoting greater formal inclusion of marginalized groups, the process of decision-making continues to remain largely dominated by the more powerful actors. The evidence gathered on both kinds of participatory initiatives suggests that weaker social groups are likely to exert only minimal influence, if at all, on the decision-making processes. This calls into question the claim that CDD initiatives will make development more inclusive and responsive to the needs of the poor.

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<sup>1</sup> CDD projects give communities control over resources and decisions in the design and implementation of subprojects. CBD projects give communities comparatively less responsibility and emphasize collaboration, consultation and information sharing with them. Since the late 1990s though the focus has shifted to CDD, many projects include both CBD and CDD components, hence the use of the term CBD/CDD in the paper. Further, in covering the literature on community participation, this review leaves out those initiatives aimed at merely consulting and sharing information with community groups. In this sense the review covers only some of the CBD literature, that which emphasizes collaboration with communities. In practice the line between CBD and CDD is quite blurred and in the rest of the paper when the term CBD/CDD is used it refers to those interventions that involve more than mere consulting and sharing information.

The promotion of effective and successful participatory initiatives is likely to be influenced by a wide range of factors. We draw on the literature on collective action in the management of common property resources to shed light on some of the critical factors that may enable or hinder collective undertakings. The effect that *heterogeneity* has on a group's propensity to act collectively has generated considerable debate. Wealth inequality is the dimension of heterogeneity that has been studied most widely. While some analysis show a negative relation between wealth inequality and collective action, the majority of the studies reviewed point to more complex relations, in which the level of wealth inequality, the shape of the distribution and the accompanying social structure play an important role. *Social capital* is generally regarded as conducive to effective cooperation amongst community members and citizens, although not all types of social relations that fall under the broad definition of social capital have been found to have the same effect on a group's propensity to act collectively. The *involvement of the elite* in CBD/CDD-type (footnote 1) interventions is found to favor collective undertakings, even when it dominates the process of decision-making. According to some commentators the issues should not be how to avoid elite domination, but how to ensure that the power and energy of the elite serve the interest of poor. *Tenure security* of both land and home ownership favor collective undertakings, as it generates greater security over returns on investments. The literature reviewed also suggests that a lower and upper threshold exist for *group size* below and above which collective action becomes difficult. While ours is by no means an exhaustive exploration, it nevertheless highlights the complexity of establishing *a priori* whether any given participatory intervention is likely to be successful. It is therefore important that the design of CBD/CDD-type interventions takes into account all the context-specific factors that are likely to favor or hinder smooth implementation and project sustainability.

Within the World Bank, the CBD/CDD approach is widely regarded as an effective means for poverty reduction. The evidence on the development effectiveness of CBD/CDD-type intervention is however largely anecdotal, as rigorous impact evaluation studies are lacking. There is some evidence that participatory approaches perform better than top-down initiatives, and a few studies single out participation as the key element for improved performance. In the context of participatory governance initiatives, Participatory Budgeting in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil stands out as the exception for which ample evidence is available on its pro-poor development outcomes. Limiting the assessment of the effectiveness of the CBD/CDD approach to the attainment of results, however, would ignore the potential that this has for fostering empowerment and social capital formation – a second key premise of the World Bank's CBD/CDD approach.

In assessing the empowerment effect of CBD/CDD-type interventions, we have focused on two forms of empowerment, namely (a) the scope of decision-making power over project matters devolved to communities, and (b) the creation of effective mechanisms of downward accountability to citizens and communities. The evidence suggests that while rhetorically the emphasis is on devolving control to communities, these usually enjoy no control over project design, and very limited decision-making power over project implementation and resources. This has important implications for the claim that the CDD approach enables primary stakeholders to 'drive' development interventions. Mechanisms for downward accountability to citizens and communities were also found to be weak, if at all in place. Similarly, little convincing evidence was found that community participation fosters social capital generation. On the contrary, some studies suggest that by replacing existing practices with new ones this may undermine social capital at the community level and the social networks on which the poor relay.

Adopting the CBD/CDD approach requires an enabling institutional environment, in which governments and their bureaucracies operate as 'enabler' of development processes rather than 'implementer'. This entails far-reaching changes including a shift in operations focus from 'product'

to ‘process’, longer-term commitment to projects, and the promotion of new attitudes and behavior amongst staff. The evidence in the literature indicates that government bureaucracies largely retain their role as ‘implementor’. Too little time is devoted to community organizations activities; the system of rewards and incentives as well the monitoring system often fail to reflect the new emphasis on participation; and staff’s skills and attitudes continue to be inadequate for participatory initiatives.

Promoting an enabling environment for CBD/CDD-type interventions requires more than a radical change in governments’ *modus operandi*. For community participation initiatives, this raises the critical question of the nature and type of relations that should be established between community groups and the local government. Whilst some favor partnerships between them, others believe that formal links with local government may pose serious challenges to participatory initiatives. There is very little evidence in the literature on experiences with partnership arrangements between community groups and the local government. On the contrary, a few studies argue that the struggle for control over resources and revenues, and the lack of clearly defined roles generate conflicts between them. A critical factor in the promotion of an enabling environment for participatory governance initiatives is the provision of an appropriate legal framework to enable citizens to engage directly in policy-making. Whilst necessary, this is in itself not sufficient. Translating achievements in the legal realm into new governance practices requires willingness on the part of the government to relinquish power, and a strong and active civil society capable of exploiting the opportunities the law provides. More recently, the argument has been advanced that participatory governance initiatives are more likely to succeed if they result from the convergence of citizens’ initiatives and demands on the one hand, and state responsiveness on the other.

Other components of the OED CBD/CDD evaluation have indicated that the CBD/CDD approach entails critical challenges for the World Bank and other donors committed to poverty reduction. We explore five of such challenges.

- *Scaling up* – Several studies draw attention to the difficulties in scaling up CBD/CDD interventions, as small pilots that work well often do so because of unreplicably high costs. There seem to be a general agreement that ‘participation cannot be rushed’ and that the pace and the timing of scaling up should be consistent with the capabilities of all actors involved. Some also note that scaling up often entails trade-offs in terms of participation and effectiveness.
- *Efficiency* – Only a few studies in the literature provide quantitative evidence on the cost effectiveness of CBD/CDD-type interventions, and it is difficult to assess the robustness of their findings. The cost to the funding institution of undertaking such interventions is usually not computed. One study includes them and finds that participation increases preparation and supervision costs.
- *Ensuring a fair deal for the poor* – The evidence draws attention to the unequal distribution of the costs and benefits of participatory initiatives between the poor and the better-offs, in favor of the latter, and along the gender divide in favor of men. In addition, state capture of the benefits from participatory initiatives may limit community gains.
- *Sustainability* – The sustainability of community organizations have been found to improve the sustainability of project outputs. However, the cost that the CBD/CDD approach entails for communities – both in terms of time and resources – might be too high and hence unsustainable in the long-term. Sustainability is also undermined by the lack of appropriate exit strategies.
- *Donor issues* - Whilst in recent years a broad consensus has emerged amongst main donor agencies on the need for greater coordination of their activities, coordination on the ground continues to be limited. Concerns have also been raised about the tendency to replace partner country structures with new semi-autonomous institution, as this precludes strengthening existing institutions and might undermine their capacities.





# 1. Introduction

1.1 This paper explores the available literature on participatory approaches to development as an input to the OED evaluation of World Bank-supported community-based development (CBD) and community-driven development (CDD) interventions. Participatory approaches to development have gained substantial support in the international community over the past quarter century, and have become increasingly important in the work of the World Bank and other donors. Undertaking this literature review has been a particularly challenging exercise for two reasons. First, participatory approaches that involve communities adopted by donors have changed over time. For instance, the World Bank experience shows that during the early years of experimentation, in the 1980s and early 1990s, lower levels of participation (information and consultation) as opposed to higher ones (collaboration and empowerment) were more frequently used in Bank interventions.<sup>2</sup> Second, the theoretical understanding and conceptualization of the notion of participation in the development arena has also evolved over time, leading to the creation of multiple and diverse participatory spaces<sup>3</sup> (Cornwall, 2002).

1.2 Conceptually, a broad distinction has been drawn in the development arena between *community participation* and *citizen participation* (Valderrama and Gaventa, 1999). Community participation refers to the types of participatory initiatives that typically take place within a given donor supported intervention. It is advocated as a means to increase the efficacy and efficiency of service delivery, improve targeting and sustainability of project investments. Participants are seen as ‘consumer’ of public services, and more recently as ‘partners’ in the provision of such services (Croft and Beresford, 1996; Cornwall, 2000a). On the other hand, citizen participation spills beyond the boundary of the project and calls for institutional reforms to make governance more participatory, by enabling citizens to partake in the making of decisions that affect their lives. Participatory governance is advocated as a means to increase government accountability, deepening democracy and contributing to poverty reduction (Fung and Wright, 2003; Schneider, 1999; UNDP, 2002; DFID, 2000). Participation is recast as a human right, and as an indispensable one for the progressive realization of economic, social and cultural rights (UNDP, 2002; DFID, 2000; Häusermann, 1998). In this paper, the expressions ‘citizen participation’ and ‘participatory governance’ will be used interchangeably to refer to this second kind of participatory efforts.

1.3 Today, the World Bank defines CDD as an approach that “gives control of decisions and resources to community groups”(Dongier et al., 2002b: 3).<sup>4</sup> The Bank categories CDD approaches in a three-fold typology (see table below), which encompasses both community participation efforts and participatory governance initiatives (World Bank, 2003). CDD initiatives that fall under the first typology, namely ‘community control’, are close to the notion of community participation, as they entail enabling the community to make decisions within the boundaries of a specific development intervention. Communities take decisions on planning, implementation, operation and maintenance, and in some cases exert direct control over investment funds. The second typology of CDD interventions is closer to the notion of participatory governance, as it promotes partnerships and collaborative decision-making between local government and communities. Finally the third

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<sup>2</sup> Those approaches that gave communities comparatively less responsibility and emphasize collaboration, consultation and information sharing with them were called CBD. CDD approaches emphasized giving communities control over resources and decisions in the design and implementation of subprojects. Since the late 1990s though the focus has shifted to CDD, many projects include both CBD and CDD components, hence the use of the term CBD/CDD in most of the paper.

<sup>3</sup> The expression ‘participatory spaces’ is used throughout the paper to identify the various mechanisms, organizations and institutions created to enable the participation of project beneficiaries and citizens in decision/policy-making.

<sup>4</sup> The CDD approach hence comprises interventions that emphasize higher levels of participation.

typology, encompasses both community participation and participatory governance as it seeks to promote policy and institutional reform for building an enabling environment for both.

**The World Bank’s CDD typology**

Type	1. Community Control		2. Local Governments	3. Enabling Environment
Definition	Community groups make decisions on planning implementation and O&M <u>and</u> directly manage investments funds	Community groups make decisions on planning implementation and O&M <u>but do not</u> directly manage investments funds	Democratically elected local governments make decisions on planning, implementation, O&M, in partnership with different community groups	Policy and institutional reforms oriented toward increased control of decisions and resources by community groups.

Source: World Bank, 2003

1.4 In order to provide relevant information for the OED evaluation on Bank-supported CBD/CDD interventions, an attempt is made to confine the scope of this review to participatory initiatives that more closely match this three-fold typology. Consequently, this paper draws on the literature available on the two kinds of participatory spaces identified in paragraph 1.2, while leaving out those initiatives aimed at merely consulting and sharing information with community groups. In this sense the review covers some of the CBD literature, that which emphasizes collaboration with communities (footnote 2). In practice the line between CBD and CDD is quite blurred and in the rest of the paper when the term CBD/CDD is used it refers to those interventions that involve more than mere consulting and sharing information. In addition, this paper is primarily concerned with ‘regularized’ participatory spaces, in which community members deliberate over the provision of services and the allocation of resources, rather than ‘transient’ spaces, which entail one-off events or exercises aimed at generating discussion on specific policy issues with no direct link to decision-making (Cornwall, 2002). Moreover, the focus is on ‘invited’ participatory spaces created ‘from above’ by outside agents or institution – such as governments, donor agencies and NGOs – rather than ‘autonomous’ participatory spaces created ‘from below’ by citizens themselves through more independent forms of social action (Brock et al., 2001). In most of the countries where it has supported participatory approaches to local development, the Bank has thus far primarily engaged in community participation initiatives. Only fairly recently, and in a limited number of countries, the Bank has begun engaging in initiatives that promote participatory governance. Hence, though this review focuses primarily on the first kind of participatory spaces, an attempt is also made to cover the literature on participatory governance in order to better understand the ‘newer’ CDD initiatives the Bank has been promoting. Admittedly, the literature reviewed for the latter is only a minute portion of the vast available literature on issues of participatory governance.

1.5 This review was undertaken with a four-fold objective. First, to simply bring to the ongoing CBD/CDD evaluation information on the kind of evidence that is out there on participatory approaches to local development, qualitative, quantitative and anecdotal. Second, to draw on the evidence in the literature to understand the different kinds of participatory spaces that Bank’s CBD/CDD interventions have fostered at the local level.<sup>5</sup> Third, to explore the evidence in the literature on factors that have a bearing on development effectiveness of CBD/CDD-type interventions. Finally, since this literature review is one of the four components of the CBD/CDD evaluation, a major purpose was to provide a means for ‘testing’ the findings emerging from other study components, particularly case study countries and the portfolio review both of which indicate several challenges that donor agencies face in implementing participatory projects. Such triangulation of the various sources of information was essential to do justice to the evaluation questions.

<sup>5</sup> The literature on Social Funds remains excluded from this review, as it has been the subject of a recent OED evaluation (World Bank, 2002b).

1.6 After an initial assessment of the kind of literature available, this review focuses on empirical studies on CBD/CDD-type interventions, rather than on theoretical debates around participatory development. The studies reviewed examine participatory initiatives over a range of sectors, including health, education, natural resource management, water and sanitation, and social services provision. While attempts have been made to include both quantitative and qualitative studies, the limited number of quantitative analysis of participatory initiatives available in the literature has meant that the evidence on which this review draws is largely qualitative. Whenever the information available permitted, indication is given about the validity and robustness of the findings presented in the studies reviewed. However, it was beyond the scope of this paper to undertake a quality screening of the studies reviewed – the majority of which do not provide sufficient information on methodology to allow for such screening. This notwithstanding, it is important to note that a substantial number of the studies reviewed by this paper are articles from leading journals, which themselves have a quality control process in place. Due to time and resource constraints, we have chosen to focus our attention on relatively recent literature, from the mid 1990s onwards.<sup>6</sup>

1.7 This review also builds on two other literature reviews on CBD/CDD-type initiatives. One was conducted by the World Bank Development Research Group and focuses on the literature on community participation (Mansuri and Rao, 2003). After briefly examining the history of participatory development and exploring the theoretical understanding of some key concepts – such as ‘participation’, ‘community’ and ‘social capital’ – Mansuri and Rao review the evidence on the impact of participatory initiatives. The other, conducted by the Institute of Development Studies, focuses on the literature on citizen participation and local governance (Howard, et al., 2002).<sup>7</sup> In particular, it looks at how institutional and policy reforms can create new spaces for citizen participation and identifies some of the conditions for meaningful citizen participation in local governance.

1.8 This review proceeds in six sections. Section two examines the evidence in the literature on the extent to which participation in decision-making has promoted inclusiveness; section three explores factors that are likely to facilitate or hinder participatory and collective undertakings; section four assesses the development effectiveness of participatory interventions; section five explores key issues related to the institutional contexts of CBD/CDD-type interventions; and finally section six draws on the evidence in the literature to explore the main challenges that donors and lenders are likely to encounter in the promotion of the CDD approach.

## **2. Participation in decision-making**

2.1 Different types of participatory spaces are created by CBD/CDD-type initiatives to enable community groups or citizens to partake in decision-making processes. Community participation initiatives usually entail the creation of village committees or associations, which bring together project beneficiaries to discuss and deliberate over project decisions. While some of these committees and associations enjoy legal standing, other are more informal arrangements. In either case, they constitute forms of civil society organization. On the other hand, participatory governance initiatives entail the creation, often through institutional reforms, of new political spaces in which citizens meet with government representatives to discuss and deliberate over a wide range of policy decisions. These new institutions are intended to complement representative democratic systems, which are increasingly being criticized for their inability to represent the poor and marginalized (Narayan, *et al.*, 2000; Commonwealth Foundation, 1999). They move beyond the realm of civil society and are at the interface between civil society and the state.

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<sup>6</sup> For a broader historical review of earlier experiences with community participation see White (1999). A detailed exploration of the changing meanings of participation since the 1970s is provided by Cornwall (2000).

<sup>7</sup> This is an annotated bibliography accompanied by an introductory overview of the literature.

2.2 Both the participatory spaces constitute the *locus* of decision-making at the local level, and it is therefore extremely important for community groups and citizens to enter such spaces. This however, is not in itself sufficient to guarantee that participants will be able to exert influence over decisions. The idea that decision-making fora are neutral and that by entering them people can meet on a level playing field has been criticized by a number of scholars for it ignores that differences in the distribution of power and resources amongst community members impinge on the process of collective decision-making which is inherently a social activity (Leach et al., 1999; White, 1996; Molyneux, 2002).<sup>8</sup> As Leach et al. (1999: 241) powerfully argue in the context of natural resource management,

“(..) it would be naïve to assume that negotiation processes take place on a level playing field. Indeed the very idea of negotiation conjures up an image of parties equally able to voice their positions and argue for them, which is very far from reality in most of the situation confronted by community-based natural resource management. Just as power relations pervade the institutional dynamics of every day resource use, so they would pervade any negotiation process”.

2.3 The evidence in the literature points to two distinct yet inter-related dimensions of inclusion in participatory spaces. One dimension, which we call *formal inclusion*, concerns the extent to which different community members and citizens are able to enter decision-making arenas. The other, which we call *substantive inclusion*, captures the extent to which different participants are able to voice their views, and the extent to which these are taken into consideration by other participants. In order to influence decision-making processes, community members need to attain inclusion in both dimensions. Merely entering participatory spaces does not enable weaker social groups to influence decisions and risks turning participation into legitimization of an apparent consensus, which reflects the wishes of the most powerful groups (Johnson and Wilson, 2000).<sup>9</sup>

2.4 It is important to note that while analytically it is possible and useful to make the distinction between these two dimensions of inclusion, in practice the boundaries between them are blurred. Formal and substantive inclusion do not exist in isolation from one another, and they tend to reinforce one another. Low levels of substantive inclusion experienced by some participants, that is their inability to exert influence over decision making processes in which they partake, may discourage their participation. On the other hand, low levels of formal inclusion are likely to lead to low levels of substantive inclusion. As debates on gender and political participation point out, women need to attain a ‘critical mass’ in public arenas in order for their voices to be heard (Cornwall, 2000b). A similar argument can be made for other social groups that have historically been marginalized from decision-making processes to contend that the absence of a ‘critical mass’ (or low levels of formal inclusion) of poor and marginalized people is likely to impinge on their voices in public arenas.

2.5 It is also important to bear in mind that issues of participation and inclusion are closely linked with issues of representation and legitimacy. As spaces are opened up for communities to take part in local decision-making processes and for citizens to engage directly in policy-making, different community groups and civil society actors will compete to occupy these spaces (Howard, et al. 2002). Assessing the degree of ‘representativeness’ of those who enter such spaces raises a number of difficult conceptual and empirical issues, and it is rarely addressed in the literature reviewed.

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<sup>8</sup>At the theoretical level, a number of authors explore the different ways in which difference in socio-economic and political power between participants impinge on collective decision-making processes (Bohman, 1996 and 1997; Knight and Johnson, 1996; Young, 1996). The arguments put forward by these theorists of deliberative democracy are relevant for face-to-face collective decisions-making processes, such as those taking places in participatory spaces created by CDD-type initiatives.

<sup>9</sup> As Bohman (1996: 125) points out, even avoiding compliance in collective decision-making processes “(...) takes a considerable degree of political power and capacity to contest such an inclusion”.

## FORMAL INCLUSION

2.6 The literature reviewed on community participation suggests that hitherto excluded social groups – such as the poor and women – remain largely excluded from participatory spaces created by CBD/CDD-type interventions.<sup>10</sup> In their analysis of the Eastern India Rainfed Farming Project, Kumar and Corbridge (2002) find that it was mostly the relatively better-off households who participated in project-initiated groups. Similarly, in the context of watershed development in India, Turton and Farrington (1998) point out that inadequate efforts were made at the community level to engage weaker groups in the process of watershed management. Women appear to face similar difficulties in attaining formal inclusion in participatory spaces. Agarwal's (2001) study on participatory forestry in South Asia finds that in India, women constituted less than 10 percent of the members of most Joint Forest Management (JFM) groups. Similarly, Sarin's (2003) study on JFM in Madhya Pradesh points to greater levels of participation amongst men than women. In Nepal, Agarwal (2001) finds that women's exclusion was even more pronounced, with women constituting only 3.5 percent of the members of Forest User Groups (FUG). A number of World Bank's studies also point to the limited inclusion of women in participatory spaces created by CBD/CDD-type interventions. Narayan (1995) finds that the majority of the 121 projects she reviewed (83 percent) attained low to medium levels of women's participation. Svendsen and Nott's (2000) study of participatory water associations in Turkey finds that only one association included a female member. While several of these associations employed female accountants and office assistants, it appeared that local politics was largely closed to women's participation. Alsop et al. (2002) empirical study of 100 community user groups in three Bank-supported CBD/CDD projects in India find that women rarely participated at meetings.

2.7 A number of factors contribute to the exclusion of the poor and hitherto marginalized groups. Participation places additional demands on community members, which are likely to be particularly problematic for poorer households (Pantoja, 2000; Garcia and Way 2003). As Baland and Platteau (1999) point out the poor often lack incentives to take part in collective undertakings, as these violate their survival constraints. As the authors explain, poverty tends to shrink the time horizon, as it forces people to attach considerable importance to their present income opportunities. Consequently, the poor are likely to resist any type of collective activity that requires them to forgo present income opportunities – even if it increases permanent future incomes. This argument is echoed by Weinberger and Jutting's (2001) quantitative analysis, which also finds that better-off households in terms of asset ownership – though not the *most* well-off – participate more, suggesting that participation in local development groups is more attractive for the middle class.

2.8 In other cases, ill-devised membership norms preclude the participation of the poor and women. The Metropolitan Environmental Improvement Program effectively excluded the poor by making membership to community organizations subject to an initial deposit towards the members' saving program (Gill, 2000). Similarly, the gender-blindness of membership norms adopted in participatory forestry efforts in South Asia resulted in the exclusion of women from forestry groups (Agarwal, 2001). When only one member per household is allowed to join the group, this is invariably the man. In other cases, the poor and marginalized may refrain from participating because they expect the village elite to manage project groups (Kumar and Corbridge, 2002).

2.9 As various studies point out, village chiefs and community leaders are often the ones who represented the community in participatory spaces created by CBD/CDD-type intervention (Desai, 1996; Gibson and Marks, 1995; Linden, 1997; Ribot, 1998). These tend to be the better-educated members of the community and relatively better-off (Desai, 1996; Gibson and Marks, 1995). The

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<sup>10</sup> While women cannot be regarded as a homogenous group, as economic, social and cultural differences cut through the gender divide, the focus here is on inter-gender inequalities, which put women in a weaker position vis-à-vis their male counterparts.

selection of these community representatives does not always occur through democratic processes of election. As Kumar and Corbridge (2002) point out village elites are likely to nominate themselves as representatives in their role of gate-keepers of development interventions. The latter represent for them a new source of patronage that must be controlled if this is not to become a source of social power for other community members (ibid.; Desai, 1996; Das Gupta et al. 2000). In other cases, participatory projects choose to work through village chiefs or community leaders, for these are seen as legitimate and appropriate institutions of community representation (Kumar and Corbridge, 2002; Ribot, 1998; Gibson and Marks, 1995). Having democratically elected leaders may not be sufficient to ensure greater inclusion of weaker social groups. A number of studies found that communities generally elect the most prominent members and those with political connection with power-holders, as they are believed to be the only ones in the position to attract benefits to the community (Linden, 1997; Platteau and Gaspart, 2003). In the context of Sahelian countries, Ribot (1995, 1998) finds that community representatives were elected by list drawn up by urban-based political parties, and were not necessarily representatives of, or accountable to the communities over which they preside.

2.10 The limited evidence found in the literature we reviewed on participatory governance suggests a greater level of formal inclusion of hitherto excluded groups. A number of studies on Participatory Budgeting (PB) participants in Porto Alegre maintain that the majority of participants are poor (Marquetti, 2001; Baiocchi, 2001; Abers, 2000; De Sousa Santos, 1998). Comparing the profile of the general population of Porto Alegre with that of PB participants reveals that socio-economic inequalities are not reproduced within PB assemblies. Abers (2000) argues that household incomes of budget participants are significantly lower than those of the population as a whole. Similarly, Marquetti (2000) shows more than half of the participants belong to the lower income bracket. In addition, Marquetti's (ibid.) analysis of PB participants by level of education reveals that the vast majority has either no formal schooling or only some primary education (ibid.). In the context of the Indian *Panchayat Raj* system in Karnataka, Vyasulu and Vyasulu (1999) find that women attained high levels of formal inclusion. At the *gram panchayat* level well over 40 percent of elected representatives are women. In addition, while acknowledging the great degree of variation across the Indian states, Raman (2002) maintains that approximately 40 percent of the women elected in *Panchayati Raj* bodies came from marginalized sections and communities. Houtzegar et al. (2003) analyze the pattern of participation of civil society actors (rather than individual citizens) that work for or with sectors of the lower-middle class, the working class and the urban poor in São Paulo, Brazil. The authors' econometric analysis indicates that rich and poor civil society actors are as likely to participate in spaces for direct citizen participation. In the authors' view, this indicates that the new participatory institutions have succeeded in creating opportunities for formal inclusion of social groups excluded from other public decision making arenas.

2.11 The inclusion of hitherto excluded citizens or civil society organizations in local governance has been primarily attained through legislative provisions that promote more equitable participation by addressing entrenched exclusionary practices based on gender, caste, and race (Howard et al., 2002). This is the case in India *Panchayati Raj* system where the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment provides 33.3 percent reservation of seats for women and includes reservation for marginalized castes and tribes in the *panchayats* (ibid.). Similarly, the recognition of territorial based organizations (TBOs) by the Law of Popular Participation in Bolivia has resulted in the inclusion of indigenous people and lower classes in local governance, as the majority of such organizations are peasant and indigenous associations (ibid.).

## **SUBSTANTIVE INCLUSION**

2.12 The literature reviewed on community participation suggests that socio-economically and politically weaker groups, such as women and poor people, tend to attain only minimal levels of substantive inclusion in participatory spaces, if at all. The views of the poor, as well as their needs

and priorities are likely to remain excluded from collective decision-making processes – even though they may be ‘formally’ included – for at least two reasons. First, poor people may opt not to speak up against the views and positions put forward by more powerful members of the community, but rather conform to them (Kolavalli and Kerr, 2002: 225). As Linden (1997) points out, keeping a low profile is an essential element of poor people’s survival strategies. In the context of patronage, the poor are highly dependent on their leaders and are hence unwilling to antagonize them (Kumar, 2002a). Williams (2003: 15) points to the same limitation, though from a different perspective, when he argues that most participatory interventions “simply do not command enough power in terms of providing opportunities to radically transform structural inequalities, whether based on class, gender, or ethnicity, for the poor to take them too seriously”. Consequently, giving a say or a vote to all community members may not be as meaningful as it might seem (ibid.; Desai, 1996). Second, poor people’s voices may be silenced by more powerful or better-articulated participants, who possess greater abilities to voice and stake their claims (Leach et al., 1999). As Desai (1996) points out, the contributions of weaker participants can be easily dismissed as irrelevant by more powerful actors.

2.13 Women also appear to have limited voices in participatory spaces. A World Bank study of 100 user groups in India found “(...) no case where a woman initiated a discussion or made a final decision” (Alsop and Forusz, 2002: 2). As a number of studies on participatory forestry in South Asia point out, women’s limited substantive inclusion is largely attributable to social norms that define gender roles (Agarwal, 2000a, 2000b, 2001; Cornwall, 2003; Sarin, 2003; Kumar, 2002a). By stipulating what is acceptable female behavior, and how the genders should interact in public, such norms effectively prevent women from participating in public face-to-face meetings on an equal footing with men. Agarwal (2000a) points to the ‘territorial gendering’ of space, whereby women sit on the side or at the back of meeting spaces. This, combined with norms of appropriate female behavior, which require women to speak with a soft voice, renders women less visible and audible at meetings (ibid.). In addition, the author notes that “(...) norms of respectful behavior toward senior male family members prevent women from speaking up, or opposing the men” (ibid.: 302). Given that transcending these socially ascribed gender roles is likely to lead to intra-household conflict, women are generally reluctant to speak up at meetings (ibid.). Kumar’s (2002) study on community participation in forestry in Nepal points to similar findings. Male perceptions of women’s lack of abilities constitute another constraint on women’s substantial inclusion in decision-making processes (Agarwal, 2000b).<sup>11</sup> As Kumar (2002a) points out, in Nepalese villages, people still believe that women cannot make any decision by themselves.

2.14 Evidence from the literature reviewed on participatory governance also points to low levels of substantive inclusion of hitherto excluded groups. In the context of the *Panchayat Raj* system in Madhya Pradesh, Behar and Kumar (2002) find that in all the 60 *panchayats* they studied, the Sarpanch and other influential people continue to dominate the decision-making process. In addition, the authors point out that groups unhappy with the functioning of the Gram Sabha (village assembly) did not oppose the consensus. The authors argue that marginalized groups are economically dependent on the more powerful sections of the village community, and therefore open confrontation is not possible. Vyasulu and Vyasulu’s (1999) study on women participation in *Panchayati Raj* institutions maintains that many elected women are surrogates for husbands and fathers who could not contest because of the reservation, whilst others have been put in place by the wealthy and powerful for their malleability. In the context of the Lerma-Chapala basin in Mexico, Wester et al. (2003) find that user representatives on the River Basin Council – a space created to enable users participation in the basin management – are chosen by the federal agency responsible for water management. The authors note that these ‘representatives’ do not necessarily reflect the interests of water users, nor are they known by the latter (ibid.).

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<sup>11</sup> This relates to the issue of social recognition, which Bohman (1997: 337) argues “(...) is a minimal requirement for effective political participation”. See also Fraser’s (1995; 2000) discussion of the politics of recognition.

2.15 The case of Participatory Budgeting (PB) in Porto Alegre, Brazil stands out as the exception. Based on ethnographic evidence from PB assemblies as well as survey data, Baiocchi (2001) argues that women, less educated and poorer participants did not speak less often or concede authority to educated, wealthier men, and that ‘highly educated speech’ did not prevail in PB meetings. This seems to suggest that PB succeeded in including the hitherto excluded not only formally, but also substantively.

### **Section summary**

2.16 The evidence from the literature on inclusion in participatory spaces points to the “double exclusion” of weaker social groups from decision-making fora created by community participation initiatives. Not only do these groups face considerable difficulties in entering such spaces, but even when they succeed in attaining formal inclusion, they find it difficult to voice their views and to have them taken into account by better-off participants. As a result, weaker social groups are likely to exert generally minimal influence, if at all, on the decision-making process. The evidence on the inclusion of poor and marginalized citizens in innovative institutions of participatory governance points to a greater level of formal inclusion, but similar low levels of substantive inclusion. While legislative provisions have contributed to attaining greater formal inclusion of hitherto marginalized groups, decision-making processes in the majority of these spaces continue to be dominated by the more powerful actors.

## **3. Participatory initiatives: conducive and hindering factors**

3.1 Drawing largely on the literature on collective action in the management of common property resources (CPRs), this section explores factors that might be conducive to successful participatory initiatives, and those that might hinder them. Before beginning, four caveats are in order. First, the literature reviewed shows that the types of collective action efforts differ from one another in nature. Collective action can take a variety of forms, including voluntary contributions toward the construction of collective infrastructure, self-restrain behavior for the conservation of a resource, and participation in the setting up a regulatory agency (Balland and Platteau, 2002). Any given factor could then have a different impact on the propensity of a community or group to act collectively depending on the type of collective action. Second, it is important to bear in mind that group behavior cannot be looked at in isolation, but is strongly influenced by the society in which the group is embedded, its prevalent norms and socio-economic structure (Stewart, 1996). Hence, factors may be conducive to successful collective action efforts in one setting but not in others. Third, the literature on collective action focuses primarily on endogenous conditions of a social group. However, as Vedeld’s (2000: 128) points out, “(...) the outcome of internal bargaining and decision making is to a large extent determined in the encounters at the interface between endogenous and exogenous processes, between local and external political agents and arrangements”. This has significant implication for how patterns of collective activity are to be analyzed and understood in the context of CBD/CDD-type interventions. Finally, project design features also impinge on a group’s ability to act collectively. Khwaja’s (2000) econometric analysis of 132 community-maintained infrastructure projects in North Pakistan finds that project complexity, the type of external organization, and community participation in decision-making have significantly larger effects, both economically and statistically, on project maintenance than community-specific characteristics. This suggests that unfavorable endogenous conditions might be compensated by better project design (ibid.).

3.2 This section focuses primarily on the evidence on conditions for successful intra- and inter-community collective action efforts, and is therefore more relevant for community participation initiatives. This notwithstanding, an attempt is made to include evidence on conditions for successful citizen engagement in participatory governance. The section builds on Kahkonen’s (1999) review of



the literature on collective action in participatory irrigation management and drinking water delivery in rural areas.

### **Heterogeneity**

3.3 The effect that heterogeneity has on the propensity to act collectively has generated considerable debate. Groups differ along a variety of dimensions, and each dimension may operate differently in any given context (Varughese and Ostrom, 2001; Balland and Platteau, 2002). It is therefore necessary to clarify the dimension and sources of heterogeneity when attempting to explain patterns of collective activity.

3.4 Inequality of wealth or income is the dimension of heterogeneity that has most attracted researcher's interest. A few analysts show a negative relation between inequality and collective action. Amongst them Cardenas (2002), who uses experimental methods to study how wealth heterogeneity can affect the possibilities of self-governed solutions to common dilemmas in the use of natural resources. The author concludes that heterogeneous groups find it more difficult to cooperate, even when all the members of the group depend equally on the commons. Bardhan's (2000) study of 48 irrigation communities in Tamil Nadu finds a negative correlation between inequality of landholding at the irrigation unit level and the quality of maintenance of distributaries and field channels. In the author's view, this suggests that effective collective action is more difficult in more unequal communities. Similarly, Bardhan and Dayton-Johnson's (2002) study on community irrigation systems in Mexico and South India finds that there generally is a negative association between inequality and cooperative outcomes. The authors find that an increase in the Gini coefficient of landholding inequality has a negative effect on various indicators of maintenance. Based on a utility maximization model and survey data from rural Tanzania, La Ferrara (2002: 237) argues that "higher inequality in assets at the village level has a negative impact on the likelihood that the respondents are members of a group". In addition, the author finds that in more unequal societies groups tend to report poorer performances and misuse of funds, groups members interact less frequently with one another, and generally feel less encouraged to participate.

3.5 However, most of the evidence available points to a more ambiguous relationship between wealth inequality and collective action, and draws attention to the importance of the levels of wealth inequality, the shape of the distribution of wealth, and the accompanying social structure. La Ferrara (2002) argues that the impact of inequality on participation varies according to two main factors: (i) the shape of the distribution of wealth, that is whether disparities are concentrated at the bottom, middle or top of the distribution; and (ii) the access rule to the group. The author finds that inequality has a negative impact on participation when there are wide disparities at the bottom of the distribution and the group is open access. On the other hand, when disparities are concentrated at the middle-top part of the distribution and access to the group is restricted, inequality has a positive impact on participation. Moreover, La Ferrara (*ibid.*) finds that inequality has a differentiated effect on the participation levels of different community members depending on their level of wealth. More specifically, "(...) when inequality increases, it is the relatively richer who drop out of the group, possibly because they have less to gain" (*ibid.*: 237). Molinas' (1998) econometric analysis finds that the relationship between inequality and cooperation can be graphically represented with an inverted U-shape. According to the author a coordination problem affects highly equal society, because no one has a differentiated incentive to take the lead in organizing the collective action effort. On the other hand, high levels of inequality may deter collective action for at least two reasons. First, a small number of better-off farmers may gain from the non-cooperation of the others, and hence may purposely obstruct collective action. Second, highly skewed land distribution may lead to seasonal out-migration of poorer peasants, which in turn may affect the feasibility of collective undertakings. In the author's view, cooperation is more likely to take place in communities characterized by moderate levels of inequality, where medium size farmers act as 'organizational entrepreneurs' for

collective action. Similarly, Bardhan (2000) finds a U-shaped relationship between inequality and cooperative behavior, where the latter is measured as the absence of intra-village conflict over waters over the previous five-year period.

3.6 At a more theoretical level, Baland and Platteau (1997; 1998; 1999) have investigated extensively the question of whether greater inequality leads to more or less efficiency in the management of common property resources. Based on game-theoretic modeling, they argue that “(...) there is nothing like a one-to-one relationship between inequality and collective action” (ibid., 1999: 779). In particular they make a distinction between two hypothetical situations. On the one hand, if the participation of all users is required in order to sustain the efficient outcome, inequality is likely to have a negative effect on collective action. On the other hand, if the participation of only a small number of cooperating units is required for the efficient outcome, inequality is more likely to yield cooperation than inequality. However, the authors also point out that where cooperation is enforced through a regulatory agency, inequality is likely to hinder the well functioning of such agency, or at least to make regulation more difficult. In games of voluntary contribution, Baland and Platteau (2001) find that inequality has an ambiguous impact. While wealthier users tend to contribute more to the common good, inequality reduces the incentive of small users to contribute.

3.7 The ability of a group to act collectively may also be affected by dimensions of heterogeneity other than wealth inequalities. Social homogeneity is widely regarded as important for efficient collective action. Much of the evidence, however, is anecdotal (see Kahkonen, 1999: 7-9). Meinzen-Dick et al (1997) argue that homogenous background among members helps defining common goals for the organization, thereby making cooperation more efficient. Watson et al. (1997: 29) go a step forward and argue that “(...) common group characteristics can even persuade powerful individuals in the group to act in the group interest even though such action is not in the person's own interest”. Bardhan (2000) provides some quantitative evidence on the positive effect that social homogeneity has on cooperation. He defines a socially homogenous community as that in which 75 percent or more of the farmers belong to the same caste group, and finds a positive correlation between homogeneity and cooperation. Bardhan and Dayton-Johnson (2002) find that social heterogeneity has a negative impact on cooperation outcomes in water resources management. In Mexico, the number of *ejidos* from which irrigation-group members are drawn has a uniformly negative and significant effect on maintenance, while caste homogeneity in India is found to reduce the incidence of intra-village water conflict. Similarly, Khwaja (2000) finds that socially heterogeneous communities have poorly maintained projects. Only a few studies find that social heterogeneity does not hinder a group's ability to act collectively. In the context of community forest management in the Indian Central Himalayas, Somanathan et al. (2002) find no correlation between caste heterogeneity and indicators of collective action.

3.8 Other dimensions of heterogeneity, like cultural and locational differences have been found to have no effect on collective action. In the context of community forestry in Nepal, Varughese and Ostrom (2001) study the effects of these factors on collective action in 18 forest user groups. The authors find that these heterogeneities are not strong predictors of successful collective action, and argue that they rather represent challenges that groups of forest users can overcome by good institutional design. Velded (2000) includes in his study on collective action in the Fulani society of Mali various sources of heterogeneity – including political and cultural heterogeneity, and heterogeneity economic interests – and finds little direct relationship between the degree of heterogeneity and the success in collective action.<sup>12</sup> However, the author finds that political homogeneity, that is a high level of agreement about the authority structure, is a prerequisite for

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<sup>12</sup> Political heterogeneity captures the degree of agreement within the group on the legitimacy of the leaders. Cultural heterogeneity refers to differences in levels of education, values and life orientation, while heterogeneity in economic interests refer to the diversity in the type of use of CPRs (Velded, 2002).

collective action in a social group, and that homogeneity among the leaders enhances the capacity for collective action.

## **Social capital**

3.9 A number of studies point to the importance of social capital for effective cooperation amongst community members (Uphoff and Wijaratna, 2000; Parker and Skytta, 2000; Agarwal, 2000a; Gooptu, 2000; Turton, 1999; Kent and Rimarachin, 1994, Putnam 1993). Although the concept of social capital has been accepted as a useful tool for sociological and economic analysis, and is being heralded as the ‘missing link’ in development, the multiple ways in which it has been used makes it ambiguous (Fine, 1999).<sup>13</sup> Despite the lack of clarity, the general argument made is that the chances of successful collective action are greater in communities with horizontal networks of association amongst their members, where people are bound by mutual trust and obligations, and where arrangements for the discussion of common problems are in place.

3.10 Quantitative studies, based on econometric analysis, find that social capital – albeit measured differently in different contexts – is positively correlated with collective action.<sup>14</sup> Molinas’ (1998) analysis of 104 cooperative organizations in Paraguay finds that social capital increases cooperation. In their study on community-based water services in Sri Lanka and India, Isham and Kahkonen (2002) find that higher household-level social capital was positively associated with participation in service design, while higher community-level social capital was a positive and significant determinant of construction monitoring. The latter entails members of the community monitoring that other members contributed their share to the project. Weinberger and Jutting (2001) analyze the determinants of participation in two projects in Kashmir and Chad and find that existing social networks were important determinants of women’s participation. Grootaert and Narayan’s (2001) study on local institutions, poverty, and household welfare in Bolivia finds that households with higher social capital are more likely to participate in collective action. Similarly, Grootaert et al.’s (1999) study on social capital and development outcomes in Burkina Faso concludes that social capital facilitates collective action. Stewart (1996) notes that trust in relationships encourages appropriate collective action and allows ‘light-handed’ government, all of which contribute to higher efficiency.

3.11 The literature also reveals that different types of social relations can have different effects on the propensity of community members to act collectively. Since the notion of social capital encompasses different types of social interactions, it is possible that while some may have a positive impact on the propensity of community members to act collectively, others may not. Meinen-Dick et al.’s (2002) study on canal irrigation systems in India uses two indicators of social capital, namely the number of temples and cooperatives that exist in the village. They find that while the numbers of temples has a significant positive influence on the likelihood of organization for irrigation, the same does not hold for the number of cooperatives. In the authors’ view, this suggests that the links created between cooperatives members are not as pervasive as those created through religious activities.

3.12 The studies mentioned so far treat social capital as a ‘positive force’, a desirable community attribute. Other studies however, point to a ‘darker side’ of social capital, and draw attention to less desirable ways in which social capital compels people to cooperate. Kent and Rimarachin’s (1994) study on rural public works in Peru maintains that the most important factor in ensuring that community members fulfilled their communal obligations was the cohesiveness of communities –

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<sup>13</sup> As Fine (1999: 4-5) points out “(...) although [social capital] can require the use of economic resources, it has to be something over and above other types of capital but, as such, it seems to be able to be *anything* ranging over public goods, networks, culture etc. The only provision is that social capital should be attached to the economy in a functionally positive way for economic performance, especially growth”.

<sup>14</sup> As Krishna (2001: 930) points out “measures of social capital that are relevant for one set of cultures can be irrelevant for others”.

that members and families were well know to each other, and personal visibility was high. This meant that individuals and families who could not meet their community obligations tended to be subjected to considerable pressure and even ostracism by other community members. Isham and Kahkhonen (2002) also recognize that social sanctions can be an effective constraint against free-riding.

3.13 Evidence from the literature reviewed on participatory governance also points to social capital as a determinant for successful citizens participation initiatives. Goetz and Gaventa (2001) review numerous civil society-led initiatives aimed at amplifying citizens' voice to influence policy and spending decisions. They find that 'success stories' are rooted in social movements and organizations which have built trust and mutual support amongst their members.

### **Elite domination**

3.14 A few studies reviewed argue that the involvement of the elite in CBD/CDD-type projects favors collective undertakings, even when it dominates the process of decision-making. The OED Social Fund evaluation found that 'prime movers' (that is local leaders) played a critical role in mobilizing support and preparing successful subproject proposals (World Bank, 2002b). Household data from four countries collected for OED's Social Fund Evaluation also revealed that leaders usually determined subproject choice, often biasing it towards sectors in which they were active (ibid.). Meinzen-Dick et al. (2002) included in their study on irrigation organizations in India a variable that captures the presence of influential people on the site. Their econometric analysis shows that this has a positive and significant effect on the establishment of irrigation organizations. The authors suggest that the involvement of charismatic or trusted elite is likely to reduce the transaction costs of organizing and also provides assurance which makes people more willing to take part in collective undertakings.

3.15 Two important considerations are advanced in the literature regarding elite domination. First, at least to some degree this might be inevitable (Mansuri and Rao, 2003). As Narayan (1995) points out, village committees may be unable to affect change without the involvement and the support of the well-to-do and the powerful members of the community. Moreover, field level agents, as outsiders, are likely to need the support of the village elite in the process of establishing community groups (Kumar and Corbridge, 2002). Second, local people do not necessarily see elite domination as a problem. As Platteau and Gaspar (2003) argue, so long as the intervention of the elite leads to an improvement in the situation of the poor, the latter are likely to be thankful to their leaders. In a similar vein, Kumar and Corbridge (2002) point out that the poor and marginalized are likely to be more concerned with the improvements the project will bring to their lives, rather than the ways in which these are attained.

3.16 It follows from the two considerations above that the issue may not be so much how to avoid elite domination, for as the OED evaluation of Social Funds points out, "it is natural and appropriate that prime movers should bring project ideas to the communities" (World Bank, 2002b: xxvii). Rather, the issue should be how to best use the power and energy of the elite to serve the poor (Narayan, 1995). One way of doing so, perhaps, would be to create appropriate mechanisms to ensure, before a subproject is funded, "that the ideas of the leader are also the most important ones for the community as a whole" (World Bank, 2002b: xxvii).

## **Tenure security**<sup>15</sup>

3.17 A few World Bank studies point to the importance of addressing land tenure issues in order to attain successful community participation. Drawing on detailed case study material from two contrasting areas in the Rajasthan Canal Project, Sinha (1996) argues that there is clear evidence of limited or lack of participation of tenants in water users' associations, which in turns adversely affects irrigation performance and utilization of irrigation potential. The author also points out that farmers cultivating land under short-term share and fixed-rent tenancies experience serious limitations in evolving organizations for increasing their control over local irrigation management. A study on participatory forest management and conservation reaches similar conclusions (Banarjee et al., 1997). The authors find that "(...) the long gestation period of forestry and conservation investments compared to other agricultural enterprises demands a greater security over returns on investments" (ibid.: 11).

3.18 A few study call for tenancy reforms in order to enable successful collective undertakings. Sinha (ibid.) argues that the relaxation of legal restrictions on tenancy to give greater security of tenure to those leasing land will contribute to the formation of successful water user groups. Similarly, a recent World Bank study draws on a number of case studies from Asia and Latin America to argue that state efforts to bring about land or tenancy reform lay the basis for more effective community-driven collective action (Das Gupta et al., 2003). However, one of the studies reviewed advances the argument that social capital can substitute for well defined legal property rights of land (Katz, 2000). In the context of natural resources management in Guatemala, the author points to the informal mechanisms that evolved among resource users *in lieu* of property rights. These include mutual recognition and respect of property boundaries, a strong customary legal system which supports inter-generational and intra-community transfers, and the absence of the threat of external expropriation (ibid.).

3.19 Tenure security of home ownership is also found to encourage collective undertakings. Lall et al. (2002) use household level survey data from Bangalore, India to show that tenure security had a significant impact on the willingness of residents to participate in community based service provision programs, even when neighborhoods were diverse in terms of their cultural background and welfare status. In the authors' view, there are at least two reasons why tenure status enhances participation. First, tenure security provides incentives for individuals to invest in the community, as the gains from improvements in services can be capitalized in their home's value. Second, home owners usually expect to live in their residence for a long time and will thus anticipate an extended future stream of benefits from any improved service.

## **Group Size**

3.20 The literature reviewed suggests that a lower and upper threshold exists for group size below and above which collective efforts become more difficult. Baland and Platteau (1999) argue that the smaller the group, the stronger its ability to perform collectively. Similarly, Gerson (1993) notes from the experience of the Ivory Coast Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Adjustment Program that generally the larger the village the more difficult it was to organize competing interests into an effective water committee. Stewart (1996) notes that trust and reciprocity are more likely to emerge in relatively small and stable communities, while mobility and growth in their size may reduce trust

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<sup>15</sup> This review did not look at the literature on land tenure and CPRs, a topic which has received considerable attention in the last two decades and should be the subject of an independent review. It suffices to note here that those resources that by their nature are less conveniently partitioned for management by households than others presents particular challenges for participatory management (Bruce 2001). This is particularly so in the context of several developing countries where there are often multiple users of these resources, and where the considerable overlap between the traditional rights of different neighboring communities makes it difficult to clearly demarcate ownership patterns, with consequent implications for the sustainable participatory management of resources.

and reciprocity. As the latter have been generally found to increase the propensity to act collectively (paragraph 3.2-3.6), this suggests that collective efforts are more likely to be successful in small size groups. A few studies, however, point out that while it is more likely for an agreement to collapse as numbers increase, tasks may not be performed effectively once group size falls below a minimum threshold (Turton, 1998). Based on game-theoretic models, White (2003: 9) argues that unless a minimal threshold of participants is reached, “participation rates fall to zero and no activity occurs”.

### Section summary

3.21 The evidence from the literature on determinants of collective action draws attention to the multiplicity of factors that might induce or hinder collective undertakings. While ours is by no means an exhaustive exploration, it nevertheless highlights the complexity of establishing *a priori* whether any given participatory intervention is likely to be successful. The evidence on many of the factors explored in this section suggests that their impact on the propensity to act collectively is strongly influenced by the context and the type of collective undertaking. Moreover, it is unclear how these factors interact with one another. It is therefore important for the success of CBD/CDD-type interventions that their design be informed by a thorough understanding of the context-specific factors that are likely to favor or hinder smooth implementation and project sustainability.

## 4. The evidence on development effectiveness of participatory interventions

4.1 A recent World Bank document maintains that “CDD is an effective mechanism for poverty reduction (...)” capable of “ (...) achieving immediate and lasting results at the grassroots level” (Dongier et al., 2002b: 4). This section explores the evidence in the literature on the extent to which participatory interventions have proved to be an effective means for promoting development.<sup>16</sup> Assessing the effectiveness of the CBD/CDD approach requires us to look beyond the attainment of results to include processes. One of the premises of the CBD/CDD approach is that it fosters empowerment and social capital formation – both regarded as a means to poverty reduction. Moreover, some recent Bank documents (Narayan, 2000, World Bank 2002a) argue that empowerment is not only a means to poverty reduction, but also an end in itself as it provides for expansion of freedom of choice and action to shape one’s life. Powerlessness has been identified by the poor as one of the multiple dimensions of poverty (Narayan, 2000). Hence, empowering the poor can be regarded in itself as a reduction in poverty.

### ATTAINING RESULTS

4.2 The majority of studies reviewed argue that CBD/CDD-type interventions proved to be an effective means for attaining results. However none of these are rigorous impact evaluations. Based on the perceptions of project beneficiaries, Isham and Kakhonen (2002) maintain that community-based water projects led to a decrease in the incidence of diarrhea, and a reduction in the time spent in fetching water. Their analysis also found that community satisfaction with service design was positively correlated with health improvement, suggesting that involving users in the making of decisions regarding service design is of critical importance for improving health conditions. Similarly, Gill’s (2000) analysis of the Metropolitan Environmental Improvement Program find that focus groups respondents reported positive impacts on the environment as well as their well-being.

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<sup>16</sup> While assessing effectiveness calls for an examination of efficiency issues, these are explored in the last section of the paper, because implementing CBD/CDD-type initiatives *efficiently* has been identified by other components of the CBD/CDD evaluation as one of the major challenges for donor supported interventions.

Other studies provide anecdotal evidence on the efficacy of participatory initiatives. In the context of forestry in South Asia, Pattnaik and Brahmachari (1996) and Agarwal (2000a) argue that many initiatives were successful in terms of forest regeneration. In addition, Agarwal (*ibid.*) maintains that in some part of India the sale of forest products as well as raw materials have led to an increase in earnings and to a fall in seasonal migration. Similarly, Turton and Farrington (1998) and Farrington and Lobo (1997) argue that participatory watershed projects created employment for the landless and the poor, which reduced seasonal out-migration. They maintain that in a specific region the Indo-German Watershed Development Program attained a doubling of crop production, a ten-fold increase in milk production as well as year-around availability of drinking water. Gooptu (2000) argues that the STD/HIV Intervention Program in Calcutta increased condom use, reduced the incidence of STD and achieved a progressively lower rate of HIV prevalence among Calcutta sex workers in comparison to all other metropolitan towns of Asia. A World Bank (1999) study on education in Pakistan argues that participation improved the quality of education and increased enrollment rates as much as 50 percent. Kar's (2003) study on basic sanitation in Bangladesh argues that community-led efforts to build latrines – without recurring to subsidies – brought to an end the long-standing practice of open defecation in a large number of villages.

4.3 A few studies point to less efficacious CBD/CDD-type initiatives, but here too the evidence presented is largely anecdotal. The evaluation of watershed development projects in India by Kerr et al. (2000) points out that successful participatory projects remain few in number and that none of the projects they reviewed had helped poor and landless people in gaining access to the additional water generated through project efforts. In the context of wildlife management programs in Africa, Gibson and Marks (1995) point to the little success attained by participatory initiatives. The authors maintain that while the hunting of some of the larger mammals decreased, illegal hunting and game meat consumption did not, and residents continued to be openly hostile to scouts.

4.4 An argument put forward in the literature in favor of CBD/CDD-type initiatives is that they perform better than top-down ones. Kerr et al.'s (2000) econometric analysis finds that participatory watershed projects in India performed better than technocratic and top-down ones. The authors also find that a combination of participation and sound technical input performed best of all. Similarly, Kahkonen's (1999) review of the literature maintains that community-managed water and sanitation projects worked better than government-managed schemes. A few studies identify participation as the key element for improved performance. Narayan's (1995: 2) study of 121 community-based rural water supply projects maintains that "participation was the single most important determinant of overall quality of implementation". Similarly, Isham et al.'s (1994) quantitative analysis finds a strong statistical correlation between increased participation and better project performance.

4.5 In the context of participatory local governance, little research appears to have been conducted on assessing the extent to which citizen engagement in policy-making brings about expected results. As Gaventa (2002) points out, many studies have been conducted on the impact of decentralization in general, while little has been done on the impact of participatory innovations. This lack of research notwithstanding, the author argues that "(...) while there is some evidence of positive democracy building outcomes, there is less evidence about the pro-poor development outcomes of participatory governance" (*ibid.*: 5). Similarly, Bonfiglioli's (2003: 43) study on local governance and poverty reduction maintains that there is no clear evidence in support of the argument that democratic decentralization and local governance lead to poverty reduction.

4.6 The well-documented and researched experience of Participatory Budgeting (PB) in Porto Alegre, Brazil appears to be the only initiatives of citizen engagement in local governance for which evidence is available on its pro-poor development outcomes. The allocation of investment through PB in Porto Alegre is found to have had a significant redistributive effect, to such an extent that PB has been named 'redistributive democracy' (Marquetti, 2001). A number of studies maintain that PB has

reversed priorities and allocates a large share of investment resources to deprived and poor neighborhoods, bringing to these areas basic services and infrastructure that were not previously available (Abers, 2000; Wampler, 2000; Navarro, 1998). Marquetti (2001) provides further evidence of the redistributive effect of PB. His econometric analysis finds a negative correlation between the wealth of a city-zone, measured in average household incomes, and the investments per capita allocated by PB for the period 1992-2000. Marquetti (2001) also compares investments per capita with social indicators of poverty, such as the percentage of mothers with low levels of education, and finds a strong positive correlation, which again indicates that PB has allocated more resources to poorer neighborhoods.

## EMPOWERMENT

4.7 Power is one of the most contested and controversial concepts of social and political theory (Barnes, 1993). Numerous conceptualizations of power have been advanced in the literature, but little agreement has been reached among academics as to what power is, how it can be identified and studied, where it is, and how it operates.<sup>17</sup> It thus comes as no surprise that the notion of empowerment has multiple and contested meanings. As Cornwall (2000) points out, empowerment is a highly malleable idea and the language of empowerment has been adopted by people across the political spectrum to mean very different things. This diversity of meanings is reflected in the literature reviewed on the empowering effects of CBD/CDD-type interventions. Generally however, no explicit definition of empowerment is provided in the studies reviewed. This renders the identification of different empowering dimensions of CBD/CDD-type initiatives difficult.

4.8 This reviews attempts to make a broad distinction between two main forms of empowerment that CBD/CDD-type initiatives seem to promote. First, we look at the scope of decision-making power over project matters enjoyed by communities. While rhetorically the emphasis is on devolving control to communities, in practice the realms within which communities are allowed to exert such control may be limited, and rarely devolved *tout court*. Establishing where the boundaries of the 'decisionable' are drawn for communities will shed light on the extent to which their power and freedom to choose has expanded.<sup>18</sup> Second, we look at accountability issues as these are regarded by some of the literature as one element of empowerment (Narayan, 2002). We explore the extent to which CBD/CDD-type initiatives have succeeded in establishing effective mechanisms of downward accountability to communities and citizens.

4.9 Before beginning two caveats are in order. First, while the majority of the studies reviewed appear to reflect an understanding of empowerment as a once-and-for-all loosening of hierarchical power relations, empowerment is best regarded as "a relative and reversible process", and as a continuous re-negotiation of power asymmetries (Williams, 2003: 17, Masaki, 2003). Second, the empowerment impact of CBD/CDD-type interventions may differ substantially in *nature* from the intended one. As Michener's (1998) points out, empowerment can take the form of 'co-option from the bottom'. This refers to the abilities developed by communities to use participatory elements of

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<sup>17</sup> For some theoretical discussions on the concept of power and empowerment see Gaventa and Cornwall (2001); Rowlands (1995); Hayward (1998); Flyvbjerg, (1997); Lukes (1974); Gaventa, (1980); Clegg, (1989); Kabeer (1994); Scott (1985 and 1990) and Hoy (1986).

<sup>18</sup> The empirical investigation of this dimension of empowerment finds its theoretical basis in Bachrach and Baratz's (1970) conceptualization of power and Sen's (1992) conceptualization of freedom. Bachrach and Baratz (1970) recognize that A can exercise power over B by confining the scope of decision-making to issues that are relatively innocuous to him/her. Hence establishing what is 'decisionable' and what is not is in itself an exercise of power, which limits the power enjoyed by those who are allowed to make decisions. Sen (1992) makes a distinction between valuable and trivial choices. He recognizes that "...the expansion of choices to be made is both an opportunity (the choices can be made) and a burden (the choices have to be made by oneself)" (Ibid.: 63). Consequently, having to make an increasing number of trivial choices may limit rather than expend one's freedom.



development interventions as bargaining chips in their relationship with outsiders, with the aim of lowering the demands that participation places on community contributions.

### **What is the scope of decision-making power enjoyed by communities?**

4.10 Communities appear to enjoy limited decision-making power over project design (Cleaver, 1999). As Williams (2003: 8) powerfully puts it, “grassroots participants are usually not empowered to criticize or evaluate key decisions such as project objectives, staffing or finance”. Similarly, Aycrigg’s (1998) study on World Bank-funded participatory interventions points to the virtual exclusion of communities from project design, which is usually the result of policy work, rather than stakeholders consultation. In the words of a World Bank’s staff member, “participation during preparation results in some tinkering around the edges of an already defined project, when it is too late for primary stakeholder views and concerns to be factored into project design” (ibid., 4).

4.11 The extent to which CBD/CDD-type initiatives devolve control over project matters to communities during project implementation has also been found to be limited (Parker and Skytta, 2002; Johnson and Wilson, 2000, Michener, 1998). In the context of multi-sectoral projects, which are specifically designed to allow communities to choose the type of investment most suited to their needs, Sara and Katz (1999) found that most households did not know that they had options. Ribot’s (1998) study on participatory forestry in Sahelian countries points out that despite the rhetoric, communities are not allowed to participate in many of the critical decisions over the disposition of forests. Similarly, in the context of JFM in India, Sarin (2003) finds that the Forestry Department often thwarted villagers’ attempts to participate actively in decision-making, by controlling leadership appointment, record keeping and other key decisions. Limited community involvement in the making of critical decisions was also observed in water and sanitation projects, where decisions regarding technology, design and level of service, as well as the selection of beneficiaries villages continued to be made by non-users (Manikutty, 1998; Isham and Kahkonen, 1999).

4.12 Community control over resources also appears to be limited. Sarin’s (2003) study on JFM in India finds that the vast majority of villagers not only ignored the total budgetary allocation for the village, but also that they had the right to decide how to use their share of the funds. Esmail (1998) finds that funds for investments at village level were transferred to government agencies rather than to village water associations, thereby preventing the latter from exerting direct control over investments. Gill (2000) similarly points to the limited involvement of communities in resource allocation. Community’s low level of control over resources is also reflected in the provisions on assets ownership. In the context of irrigation management transfer in Colombia, Quintero-Pinto (2000) finds that assets, such as heavy equipment, even when purchased by user associations with their own funds remained property of the government. Similarly, Parker and Skytta’s (2000) study on rural water projects finds that in many countries, government officials retained control over expensive drilling equipment.

4.13 The limited scope of decision-making power enjoyed by communities over project matters implies that CBD/CDD-type initiatives often respond to a set of pre-defined needs, rather than giving communities the possibility to work on their priorities (Michener, 1998; Botchway, 2000). It also often implies that the terms in which communities can participate in the projects are defined *a priori* (Michener, 1998). In addition, it is argued that participatory initiatives that do not devolve adequate decision-making power to local communities are likely to disempower them vis-à-vis the state (Brown et al., 2002). As Ribot (1998: 6) points out participatory forestry initiatives “often creat[e] centralized control articulated right down to the local level (...) rather than empowering or enabling [participatory forestry] policies control and administer the local treating rural population as subjects to be managed and used”. Kull’s (2002) analysis of community-based natural resource management in Madagascar largely concurs with Ribot’s view. The author argues that when communities only

gain responsibilities and no or few rights, they are not empowered, but rather co-opted by the state, which uses their labor and time for its own purposes. While the limited control that communities enjoy over decisions and resources is often attributed to the centralizing tendencies of government agencies (see Section 5), the critical role that field agents play in devolving control over to communities has also been highlighted (Kar, 2003; Michener, 1998; see Mansuri and Rao, 2003 for a discussion on the role of field agents in participatory interventions).

4.14 In contrast with the literature presented thus far, a few studies draw attention to the drawbacks of devolving decision-making power over project matters to communities. Khwaja's (2001) econometric analysis finds that while greater community participation in non-technical project decisions improves project maintenance, community participation in technical decisions worsens it. This suggests that community control is desirable but not in all realms of decision-making and calls for the identification of the realms of decision-making in which community control can contribute toward project effectiveness. Another drawback of devolving control over project decisions to communities is that this may lead to the systematic sidelining of specific community needs. As McLeod and Tovo (2001) point out, communities are unlikely to ask for social care provision, even though they need it, as this might not be regarded as a worthwhile investment. Other authors note that involving communities in project design may be problematic for at least two reasons. First, given the nature of the donors' project cycle (the author refers in particular to the World Bank's), stakeholders' expectations may be raised as much as one or two years before any project activity can be demonstrated, which is likely to create tensions between the project and its intended beneficiaries (Aycrigg, 1998). Second, community participation in project design may result in a mismatch between the needs and priorities put forward by the latter, and the activities that donors regard as important and are willing to fund (Michener, 1998).<sup>19</sup>

### **Does participation lead to greater accountability?**

4.15 The notion of accountability has a range of connotations. It can refer to 'giving an account' to another party who has a stake in what has been done, or 'being held to account', that is being held responsible by others (Cornwall et al., 2000). A distinction can be made between political, administrative and social accountability (Narayan, 2002). While political accountability takes place through elections, administrative accountability is ensured through internal accountability mechanisms both within and between agencies (ibid.). Social accountability, which is by definition of vertical mechanism, holds agencies and elected officials accountable to citizens (ibid.; Reuben, 2003). Accountability is also multidirectional. The accountability of the bureaucracy to elected representatives is an example of horizontal accountability (Grant, 2002). Vertical accountability can take the form of downward accountability, for instance elected representatives to citizens, or upward accountability, such as local to central government (ibid.). More recently, a trend to move beyond the traditional divide between horizontal and vertical modes of accountability has emerged (Goetz and Gaventa, 2001). This entails efforts to "engage citizens directly in the workings of horizontal accountability institutions (...) by breaking the state's monopoly over responsibility for official executive oversight" (ibid.: 8). It is important to note that while the availability and accessibility of information are critical for accountability, they do not automatically result in accountability (Jenkins and Goetz, 1999).

4.16 The literature on accountability is vast and it is beyond the scope of this section to provide a comprehensive review on the topic. Instead, we limit ourselves to drawing on the literature we reviewed to present some evidence on the extent to which the creation of participatory spaces,

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<sup>19</sup> This tension between donors' established way of functioning and the demands for participation generates, in Mosse's (2002: 25) view, a 'dual logic' in projects; one that emphasizes local planning, and the other "upward accountability" and the "proper use of funds".

promoted both by community participation and participatory governance initiatives, has promoted greater downward accountability to project beneficiaries and citizens. Research has focused primarily on the extent to which decentralization efforts have led to greater accountability, while less empirical work has assessed the extent to which participatory initiatives have increased downward accountability.

4.17 The evidence from the literature on community participation suggests that downward accountability to the community at large remains weak. Alsop et al.'s (2002) study of 100 community user groups in India finds that few members knew how group funds were structured or used and that members were generally unfamiliar with accountability mechanisms. The majority of the members either did not know how the group chairmen were selected, or ignored the rules for holding them accountable, and little information was available on the decisions taken at group meetings (ibid.). The authors also point out that "(...) regardless of awareness, accountability mechanisms were rarely – if ever – applied" (Alsop and Forusz, 2002: 3). Similarly, Gill (2000) notes that the transparency and accountability of project finances was uneven, which restricted community access to information about the administrative decision making processes. Shenckleton et al. (2002) only found a few locations where checks and balances were in place to ensure committees' accountability to the community at large. For example in Malawi a mechanism existed to remove committee members with whom the community was unhappy. In other cases, the responsibility of user committees to report and collect revenue only reinforced upward accountability (Kanyesigye and Muramira, 2001). Koopman et al. (2001) draw attention to the difficulties that elected community representatives face in establishing mechanisms for downward accountability. The authors argue that providing villagers with appropriate and clear information about the financial situation of irrigation organizations requires a solid understanding of the complexities of financial planning and monetary management for which little training had been provided to village leaders.

4.18 The creation of spaces for citizen participation in local governance is regarded as one of the most effective ways to improve accountability and governance (Ackerman, 2004, Blair, 2000). However, little empirical evidence is available in the literature reviewed to substantiate this normative view. Caseley's (2003) detailed study of the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board concludes that "transparent, cost-effective, and accessible citizen-based accountability mechanisms can lead to long-term organizational transformation and performance improvement across a range of services" (ibid.: 35). In their study on determinants of corruption in local health care provision in Bolivia, Gatti et al. (2003) explore whether the presence of territorial based organizations (TBOs) was effective in keeping corruption in check.<sup>20</sup> The authors find that the level of activity of TBOs – as independently rated by the local mayor – is significantly associated with lower perceived corruption, while the density of TBOs on the territory is not (ibid.). Other studies however, provide less encouraging evidence on the relationship between direct citizen engagement in governance and accountability. Behar and Kumar (2002) argue that transparency in the affairs of *Gram Panchayat* is almost non-existent, and accountability is very poor. The authors also found that target groups of government's welfare programs did not have access to information about such programs from the *Gram Panchayat*, which was required to inform them (ibid.). Blackburn's (2000) study of the Law of Popular Participation in Bolivia maintains that where the local political culture is prebendal, participatory forms of local public planning largely fail to empower poor citizens or to make local government more accountable to them.

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<sup>20</sup> TBOs – a key actor in the Popular Participation reform in Bolivia – are responsible for the joint execution of many public works, and provide social oversight of local planning and execution.

## SOCIAL CAPITAL

4.19 As pointed out earlier, the concept of social capital lacks a clear definition (Fine, 1999). In addition, as Krishna (2001: 930) points out, “measures of social capital that are relevant for one set of cultures can be irrelevant for others”. Consequently, social capital has been used as an analytical category to study different kinds of interactions in different contexts. Though a number of studies argue that social capital increases household welfare and reduces poverty (see Grootaert, 2001; Gootaert, et al., 1999), Harriss (2001) criticized this view, while Krishna (2001) provides empirical evidence that higher level of social capital do not necessarily translates into better development outcomes. Based on the econometric analysis of the data collected in 60 villages in Rajasthan, India, the author shows that villages that scored high on the social capital index did not attain greater development. Krishna concludes that while social capital is necessary for development – as all high performance villages had medium to high levels of social capital – it is not in itself sufficient. Unless agency is available “to convert stock of social capital into flows of benefits”, the potential of social capital cannot be actualized (ibid.: 394).

4.20 In the context of community participation initiatives, there is little convincing evidence that CBD/CDD-type initiatives promote social capital formation at the local level. While a number of studies advance this argument, it is difficult to establish the validity of their analysis. Van Zyl et al.’s (2000) report on World Bank-funded CDD projects in Northeast Brazil argue that the social capital formation between 1993-4 and 1998-2000 was greater in communities operating under the most decentralized and participatory delivery mechanism. Their study, however, only looks at communities where the Bank project had been implemented, and provides no information on the change in social capital in communities without the Bank project. This raises questions of attribution, as it is impossible to establish whether social capital increased in project communities *because* of the Bank project or whether wider socio-economic, political or cultural processes taking place in Northeast Brazil led to a general increase in the level of social capital. In their study of the Gal Oya irrigation system in Sri Lanka, Uphoff and Wijayaratra (2000) distinguish between cognitive and structural forms of social capital and find that the participatory irrigation management enhanced both.<sup>21</sup> In the authors’ analysis, community organizers succeeded in creating cognitive social capital by activating and intensifying farmers’ normative commitment to equitable outcomes, whereby an increasing number of farmers began to see cooperation and generosity as normal modes of interaction. On the other hand, the project created structural forms of social capital by establishing rules, roles and procedures that were appreciated and supported by the farmers themselves. Gooptu’s (2000) qualitative analysis of the STD/HIV Intervention Program in Calcutta maintains that the program succeed in fostering altruism, co-operation and cohesion amongst sex workers through the ideological definition and discursive construction of ‘community’ amongst sex workers, which did not exist before the project and upon which consensus over group action could be based.

4.21 Other studies, however, depict a less favorable picture of the impact of CBD/CDD-type interventions on social capital formation. The recent World Bank’s (2002b) evaluation of Social Funds, which includes a number of different countries, finds mixed evidence of the impact of these initiatives on social capital. Based on their empirical analysis – which combined quantitative and qualitative methods – the authors conclude that “(...) overall, Social Funds have operated as users, rather than producer of social capital” (ibid.: 43). Kumar and Corbrigde (2002) find that the Eastern Indian Rainfed Program generated ‘personalized’ social capital among the richest households – as they dominated project-groups – but failed to promote greater trust at the community level – or ‘generalized’ social capital. Moreover, the authors argue that the program weakened the social capital

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<sup>21</sup> While cognitive forms of social capital refer to the set of values, attitudes and beliefs that predispose people to cooperate, structural forms of social capital refer to the norms and procedures that “establish on-going patterns of social interaction” (Uphoff and Wijayaratra, 2000: 1876).

of the poorest and most vulnerable members of the community, by making progressively redundant the labor-sharing practices on which their social networks relied. Drawing on Bourdieu's conceptualization of social capital, the authors conclude that the program functioned "(...) as a means by which class stratification [was] reproduced" (ibid.: 86). Participatory initiatives have also been found to undermine social capital at the community level, by promoting the creation of new and formal community organizations, rather than engaging with existing informal community networks. In the context of water projects in rural Tanzania, Cleaver (1999) finds that the emphasis on the creation of water committees was in danger of undermining existing water management practices, which were embedded in informal social networks and took place through daily interactions and the application of cultural norms.

4.22 The literature reviewed on participatory governance suggests that some innovative spaces for citizen engagement with the state fostered social capital formation amongst citizens. Abers (1998; 2000) maintains that Participatory Budgeting (PB) in Porto Alegre strengthened networks of reciprocity and trust, led to the creation of numerous neighborhood organizations, fostered inter-group collaboration, and discouraged clientelistic forms of neighborhood action. Baiocchi (2003) similarly argues that PB led to a dramatic raise in the number of associations in Porto Alegre, including popular councils, which are important institutions because they foster coordination between neighborhood associations, settle dispute between them and draw on collective resources to solve district-level problems.<sup>22</sup> The most tangible evidence of enhanced solidaristic relations amongst Portoalegrense, however, is the progressive distribution of municipal investment that PB promoted (see paragraph 4.8). In the context of the *Panchayati Raj* system in Kerala, India, Isaac and Heller (2003) find that the government-led People's Campaign for Decentralized Planning had a crowding-in effect on the associational life. Neighborhood groups, which consist of forty to fifty families and function as mini-*gram sabhas*, were created as a response to the weakness of *gram sabhas*.

### Section summary

4.23 The literature reviewed on the development effectiveness of CBD/CDD-type interventions reveals a paucity of robust impact evaluation studies. Most assessments on the extent to which CBD/CDD-initiatives attained intended results provide insufficient information to establish the validity or robustness of their findings, and some appears to rely solely on anecdotal evidence. Despite the notable lack of convincing evidence, the argument is often made in the literature that CBD/CDD-type initiatives have proved to be an effective means for attaining results, and even for bettering the living conditions of the poor. More solid evidence is provided in support of the argument that participatory projects perform better than top-down ones, and that participation is a key element for improved performance. CBD/CDD-type initiatives also appear to have limited empowering effects. The scope of decision-making power devolved to communities is limited both during project design and implementation. Moreover, mechanisms for downward accountability remain weak in community participation initiatives, whilst the evidence is mixed for participatory governance initiatives. Finally, there is little convincing evidence that community participation initiatives promote social capital formation. Instead a few studies point out that these may undermine existing social networks by replacing existing practices with new ones. However, some evidence does suggest that participatory governance initiatives have a positive impact on the associational life of some cities and villages in Brazil and India.

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<sup>22</sup> Baiocchi's (2003) study on PB in Porto Alegre raises the question of whether the creation of participatory spaces for citizen engagement is in itself sufficient for fostering social capital formation. In the author's view, the educational work of the Workers' Party administration, which was inspired to the 'popular education' methodologies of Freire and the Ecclesiastical Base Communities, played an important role in the formation of social capital in Porto Alegre. Meeting facilitators stressed the importance of cooperation and solidarity and promoted negotiation processes inspired by solidaristic practices.

## 5. Institutional context: establishing participatory processes

5.1 The creation of participatory spaces requires establishing an enabling institutional environment. In order to adopt participatory approaches to development, governments need to undergo a radical shift in their *modus operandi*, as they move from being ‘implementor’ to ‘enabler’ of development processes (Thompson, 1995; Shepard, 1998). Government bureaucracies need to devise new management and organizational procedures, as well as promote greater acceptance toward CBD/CDD-type interventions amongst their personnel (Pimbert et al., 2000). The first part of this section explores some of these changes in more detail and draws on the evidence in the literature to assess the extent to which government in client countries have succeeded in bringing them about. The second and third parts of this section turn to specific issues concerning the institutional context of community participation and local governance initiatives respectively. One of the most critical questions for the former concerns the nature and type of relations that should be established between community organizations and the local government. On the other hand, a critical factor for the success of innovative spaces of participatory governance is the provision of an appropriate legal framework, which enables citizens to engage directly in policy-making processes.

### CHANGES IN MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES

5.2 The literature reviewed points to three main changes government need to undergo in order to adopt participatory approaches to development. First, they have to shift the focus of their operations from ‘product’ to ‘process’ (IDS, 1998b). While government bureaucracies have been accustomed to assessing project success solely on the basis of quantifiable products and physical targets, participatory initiatives demand greater appreciation of process and capacity-building (ibid.). This in turn requires the development of new indicators for assessing performance and measuring success, ideally in collaboration with affected communities (ibid.; Thompson, 1995). A variety of experiences with participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) – in which all stakeholders are involved in the selection of indicators, data collection, and findings evaluation – have been documented (Estrella, 2000).<sup>23</sup> Some authors argue that government bureaucracies should include participatory research methods in their evaluation toolkit, as these have been found to generate data that is suitable for standard statistical analysis, and that is at least as reliable as that obtained from traditional methods, such as surveys (Barahona and Levy, 2003).

5.3 Second, government must be willing to commit greater time to a project and to allow for prolonged pre-project preparatory work aimed at strengthening local organizations (IDS, 1998b). This has implication for the model of investment and expenditure adopted by government bureaucracies (Thompson, 1995). While traditionally the emphasis is on disbursing funds upfront, many critical elements of participatory approaches, such as dialogue-constructing, joint analysis, and participatory planning require a “a more gradual release of funds” following “a substantial period of interaction with local groups and institutions” (ibid.: 1543). Similarly, Absalom et al. (1995: 4) call for a move towards “more open ended, event-focused targets for disbursement”.

5.4 Third, transforming governments and bureaucracies requires far-reaching changes in the attitudes and behaviors of both elected representatives and government personnel, who need to move from a traditional management style that emphasizes control to one that stresses local accountability, responsiveness and stakeholder participation (Howard et al., 2002). The growing recognition of the critical role played by attitudes and behaviors has led to the spread of training programs on participatory methodologies, which have however proved to be insufficient for attaining the

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<sup>23</sup> A review of PM&E is beyond the scope of this paper. For a review of experiences with PM&E, and a discussion on the challenges they face see Estrella (2000), and Estrella and Gaventa (1998). For a review of PM&E in the context of Latin America see Pasteur and Blauret (2000).

fundamental changes (Pimbert et al., 2000; Thompson, 1995). People tend to revert back to old non-participatory habits once the enthusiasm generated by the training course is over, and initial changes in attitudes and behaviors fade away as professionals feel pressured to conform to hierarchical organizations (Pimbert et al., 2000; IDS, 1998a). In order to affect deeply rooted attitudes and behaviors, training need to be accompanied by new incentive systems, and supervisory methods that enable project managers to identify and reward staff for “displaying certain attitudes and behaviors which make participation works better in practice, such as tolerance and mutual respect, openness and adaptability” (IDS, 1998b: 147; Shepard, 1998; Thompson, 1995; Pimbert et al., 2000).

5.5 In the context of community participation initiatives, our review of the literature found that government bureaucracies largely retained their role as ‘implementor’. The lingering of the top-down approach was particularly evident in the ways government agencies promoted community participation. The time devoted to community organization activities and to strengthen the newly created associations and organizations was limited, and little attention was paid to existing intra-community conflicts (Kolovalli and Kerr, 2002; Esmail, 1998). The skills and attitudes of government personnel were also found to be largely inadequate for participatory approaches. Kolovalli and Kerr (2002) find that none of the government watershed agencies they examined had any staff member with significant training in social organization. Rather, these agencies relied on agronomist or other technicians who underwent brief exposure visits to become acquainted with social organization approaches. Esmail (1998) similarly argues that government agencies lacked staff with appropriate skills to work with communities, as well as displaying “a fundamental unwillingness to accept that local communities and farmers' groups have the capacity to plan, implement and manage natural resource subprojects” (ibid.: 3).

5.6 The system of rewards and incentives as well as the monitoring system of government agencies also failed to reflect the new emphasis on participation. Shepherd’s (1998) study on the Doon Valley Project in Uttar Pradesh finds that there were no rewards, either financial or of other kind, for “the sort of behavior conducive to a participatory approach” which include “spending long hours in villages allowing villagers to make decisions, encouraging experimentation and innovation, and feeding villagers' ideas and criticisms to management” (ibid.: 94). The author further points out that confidential reports on staff performance did not reflect their abilities for participatory approaches. This may at least in part be attributed to the supervisors’ lack of knowledge of participatory approaches (Kolovalli and Kerr, 2002).

5.7 In the context of participatory governance, Howard, et al. (2002) point out that little training and capacity building has been provided to members of new participatory spaces, and that consequently participants often do not fully understand their role within the wider governance structure and the norms and procedures within which they operate. A study of 195 *Gram Panchayats* and 155 *Gram Sabhas* conducted by PRIA (n/a) in India argues that one of the reasons for the poor functioning of these innovative participatory governance institutions was the absence of clear understanding amongst its members about their role. Similarly, Behar and Kumar (2002) argue that one of the main obstacles to the development of an effective *panchayat* system was the lack of capacities at the grassroots level.

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

5.8 Both arguments for and against the establishment of formal links between community organizations and local government units can be found in the literature. Within the Bank, Dongier et al. (2002b) argue that partnership arrangements between these bodies play an important role for the successful implementation of CDD projects. The authors observe that when there is commitment to genuine decentralization in a country, a partnership between community-based organizations and local government institutions can strengthen the national system of intergovernmental transfer of resources, allow resource allocation decisions to be accountable to local priorities, and provide a

sustainable source of funding for community organizations.<sup>24</sup> In contrast, Buamann (1999) sounds a note of caution with regard to the establishment of formal links between community groups and local government units, as these may pose serious challenges to participatory initiatives. In the context of watershed development in India, the author finds that the involvement of *panchayats* was likely to create divisions within communities along party-political lines, which would exacerbate rather than diminish disputes within the community over natural resources management

5.9 Very little evidence was found in the literature reviewed of partnership arrangements between community organizations and local government units, and any links between the two largely took the form of cross-membership or informal relations of mutual support. Buamann's (1999) finds that in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh watershed committees included a few members of the *panchayats* – the local government unit – primarily for facilitating the issue of permits by the latter to take up land for afforestation or soil conservation. In the context of participatory irrigation management in the Philippines, Raby (2000) points to the existence of informal relations between the *barangay* – the local government unit – and irrigation associations, which were largely based on reciprocity.

5.10 Instead a few authors draw attention to the tensions that emerged between community organizations and local governments units due to the struggle for the control over resources and revenues, and the lack of clearly defined roles (Shackleton et al., 2002). In the context of participatory forestry in South Asia, JFM and community forestry groups enjoy greater control over resources and revenues than local government units, despite the forests being under the jurisdiction of the latter (Kumar, 2002a; Shackleton et al, 2002). Consequently, community groups had greater political clout vis-à-vis local governments, thereby undermining the authority of the latter (ibid.). In the context of watershed development in India, Buamann's (1998; 1999) argues that the coexistence of *panchayats* and watershed development committees led to a duplication of functions at the local level, which gave rise to confusion of roles. Tensions were particularly likely to arise when watershed committees took on the role of *panchayats* and engaged with broader local development planning, or alternatively when *panchayats* were treated as implementation mechanisms for specific projects, rather than as units of local government.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

5.11 Experiments in participatory local governance entail the redesign of existing democratic institutions in order to provide new spaces for direct citizen engagement in policy making at the local level. The provision of a legal framework is of critical importance for the creation of these new spaces, as they provide a platform for citizen action (McGee, et al., 2003; Plummer, 1999). There are a number of examples of legal provisions enacted to enable citizen participation in local governance. In India, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment vested *Panchayati Raj* Institutions with powers and authority to enable them to function as institutions of self-governance (Mander, 2000). The Amendment also gave constitutional status to the *Gram Sabha* (village assembly), through which women, the rural poor, and marginalized groups can participate in decision making on matters affecting their lives (ibid.). In Bolivia, the Law of Popular Participation required municipal governments to engage the local population in planning and managing a broad range of projects with finance transferred from the central government (Blackburn and Toma, 1998). The Law also assigned village committees a watchdog role over the activities of the municipal government, and required them to report all irregularities directly to the Ministry of Finance (ibid.). In Brazil, the 1988

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<sup>24</sup> At the theoretical level, Dongier et al. (2002a) envisions a dual role that community-based organizations can play in relation to local government units. On the one hand, by undertaking specific activities on behalf of local governments, community-based organizations can stretch the territorial reach of the latter ('stretching role'). On the other, by organizing citizens to act collectively in support of a particular local enterprise, community-based organizations can play a 'deepening' role vis-à-vis local government units.



Constitution established popular participation as one of the cornerstones of the reformed health system (Lobato, 1998). Subsequent legislation made the transfer of health sector resources from the federal to the municipal level conditional upon the existence of the Municipal Health Council – an innovative institution of participatory governance which is responsible for formulating and overseeing health policies at the municipal level and in which civil society holds the majority of the seats (Coelho et al., 2002).

5.12 The provision of a legal framework, however, is not in itself sufficient to ensure greater citizen participation in local governance. Translating achievement in the legal realm into new governance practices requires willingness on the part of the central government to relinquish power, as well as willingness and ability on the part of the local government to engage citizens in policy-making (Howard et al., 2002; Heller, 2001). As Plummer (1999) points out, legislation does not replace political change, and it can be dormant in an unsupportive political context. A centralizing government may opt for a minimalist and merely formulatic observance of the law, thereby precluding meaningful change (McGee et al., 2003).

5.13 Civil society also plays an important role in translating legal frameworks into practice. While laws may provide citizens with new opportunities and rights, it is only through citizens' action that opportunities can be seized and rights realized. Attaining meaningful citizen participation in governance requires a well organized civil society that is able to maintain a continuous presence throughout the processes it intends to influence, and that it is able to exploit creatively all the opportunities the law provides, by adopting a proactive and maximalist interpretation of the law (McGee et al., 2003; Howard et al. 2002; Goetz and Gaventa, 2001). Conversely, a weak and uninformed civil society will be unable to take advantage of the opportunities made available to them. As Behar and Kumar (2002) point out, while legal provisions for holding *Gram Panchayats* accountable to the *Gram Sabhas* have provided certain rights to *Gram Sabhas*, the weakness and the low level of awareness of the latter have prevented them from exercising these rights. Similarly, in Madhya Pradesh, local government provisions guaranteeing investigations of corruption charges made by the village assembly have remained reforms on paper, as citizens are insufficiently informed and organized to use them (Goetz and Gaventa, 2001). Attaining greater citizen participation in governance in the context of a weak civil society requires considerable work in awareness raising, information generation and capacity-building in civil society groups, with particular attention to marginalized sections of society (ibid.).

5.14 A strong civil society can do more than exploiting the opportunities the law provides. It can be instrumental in securing the adoption of new legislation that opens up new avenues for participating in governance. The experience of the MKSS and the National Campaign for People's Right to Information in India exemplifies this very well. As a result of the strong mobilization of civil society organizations, new spaces for citizen engagement in local governance were opened up, initially in six Indian states, through the enactment of Right to Information Acts, and then in the whole country, through the Freedom to Information Act passed by Parliament (Mishra, 2003).

5.15 More recently, the argument has been advanced that participatory governance initiatives are more likely to succeed if they result from the collaboration (or convergence) between citizens' initiatives and demands on the one hand, and state responsiveness on the other (Gaventa, 2002; Goetz and Gaventa, 2001; Heller, 2001; Howard, et al. 2002).

## Section summary

5.16 The literature reviewed on the enabling institutional environment for CBD/CDD-type interventions points to the need for far-reaching changes in the management and organizational procedures of government bureaucracies. The evidence suggests that little advance has been made in

these areas. Government bureaucracies largely retain their role as ‘implementor’, and lack personnel with adequate skills and attitudes to enable participation. At the local level, the interaction between local government units and community groups and associations has been minimal and largely confined to informal relations of mutual support. In some cases, tensions have emerged between these two entities due to the lack of clearly defined roles and the competition for the control over resources and revenues. In the context of participatory governance, the literature suggests that the provision of legal frameworks while necessary for enabling citizen participation in governance is not in itself sufficient. A committed and capable government, at all levels, as well as an active and well organized civil society are required to translate laws into new governance practices.

## **6. Challenges for donors and lenders**

6.1 The preceding sections explore distinct aspects of CBD/CDD-type interventions. We began by assessing the extent to which the poor and marginalized are included in participatory spaces, and explored the factors that might encourage or hinder collective undertakings promoted by CBD/CDD initiatives. We subsequently turned to examine the evidence on the development effectiveness of CDD-type interventions, and explored the enabling institutional context for different participatory spaces.

6.2 This concluding section explores the evidence in the literature on five critical challenges, that other components of the OED CBD/CDD evaluation have indicated the CBD/CDD approach entails for the World Bank and other donors committed to poverty reduction and to making the MDGs a reality. As the Bank has thus far primarily invested in community participation initiatives, the challenges discussed in this section are primarily relevant to this type of CBD/CDD interventions. First, the argument is made within the Bank that to have a material impact on poverty CBD/CDD should no longer be designed as small and isolated interventions but should be scaled up (Dongier et al., 2002b). As Abed and Chowdhury (1997: 45) powerfully put it “small is beautiful, but large is necessary”. However, since there is little agreement in the literature and within the Bank as to what scaling up means and how it should be pursued, going to scale represent an important challenge for CBD/CDD-type interventions. Second, the imperative of going to scale raises questions about the efficiency of the CBD/CDD approach. Unless participatory interventions can be implemented efficiently, going to scale will not be viable. Third, concerns have been raised as to whether the economic interests of the poorest are adequately addressed by CBD/CDD-type interventions. In assessing the costs and benefits of CBD/CDD initiatives, attention must also be paid to the way in which these are shared within the community. Fourth, scaling up the CBD/CDD approach only makes sense if the outcomes of these interventions are sustainable. Finally, since there are numerous donors promoting participatory development in any country at one time, an important challenge is the coordination among donors on procedures and implementation strategies. The following sections draw on the literature review to discuss each of these challenges in turn.

### **SCALING UP**

6.3 Different dimensions or strategies for scaling-up have been identified in the literature. Scaling up CBD/CDD projects entails moving along several of these dimensions, either simultaneously or sequentially, and CBD/CDD projects that scale up in only one or two dimensions are rare (Gallespie, 2003). Scaling up can be geographical, which entails expanding the size of the area and population served, or functional, which entails moving into new types of activities<sup>25</sup> (Uvin, 1995; Gaventa, 1998; Uphoff et al., 1998). It can also be organizational, when the focus is on strengthening community

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<sup>25</sup> This type of scaling-up has also been called ‘scaling-out’ (Gaventa, 1998).

organizations, or political, when participatory initiatives develop relations with the state (Uvin, 1995). Building links with local government units and making large-scale organizations (such as government bureaucracies) more participatory are also put forward as strategies for scaling up participatory initiatives (Binswanger and Aiyar, 2003; IDS, 1998a; Gaventa, 1998; Baumann, 1999).

6.4 Several studies have drawn attention to the difficulties in scaling up CBD/CDD interventions. Experience from several parts of the world shows that small pilots that work well often do so because of unreplicably high costs (Kumar 2003; Binswanger and Aiyar, 2003). The special treatment enjoyed by these initiatives cannot be easily applied on a large scale (Kerr et al., 2000). Choosing the appropriate means through which CBD/CDD interventions can be scaled up also poses challenges. A number of studies in the literature argue that NGOs do not provide a viable means for scaling up CBD/CDD initiatives (Kolovalli and Kerr, 2002). The high costs per unit area typical of participatory initiatives implemented by NGOs has meant that resources were rarely available to enable scaling up to any significant extent (Turton, 1998). Instead, the involvement of large scale institutions, such as national governments and donors, is put forward as a more appropriate strategy to attain participation on a large scale (Gaventa, 1998; Kolovalli and Kerr, 2002). However, the involvement of these institutions is also recognized to pose significant challenges, as they tend to be largely non-participatory (*ibid.*). Successful scaling up through large scale institutions requires them to undertake far-reaching changes in order to become more participatory – a difficult transition as discussed in section five.

6.5 The pace at which CBD/CDD-type interventions should be scaled up has also generated considerable debate. The majority of the studies suggest that slow is better and that “participation cannot be rushed” (Blackburn et al., 2000: 8). Underpinning this view is the idea that before going to scale, the organizational capabilities of all actors involved need to be strengthened (Platteau and Gaspart 2003; Kerr et al., 2000; Bagadion, 1997; Krishna et al., 1997). The pace of scaling up, as well as timing for scaling up has to be consistent with the development of such capabilities and it is hence context specific (Kumar, 2003; Uphoff et al., 1998; Korten, 1980). As Candler and Kumar’s (1998) study on dairy cooperatives in India shows, the latter tend to be most effective when donors support the scaling up of participatory initiatives for which there is already national ownership. A few studies warn against scaling up too rapidly, as this has been found to undermine participatory initiatives (Krishna et al., 1997; IRC, 2000). In addition, the rush to scale “risks creating and reinforcing an opportunistic rent-seeking elite” and may bias the selection of communities towards those that are most accessible, regardless of their relative level of poverty – in either cases the share of aid resources that actually reaches the poor may be low (Platteau and Gaspart, 2003: 1690). A number of studies point to the importance of adopting a ‘learning model’, which requires starting small, and refining the knowledge of what works and what doesn’t under particular conditions (Abed and Chowdhury, 1997; Uphoff et al., 1998; IRC, 2002).

6.6 The literature reviewed on participatory governance also argues against a rush to scaling up. One of the main constraints faced by the Indonesian nation-wide program for participatory village planning, which was implemented simultaneously in 60,000 villages, was the unrealistic time frame imposed by the government (Mukherjee, 1996). Goetz and Gaventa’s (2001) extensive review of citizen participation initiatives finds that ‘success stories’ have started small and increased in scale over a long period of time. As the authors powerfully put it, “state-citizen participatory structures cannot be command into existence by law – they tend to evolve gradually” (*ibid.*: 49). In the authors’ view, this implies that donors should avoid putting pressure on citizens’ groups to increase in scale too rapidly.

6.7 Finally, it is important to note that scaling up often entails trade-offs in terms of participation and effectiveness (Uphoff et al., 1998). The scaling up of the dairy cooperative system in India, for example, occurred through the creation of organizational structures characterized by lower levels of members’ participation compared to that experienced in the ‘original’ structure developed in Gujarat

over the prior two decades (*ibid.*). In the context of Participatory Budgeting, Schneider and Goldfrank (2002) point to the same kind of trade-off. Scaling-up Participatory Budgeting at the state level required administrative innovations that allowed a greater number of people to participate, but that created costs for the quality of participation. In addition, scaled up CBD/CDD interventions cannot be expected to be as effective as their small scale precursors (Korten, 1980). All programs reviewed by Krishna et al. (1997) had lost some of their effectiveness and quality in the scaling up process.

## **EFFICIENCY**

6.8 A major challenge in assessing the efficiency of CBD/CDD interventions is methodological: how do you assess benefits and costs? Though a number of studies in the literature point to the cost effectiveness of CBD/CDD-type interventions, only a few of them are based on quantitative analysis, though it is difficult to assess the robustness of their findings. Hoddinott et al.'s (2001: 24) study finds that *de facto* participation – i.e. when communities make decisions – lowered the ratio of project to local wages, increased the labor intensity of projects that provided community infrastructure, and lowered the cost of creating employment and of transferring funds to poor individuals. Their study also finds that community participation did not increase the cost overruns or the ratio of training to employment created, except for environmental improvement activities. Uphoff and Wijayarathna (2000) estimated that the overall rate of return of Gal Oya Water Management Project in Sri Lanka, measured four years after the project had been completed, was between 14 and 24 percent. They also argue that improvements in productivity were largely attributable to the existence of farmer organizations, the creation of which cost between five and ten percent of total project expenditure. Other studies provide quantitative evidence on the efficiency of participatory interventions, though their analyses appear less rigorous. On the basis of a study of 48 World Bank supported projects, Schmidt (1996) argues that participation increases efficiency. Similarly, in the context of World Bank-funded CDD projects in Northeast Brazil, Van Zyl et al. (2000) argue that cost-effectiveness was greater under the most decentralized and participatory delivery mechanism made available by the project.

6.9 A number of different measures enable CBD/CDD-type interventions to contain their costs. First, the introduction of cost-sharing arrangements, which require communities to contribute in cash, kind or labor toward project implementation and maintenance (Koopman et al., 2001). A number of studies in the literature show that such contribution can be fairly substantial in terms of the share of total project cost. Kent and Rimarachin's (1994) study on public works in Peru finds that community contribution varied between 7 and 47 percent, and was on average 20 percent of total project costs. Isham and Kahkonen (2002) find that community contribution to water service projects in Sri Lanka amounted to 43 percent of total construction costs – well above the required 20 percent. Similarly, Parker and Skytta (2000) find that communities generally contributed more than 20 percent to capital costs. Another cost-saving measure adopted by CBD/CDD-type interventions is employing rural residents instead of educated and more costly bureaucrat (Conning and Kevane, 2001). According to Gibson and Marks (1995) this practice has allowed many African wildlife departments that cannot afford additional civil servants to enlarge their scout force. It is also argued that community participation contains project cost by creating “an atmosphere in which fraud becomes difficult”, which reduces the likelihood of misuse of funds (Koopman, et al. 2001: 31; Kolavalli and Kerr, 2002).

6.10 Finally, assessing the efficiency of CBD/CDD-type interventions requires computing the cost to the funding institution of undertaking such interventions. We found only one study that carried out such analysis. Hentschel (1994) compares the cost of Bank-supported participatory projects with a Bank wide control group of projects and concludes that participatory projects increase preparation and supervision costs between 10 and 15 percent. The author, however, also point out that

participatory approaches “(...) can turn out to be the least-cost solution when putting project quality and sustainable development first” (ibid.: 2).

#### **ENSURING A ‘FAIR DEAL’ FOR THE POOR**

6.11 The literature reviewed draws attention to the unequal distribution of the costs and benefits of participatory initiatives between the poor and the better-offs. In the context of irrigation schemes in Tanzania, Koopman et al. (2001) find that while landowners were the main beneficiaries, they did not shoulder a greater share of the costs. Instead, the net costs borne by tenants were significantly higher, for they were not only required to put in as much free labor as landowners, but also ended up paying higher rents, as the project increased the value of land. In the context of participatory forestry, Kumar (2002a) and Brown et al. (2002) find that the equal distribution of forest products lead to gross inequalities between wealthy and poor households, as the former received more than they needed while the latter received less than they required. Similarly, Banarjee et al., (1997: 12) argue that “(...) the cost-sharing formulas used in some [World] Bank forestry projects have been so arbitrary that benefits are not commensurate with stakeholders’ costs or actual returns expected from different forestry treatment and resources”. The social cost-benefit analysis of JFM arrangements in India undertaken by Kumar (2002b) corroborates these findings. The author finds that the decrease in net benefits from JFM forests compared to non-JFM forests affected the landless and marginal farmers the most. The latter suffer a loss of up to 45-50 percent compared to a mere 6 percent for large farmers. In addition the author notes that the disparity in the costs borne by different household classes becomes more acute when user fee charges are taken into account.

6.12 The costs of participatory interventions are also unequally distributed along the gender divide (Cleaver, 2000; Ribot, 1995). In the context of watershed development in India, Seeley et al. (2000) find that women often contributed with free labor, while men only got involved when labor was remunerated. In the context of forestry projects, Agarwal (2001; 2000a; 2000b) points out that while the cost of forgone forest use falls disproportionately on women, they often have little influence over the framing of rules on forest use.

6.13 Inequality in the distribution of benefits from participatory interventions also stems from the ways in which the revenues generated are used by communities themselves. In the context of community-based natural resource management Shackleton et al. (2002) find that often revenues finance development projects that benefits the better-offs in the community. Similarly, in the context of participatory forestry, Kumar (2002a) and Agarwal (2000a) find that the funds generated from user fees were often used to build temples and organize community feasts, which contributed to the reproduction of the cultural and political capital of the more influential members in the village, but offer little compensatory benefits to the poor.

6.14 State capture of the benefits from participatory initiatives has also been found to limit community gains. Gibson and Marks (1995) estimate that only about 2 percent of the gross profits from sport hunting reached rural communities. Sarin (2003: 30) argues that “(...) in the case of well-stocked forests, the forestry department retain[ed] the right over 90 percent of the income from timber, even from community forests within revenue village boundaries”. Similarly, Shanckleton et al. (2002) note that in India, the Forest Department often claimed more than half of the income from timber even when they played no role in protecting the harvested trees. In southern China, after paying taxes, harvesting and transport costs, local communities were often left with only a third of the final sale price of timber (ibid.).

6.15 Finally, it is important to note that requiring communities to contribute toward project cost might create hardships for some community members. In Nicaragua, the need of school councils’ to raise money in order to make autonomous schools work, led to a situation in which the councils harassed parents for support regardless of their financial ability (Gershberg, 1999). In addition, as

mentioned in section 2, requiring communities to make financial contribution towards the project may have exclusionary effects.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

6.16 Assessing the sustainability of CBD/CDD-type interventions requires some clarifications as to what we are to look at. Is it the sustainability of project-induced community organizations, or the sustainability of project outputs/outcomes? While these two dimensions of sustainability are separate from one another, they are interrelated, as sustainable community organizations are expected to ensure sustainable project outputs/outcomes. Based on statistical and qualitative analysis of field level data, Sara and Katz's (1999) study on rural water projects finds that the existence of water committees or other community organizations affects overall sustainability of a water system. Similarly, in their analysis of the Gal Oya irrigation system in Sri Lanka, Uphoff and Wjyaratna (2000) find that the persistence of effective farmers organizations, promoted 13 years before, had allowed farmers to attain an above average harvest during a dry season. However, project outputs/outcomes can also be sustained through other means than community organizations' efforts (Alsop et al., 2002). In the context of the World-Bank funded Mali Rural Water Supply Project, Parker and Skytta's (2000) find that while in most villages water committees had ceased to function once the infrastructure was installed, more than 90 percent of the pumps they surveyed were operational, largely thanks to follow up support provided by government agencies.

6.17 Creating sustainable community-level organizations represents a great challenge for CBD/CDD-type initiatives. Oftentimes, once project implementation is over, these organizations cease to function and in time disappear altogether (Manikutty, 1998). Some authors argue that community-level organizations will only be sustainable if the benefits group members derive from the group exceed the costs that participation entail (Subramanian et al., 1997; Banarjee et al., 1997). However, this may not be sufficient. As Alsop et al. (2002: 14) argue, community-level organizations may fail to become sustainable even when benefits outweigh costs, if group members view them as "a means of accessing individual, short-term benefits, rather than as mechanisms of cooperation for long-term shared benefits". The process through which community groups are created clearly has a bearing on the ways in which their members perceive them and engage in them. Alsop et al. (2002) found that group formation responded primarily to the incentive system of project staff rather than to the group's needs, and that groups were often established "more on paper than in practice and emphasis appear[ed] to be placed on delivery of short term benefits" (ibid.: 27).

6.18 The financial viability of community-based management is an important factor for the sustainability of project outputs, as communities will ultimately be responsible for the operation and maintenance of project outputs. While the introduction of user fees is widely regarded as necessary for attaining financial viability, this might not be sufficient (van Zyl et al., 1995; Kleemeier, 2000). As Parker and Skytta (2000) point out communities often find it difficult to finance replacement parts for the equipment installed by the project. Moreover, the costs that participatory approaches entail for communities – both in terms of time and financial resources – might be too high and hence unsustainable in the long-term (Yacoob and Walker in Kleemeier, 2000; Meinzen-Dick et al., 1997). As Kleemeier's (2000) study of the Malawi rural piped water program found community groups were largely successful in maintaining small rural schemes many years after completion, whilst ensuring the sustainability of larger schemes that required technical input and financing was beyond the community's reach. A number of studies argue that the community cannot and should not be expected to ensure the sustainability of project outputs solely by relying on local-level resources, and that sustainability does not necessarily imply self-sustenance (Subramanian et al., 1997; Farrington and Lobo, 1998). Rather, the availability of external support plays a critical role for attaining sustainability (Gonzales, 2000; Meinzen-Dick, et al., 1997; Farrington and Lobo, 1998). Consequently, the central issue should be to "identify what types of interactions and assistance are

required for long-term viability” (Subramanian et al., 1997: xii). Of particular relevance here are interactions with government agencies, local government units and civil society organizations (Baumann, 1998; Turton, 1998; Meinzen-Dick et al., 1997).

6.19 Finally, devising appropriate exit strategies is critical for attaining sustainability. Handing over is a process rather than an event, and it should be considered as a project phase in its own right (Strechan, 1997; IRC, 2002). Many projects, however, find it difficult to design exit strategies well in advance (Farrington et al., 1999; Turton and Farrington, 1999). Training community members and community-level organizations is regarded as an important element of an exit strategy (Strechan, 1997). Based on statistical analysis of field level data, Sara and Katz (1999) find that training household members and water committees improved sustainability as it provided them with the knowledge and the capacity to operate and maintain the system on their own. However, when community organizations are elected bodies, training may have limited effect given the high turn-over of trained members (Strachan, 1997).

## **DONOR ISSUES**

6.20 The literature reviewed draws attention to two main donor related issues in the context of CBD/CDD-type interventions. First, a number of studies argue against the tendency of donor agencies to set up new and semi-autonomous institutions that replace partner country structures, with the view of creating a direct line of accountability (Shepherd, 1998; Forster, 1998). Instead, donors should invest in the strengthening of existing state institutions, and aim to improve their effectiveness and efficiency, through support for capacity building at all levels, and the strengthening of monitoring and strategic planning (Turton and Farrington, 1998). Bypassing existing institutions and ministry is problematic not only because it misses the opportunity to strengthen the capacities of partner countries, but also because it weakens them in the process (Franks, 1998). The second issue to which the literature draws attention is the need for greater donor coordination (Blackburn et al., 2000; Forster, 1998). This is advocated in order to improve the efficiency and sustainability of development interventions, as well as to increase primary stakeholder participation (Absalom et al., 1995; Blackburn et al., 2000; Forster, 1998). Moreover, it is argued that a lack of donor coordination might constraint attempts to scale up CBD/CDD interventions, which in turn has implications for their impact on poverty reduction (Gillespie, 2003).

6.21 While in recent years a broad consensus has emerged amongst main donor agencies on the need for greater coordination of their activities, coordination on the ground continues to be limited (Kumar, 2002a; Forster, 1998). Michener’s (1998) study on participatory non-formal education in Burkina Faso maintains that development agencies competed with each other to work in ‘motivated’ villages, where promoting participation was easier. Forster (1998: 20) points to the ‘inflation’ of committees in Western African villages and describes it as “the grotesque effects of fragmented and single-eyed outside interventions”. In the context of participatory forestry in Nepal, Kumar (2002a: 4) points out that individual donors have preferred working in particular districts and fields of interventions, which has “put tremendous coordination burden on the government and stretched its limited institutional capacity”.

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