

Participatory tools for influencing health systems

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This session:

How academic

or

practical/skills based?



This session seeks to :

- provide an overview of the value of participatory approaches and community participation
- explore the degrees & levels of participation according to the participation ladder
- challenge each other to consider some of the key issues and implications when we talk participatory approaches that influence health



Exercise: Head or Tail?



HEAD

or

TAIL?





HEAD

or

TAIL?





HEAD

or

TAIL?





HEAD

or

TAIL?





HEAD

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TAIL?





HEAD

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HEAD

or

TAIL?





HEAD

or

TAIL?





HEAD

or

TAIL?







HEAD

or

TAIL?





HEAD

or

TAIL?





**Congratulations
you win**



Now lets talk!

How do we define:

1. Community participation?
2. Participatory Approaches?



Community participation

Definitions of community participation range from people *passively receiving benefits* from health/disability programmes to people *actively making & implementing decisions* about programme policies and activities.



The challenges

- defining the term '*community participation*'
- gaining and sustaining broad-based community participation
- failing to recognize the political implications of the concept of community participation for health.



Participatory tools and approaches



- Introduced in the 1970s and have become central tools for community development
- Applied in a variety of contexts and sectors, including livestock management, health systems, watershed management, urban sanitation provision, impact assessments, village health promotion, gender awareness and building micro-credit organizations etc
- Some of the current champions of participatory approaches include Robert Chambers, Cooke, Sen Amartya, Bill and Uma Kothari



Evolution of the methodologies

- accelerating evolution of participatory methodologies in development practice since the mid 1970s
- One part of this has been a sequence known by its acronyms
 - rapid rural appraisal (RRA),
 - participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and,
 - participatory learning and action (PLA).



Other approaches

- Participatory Poverty Assessments
- Participatory Action Research
- Appreciative Inquiry
- And many many others with different names, acronyms and titles
- All these continue to be practised and are in various ways complementary.



What is the value of
participatory tools and
approaches to health
systems?
(activity)



How far do the
communities really
participate?



Degrees of Participation

- **Functional or Passive Perspective** – participation is seen as a means of accessing information from a variety of stakeholders so as to support more effective implementation of a project, policy or program.
- **Rights-based or Proactive Perspective** – view participation as a means of enabling and empowering less powerful groups in society to engage in decision-making and exercise their democratic rights.



Some theoretical frameworks

- Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969)
- A ladder of citizen participation (Burns et al, 1994)
- A continuum of involvement (Wilcox, 1999)



Levels of participation

The 5 interconnected levels are:

- Information
- Consultation
- Deciding together
- Acting together
- Supporting individual community initiatives



Activity



Implications

- Participatory approaches depend on mind-sets /attitudes - can we really train people to be participatory?
- Agencies promoting participation need to be participatory themselves -- **Walk the talk!!**
- Be prepared for the consequences of participation: uncertainty, politicization, loss of “control”, etc.
- Consider issues around power, capacity, the process and meaning/s of communities itself.



THANK YOU

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