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FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

This guide reflects the current thinking of our group regarding important developments in participatory research methods. The questions are arranged to cover the significant aspects of a participatory research activity and the "surrounding conditions" which significantly affect the outcome of research:

- background of the situation, including time, place, politics, economics
- origins
- people involved
- purpose of the activity, goals and methods
- values and assumptions
- major changes
- reflections.

We suggest that you read over all the material before answering specific questions. Details are important: whenever possible, provide examples, quotations, or other grounded impressions.

Purposes of the framework:

- 1) to assist in the process of reflection on work completed or ongoing;
- 2) to assess direction, point of view, possible outcomes;
- 3) to evaluate participation, and factors which hinder or promote it;
- 4) to assist in planning further activities;
- 5) to provide a common frame of reference in discussions of participatory research
- 6) to provide a basis for learning from each other's work;
- 7) to assist in theoretical analysis;
- 8) to present this viewpoint to those in other disciplines;
- 9) to provide a cross-reference of materials for other workers in participatory research.

Were there other ways in which you found this framework useful?

We encourage the exchange of the results of this analysis: share it with the group involved, with us, and with other analysts. Criticism and comments on this framework are welcome.

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APPENDIX B.1. A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

I CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH ACTIVITY

A. Demographic

1. What groups and individuals are involved?
2. Which of these (if any) are new/temporary participants in the context (e.g., consultants, visiting officials)?
3. Which are seen as professional, that is, having long-term, systematic training in a discipline?
4. At what "levels" does each party normally work, e.g., national, regional, local?
5. What are the major historical factors which influenced the makeup of each?
6. What are the important structural (organizational) links between groups and individuals?
7. If possible, summarize the relationships among them in a visual manner (sociogram, charts, diagrams).

B. Physical Conditions

1. What are the major historical factors which determined the present relationship of groups and individuals to the environment?
2. What sorts of control of land, movement, resources, etc., do each of these have?
3. What environmental factors have a major influence upon the relationships of various groups and individuals?

C. Time and Schedule Factors

1. What are the beginning and ending dates of the activity? Specify if the project is on-going.
2. What are the major events in the activity and their dates?
3. What historical conditions are contributing to the timing and the duration of the activity?
4. Which groups and individuals have control over the formal planning of the timing of the activity?

5. Which do not have formal control, but have significant influence anyway?
6. Does the timing of the activity seem to be hindering some aspects of the research process?
7. Does the timing seem to be augmenting other aspects?

D. Political Factors

1. What historical conditions contributed to the current political stance of the groups and individuals?
2. What are the major formal political influences which the groups and individuals are having upon the activity?
3. What are the major informal influences?
4. Are there any major internal political issues of the groups which are influencing the activity?
5. If you are a participant, do you have any public or private political intentions in relation to the activity? Are there any perceived intentions on the part of other participants in the activity?
6. What political relationships between groups or individuals are having an effect upon the activity?
7. If possible, describe these in "horizontal" or "vertical" terms, such as across organizational, or national, regional, local lines.
8. If possible, summarize the political positions and alignments of the participants across important issues in some visual manner.

E. Economic Factors

1. What were (historical) the major influences upon the present economic positions of the participants?
2. What economic forces are currently operating upon the activity?
3. What sort of economic influence does each group and individual have in the activity presently?
4. Is this influence on a local, regional, or national level?
5. What are the important horizontal and vertical economic relationships among the participants which are affecting the activity?
6. Is it possible to summarize these visually?

F. Origins of the Project

1. What social conditions contributed to the beginnings of the project, e.g., "mass" or community conditions, initiations by a specific group, suggestion or decision by an individual?
2. Were there "outside" participants? (See section I-A-2).
3. In what order did "outside" participants become involved?
4. How? (e.g., invitation by insiders, solicitation by outsiders)

G. Costs

1. How much time, money, and energy are the participants spending?
2. Are there problems distributing these resources? (bad weather, delayed funding, sickness)
3. If special equipment is needed, does it have a "cost influence" (gain or loss of time, repair costs, group disputes over use or possession)?
4. If there is any major form of credit involved, describe it (start-up loans, collateral).

II. PURPOSE OF THE ACTIVITY

A. Problem

1. If the problem was clear at the beginning of the activity, what is (was) it?
2. Do the participants generally agree upon it?
3. If not, what are the reasons?
4. If the problem was not clear at the beginning, what is the general manner in which the problem is being discussed and clarified (e.g., small groups, mass meetings, executive representative meetings)?
5. Do participants agree on why the activity is being undertaken?

B. Goals and Means to Goals

1. What are the agreed-upon goals of the activity?
2. Do all participants agree upon them?
3. If not, what are the reasons?
4. What are the agreed-upon means to these goals?
5. Do all participants agree upon them?

6. If not, what are the reasons?

III VALUES AND ASSUMPTIONS

1. What seem to be the basic values and assumptions upon which the goals and means are based in terms of the following areas?
 - a) Economic - ("Decentralized economic development is more efficient in the long run.")
 - b) Political - ("This residents' group needs more responsiveness from local politicians.")
 - c) Educational - ("Increased literacy rate will help prevent social problems.")
 - d) Social - ("Knowledge of the extended family ties strengthens structure of squatter community.")
2. If there were/are any major differences among participants about these, were/are they
 - a) obvious or hidden?
 - b) "fixed" or "negotiated" over time?
3. How have/do they affect the activity?

IV METHOD

A. Roles

Identify the relevant roles of the groups and individuals in relation to the following areas of decision-making.

1. establishing the goals;
2. determining the means to the goals;
3. source of funding;
4. controlling the funds;
5. deciding upon the relevance of the information;
6. deciding how information will be gathered;
7. gathering/creating information;
8. analyzing the information;
9. determining how/if results get distributed;

10. deciding upon the practical action resulting from the analysis;
11. involvement in the reflection upon the consequences of the action taken.

B. Practical Aspects of Participating

1. What are the major practical constraints upon people's abilities to participate in the roles mentioned in the last section? (e.g., travel time, family commitments, social expectations, lack of money).
2. What are the participants doing to overcome these constraints?
3. What procedures are used to determine the roles?
4. Which of these greatly promote or hinder participation?
5. What occasions are there, if any, in which participants are able to reflect and criticize what they are doing? Are these planned or spontaneous?
6. Are there points at which participants were/are taking important unexpected initiatives?
7. Describe the overall, formal style of the research process (e.g., information coordinated from a central group; communication among groups on the periphery; results recycled in process).

C. The Role of Academic Information

1. What models, previous studies, etc., are being used in problem-definition, goal-setting, and method-development?
2. How does this material come to be accepted by the participants as legitimate resource material? Can you give incidences?
3. What are the major advantages and disadvantages of using these resources? Can you give incidences?

D. Documentation

1. What general sources of information are being sought? (e.g., group meetings, records, surveys).
2. How were these chosen?
3. If the activity is written up, what is its form?
4. Who was in charge of writing?
5. Do the documenters have a specific political stance?

6. Is the documentation being done on behalf of others? What is their political stance?
7. Do/will the documenters make a clear distinction between descriptive reporting and their own reflections?
8. Do/will they report the reflections of the others involved?

V. MAJOR CHANGES IN THE ACTIVITY OVER TIME

This section is particularly useful if you attempt to describe specific incidences. Reference to earlier sections may be helpful.

1. Are there major changes in the assumptions upon which the definition of the problem was based? Why?
2. Were/are there major shifts in original goals? Why?
3. Were/are there major changes in the assumptions behind the methods used?
4. How did they come about?
5. Are there major changes in the roles of any of the participants?
6. Why did they come about?
7. How is it affecting the activity?
8. Are there major economic or political changes in the condition of the participants? (e.g., unexpected funding cutback, change of director, demands by residents' group, elections)
9. Why are they coming about?
10. How does it affect the activity?

VI RESULTS

1. What is the current status of the activity (e.g., terminated, on hold, extended, assimilated)?
2. At what point, if any, will the project lose its "special" status?
3. What practical action resulted from the activity?
4. What specific skills were acquired by participants in the activity?
5. Which of these are specific research-related skills?
6. What less tangible skills, attitudes, values remain and are probably a result of the activity?

7. What actual processes or routines, if any, allowed for skills to be "institutionalized" among the participants?
8. Can you summarize the shifts in political or economic power, if any, as compared to the period prior to the activity?

VII OVERALL REFLECTION UPON IMPLICATIONS OF THE ACTIVITY

1. What effect did political and economic structures have on the activity?
2. What incidences or routines in the activity consistently hindered or promoted participation?
3. What are the overall limitations of the method used, in attempting social change?
4. What specific evidence links the method to the changes seen? Could the changes have been caused by something else?
5. What conditions peculiar to this situation would limit the usefulness of these methods in other situations (e.g., atypical groups, pilot project)?
6. If you were a participant, what were the significant problems for you?
7. What are the most important lessons which the process and results of this activity hold for others?

VIII UNRESOLVED ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

Additional comments, observations, and questions not covered previously about the activity; how the framework could be improved for your use?

IX KEY WORDS, DEFINITIONS, AND CATEGORIES

1. Define any terms or phrases, especially of a technical nature.
2. List any words or phrases which help you to classify this project in comparing it with others.

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