

Summary of Observations

Workshop on:

PROSPECTS OF SCALING UP PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES IN RURAL AFGHANISTAN

Facilitated by : Robert Chambers

MRRD, PRAXIS and ACTON AID

Kabul, Afghanistan

23 – 24 May 2006

Preface

This report is prepared by Dr. Shamsul Bahria Ahmed (Senior Researcher on Economic Development, AIRD) regarding the workshop on Prospectus of scaling up participatory approaches in rural Afghanistan, held on 23rd-24th May 2006, facilitated by Dr. Robert Cambers.

This views expressed in this report are those the author and don't necessarily reflect the views of facilitators or organizers. We greatly appreciate her efforts and are looking forward for your comments and recommendations.

Dr. Mohammad Hossein Emadi

Senior Policy Advisor

Director of AIRD

Summary of Observations

Participative Approach to Development

Participation is a process through which Stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affects them (World Bank). The main tenet of participative approach to development is that the community and stakeholders are collaborators at every stage of project development. Hence participative methods are meant to generate a sense of ownership of decisions and actions. The essence of ownership is that the development process is driven by recipients from planning, design, implementation, monitoring and project evaluation. This approach ensures the widest possible participation of the poor and beneficiaries of development projects. This is in contrast to the alternative model of development where project conceptualization, objectives and design are imposed on the community by external agents. Participatory approach to development will challenge perceptions, attitudes, agendas and can be a rich and illuminating source of contextual insights to determine development outcomes. In particular, participative approach allows a community to:

- Express and analyze the realities of their lives
- Plan and design the actions needed to change their life situations
- Monitor and evaluate the results of their own programmes

This will ensure commitments by the community to make each project a success. Through this experience, communities will be better agents of change.

Relevance to Afghanistan

Relevance of participatory approach in the early stages of rural development in the case of Afghanistan may be significant in two fundamental aspects of its current development phase:

- Democratization and inclusion: The informality of small groups such as CDCs is suitable to the poor's' scarce organizational experience and low literacy levels. Small group environment is also ideal for the diffusion of collective decision making and leadership skills which can be expanded to bigger groups, communities, provinces, and regions.
- Sustainability: Participatory development increased self-reliance among the poor and the establishment of a network of self-sustaining rural organizations. This can lead to greater efficiencies in the delivery of development services, stimulating economic growth in rural areas, enlarging domestic markets and ensuring that rural development is not neglected.

- Other benefits of participatory approach to development: Inclusion of the poor in the development process makes them more receptive and ensures the success of programmes; rural development projects can strengthen rural economic base and capital formation; knowledge of local conditions from the grass root can more effectively facilitate the diagnosis of environmental, social and institutional constraints and the search for solutions among stakeholders.

Evaluation and Recommendation

The participatory workshop was undoubtedly well received by participants. The knowledge generated is rich, voluminous and beneficial to participants and facilitators alike. Overall this workshop has opened the potential to meet the objectives of the participatory approach to development. This is evident from:

The participatory structure and fluidity of the approach to the workshop itself was very effective in engaging participants to think and rethink their experience, approach, perspective achievements and challenges in the rural development of Afghanistan. The need among participants to understand the meaning, method, theory and practice/applicability, to upscale/deepen participatory practices in rural development came high on their agenda. This workshop has also opened the window for new interpretations, understanding and a forum for discussion of related issues such as including the excluded, assessing the institutional capacity and planning mechanisms, scaling up participation, evaluation and monitoring and lessons learned from the development experience of rural Afghanistan.

The session on context Afghanistan succeeded in opening up controversies and raising issues related to the poor and disadvantaged groups and similar cross-cutting themes emerged under the list of challenges faced by Afghanistan on issues relating to women and the excluded such as Kuchis, the disabled, the internationally displaced people, the rural agrarian population/farmers and concern about conflict and the cultural and time loss to Afghanistan. Three areas of major concern arising from the workshop that merits urgent attention are:

1. Insecurity and weapons culture
2. The limited participation of women
3. Sustainability of CDCs

Implications on the Role of AIRD

At this early stage of its inception, AIRD is well positioned within MRRD to manage stakeholder interest (MRRD, FPs, Donors, and research institutions, among others) and to facilitate inter-agency collaboration in rural development. Being anchored by the Ministry allows AIRD to leverage its thrust in applied research, policy development and training to fulfill different levels of stakeholder needs and demands for effective policy/project interventions and delivery mechanisms.

As evident from the workshop, there is a very high level of knowledge among participants and a vast reservoir of knowledge among rural development practitioners in Afghanistan. This reservoir (in different specialized/focus areas) need to be tapped by AIRD to generate its applied research agenda and training to be used as policy input for MRRD in line with the ANDs objective of pro-poor growth. Such a participatory workshop is crucial for stakeholders to engage in the development reality confronting Afghanistan while strengthening inter-agency linkages.

There should be follow-up programmes to generate applied policy research, training, and institutional linkages to foster understanding and solutions to long term socio-economic development issues confronting Afghanistan. Programmes related to the 3 major areas of concern arising from the workshop, insecurity and weapons culture, the limited participation of women and sustainability of CDCs should be undertaken in the immediate term. This immediate action will not only provide much needed policy input for MRRD but will also ensure the continuous generation of research agenda that would feed the long term training and policy direction of the Ministry and could form the nucleus and sustainable framework for a broader role of AIRD as rural development institute for Afghanistan.

Workshop Report: 23 – 24 May 2006

23 May 2006: Morning Session

Introduction: The introductory session by Dr. Chambers set the tone for the informal participatory nature of the workshop with an ice-breaking session. Participants identified themselves based on their country of origin with Afghanistan as a focal point. The majority of participants comprised of Afghan nationals from MRRD with a small group of foreign nationals representing NGOs and FPs. After an informal round of introduction, participants were requested to identify their purpose and expectations following the schedule for the morning of day one.

Purpose and Expectations: This session was facilitated by Anindo Banerjee from PRAXIS. Participants were grouped into clusters and were asked to identify their purpose and expectations in attending this workshop. The purpose and expectations of participants were then listed and grouped for observation. They are listed below in 6 categories:

1. Participation and Participatory Methods

A wide range of expected outcomes were identified which reflected the interest and the need of participants to understand the meaning and method of participatory approach in rural Afghanistan. The list of expectations as outlined by participants is reproduced below:

<p>Participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability systems • Pros and cons of participatory approach • Transform theory into practice • How capacity of rural communities can be improved • Enhance level of rural participation • Analysis of participation • Inhibitors to participation • Community involvement • How to encourage participation • Participation methods • Rural community participation and decision making • Community involvement process • Can development continue 	<p>Participation Methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better knowledge of participatory approach • How to input meaningful participation • Approaches and methods • Urban participation challenges, • To know new methods of participatory approach • Which method is better for Afghanistan • Participation in practice • Understanding participatory method • Acquiring new skills and methodologies in Participatory process
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<p>without participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difference between participation and involvement • Collect information • Communication • Rural development and alternative livelihood 	
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2. Gender and Involving Excluded People

<p>Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to involve the most excluded people in decision making, e.g NSP programmes • Encourage partners/stakeholders to leaving communities to participate • Innovation • Gender participation • Understanding of way in which can move effective participation of women 	<p>Involving Excluded People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues of exclusion and people centered planning process • Encourage community for active participation • Shortest way to give relief to orphanage
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3. Planning and Institutional Framework

<p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to measure input of rural development programmes • Participatory planning • Project identification • Approach to accessibility in agrarian villages • To provide clean water in remote areas 	<p>Institutional framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How CDCs/NSP can remain alive ad sustainable in the future • CDC sustainability • Is NSP a good model or merely a development method • Expand rural linkages • Project implementation
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4. Scaling Up Participatory Approach and Evaluation and Assessment Methods

<p>Scaling up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstreaming Participatory Research (PRA) in development 	<p>Evaluation Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation numbers
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More knowledge about scaling up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortcomings • Monitoring and evaluation • Link data and participation diagnosis • Assess themes of development in Afghanistan
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5. Lessons Learned

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about history of participation practice • Learning from experience • Sharing practical experience • Application

Context Afghanistan: This session was facilitated by Dr. Helena Malykyar from AIRD/MRRD and Tom from PRAXIS. This session aim to contextualize the issues raised in the preceding session within the context of Afghanistan’s history, particularly the experience of conflict and its impact on people. Two questions were posed by Dr. Malikyar within the time line of Afghanistan’s history:

1. Who bore the brunt of different upheavals/conflicts?
2. What were the different impacts and why?

Participants were asked to think about the development experience in Afghanistan within the time line spanning the:

- 1960s or prewar period: eg. centralized/top-down policies and programmes, its impact on people)
- 1978 – 1989: war and occupation: how the population was displaced and people were deprived of normal life, the disintegration of the Afghan State as a service provider.
- 1992-96: Civil war and factionalized conflict during the Mujahideen period; how did that affect people?
- 1996-2000: The Taliban and the change in political order: what were the effects on people in rural and urban areas?
- The experience of development in the last 4 years: are people better or worse?

Participants organized themselves into discussion groups to identify the groups that were most adversely affected in the last 25 years. Group views are reproduced below:

Group 1	Worse off	Why
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women • Farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor education • Poor access to health care • Poor economic participation • No decision making power • Lack of roads and irrigation • High cost of inputs • Weak markets • Lack of fertilizers/seeds • Drought • Lack of disease control • Lack of land title and rehabilitation

Group 2	Worse off	Why
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kuchis • Women • Agricultural sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have not been targeted in any programme and are already vulnerable • Land were mined and the Kuchis had to migrate • Lost of pasture and livestocks because of mines • No will to save, health, education during the war • Drought • Cultural constraints • Poor education • Male dominated • Lost of freedom during the war • Low access to health facility • Most vulnerable • Loss of agricultural land

Group 3	Worse off	Why
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Communities were the main victims • Children • Cultural Loss • Time loss • Business Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete halt in development • 2 generations of children lost their education • Afghans were integrated into foreign cultures

Group 4	Worse off	Why
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone affected by conflict • Women excluded • Taliban was excluded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development was halted • Mass migration of Afghan population • Social dis-integration • Lack of trust among Afghan people • Change in cultural context under the Taliban

Group 5	Worse off	Why
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Afghans suffered during communist and Taliban period • Internationally Displaced People (IDPs) • Refugees • Rural-urban poor • Disabled • Some still excluded at village level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of freedom • Power rest with Russians • Afghans have no voice • No unity, conflict and no trust among Afghans • No consultation among people • Low education for both men and women

Achievements and Challenges: Anindo Banerjee then brought in the list of issues and expectations raised in the earlier session emphasizing the need to contextualize the meaning of participation in key programmes such as the NSP within the historical context outlined by Dr. Malikyar. He pointed out that NSP has clearly set out to address the issue

of “exclusion of poorest and most vulnerable population” (handout 1). Participants were requested to identify the changes brought about by NSP programmes; what are the opportunities available to scale up or to deepen people’s participation in these programmes. This was followed by a breakout session whereby participants organised themselves into groups to discuss common views of the past in order to contextualize future work by identifying achievements and challenges faced by Afghanistan in order to

- address the issues of exclusion and
- to achieve participation of the excluded
- to give scores to the most important achievements and challenges

The list of achievements and challenges and the corresponding scores are reproduced below:

ACHIEVEMENTS	SCORES	CHALLENGES	SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness Confidence building Local capacity to manage development projects 	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insecurity Security Weapon/gun culture 	52
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDCs formation and decision making CDCs formation and local governance Decision making Basic mechanism in place Bottom-up approach enhancement Establishment of local structures 	37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited Participation of Women Voice Female staff Gender equity Outside barriers 	36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability/transparency Promoting accountability NSP as a good model for governance Participatory planning 	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability of CDCs • Access Outreach/community Access to rural remote communities Physical access to rural villages Lack of technological resources Increase service delivery 	25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s Participation Women’s participation in development Participation of women in some programmes is marginalized 	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Knowledge Level Development Education Literacy 	18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Participation Community contribution/local resource mobilization 	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil Rights Equal rights 	17
	10		

<p>Shared decision making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Reach • Infra-Structure built • Open Election/Representation 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of local government 	12
		<p>Sub-national development system</p>	11
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legitimacy of Power 	
		<p>Legitimacy of power structures</p>	10
		<p>Traditional/Illegal power structures</p>	5
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust and Unity 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights Protection 	

23 May 2006: Afternoon Session

The Big-Shift in Development Paradigm

This session was facilitated by Dr. Chambers raising issues around change, the pace of change, is it accelerating and how change is affecting poor people. Therefore as agents of change we need to be up to date with our knowledge and be in touch with poor people and their realities. This is necessary as there is a danger of relying on realities that is not up to date. There are practitioners, donors and policy makers who are trapped in capital cities making decisions and designing policies from capital cities viewpoint often based on out of date information. This group of decision makers often comprised of “uppers” comprising old men at the top of their career who are out of date and out of touch with reality (handout 2).

In order to have a better perception of the reality of the poor, development agents – donors, governments, stakeholders and decision makers - should spend time living with poor communities in order to have a better understanding of their needs. In this way knowledge will be up dated and will enable the design of more appropriate and effective policies. Such participatory approach can avoid policy errors and represent a big shift in the development paradigm. Is Afghanistan in the middle of this shift in development paradigm?

After World War II the development focus was on post-war reconstruction of Europe through the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). The development approach during this period was top down focusing on “things” such as infrastructure, roads and telecommunications. The development blue print is based on pre-determined plans and centralized decision making by policy makers and development experts (handout 3). The paradigm shift occurred in the late 1980s – 1990s within the increasingly complex context of rural reality in relation to identifying development interventions that take into consideration stakeholder needs. This shift to people-centered approach to development targets the poorest of the poor

in a bottom-up approach hence taking into account the reality of the poor in agrarian communities.

Reality and Perceptions: The central question would be how to move from the earlier paradigm to the latter. The development realities and perceptions of those most affected by development interventions therefore counts. Also critical is the power relationship in the development process. Bureaucracy in a top-down development process for instance, requires magnetized people and hence rigid organizations that demands compliance. This may lead to misreporting and misinformation perforating upwards. Therefore there is a need to know the actors participating in each project for example through participatory mapping to identify the poor, the rich, their characteristics and priorities. There are other methods to identify actors such as well-being ranking, and wealth ranking whereby communities are classified from the economic/wealth perspective into rich, middle, poor and poorest categories. Massoud clarified that the NSP identify detail individual characteristics using cluster-base or geographical location. Nonetheless this approach doesn't necessarily bring the poor into the decision making process. Moreover it has been difficult to get the accurate number of the poor. Participants were then asked to join 5 pre-determined groups and to identify their perception of each other and to come up with a group perspective on reality and perception (handout 4). The 5 groups were:

- Women and the Excluded
- CDCs and Local elites
- MRRD
- Facilitating Partners
- Donors

	CDCs and LOCAL ELITES - perception of:
MRRD	Dislike MRRD; interfering in activities of CDCs, should give more power to CDCs; empowerment in terms of planning and project implementation; MRRD is a toy of Donors
Donors	More training for CDCs; top down procedure; delay of grants lead to delay of achievements; lack of sustainable support; ensure continuity of CDC funds; CDC doesn't like to depend of funding therefore require clear strategy for support;lack of donor knowledge of CDCs such as its culture, village; donors should look at global issues not just micro.
Facilitating Partners	Toy of MRRD; good access to communities assistance is short term, good linkages with government – communities and donors; need to increase capacity building for CDCs.
Women	Less representation of women; women are voiceless

	MRRD - perception of:
CDCs and Local Elites	CDCs are helpless, give them what they want; they don't understand issues; not transparent; cant implement project; don't follow MRRD procedure
Donors	Do what they want; afraid of donors, cant do anything without them; don't understand problems
Facilitating Partners	Proposals for money; doesn't facilitate programmes; no expertise; cant implement programmes; reports are sub-standard, late submissions but request for payment; did not implement programme according to guidelines; bottom-up approach, promote women's participation
Women	Don't understand anything, don't need to be in CDCs; we know what is good for them; must stay at home; women participation needed as kind cooperation; targeting of women can bring more funds.

	Facilitating Partners - perception of:
MRRD	Poor coordination; not evaluating projects; excess of experts within MRRD,
Donors	Most wasted on salaries, reception, travel and security; no coordination among donors/Ministries; some project-specific/micro management; doesn't take into account local issues
CDCs	Not allocated, changes, not utilizing NGOs
Women	Women have their share, mostly propaganda, reflect lack of women in decision making

	Donors - perception of:
MRRD	Not efficient, bureaucratic and impossible to work with; not capable of anything; representative of state; needs capacity building; not transparent; no strategic plan
Facilitating Partners	Most FPs are NGOs; did not enhance the participation of women; expensive cost/overheads; wasting a lot of money
CDCs	First step to democracy; male dominated; need to be supported; need FPs and NGOs to do a better job for capacity building for CDCs
Women	Excluded, symbolic role but can justify flow of funds

	WOMEN AND THE EXCLUDED – perception of:
CDCs and Local Elites	Feel included but not prioritized partially satisfied
MRRD	Heard about it but don't really know, indifferent, slightly negative
Facilitating Partners	They help give a voice so that priorities are heard, trust FPs
Donors	No contact with donors, invisible, needs not prioritise

The session ended at 4.30pm

24 May 2006: Morning Session

Recap of day 1 and Reflections

The morning session began with a 5 minutes recap of yesterday's programme by Andrew Penny and Shamsulbahriah. Both emphasised the significance of the programme and the importance of the issues raised by participants and facilitators in relation to maintaining contact with the poor, the idea of magnetism and poverty eradication.

Unpacking Participatory Development

Dr. Chambers posed the question as to what sort of participation would be appropriate for Afghanistan. The empowerment of women and other excluded group for instance, is a big challenge for Afghanistan. In scaling up participatory approach to rural development it is important to start small and then to expand to other areas. The big challenge is to expand participation to remote areas. In deepening participation it is then pertinent to ask "What sort of participation and for whom (Handout 5)?" Is it for the elites, for women or for other excluded groups? What would be the quality of participation particularly in relation to behavior and attitudes (handout 6)? What are the dimensions of participation that drives change (handout 7)? How do we behave and relate to others as uppers or lowers (handout 8)? Participation requires a change of behavior and mindset from "power over" to "power to – do something", "power to empower – build confidence/they can do it", "power within", "power to share, to distribute, to delegate".

Attitude and Behavior

Participation therefore, need to be accompanied by changes in normal behavior particularly those that creates disabling situations eg. Those that dominate and criticize. Instead, listening, watching and learning can create a more enabling and participatory

environment. Disempowering yourself by keeping quiet and listening is a way of empowering others in participatory approach to development.

Afternoon Session

Experiences, innovations, PM and E, Accountability, Doables

Anindo began this session by bringing in issues listed as challenges faced by Afghanistan for example the limited participation of women, bureaucratic-led process and corruption. The question posed what need to change, what actions can be taken to initiate change and what can be done differently. Participants were asked to choose 3 challenges from the list identified in yesterday's session and to discuss what need to be done to overcome those challenges. Group views are reproduced below:

Group 1: Challenges

- **Lack of knowledge:**

- the level of knowledge need to be improved and the attitudes of men and women need to be changed. Like wise the attitude of committees, implementing partners and CDCs also need to be changed
- law enforcement and implementation must be based on the constitution
- government and literate people must help in the improvement of knowledge and attitude change

- **Access**

- Need to be improved at the village and community level
- Infrastructure need to be improved and rehabilitated to improve access to clinics, schools, market etc.
- Decentralization of government
- Key players are: community, government and donors

- **Sustainability of CDCs**

- Concern about funds
- Need improvements to retain CDCs for example through continuous fund flows for instance from the government
- NGOs and stakeholders should share their activities and projects with CDCs
- Inclusion of women and excluded groups to take part in decision making
- Accountability of CDCs to community, donors etc.
- Ensure local ownership

Comments: attitude inhibits CDCs especially in the participation of women, power of women in decision making, decentralize knowledge about roles, functions and activities of CDCs.

Group 2: Challenges

- **Sustainability of CDCs**

- culture
- can CDC function without FPs assistance, is there capacity
- how to facilitate cultural evolution, for example from primitive culture which requires a long process of change for cultural transformation
- CDCs need to be legitimized by the government and the Ministry of Interior
- How to channel development through CDCs
- Continued capacity building by MRRD for example professional training of staff
- Cultural change required for women to participate. Now their participation is symbolic for the purpose of obtaining grants

- **Security**

- communities to ensure security
- relations between community and Taliban,
- security is the responsibility of the government and PRT

Comments: Afghan culture is embedded in Islamic teaching; illiteracy doesn't allow Afghans to interpret religious law. Leadership is important but not the imposition of leaders on people; must be democratic.

Group 3: Challenges

- **Limited participation of women**

- to improve NSP manual
- should increase female participation for example should involve husbands, wives and family members
- change conditions of project grants to sustain finance
- exchange visits between CDCs in villages/communities/provinces and to use budget to maximize exchange visits
- FPs should go to girls schools to talk to female teachers
- FPs should also talk to men

Group 4: Challenges

- **Bureaucracy and management of NSP**

- procurement of goods and services is slow and it leads to delays in the programmes of CDCs and FPs.
- Simplification of rules and regulations
- Financial autonomy to NSP to avoid red tape and delay

- **CDCs Sustainability**

- is linked to other rural development actors such as UN agencies, PRT
- legally recognize CDCs as the local entity for projects from government and non-government programmes in Afghanistan

- **Women's participation**

- a lot of effort has been put in but not successful
- female CDCs not functioning
- women have no idea about CDCs
- symbolic and dependent on male CDCs
- need to sensitise men because men are not ready to allow women to go to work
- it is worse for men in marginalized area
- men created this problem and must be educated and put in the context of Afghanistan through a gradual process; cannot follow Europe's/Western mode; different kinds of problems in Afghanistan, need to be sensitive.

Comments: NSP should increase female social workers/organizers through capacity building and exposure trips; top-up grants useful for sustainability of CDCs.

Group 5: Challenges

- Reiterated the importance of challenges raised by all 4 groups.

Brainstorming Actions and Commitments - What can we do?

Issues raised by participants are reproduced below:

- exclusion of the excluded in the CDCs as CDCs are the instrument of change at local level

- downward accountability: Action Aid adopted two different approaches
- community review, proposals include all activities, visits, comments; financial resources, vigilance community, comments, suggestions, present actual bills and vouchers; there are cases where communities objects to some expenses; questions to CDCs: empowers people to correct misuse of resources , question why women are marginalized; this leads to accountability/community-led; projects are subject to evaluation by community
 - creating models of excellence
 - enhancing community ownership
- for example building of schools. Parents can be made to pay; Projects should be designed by communities not from outside to give a sense of ownership
 - Difference between life of project and life of CDCs
- How to ensure CDCs have a stake in the project; Legalise CDCs; Not just CDCs that work to develop villages, have to be selective, composition of CDCs is crucial
 - Sustainability of CDCs
- is there a possibility to share the cost that can bring sustainability and ownership
 - Looking at resources
- how has people's life change beyond the project; do people benefit or not; CDCs dealing with adversity e.g floods, drought; this goes beyond projects; how CDCs open up other resources; this is important for sustainability
 - Establish networks of CDCs/clustering
 - To go beyond projects
 - CDCs not new; there are Jirgas
 - Too much destruction: CDCs not just projects; it is how people work together to solve conflicts
 - Recognition of CDCs
- should be by law, a political-administrative unit/governance system e.g: to solve dispute, institutional norms; government should bring bill to Parliament after re-election through MRRD, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Justice
 - Norms based on expectations of community
 - No clear mandate/role for the community as to what CDCs could be
 - CDCs to be made constitutional
 - Links between CDCs and Shuras
 - CDCs should replace Shuras

- in some areas CDCs should be converted from Shuras or CDCs should support traditional Shuras
 - Traditional Shuras from Ministry of Interior are in charge by Maliks
 - What makes CDCs more inclusive of the poor; CDCs encourage local Shuras to participate; NSP donors also funding traditional Shuras
 - Traditional Shuras not elected; no funds; Shuras look after needs of communities when there is no government or NSP
 - If CDCs elevated what will happen to Shuras; Shuras deals with communities while CDCs deals with projects
 - Sensitising men; role of Mullah crucial in sensitizing men; security to allow women to get together to form CDCs
 - Change the minds of men regarding women's participation; if men don't allow women to participate, need to change men
 - Not that simple to convince men to allow wives and children to participate in development
- requires changes in culture, changes in perception of men, not easy
- Dr. Chambers pointed out a case in India whereby women uses participatory method to invite men to analyse the lives of their wives; men realized the need for social change and relationships; men can be involved in changing women's lives
 - Incentives for better CDCs
 - Simplifying procedures: must be sensitive to local context, consider impact on lives of people
 - CDCs as counterpart of Shura; as vision of change
 - Capacity building to focus on women
 - Integration of real Islamic values: certain values presented as Islamic values are not necessarily correct; how to improve Afghan culture in the context of Islamic values e.g: property rights, education
 - CDCs also Islamic values; take a consensus decision involving communities
 - CDCs and Iran: Shia – who's reality, attitudes, beliefs; talk to people from Islamic view
 - Generally there is a common understanding; the word Shura comes from the Quran
 - Women from Islamic viewpoint to CDCs; If change from Western perspective, top-down there is no chance for success; Women's issues must be based on Islamic principles; cannot come from NSP manual; seek basis from Islam to sensitise men to allow women's participation

Potential Application: Context Specific

In this session Anindo talked about context specific changes from a series of slide presentations that can be undertaken using methods related to:

- Unpacking a community
 - to identify the poorest and marginalized; understanding difficult years/times faced by the poor; understanding gender disputes; prioritizing choices; evaluating specific interventions
- Social map
 - to find the location of the poorest; location of the population; poor households; landless; indebtedness of the community; most disadvantaged group
- Output of Well-being Assessment Indicators
 - identify access debts; wage labours; widows; old couples
 - 4 Categories of well-being
 - local cases of impoverishment; which household to be targeted
- Understanding Key Hardships of the Poor
 - old women by activity from places she visits in the community, then to identify needs and priorities
- Seasonal Calendar
 - wage labour availability; ailments, income; hardships in different times of the year
- Occupancy of Time
 - activities of men and women, to identify differences and patterns
- Understanding gender disputes
 - women and men's roles in household level decision making; prioritizing choices
- Evaluate Interventions
- Impact of project over time

Brainstorming Actions and Commitments

Participants were asked to be imaginative and to focus on commitments and action that could be taken to overcome the problems and challenges in rural Afghanistan. Group views from the break-out session are reproduced below:

Group 1: NGOs/FPs

- lobby for legalizing CDCs; increase female social organizations

- develop capacity of social organizers
- find alternatives to reach women
- greater FP collaborators/meetings with FPs
- more CDC exchange especially between ethnic groups, women's groups
- reducing bureaucracy of MRRD
- decentralization of decision making

Group 2: Mix

- discuss ideas, issues about community development and participation
- how to upscale participatory practices
- discuss single issue which are valuable
- must identify framework for participatory system
- advocate discussion to discuss development system to be applied; a system that make sense, practical, participatory
- at the moment there is no functioning governance system; no system to promote community development plans
- this system is needed before sustainability and ownership can take place

Group 3: MRRD (Non NSP)

Methods

- participation method to be used in conjunction with national surveys such as vulnerability units
- incorporate participatory approach to understand poverty
- MISFA continues to improve its participatory approach for micro finance assessment
- Recent experience from Kandahar on how to overcome insecurity issues – participation from insecure area
- How MISFA can relate to communities through CDCs

Personal

- give time and space for participatory team building in MRRD
- encourage experimentation and learn from mistakes
- try to be more emphatic

Group 4: AIRD

- AIRD is a new institute of a month old focusing on applied research, policy development and training for MRRD
- Applied Research: will focus on, insecurity and rural development, administrative system for rural development (which stage of intervention should be done by government), participation of excluded group, sustainability and integrated rural development, institutional development in MRRD (coordination and harmonization of programmes)
- Institutional development: knowledge base institution, based on needs and priorities in policies for change; dissemination of information, meeting with stakeholders, capacity building and participation
- Personal: learn from other programmes, listen to good lessons, listen to rural people, MRRD and stakeholders

Facilitators

- **PRAXIS:** committed to create institutions for Afghanistan led by the people of Afghanistan
- Offer support on:
 - Participatory policy, research and assessment
 - participatory strategic programme planning
 - participatory planning and evaluation
 - participatory M and E
- Committed to organizations/institutions and community-led development

Robert Chambers

- committed to send materials for AIRD, AREU
- (secret) Inshallah
- Express the opinion that the quality and depth of commitments from the participants is inspiring and wish the people Afghanistan equity, prosperity and peace.

Session end at 5.00p with a photo session and farewell.