

<b>Module 2:</b>	<b>Social dimensions of land use and management</b>
<b>Session 1:</b>	<b>Participatory and socially sustainable land use and management</b>
<b>Speaker:</b>	<b>Erika STYGER, The World Bank</b>

## Issue Notes

by Erika STYGER

The World Bank, Washington DC

### 1. Introduction

More than 1 billion people – two-thirds of them women – live in extreme poverty on less than \$1 per day (OECD 2001). Transforming agriculture is a key element in achieving poverty reduction in many of the poorest countries, since most of the poor live in rural areas and depend largely on agriculture for their livelihoods. The poor often live in degraded environments and, particularly in rural areas, may contribute to the further degradation of these environments (Smyth and Dumanski, 1993). Thus, poverty and environmental degradation are often intrinsically linked. Poverty alleviation and economic development efforts should therefore optimally be integrated with improved management of the natural resource base. Agricultural development is most often complex, and there has been much evidence of failures in agricultural projects, especially when they depended on external inputs and applied high subsidies. Yet we know that agricultural development efforts can be successful when people at the grassroots are well organized or are

encouraged to form groups, and when their knowledge is sought and utilized during planning and implementation. Thus the human and social organizational dimensions are vital for achieving long-term economic benefits and for the sustainable management of the natural resources (Pretty, 2002).

### 2. What is Sustainable Land Management (SLM)?

Land management has direct impacts on agricultural sustainability, biodiversity, the environment, inland and coastal fisheries, plantation and natural forest productivity, and water supplies. Sustainable land use and management tries to make best use of nature's goods and services without damaging the environment. This can be done by integrating natural processes into food production processes, (such as nutrient cycling, nitrogen fixation, integrated pest management etc.), and in particular, it makes better use of farmers' knowledge and skills, thereby improving their self-reliance and capacities (Pretty, 2002). The definition of Smyth and Dumanski (1993) of

SLM is: “Sustainable land management combines technologies, policies, and activities aimed at integrating socio-economic principles with environmental concerns so as to simultaneously maintain or enhance production, reduce the level of production risk, protect the potential of natural resources and prevent (buffer against) soil and water degradation, be economically viable, and be socially acceptable.” Dumanski et al., (1998) also refer to SLM as a knowledge-based procedure. It helps guide decisions on land management, land use intensification, combined with improved environmental management.

### 3. SLM and the World Bank

SLM is central to the World Bank mission. The World Bank is committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). More specifically SLM is directly relevant for Goal 1 *Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger*, and Goal 7 *Ensure environmental sustainability*. The interrelationship between poverty and environmental degradation is recognized through the *Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development (ESSD) Network* within the World Bank. Mainstreaming sustainability within all Bank activities is the mandate of the ESSD network. The role, function and potential of SLM for Bank operations is currently reassessed in an Economic and Sector Work study within ARD (Agriculture and Rural Development Department) which will provide conceptual and operational guidance for mainstreaming SLM in agriculture, natural resource management and rural development programs. Since 2003, the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) has created a new operational program (OP 15) for Sustainable Land Management.

The social dimension in SLM is central. To study and integrate the social dimension into development activities, the World Bank

has identified five entry points for social analysis. They are: 1) social diversity and gender, 2) institutions, rules and behavior, 3) stakeholders, 4) participation, and 5) social risk (Social Analysis Sourcebook, The World Bank, 2003). All these entry points are relevant for sustainable land management. In this paper we focus on participation. But participation is inherently linked to all other four entry points. For instance, with the question *who is participating?* the entry points of social diversity and stakeholders are directly affected, or *what are the outcomes of participation?* social risk, institutions, rules and behavior are automatically addressed.

### 4. Participation in sustainable land management

*Participation is the process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them* (The World Bank Participation Sourcebook). If some stakeholders are less able to participate, it may increase existing inequalities on the basis of gender, ethnicity, or other determinants of status and access. Differences in access to information, resources, and land ownership have to be carefully included in the stakeholder analysis of participants. Although participation has been a central concept in the development world for the past 10 to 15 years, with many projects having mainstreamed participatory methods within their project procedures (e.g. Participatory Rural Appraisal or PRA), many outcomes have not been as satisfactory as expected and hoped for. The reasons are multiple. Among others, many projects have failed to achieve true participation from the targeted groups such as the poor, marginalized groups, the women etc.

## **Reaching the poor**

The assumptions that development efforts will automatically trickle-down and reach the poor have often proven to be wrong. The poor face many barriers on a number of different levels that prevent them from having a real stake in development activities. Reaching and engaging the poor requires special arrangements and efforts by the sponsors and designers that go *beyond* those used to involve government officials and other relatively powerful stakeholders in participatory processes. The poor include often people in remote and impoverished areas, and include people marginalized by virtue of their race and ethnicity. Women and children make up a large proportion of the very poor. Because the poor are generally less educated and less organized than other more powerful stakeholders, because they are more difficult to reach, and because the institutions that serve them are often weak, interventions targeting the poor must often be small, context-specific, and resource-intensive (The World Bank Participation Sourcebook).

A great deal about reaching the poor and engaging them in their own development lies in the abilities to learn with a “bottom-up” approach from the poor what their needs and priorities are. This approach should engage poor people and build their confidence, knowledge base, and capability for action. Getting the participation of the poor involves a lot more than finding the right technique. It requires strengthening the organizational and financial capacities of the poor so that they can act for themselves. Ideally, it represents a continuum along which the poor are progressively empowered.

## **Gender equality in participation**

Among the poor, women are over-represented. Many issues and constraints

related to participation are gender-specific and stem from the fact that men and women play different roles, have different needs, and face different constraints on a number of different levels. Because of such differences, we cannot assume that women will automatically benefit from efforts to involve poor people in project design and implementation. On the contrary, experience has made clear that, unless specific steps are taken to ensure that women participate and benefit, they usually do not. Systemic gender biases may exist in the form of (a) customs, beliefs, and attitudes that confine women mostly to the domestic sphere, (b) women's economic and domestic workloads that impose severe time burdens on them, and (c) laws and customs that impede women's access to land, credit, productive inputs, employment, education, information, or medical care. These differences affect men's and women's ability and incentives to participate in economic and social development activities (The World Bank, 2001).

Because gender planning is part of the overall planning process, it is critical that the integration of gender concerns occurs in early in policy formulation, analytical work, and project preparation. It is not really necessary to create an additional component for gender to a project but the dimension can be addressed within various activities and phases of the project by simply insisting including the additional question of gender related differences.

## **5. Improving participatory and socially sustainable land management**

Raising agricultural output sustainably, and improve people's livelihood will depend on the establishment of approaches and capabilities that encourage personal and social learning. Technological change is always a complex process with biophysical and socio-economic aspects. It is not just the introduction of a technical physical new

aspect but rather results from changes in the thinking and activities of the individuals, households and communities as well as market and organizational relationships.

### ***Creating and working with innovations***

Improving land management depends on the creation and management of knowledge, innovations and technologies, wisely integrated into the current farming system and ultimately translating into beneficial outcomes for farmers while protecting the natural resource base. The basic concept of what an innovation is, is not very clear depending on who is using the term and how it is agreed upon. There is no generally accepted definition used by agricultural scientists and extensionists, and their understanding of an innovation may much differ from a farmer's perspective, of what is new and what can be qualified to be an innovation (Nielson, 2001). Identifying farmer innovations is not easy and straightforward because farmers are not necessarily aware that they are experimenting and innovating. For most farmers, the process of generating knowledge through experimentation is part of their everyday agricultural activities, not separated from them as it is in the scientific knowledge system (Reij and Waters-Bayer, 2001). Extension agents and researchers are often focusing on their own technologies and are not used and trained to pay attention to the on-going, local innovations. In addition, women's innovations are often overlooked by male extension agents. Creating awareness for farmer innovations, demands a *shift in perception and attitude*. Farmers innovations can be 'discovered' through direct field observation, targeted interviews with farmer groups and with key informants, through contests, and invitation to self-identification through radio stations among others.

### ***Old and new paradigm for SLM improvement***

Previously, new and better knowledge was assumed to originate from modern agricultural science and that development follows from transmitting such knowledge. Technologies were transferred from the research stations through the extension service to farmers. Emphasis was put on teaching about the new technologies and providing farmers with technical support on how to adopt these technologies.

In contrast, the participatory and socially sustainable land management approach as part of the new paradigm involves many actors in a multi-polar process of knowledge generation, with farmers and other practitioners acting as partners with researchers in this process. Farmers are encouraged to take initiatives rather than being a recipient. Learning from each other and interacting with each other is the way of creating new knowledge rather than through teaching. The relationship among actors becomes circular rather than linear (Pretty and Uphoff, 2002).

Transfer of technologies designed on research stations have often failed to be adopted by farmers. But what is often seen as failure can be a success, when farmers have integrated components of a technology into the farming system. Technologies were instead of *adopted as package*, *adapted* to farmers' specific needs and abilities to manage and benefit from them. A good example is the agroforestry technology of alley cropping where rows of shrubs were intentionally planted to provide green manure for the crops. In Rwanda for instance, farmers didn't trim hedgerows in the specific intervals as researchers prescribed, but adapted the cutting of leaves according to their own schedule and fed the leaves to goats. The long branches were cut and used as poles for climbing

beans. Both uses were initially not foreseen by researchers.

The process by which farmers learn about technical alternatives is crucial. As long as adoption is the goal and criterion for success, small modifications of technologies that would be more beneficial will remain untapped. Where the process of technology development and diffusion is participatory, on the other hand, and enhances farmers' capacity to learn about their farms and their resources, the foundations for redesign – drawing on both social and human capital – have been laid. Thus rather as a prescription of technological packages, sustainable land management options should be offered as principles, methods, components, and as a basket of choices. SLM is more a process of learning, than the prescription of certain sets of technologies, practices or policies. Ultimately, technologies themselves are not sustainable. What needs to be sustainable is the social process of innovation itself (Pretty and Uphoff, 2002).

### ***Indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge***

New development ideas should be inspired by farmers' needs and priorities. Farmers' knowledge and practices should provide the starting point of any intervention from where farmers and researchers work as partners. Indigenous knowledge can provide deep insights in local conditions in respect to climate and natural resources (soils, water, vegetation, pest and diseases). Indigenous knowledge allows informing on the interaction between the natural resources and farmers land management. These insights can be essential in understanding degradation or restoration dynamics within a farming system. It allows recognizing what farmers' measures and their effectiveness are, for instance, in combating degradation. Often farmers' knowledge alone does not suffice to solving all their problems. This is

where scientific knowledge can play a crucial role, complement and contribute to improving land management. The role of a scientist can be to 1) propose elements for testing, 2) advise farmers how to design simple experiments, 3) explain reasons for farmers findings and thus help farmers understand better the principles that were driving the outcome, 4) assist in generating 'hard' data to validate findings in conventional scientific terms in order to convince scientists, policy-makers or donors, and 5) to analyze the processes.

### ***Implications for institutions and policies***

Policies and institutions need to be redesigned to create an environment that allows all stakeholders-especially poor and disadvantaged ones-to become enabled to influence and share control over development initiatives. This can be for instance 1) building community capacity (understand role and potentials of community organizations, build on existing structures), 2) taking larger social circumstances into consideration when making decision of project development, 3) developing group extension models, 4) develop learning as a social process, and 5) benefit from decentralization and privatization efforts. They can offer a wide choice of services, and can make technical support more demand oriented such as experienced with community based natural resources management (CBNRM), social forestry, and community driven development (CDD) among others.

### ***Principles of social interactions***

For an effective relationship in a participatory research and extension process, a certain number of principals of social interaction apply such as reciprocity, mutual respect, transparency, equity and fairness in sharing resources and responsibilities. These principals represent the core of the new approach without which

the participation approach risks to remain theory.

### Questions for Discussion

- 1) What are the challenges to improve participation in SLM?
- 2) To achieve true participation what are further implications at policy, institutional, financial, economic, scientific level?
- 3) Take home question for every workshop participant: *What are concrete measures she/he could initiate to achieve better participation of the target groups in SLM?*

### 6. References

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Also on-line:  
<http://www.worldbank.org/socialanalysissourcebook/>

#### On-line documents

The World Bank Participation Sourcebook  
<http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sbhome.htm>

Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work: A Strategy for Action The World Bank, January 2002  
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDER/Resources/strategypaper.pdf>

[Participation Methods, Approaches and Tools](#)  
Informal Working Group on Participatory Approaches and Methods to Support Sustainable Livelihoods & Food Security (IWG-PA) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Database with over 70 participation field tools.  
[http://www.fao.org/Participation/ft\\_find.jsp](http://www.fao.org/Participation/ft_find.jsp)