

PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT: AN INVESTIGATION OF
IN-COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS

A Dissertation

by

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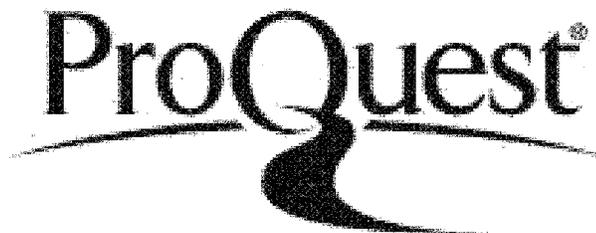


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“In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” (Colossians 2:3)

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Dedication

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“For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen” (Romans 11:36).

Abstract

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Participatory approaches and methods have been justified as a prerequisite to, and a catalyst for, sustainable socioeconomic development. The process has been adopted and applied in a variety of development contexts by international development agencies. Participation entails the involvement of in-community stakeholders in the initiation, implementation, and evaluation of development interventions and policies that are designed to change their lives. Although many development agencies are increasingly adopting participatory processes for development, critics question whether popular participation is not another form of “top-down” approach to development that restricts participation to outside experts and local elites and keeps the beneficiaries of development projects in the abstract as socioeconomic indicators.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the in-community stakeholders' perceptions of the participatory process in development projects. The study investigated women participants of the Bukoba Women's Empowerment Association (BUWEA) in rural Tanzania. The study utilized the Freirean dialogical approach that begins from a deep respect and humility before the poor and oppressed people and a

respect for their understanding of the world they inhabit. It considers their contributions no less important than the knowledge of the dominant groups.

The study revealed that the women were aware of the participatory process and that the process, as initiated by the external stakeholders, had led to the success of many economic-development projects and created a sense of empowerment. As the participants reflected on what they perceived to be participation, their voices revealed a local contextual understanding of the participation process. The results further indicated that in order to have meaningful dialogue in development, it is important that the voices and knowledge of the rural poor are listened to and taken into account. The study concluded that when the rural poor are increasingly involved in the process of developing themselves at the various stages of development, capabilities and capacities are increased, which enable them to own and manage their destinies in collaboration with external stakeholders.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Context of the Study

The history of development aid efforts for the poor has been viewed as a top-down process in which important decision making is controlled by major international institutions (Booth, 2008). This process often begins with international experts conceiving and designing development projects from outside the communities where those projects are to be implemented (Ward, 2010). In other words, the beneficiaries of the projects exist mainly in the abstract as socioeconomic indicators. Popular participation is normally restricted to some hastily organized meetings during which the outside experts brief local people on the objective of the project. In most instances, the beneficiaries are the local elites that have not involved community participation (Brohman, 1996; Hanna & Picciotto, 2002). It is often of no consequence that many scholars examining this phenomenon do argue that aid does not work. Among the many and increasing opponents of aid is Moyo (2009), who argued the following:

Aid has not lived up to expectations. Though it remains as the heart of the development agenda, despite the fact that there are very compelling reasons to show that it perpetuates the cycle of poverty and derails sustainable economic growth. (p. 28)

Development language has changed recently from paternalistic tendencies to a participatory trajectory. Development initiatives are embracing a new way of thinking that is geared toward implementing aid programs that work. It is hoped that this will lead to economic empowerment and sustainability of development projects. This new way of thinking truly fits the definition of development. Coetzee, Graaff, Hendricks, and Wood (2001) defined development as the following:

a) the connotation of favorable change moving from worse to better; b) evolving from simple to complex; c) advancing away from the inferior; d) a form of social change that will lead to progress; e) the process of enlarging people's choices of acquiring knowledge, and f) having access to resources for decent standard of living. (p. 120)

Development has an inbuilt assumption that it will help poor, unempowered people and those marginalized in poor communities to build sustainability; thus, it is viewed as more than just giving aid to these people. It requires a process that would enable the active involvement of the poor who are oftentimes the beneficiaries. This process begins with the poor acquiring a voice and the capability to respond proactively to the situations that are affecting their lives. To this end, the paradigm calls for the active involvement of in-community stakeholders in their own development (Chambers, 1997). It is upon this foundation that participatory approaches to development are prescribed. In affirming the approach, Zhang and Zhuang (2010) related the involvement of conscious decisions that give voice by involving stakeholders in devising solutions to their problems (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2010). This is currently the principle of most nonprofit organizations to empower people to solve their own problems. In outlining the usefulness of the participatory methodology in an Information Communications Technology (ICT) project in South Africa, Joseph (2010) reported mutual learning, generation of knowledge, and enhanced research as outcomes of the approach. However, he suggested willingness and continual learning as key aspects to this process.

Jennings's (2000) definition of participatory approach relates better with the central focus of this study. He defined the approach as follows:

The involvement by local population and at times international stakeholders in the creation, content, and conduct of a program or policy designed to change their lives. Built on a belief that citizens can be trusted to shape their own future,

participatory development uses local decision making and capacities to steer and define the nature of an intervention. (p. 2)

In affirming Jennings's study, Anyidoho (2010) argued that participatory development uses local decision making and capacities to steer and define the nature of interventions built on the belief that citizens can be trusted to shape their own future. The consensus is that participation should entail the active involvement of the community in decision-making processes in development initiatives that affect their lives and livelihood (Anyidoho, 2010; Chitnis, 2005; Guijit & Shah, 1998; Jennings, 2000; Maser, 1997; Slocum, Wichhart, Rocheleau, & Thomas-Slayter, 1995; Thwala, 2001). The central idea is that an approach enabling poor people to articulate and work towards personal and corporate development becomes the process that empowers.

This concept of empowerment is closely linked to participatory approaches to development. It refers to the process by which marginalized and poor people gain an upper hand in changing their predicament. As Chitnis (2005) concluded, "empowerment is linked to creating an environment where people who have control over situations that affect their lives are given the opportunity, knowledge, and power to bring about the change that would improve their lives" (p. 35). The argument is that community participation at the grassroots level promotes participatory decision making and self-sustainability, the result of which is empowerment.

Empowerment is both a process and an end that builds capacity. The poor come to understand, appreciate, analyze, and gain capacity to respond proactively to the situations that are affecting their lives. This capacity and empowerment enables the articulation of their baseline disempowered state. It creates the opportunity to use resources that are now available to them in order to live better and more productive lives. Moreover, they gain

motivation to continuously work toward improving their communities. It is this transformative process and the self-reliance that leads to the sustainability of the people (Conyers & Hills, 1990; Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2010; Wetmore & Theron, 1997).

Consequently, participatory development has become part of the policy and practice within international development practice (Brett, 2003; Cleaver, 1999; Cornwall, 2006; Green, 2010). It is used as a means of incorporating a wider representation of stakeholders into project organizational forms. Through the collection of data, local knowledge is produced involving the perceptions of informants. In addition, these perceptions can be aggregated within spatially circumscribed social institutions. Essentially, the central idea of participation is sharing information so that people know the project's objectives in order to make a difference. Once information is shared among relevant parties, a structure is agreed upon and imposed, creating a clear vision, clarifying the goals and cost benefits as economic objectives and goals, as well as identifying individual roles to help set direction. With participation, beneficiaries are empowered; with empowerment, self-direction, sense of meaning, competence, and impact is realized (Burkey, 1982; Cornwall, 2003).

The assumption gleaned from participatory literature is that poor people are given priority voice. Perhaps these distinctive values are best summarized in the spectrum of public participation by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). The IAP2 is a 10,000-member international organization that serves a broad range of stakeholders who believe in seven core values of public participation:

1. Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

2. Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
3. Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
4. Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
5. Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
6. Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
7. Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision. (International Association for Public Participation, n.d., "IAP2 Core Values.")

While the need for the approach might not be debatable, there is minimal documented evidence noted on the subject matter in relationship to the perceptions of the in-community stakeholders.

Statement of the Problem

Though the participatory approach has been justified as a prerequisite to, and a catalyst for, sustainable socioeconomic development, its practicability in many development projects still remained as rhetoric (Guijit & Shah, 1998). Often, the participatory process at the various stages of development projects is not realized. More specifically, the designing and evaluation process of projects in many rural communities is usually the role of the funding agencies rather than a collaborative effort with all stakeholders. There is an observable need to streamline the conflict between top-down and participatory approaches to sustainable development.

On the other hand, variations in sociodemographics of poor people pose a challenge in fostering participation. The poor are often less educated and less organized than other, more powerful stakeholders, thus making it harder to reach them. Knowledge regarding the process is limited; therefore, community stakeholders seldom demand their rights with regard to becoming involved in the decision making of community development projects.

Though extensive literature on the subject matter exists in the developed world, there is minimal systematic or documented evidence in many development projects established in sub-Saharan Africa. However, hardly any studies have investigated the perceptions of the community stakeholders and how they might affect the achievements of development projects. In other words, interventions from the developed world are made but may not necessarily solve the particular needs of local communities in specific areas. Therefore, there is a need for an evaluative process assessing the stakeholders' understanding of the participatory process. Cleaver (1999) suggested the following:

A number of specific areas for further work can be identified from this discussion which may contribute to resolving some paradoxes of participation An analysis of whether and how the structures of participatory projects include/approach/secure the interests of the poor people. (p. 609)

The participatory approach to economic empowerment is no doubt a complex issue because it is a new paradigm that will take time, meaningful research, and dialogue at every stage (Ettling, Buck, & Caffer, 2010).

The process involves the establishment of relationships as an “entry to the field and initiating the processes has been considered a very sensitive aspect of participatory development” (Dearden & Rizvi, 2008, p. 23). Developing relationships with a local community in a development setting is identified as a critical phase. It is critical because

how the relationship is established and nurtured will strongly influence the degree to which community members will or will not participate in research and development initiatives. It is the researcher's belief, therefore, that the participatory approach to the economic development process should consider the perceptions of stakeholders' understanding of real participation. Since it seems that there is a dearth of studies that explore this specific field, this study investigated the stakeholders' perceptions of the participatory process in the United Republic of Tanzania.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate the in-community stakeholders' perceptions of the participatory process in development projects.

Research Question

The study was guided by the following research question: What are the perceptions of the participatory process by the in-community stakeholders involved in development projects? Specifically, the study sought to explore five topics:

- the contribution of an in-community stakeholder's understanding and perceptions regarding the participatory approach to the achievement of development projects,
- the influence of an in-community stakeholder's involvement in the project-design process on the achievement of development projects,
- the influence of an in-community stakeholder's involvement in the project-evaluation process on the achievement of development projects,
- how an in-community stakeholder's understanding of the participatory approach contributes to the achievement of development projects, and

- how an in-community stakeholder's participation in the design and evaluation process of projects influences the achievement of development projects.

Overview of the Methodology

This study utilized the case-study design to investigate the phenomenon of the participatory process of development by in-community stakeholders. Yin (1994) defined the case study as follows:

an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple boundaries between phenomenon and contexts are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. (p. 23)

The case-study approach also facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon within its context by employing a variety of data sources. The study consisted of an inductive investigative approach of purposefully selected in-community stakeholders involved with a development organization. Furthermore, the study highlighted perceptions of these in-community stakeholders involved in the participatory process from initiation to implementation.

Qualitative research is used to “study research problems requiring an exploration in which little is known about the problem” (Creswell, 2005, p. 45). The qualitative paradigm was suited for this research because “qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their words, and what meaning they attribute to their experience” (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). The underlying assumption is that, more often than not, a researcher's epistemological approach affects the ontological idea of how qualitative data are interpreted. A qualitative case-study approach allowed the perception of the in-community stakeholders to emerge.

Theoretical Framework

The selection of a theory allows the researcher to situate the study in a larger context. The theoretical framework helps construct the base for the study. It also provides the rationale as to why the study is important and how the problem fits within a larger context (Radhakrishna, Yoder, & Ewing, 2007). The Freirean (1974) approach fit this study because the study investigated the in-community stakeholders' perceptions of the participatory process in development projects. This perspective deals with the issue of providing avenues for marginalized communities with a voice. It was Freire's view that the use of language was important for marginalized people to become emancipated. This study dealt with participants who have never been able to air their perceptions of the understanding of the participatory process that involves their lives.

It is further noted that Freire (2003) was an apt selection because he conceptualized that research among poor people must apply a humanizing approach that gives respect. He believed that the poor were capable of utilizing their voice to change their circumstances. Since, in some respects, this was a cross-cultural research study, the Freirean approach fit within the suggestions of researchers acquiring cultural sensitivity (Liamputtong, 2008). The Freirean approach further provided a framework through which the listening and understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the poor involved in development projects were realized.

Freire and the Freirean Dialogical Approach

Freire was born in Recife, Brazil, in 1921. Recife is Brazil's northeast province and most impoverished city. It is here that Freire became interested in the issues that affect the poor, namely education. Beyond his death in 1997, Freire came to be known for

both his system and his philosophy of education that were rooted in phenomenology, Christianity, humanistic Marxist theories, and Hegelianism. His work has transcended culture boundaries and continents, and it has generated, or contributed to, the emergence of other themes (Torres, 1991).

Freire's idea of education that focuses on conscientization has been a contributing factor to the emergence of participatory approaches for empowering the poor.

Conscientization is based on Freire's theory of dialogical communication. Freire and Macedo (1995) stated:

In order to understand the meaning of dialogical practice, we have to put aside the simplistic understanding of dialogue as a mere technique. Dialogue does not represent a somewhat false path that I attempt to elaborate on and realize in the sense of involving the ingenuity of the other. On the contrary, dialogue characterizes an epistemological relationship. Thus, in this sense, dialogue is a way of knowing and should never be viewed as a mere tactic to involve students in a particular task. . . . I engage in dialogue not necessarily because I like the other person. I engage in dialogue because I recognize the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of knowing. (p. 382)

In this sense, dialogue presents itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing.

Conscientization, according to Freire, "is an on-going process by which people move toward critical consciousness, develop critical levels of awareness of their reality and take action to change it—a process that gives voice to people submerged in a culture of silence" (as cited in Nkuba, 2007, p. 67). Consciousness enables people, either as individuals or collectively, to speak their mind. It is an emancipatory language that advocates treating the other with dignity irrespective of economic, social, or geographical backgrounds. This model calls for the listening to and understanding of others as counterparts. Servaes (1996) advocated for the Freirean perspective and said that this

“model stresses reciprocal collaboration throughout all levels of participation. Listening to what the others say, respecting the counterpart’s attitude, and having mutual trust is needed” (p. 75).

In this study, the Freirean approach provided a framework through which the listening and understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the poor involved in development projects were realized. The researcher embraces this worldview that the poor can tell their story better. He also understands that the participatory model for development is based on the assumption about knowledge of the benefactors in their context. One of the principles of the Freirean dialogical approach allows for the capability of poor people to reflect, conceptualize, and critically analyze their condition in order to make decisions for social change (Freire, 1993).

Furthermore, because the nature of the questions were derived from, and guided by, the Freirean theoretical framework, the researcher took liberty in the use of a conceptual framework that fit, or was informed by, the Freirean framework. This was mainly based upon the theory of Participation Participatory Framework (IAP2), adopted from the International Association of Public Participation. This model suggests five stages to the participatory approach: (a) the informing stage involves providing the public with balanced and objective information to assist in understanding the problem; (b) the consultation stage is intended to obtain reactions on analysis, decisions, and alternatives, if any; (c) the engaging stage involves working directly with the public throughout the process to ensure their concerns are consistently understood and considered; (d) the collaborate stage involves partnering with the public in each aspect of decisions, including the development of alternative approaches; and (e) the empowering stage

involves placing the final decision-making authority in the hands of the beneficiaries. However, the study adopted some aspects of Pretty's (1995) typology on participation, termed as *passive participation*. Pretty (1995) assigned six key attributes to the model: (a) participation in information giving, (b) participation by consultation, (c) participation for material incentives, (d) functional participation, (e) interactive participation, and (f) self-mobilization. Clearly, a number of these attributes are practical for community settings in sub-Saharan Africa.

Research Site

The research study was conducted in Bukoba, Tanzania. Bukoba is situated in the Kagera region in the northwest corner of the country along Lake Victoria. The Kagera region borders the countries of Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi.

Case Setting

Schram (2003) asserted that "the value of case study lies in facilitating appreciation of the uniqueness, complexity, and contextual embeddedness of the individual events and phenomena" (p. 107). Therefore, the questions for this study were answered within the bounds of a community that utilizes a participatory approach. The Bukoba Women's Empowerment Association (BUWEA), a registered community-based organization (CBO) in the Kagera region in the United Republic of Tanzania, and the WGC are such organizations that utilize the participatory model. The research for this study took place within the BUWEA community, which enabled the researcher to understand how women perceive the process of participation in their development partnership with the Women's Global Connection and other development partners.

The Women's Global Connection

The Women's Global Connection is a U.S. based, non-profit organization formed by Sisters of the Incarnate Word in 2001 in the United States to promote the learning and leadership of women locally and globally. The primary intention of the organization is to connect women and men in more advantaged countries of the world with women in less advantaged countries to promote a sense of global citizenship and a more just and peaceful world community. This mission stems from the beliefs of the founders: that women's role in family sustainability and community development is key in poverty-stricken areas; that the sharing of lived experiences, expertise, and wisdom across boundaries of culture and socioeconomic class is mutually beneficial for those in developing and developed countries; and that current Interactive Communications Technology (ICT) is grossly underused to create strong global connection and solidarity among well-meaning peoples of the world.

The WGC, in particular, "seeks to help women get a sense of their own power . . . it utilizes a participatory approach through which women define their needs and priorities" (Ettling et al., 2010, p. 53). This organization has developed a cross-cultural participatory framework that seeks to aid poor women in solving the problems of their communities. This participatory model has been further developed in Chapter 2 with other participatory approaches.

Significance of the Study

Although several studies on participatory approaches to development exist, there is an insufficiency of related and comprehensive documented evidence on the subject, particularly in development projects in Tanzania. By investigating the perceptions of

community stakeholders, this study made a significant contribution to the literature and to the process of participation that leads to development. The understanding of the participation process with regard to community stakeholders may reveal the complex, yet needed, understanding of the communication process in development studies. This might allow language which may have a synergetic effect on people working together successfully. Given the important communication factors underlying the participatory process in economic development, this study can guide evaluation, formulation, and policy making with development partnerships who intend to adopt the approach in an empowerment-building capacity and to see that development programs are sustainable. In addition, understanding the lived experiences of this selected group of participants in empowering the voice of the poor may be enhanced.

Limitations of the Study

One of the major limitations of any qualitative research study is the inability to generalize the findings. This study used a case-study design that was confined to a group of community stakeholders in the participatory process. However, the experiences of these participants provided an in-depth understanding of their perceptions of the participatory process. Therefore, the findings of this study are confined to this particular group. They may only offer common elements or threads of understanding for other groups in the same development context and participatory relationships.

Another limitation of this study was that of language. The research was done in both English and Swahili. The reason is that the participants in this study are from another country and speak Swahili and Kihaya as first languages. This language choice was driven by the concept that people will be more comfortable and speak more freely

when using their native tongue (Nkuba, 2007). This may have increased the possibility of findings based on inaccurate translations or interpretations.

Summary

This chapter was an introduction to the study of participatory development. It provided the context of the study and the challenges of participatory development in the last three decades. While this approach is an acceptable form of tackling development issues among the rural poor, there are still informational gaps to be filled. The chapter outlined the literature gap that needs filling to enhance the effectiveness of participatory-development programs and their intended beneficiaries. This suggests that the participatory discourse ought to involve the in-community stakeholders' perceptions of the process. This would give promise to a truly participatory process.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

This study investigated the in-community stakeholders' perceptions of the participatory process in development projects for poor, rural women in the Kagera region of the United Republic of Tanzania. Participatory development is a vast area that covers many concepts. This review of related literature is pertinent to understanding the participatory process in development and covers the following areas: (a) defining participation development, (b) describing typologies of participation, and (c) evaluating participation. In order to contextualize the summary of the literature, an introduction and rationale of participatory development is given.

Introduction and Rationale

For the last 50 years, well-intentioned, wealthy nations in the West have given over one trillion dollars to help poor nations in the less privileged areas of Africa (Moyo, 2009). Development experts such as Sachs (2005) have continued to advocate for more international aid to developing countries and claim that it is the moral responsibility of the rich nations to give aid in order to eradicate extreme poverty. However, these well-intentioned arguments have been challenged by other development scholars, such as Moyo (2009), Long (2001), and Nelson and Wright (1995). The United Nations Millennium Project publication (2005), a major donor development organization, admitted that aid has a number of problems, including the assumption that aid threatens the long-term public support for development.

One of the reasons for skepticism towards aid is that aid is a top-down process that has generally been more disempowering than empowering. The in-community stakeholders have not been involved in many of the initiatives that are meant to help them

(Chambers, 1983, 1997; Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2010; Panda, 2007; Schuurman, 1993). On the other hand, several scholars have advocated a new approach to delivering economic development aid to the poor that includes the poor in the development process (Henkel & Stirrat, 2001; Kimani & Kombo, 2011; Mosse, 2001; Rahnema, 1992). This new approach claims to provide a solution delivering aid to the poor as a bottom-up process that does not ignore the beneficiaries of aid, but interacts with them in a way that actively involves their input (Ariyaratne, 1977; Crewe & Harrison, 1998; Freire, 1970; Hussein, 1995; Long, 2001; Narayan, Chambers, Shaw, & Petesch, 2000). This new approach is one that claims to involve the poor people themselves (Booth, 2008). In fact, this approach has gained momentum in the last three decades and has been incorporated in the development discourse among development scholars and agencies. Baporikar (2012) noted that participation is widely accepted by many governments and international agencies including the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Food Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB).

Defining Participation Development

In the existing literature, the term participation has been defined in the context of the work of Paulo Freire. Freire was a renowned political pedagogue and one of the most influential thinkers in the area of social and educational thought (Glass, 2001). Freire modeled a pedagogical strategy that put students on equal terms with their teachers. This change in status quo encouraged the poor to think in critical terms about their poor conditions, their oppression, and their exploitation. Freire (1994) maintained that

“education is meaningful to the extent that it engages learners in reflecting on their relationship to the world they live in and provides them with a means to shape their world” (p. 3). Freire (1994) further noted:

One of the tasks of a progressive popular education, yesterday as today, is to seek, by means of critical understanding of the mechanism of social conflict, to further the process in which the weakness of the oppressed turns into a strength capable of converting the oppressor’s strength into weakness. (p. 125)

The impact of Freire’s ideas transcended the arena of educational thought and became a model for human-centered approaches that valued the importance of interpersonal channels of communication in decision-making processes of economic development and politics (Siddiqui, 2003). Through the years, the concept of participation has been described interchangeably as “people centered development” (Jennings, 2000, p. 3), “people first” (Chambers, 1992, p. 37), and has been commonly referred to as “participatory development” by many development scholars such as Roodt (2001), Rahman (1993), Chambers (1992), and Conyers and Hills (1990). This is because development among the participatory-development scholars has become synonymous with the promotion of social change and a source of empowerment to the marginalized (Mohan & Stokke, 2000). Even to large organizations, such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB), participatory development has played a significant role in the development of policies that promote and build local capacities and sustainability. The World Bank has recognized participatory development as “a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development vision, make choices, and manage activities” (Tufté & Mefalopulos, 2009, p. 6).

The participatory principle is based on the belief that every marginalized person or community has the right to be given a chance to participate in initiatives designed to

better their lives (Gaventa, 2006; Oakley, 1991). Therefore, participation development begins with the involvement and full participation of in-community stakeholders in the decision-making process through a collective pattern among communities to be developed. It is believed that every person in the community is a partner or a stakeholder in the decision-making, implementation, and evaluation process of development. Everybody is of equal importance in participatory development (Cees, 2000).

In participation, in-community stakeholders are expected to effectively identify the problems prevailing within their communities (Philips, 2009). In addition, they are expected to create effective solutions to the identified problems. This process of engaging in an open dialogue helps in getting different perspectives from the community members regarding a particular community problem. Dinbabo (2003) and (Dennis, 1997) defined the process as inclusion of all people: equal partnership, transparency, sharing power, and sharing responsibility. Similarly, all stakeholders have equal responsibility for decisions that are made, and they should have clear responsibilities within each process, mutual learning, empowerment, and cooperation.

Research shows that this kind of approach to development is more effective because it emphasizes the active voice and involvement of the people affected by the problems in the community (Dodds, 1989; Roodt, 2001). Participatory development is designed to address inequalities by providing development platforms that will build the capacity as well as empower communities that are deemed marginalized (Craig & Mayo, 1995). This focus also allows for the involvement, implementation, evaluation, and responsibility of development within the community. This process promotes capacity building, empowerment, and sustainability in the development projects (Sanoff, 2007).

Participation entails the engagement of people in the process of making decisions, in the implementation of development projects, in the evaluation of development programs, and in enjoying the sharing of the benefits of those developments. Development specialists have emphasized the application of the concept of participatory approaches to improve every stage of development: in particular, the process of making decisions as well as the evaluation and monitoring stages (Chambers, 1997; Nelson & Wright, 1995). This is much different from the common and traditional approach, which emphasized involvement only when it came to the sharing of the benefits or fruits of the projects.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (1994) added an open forum for negotiating and collaborating between those countries that are developed and those still developing. This enhances the idea of having the in-community stakeholders play an active role in their development as opposed to being only passive beneficiaries of the development projects. In addition, the World Bank broadened the scope of the term participation to include not only the poor and marginalized communities but also those that are developed (Tuftte & Mefalopulos, 2009). The emphasis is now on the in-community stakeholder involvement in their development (Gaventa & Cornwall, 2006). The reason behind this expansion may be due to the fact that societal problems are not just problems of the affected, but they can affect those that are not connected to those problems (Uphoff, 1985).

To summarize, it can be said that participation in development entails (a) actively and equally engaging all the players in designing policies of development; (b) engaging in strategizing; (c) working on planning, implementing, and undertaking a comprehensive monitoring program; and (d) working on an evaluation program of the development

activities. Participation is designed to empower the marginalized communities as well as engage the in-community stakeholders in order for them to actively participate in shaping their own development with the resources they have or with the resources they will receive from external sources.

Typologies of Participation

As participatory approaches have gained importance in the development process, these newer approaches have met with their own skeptics and critics. Development scholars, such as Hickey and Mohan (2008) and Evans, Pilkington, and McEachran (2010), have questioned the motives and effectiveness of the process by development agencies. Specifically, Cooke and Kothari (2007) and Hickey and Mohan (2004) have wondered whether the process is not a disguised top-down patronizing process.

The challenges within the dynamics of participatory approaches to development are many. The first is the manner in which they are implemented by donor agencies or nongovernmental organizations (McGee & Norton, 2000; Rahman, 2003). For instance, there was a point in time when participation was just considered as the process where the community gives information to development agencies in a hasty consultation without the direct involvement of the participants (Nelson & Wright, 1995; Talen , 2000). The second challenge is how to involve all the stakeholders, most especially the in-community stakeholders (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Olicio-Okui, 2005). According to other development experts, the challenges of participation might be due to the bureaucracy of development institutions and the management of development initiatives (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000; Chambers, 1995; Haidari & Wright, 2001; Jackson & Kassam, 1998; Long, 2001; Lyons, Smuts, & Stephens, 2001; Nelson & Wright, 1995;

Shortall & Shucksmith, 2001). The third challenge is that the conceptualization as well as the theoretical understanding of the concept of participation in the development process has been changing over time (Christens & Speer, 2006). Participation has evolved to where the people in the community are directly involved in development projects from the beginning and in various types of training offered by external stakeholders, which is empowering (Dipholo, 2002; Rahman, 2002). It is through these external trainings and activities that needs and resources within the community are identified and capacities built, followed by implementation.

Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation. A number of researchers and development practitioners have attempted to devise tools and instruments which are useful for measuring this concept of participation. Arnstein's (1969) participatory ladder is perhaps regarded as the seminal work in participatory typologies and different levels of participation. The stakeholders' participation varies in intensity and approach. The ladder presents the degree of participation in three ways: nonparticipation, partial participation, and genuine participation. In nonparticipation, in-community stakeholders are ignored and the decisions are made by external stakeholders or experts. In partial participation, in-community stakeholders are not involved in the decision-making process but are consulted, or they may be allowed to participate in exchange for food, cash, and other incentives. In genuine participation, the in-community stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process, taking on the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the development project. This last participatory approach is most effective because it involves the in-community stakeholders' control over the activities of the developmental

process, rather than just being passive recipients of development aid. Organizations such as the World Bank have suggested this form of participation (Cornwall, 2008).

Arnstein's (1969) ladder contributed immensely to the central aspect of the participatory ideology because it showed that involvement is dependent on the level of participation that is initiated during the development process. The ladder was designed to illustrate that there are different levels of participation in society (see Figure 1). There is no clear difference between each stage in the ladder of participation, but the overall perception gleaned is that people can be living in the same community and be on totally different rungs of participation.

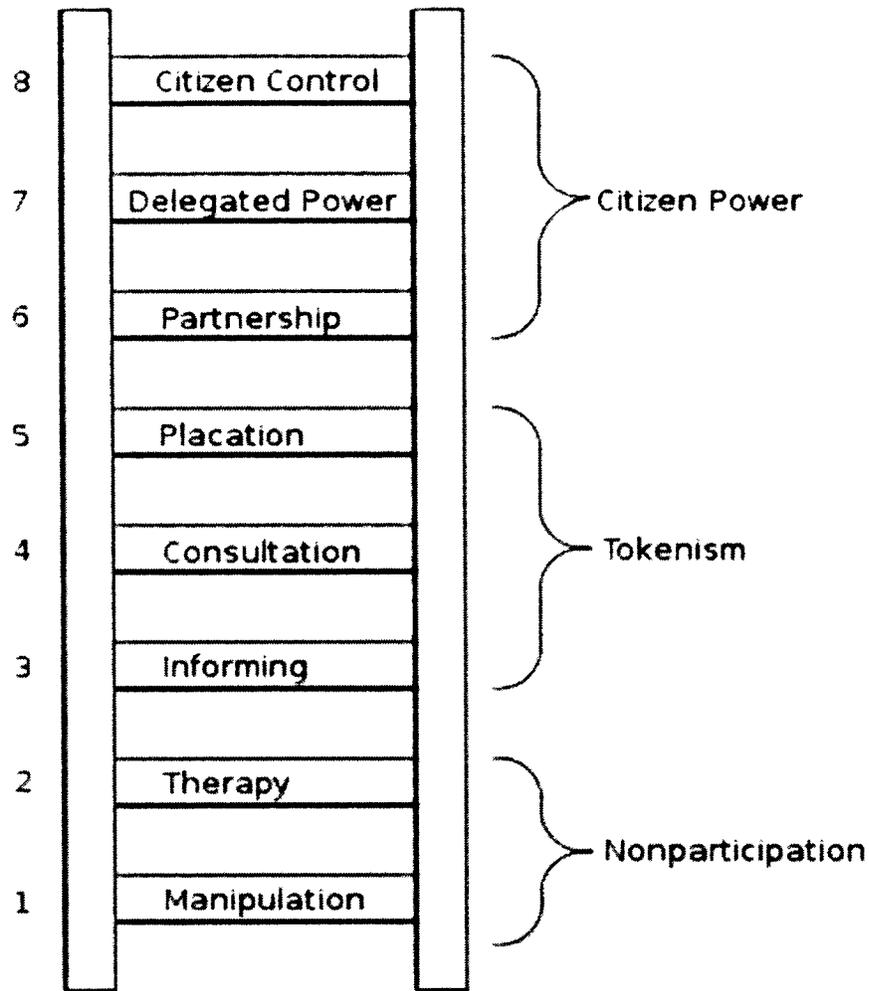


Figure 1. Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation. Source: Arnstein, S., 1969. A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35: 216–24. Reprinted with permission.

As depicted in the ladder, there is an increased effort to promote the full participation of community members and achieve development goals as one proceeds to the top of the ladder. Arnstein (1969) defined participation as

the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society. (p. 216)

On the other hand, Pretty (1995) presented a typology that introduces the concept of manipulative participation as a stage before passive participation. Pretty also described seven other types of participation (see Table 1). The introduction and implementation of any one of these typologies of participation is critical to designing meaningful interventions and development strategies. Namara (2006) and Mannigel (2008), for example, argued that participation can be achieved in a range of practices: full information sharing, capacity building, benefit sharing, negotiations, and full empowerment or the transfer of powers as rights to the local people, rather than privileges.

Table 1

Pretty's (1995) Typology of Participation

Level	Characteristics
1. Passive participation	People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. It is a unilateral announcement by leaders or project management without listening to people's responses or even asking members their opinions.
2. Participation in information giving	People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaires, surveys, or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings because the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.
3. Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted, and external people listen to views. These external professionals define both problems and solutions and may modify these in light of people's responses. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board members' views.
4. Participation for material incentives	People participate by providing resources—for example, labor—in return for food, cash, or other material incentives. It is common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end.

5. Functional participation	People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of an externally initiated social organization. Such involvement does not tend to occur at the early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather after major decisions have been made. These institutions tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators but may become self-dependent.
6. Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systematic and structured learning processes. These groups take control over local decisions, so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
7. Self-mobilization	People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice but retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated mobilization and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power.

Note. Pretty, J. N. (1995). Participatory Learning for Sustainable Agriculture. *World Development*, 23(8), pp.1247–1263, p. 1252, and *Methods for Community Participation: A complete guide for practitioners*, Adapted from Kumar, 2002, pp. 24–25.

The Women’s Global Connection Participatory Model

The Women’s Global Connection (WGC) organization utilizes participatory processes in their development work. They first research a development project, then, based on that research, they contextualize the participatory process to their projects. The WGC model comes from the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF). The SLF was conceptualized by the Department for International Development in Canada in 1998 and emphasizes six attributes of development: (a) people centered, (b) responsive and participatory, (c) multi-level (personal and community), (d) partnership based, (e) sustainable, and (f) dynamic (Ashley & Carney, 1999).

The WGC model is comprised of nine components: (a) Building relationships, (b) Planning, (c) Implementation, (d) Web networking, (e) Local networking, (f) Participatory evaluation, (g) Sustainability, (h) Integration, and (i) Transferability (Ettling, Buck, & Caffer, 2010). Building relationships is the process that involves the identification of a women's group with leadership capacities and efforts to develop themselves. Planning entails collaborating with the group on what needs to be done in terms of capacity and leadership development, needs assessment, and identifying community assets. Implementation involves working together with the community and its stakeholders to make sure that the projects are successfully executed. Web networking is seen by the WGC as an important tool because it allows not only communication but also collaboration. Local networking also plays an important role in tapping existing information sources, creating opportunities for new funding, and determining long-term sustainability. Participatory evaluation is the component of the model that emphasizes the evaluation processes by professional researchers in order to assess the personal and social impact of the WGC projects. Sustainability addresses the long-term view and survival of the projects by the group with which the WGC is working. In this process, the WGC helps to build capacity that allows for the ownership and independence of the initiated projects. Integration serves as evidence of the mutual learning and empowerment that is taking place. And transferability means sharing what the WGC has learned with other groups, projects, or countries. As a learning organization, the WGC believes in transferring that knowledge to other areas of development (see Figure 2).

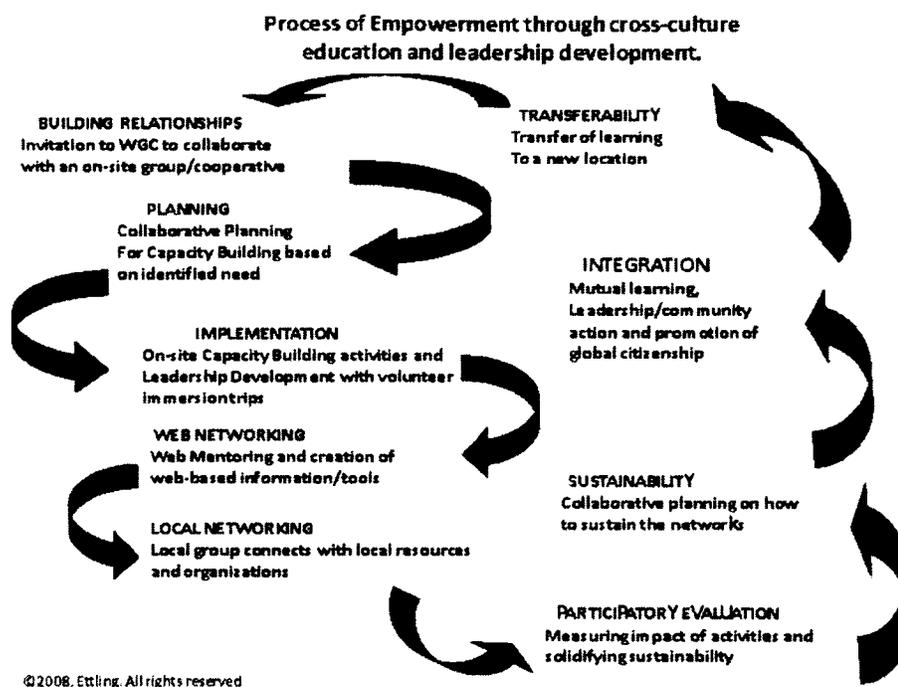


Figure 2. The Women’s Global Connection participatory model. Adapted from “A Pathway to Women’s Empowerment in Tanzania: Capacity Building for Personal and Social Impact,” by D. Ettling, A. Buck, & P. Caffer, 2009, *The International Journal of Knowledge, Culture & Change Management*, 9(12), p. 55. Reprinted with permission.

The WGC model is a good example of how NGOs involved in participatory development can adapt and use participatory models in the process of development. What is lacking in current research is an intentional, all-inclusive participatory process that involves the perception of the in-community stakeholders. As the researcher will discuss in Chapter 5, a participatory model could be more effective if it incorporated the understanding of the people involved in the process. The litmus test for participation should be whether the external stakeholders recognize the knowledge, values, and voices of the in-community stakeholders in the process of participation. Certainly, varying results are expected with regard to the adoption of any one of these typologies of participation. One suggestion would be to consider a contextual application of these typologies (Chouinard & Cousins, 2009; Frierson, Hood, & Hughes, 2002; SenGupta,

Hopson, & Thomson-Robinson, 2004). Designers of development strategies must understand the working contexts of various typologies in relation to specific individuals or communities, which are never followed to the letter. In other words, a cut-and-paste development strategy and program may not work perfectly in all communities.

In the FAO corporate-document repository on the training of individuals on a participatory approach, the following highlights were noted regarding the increased participation of local communities: (a) local people are promoted as main actors and implementers of their own development, (b) the role of the external agents shifts more and more from actors to facilitators, and (c) it gives more space to local people in decision making (van Heck, 2003). On the other hand, the increased participation of local people requires a democratic policy framework, decentralization, and increased knowledge, capacity, and skills from the local people, which may not all be readily available nor produce immediate results (McMichael, 2000). Research has shown that in both cases, Arnstein's (1969) participatory ladder and Pretty's (1995) participation typology detail the different kinds of participation. However, they fall short in dealing with various contexts within a specific culture. The participants' perceptions and knowledge within the community development process is crucial in determining the effectiveness of the participatory process.

Evaluating Participation

As the concept of community-based development has become a feature in the developing world, where issues of marginalization as well as poverty are more prevalent, the need for participation evaluation has surfaced (McKie, 2003). There is a common understanding among most of the development experts that for a community to achieve

optimum and sustainable development, the aspect of community participation evaluation has to be embraced by the key stakeholders (Chambers, 1992; Rifkin, 1985; Townsley, 1996). Participatory evaluation has been part of the process of participatory development from the 1960s through the 1980s and is found in the literature produced in community development programs. It is critical to realize that there have never been indicators of participation that are recognized from a universal perspective.

Evaluation can be monitored by using specific parameters that measure the progress of a certain event. It is important to evaluate participation so as to know where to improve or what to do since the process is highly dynamic. Critics of participatory approaches state that programs intended to help the poor ignore the voices and needs of the poor that they intend to help (Banerjee, Banerji, Duflo, Glennerster, & Khemani, 2010). Most programs are successful in generating new resources but are never effective in involving the poor. This results in a minimal impact on the overall economic development. In its earlier development, Huizer (1983) defined participatory evaluation as

self-evaluation by the groups of the entire process of planning and implementation: the rural people themselves [are to] discuss what progress they are making and how to overcome certain problems or constraints. The project beneficiaries as well as the project management at all levels should be involved in the designing and setting up of the system and subsequently in the interpretation and evaluation of the information gathered. (p. 50)

Who is involved in the participatory evaluation? Participatory evaluation involves active collaboration between key stakeholder groups in designing, implementing, and interpreting the evaluation (Williams, 2004). Stakeholder groups include all those who have a vested interest in the program and its evaluation, such as funders, program directors, line staff, families, and community members. This has led to

the suggestions that close monitoring and evaluation would help attain the intended objectives. Ngah (2012) suggested that the evaluation of participation in community development projects should ask the following questions:

- Is/was the community involved in problem identification?
 - Is/was the community involved in policies and goal formulation?
 - Is/was the community involved in objective setting?
 - Is/was the community involved in identification of project options and choice making?
 - Is/was the community involved in implementation, monitoring, and evaluation?
 - Is/did the community contribute/ing (in terms of labor, finance, and other materials)?
 - Have/did the community share in the benefits that accrue from the process?
- If the answer to any of the above questions is “no” then the outcome of the process is not participatory. (p. 33)

Evaluation is critical in participation as it shows progress and brings forth suggestions on how to improve in order to achieve maximum results. However, one aspect that is missing in many evaluation processes deals with an understanding of participatory evaluation in the context of culture. LaFrance, Nichols, and Kirkhart (2012) suggested that while doing an evaluation, certain steps must be taken. The first step is to be accurate and respectful of life experiences and perspectives and the establishment of relationships that support trustworthy communication. The second step is to draw upon culturally relevant theories in the design of the evaluation and in the interpretation of the findings. The third step is to select and implement design options and measurement strategies that are compatible with the culture. The final step is to consider intended and unintended social consequences.

Summary

Participatory development has become a common feature within development discourse since its inception in the 1970s. Today, research shows that involving the poor

and marginalized in the initiation, development, implementation, and evaluation process can yield greater results in empowering the poor. Local control over the decision-making process by the rural poor helps create ownership, thus promoting sustainability. However, the process is facing challenges that stem from the unique context and dynamic nature of the communities in which it is introduced.

One of the challenges in participatory development is the lack of genuine understanding and caring, which includes listening to the voices of those within the community. The success of the participatory processes will occur when the perceptions of those individuals within that unique context are taken into consideration. LaFrance, Nichols, and Kirkhart (2012) affirmed that “context is critical to valid inference; programs can be accurately understood only within their relationship to place, setting, and community. Working deeply within indigenous cultures and communities simultaneously supports validity and expands validity arguments” (p. 61). La France et al. (2012) also suggested a framework that could enhance participatory evaluation from the perspective of the in-community stakeholders (see Figure 3). This framework has certain core values that could become a foundation in the evaluation of indigenous people, since a lot of participatory projects are predominantly among indigenous people who often do not know how to read or write and are oblivious to the terminology and complex terms of participatory development. In this framework, they suggested that evaluation must be within the context of the core values that fit the needs and conditions of the communities. Additionally, the framework suggests respect and a keen heart to learn and not judge the indigenous communities. This framework fits in well with the tenets of the participatory approach that require the in-community stakeholders’ input.

Despite the challenges of participatory development, more and more participatory approaches are being introduced by development experts. The adoption of participation as a strategy is still more favorable among a large portion of the stakeholders in the development sector as opposed to a top-down model of helping the poor. The prevailing environment of a heated debate as well as criticism of participatory approaches should not be a source of discouragement for those that want to adopt participation in development. Nonetheless, these criticisms should encourage refining the participatory approaches to development based on the perception and context of the in-community stakeholders.



Figure 3. The indigenous evaluation model. Adapted from “Culture writes the script: On the centrality of context in indigenous evaluation” by LaFrance, Nichols, & Kirkhart 2012, *New Directions for Evaluation*, Volume 135, p. 63.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This qualitative study investigated the in-community stakeholders' perceptions of the participatory process in development projects. The qualitative research method was used for this study because of the dearth of extant research about the perception of community stakeholders in the participatory process. This methodology of research allowed the voices and perceptions of the community stakeholders to emerge. Merriam and Associates (2002) contended:

Qualitative research lies with the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world. The world, or reality, is not the fixed, single, agreed upon, or measurable phenomenon that it is assumed to be in positivist, quantitative research. (p. 3)

Qualitative research is generally useful when researchers are attempting to obtain an in-depth understanding of the meanings and perceptions of the participants. Creswell (2008) organized the paradigm in its historical development leading to the following characteristics:

i) A recognition that as researchers we need to listen to the views of participants in our studies; ii) A recognition that we need to ask general, open questions and collect data in places where people live and work; iii) A recognition that research has a role in advocating for change and bettering the lives of individuals. (p. 51)

It was the researcher's intention to uphold the integrity of this paradigm and the dignity of the human subjects in this study. This qualitative study relied on the experiences, perceptions, and motivations of the community stakeholders as they told their stories in their world and in their own words.

Research Question

The study was guided by the following research question: What are the perceptions of the participatory process by the in-community stakeholders involved in development projects? Specifically, the study sought to explore the following five topics:

- the contribution of an in-community stakeholder's understanding and perceptions regarding the participatory approach to the achievement of development projects,
- the influence of an in-community stakeholder's involvement in the project-design process on the achievement of development projects,
- the influence of an in-community stakeholder's involvement in the project-evaluation process on the achievement of development projects,
- how an in-community stakeholder's understanding of the participatory approach contributes to the achievement of development projects, and
- how an in-community stakeholder's participation in the design and evaluation process of projects influences the achievement of development projects.

The Case Study Design

In order to further answer the research question for this study, the researcher used the case-study method under the umbrella of qualitative research to understand, illuminate, and reveal the participants' meaning. The case-study approach has been recommended for an in-depth understanding of an issue. Crowe et al. (2011) stated that "a case study is a research approach that is used to generate an in-depth, multifaceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context" (p. 1). The case-study approach also facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon within its context by employing a variety

of data sources. This approach ensures that the issue under the study would be revealed and understood through several lenses.

Moreover, the case-study method includes two elements, as identified by Stake (2000): intrinsic and instrumental. According to Stake (2000), “research for an intrinsic case study is not undertaken because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because, in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest” (p. 437). And as Vissak (2010) concluded, it “is especially important in studying topics that have not attracted much previous research attention” (p. 371). He further noted that the “application of this method can be useful for transcending the local boundaries of investigated cases, capturing layers of reality, and developing new, testable and empirically valid theoretical and practical insights” (p. 372). This fit with the study’s main goals, which were to present the perceptions of community stakeholders with clarity, to help bridge the gap between theory and practice, and to perhaps aid better practices in the participatory-approach process to economic empowerment.

Setting of the Study

BUWEA and the Bukoba district. The Bukoba Women’s Empowerment Association (BUWEA) is a community-based organization. It started in 1998 under the name of St. Cecilia’s Group. It began as a women’s prayer group of 10 women. In 2006, it gained status as a registered nonprofit organization under the Tanzanian government law. The vision of BUWEA is to raise the economic situation of the women in the Kagera region through advising and helping them with microloans. The goals of BUWEA are to empower these women, to offer them better standards of living, an education, information and communication technology, as well as entrepreneurship skills, and to promote

women's rights. BUWEA has been successful from 1998 with one group to 2012 with 61 groups. The organization has received nine awards and has 350 members in Bukoba, Mulemba, and in the Missenyi districts in the Kagera region. It provides educational workshops for BUWEA members in animal husbandry, agricultural cultivation and processing, computer skills, water sanitation, tailoring, business planning, and self-development. BUWEA is currently led by a team of eight women who run the organization's day-to-day operations.

The participants in this study were from Bukoba, Tanzania, in the Kagera region (see Figure 4). The Kagera region is situated just south of the equator in the northwestern corner of Tanzania. It is Tanzania's 15th largest region and accounts for approximately 3.2% of the total 883,749 sq. km. of land area in Tanzania. This region borders Uganda to the north, Rwanda and Burundi to the west, the Kigoma and Mwanza regions to the south, and Lake Victoria to the east. It covers a total area of 40,838 sq. km. Out of the total area, 28,953 sq. km. is land and 11,885 sq. km. is covered by Lake Victoria, Lakes Ikimba, Burigi, and Ngono, and the Kagera rivers.

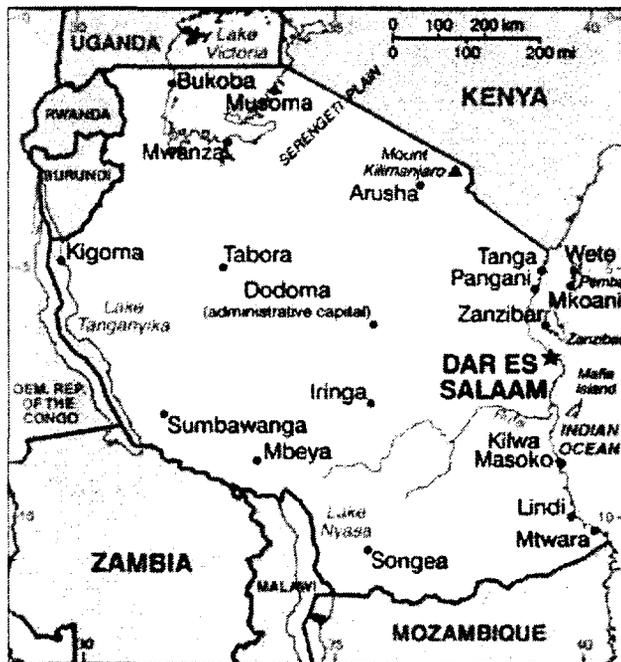
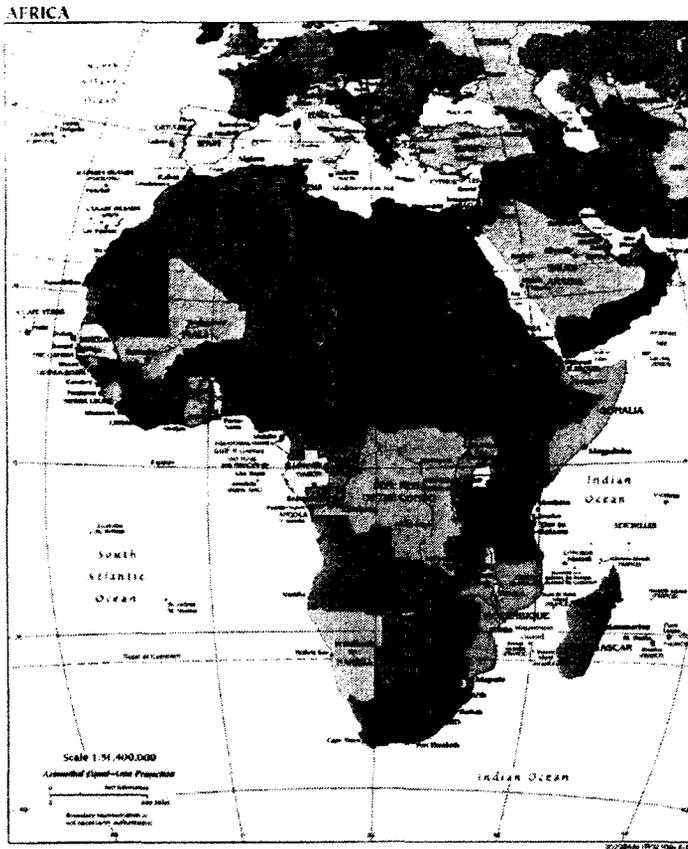


Figure 4. Map of Africa. Source:

http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/africa_pol_2003.jpg

Map of Tanzania. Source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/cia07/tanzania_sm_2007.gif

Selection of Participants

The researcher began his Ph.D. education in the summer of 2009. It was at this time that he was introduced to the Women's Global Connection (WGC)—in this study, also referred to as the Bukoba Women's Empowerment Association (BUWEA). It was through research and immersion trips with students and faculty that the researcher noticed something unique in these organizations. The WGC was using a unique approach to empower women in this rural area of Tanzania. The researcher applied to work as a graduate research assistant in 2010 for one of the founders of the Women's Global Connection. The experience led the researcher to read and study this approach of development work. And he learned that the related literature discussed the participatory approach to development in the more privileged world but not in the less privileged world. Intrigued, the researcher wanted to find out more about these rural women in Tanzania and what their perceptions would be of this new approach to doing development work. So, during the winter of 2011, the researcher began communicating with the leaders of the WGC and BUWEA to see whether he could spend time with the BUWEA group in their rural context. The researcher wanted to understand how these women perceived their relationship with the WGC and whether this was the catalyst for a good working relationship in doing development work.

As Yin (2011) stated, qualitative research often involves a “real world setting, with people in their real-life roles” (p. 109). The nature of this case study required the use of a purposeful sampling strategy. Therefore, the researcher located key stakeholders, key leaders, and other members of the BUWEA organization to participate in this study. The

focus was not to evaluate the projects but to investigate the perceptions of the community stakeholders in the process of initiating and implementing these projects.

Role of the Researcher

As often described in the qualitative methodology, the researcher is the instrument. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), the researcher's presence in the lives of the participants is fundamental to the methodology. In this case study, the researcher's role was to design the study, develop research questions, and analyze the collected data. The researcher's role was to listen carefully to the voices of the participants as they described their understanding of the participatory process. This role included private reflection, relistening to the recorded experiences, and analyzing the written notes in order to understand the participants' experiences. In brief, the role of the researcher was to collect, synthesize, and analyze data abiding with all ethical requirements of research.

Data Collection and Procedure

As Crowe et al. (2011) explained, "the case study approach usually involves the collection of multiple sources of evidence, using a range of qualitative techniques . . . (e.g., interviews, focus groups and observations)" (p. 9). The researcher's intentions were to "strive to understand the meaning people have constructed about their world and their experiences" (Merriam, 2002, p. 5). In respect to this study, the experiences were the perceptions of the participatory process in development projects. The researcher looked for the community stakeholders' perceptions in their own words or voices. In this case study, the following sources were used to collect the data: participant interviews, focus groups, observation, and the researcher's field journal.

The two most significant sources of data were the participants' interviews and the focus groups. Several women involved in the BUWEA group were interviewed several times within a period of six weeks in the spring of 2012, including follow-up interviews. This was done until analysis and saturation were accomplished. In qualitative research, interviews are utilized as the primary method for collecting data but may also be used in conjunction with other techniques. Generally, there are three types of interviews: (a) informal, conversational interviews; (b) semistructured interviews; and (c) standardized, open-ended interviews (Patton, 1990). The researcher used semistructured interviews because of the nature of the study and because it allowed flexibility and sensitivity to the culture. The interviews were both formal and informal, and they were conducted in English and Kiswahili.

Another source of information was the observation of participants in their natural setting. Yin (1994) argued that participant observation makes the researcher into an active participant in the events analyzed. This type of methodology is often utilized in the study of groups and allows creative opportunities for data collection. Merriam (2001) gave guidelines, recommendations, and critical attention to several attributes of this technique: (a) Physical setting, (b) Participants, (c) Interactions, (d) Conversations, (e) Subtle factors, and (f) Behavior of the researcher. In view of these guidelines, the researcher observed and actively listened to individuals and groups under the study. The researcher spent several days traveling to various villages in the Kagera region. Observation was key to understanding the world of the participants and the influences and effects of the participatory approach to development. People's interactions, actions,

and behaviors and the way people interpret these, act on them, and so on, are central to data gathering (Mason, 1996).

An equally important source of information was the researcher's field journal, which the researcher maintained throughout the study. Merriam (1998) defined a fieldwork journal as "an introspective record of the researcher's experience in the field which may include researcher's ideas, fears, mistakes, confusion, and reactions to the experiences" (p. 110). The journal was used as a tool to help the researcher reflect and capture in writing the experiences of the community stakeholders as they described their perceptions of the participatory process. The field journal contained daily personal reflections and was also a source of recording clarifications that came from the participant interviews.

Protection of Human Subjects

The researcher followed specific research guidelines established by the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW). The researcher completed the CITI course and obtained a certificate, which is valid for three years. As it is the required process, the researcher also received approval from the Institutional Review Board at UIW. The researcher took great care and effort to protect the human subjects, their identities, and their right to privacy. This is reflected in the use of pseudoidentification in the recording and reporting of data. A letter of formal consent in English and Swahili was presented to the relevant gatekeepers and another was forwarded by the researcher to the participants in advance.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this case study was to investigate the community stakeholders' perceptions of the participatory process in development projects. The data collected was

analyzed by listening to recorded audiotapes and by reading transcribed notes from the field journal. After the data were transcribed, the researcher began to interpret the data in order to bring meaning to the words and voices of the participants. Data were organized in emerging themes by using a descriptive approach. As Merriam (1998) contended, “raw data need to be organized in some way. This can be done by arranging transcripts, field notes, and documents chronologically according to when they were collected or according to the logical chronology of the case” (p. 145).

The researcher analyzed the data by transcribing the data and reading and rereading the transcripts, observation notes, and journal entries. The researcher would go back and forth from the notes to the tapes to make sure that the words and only the words of the participants were captured correctly. This process employed a framework suggested by Creswell (1998) for data analysis: (a) each participant’s interview was transcribed verbatim and read several times in order to understand what was being communicated through the women’s stories; (b) significant statements and phrases relating to the questions of the study were extracted from each interview; repeating and overlapping statements were eliminated; (c) meanings were formulated from each significant statement; (d) significant statements were organized into clusters; (e) themes were used to provide a description of the experience; (f) the description was returned to the original source for confirmation and validity; and (g) new, relevant data from each participant were incorporated into their transcript when necessary.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Trustworthiness is the term often used by qualitative researchers to describe a fit between what that they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study

(Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). This qualitative research study presents and reports the findings accurately as the participants' voices. In this case, the researcher used the technique of triangulation to collaborate evidence. The researcher also used the process of member checking to determine the accuracy of words, thoughts, and experiences.

Merriam and Associates (2002) cited member check as a key strategy

for ensuring validity in qualitative research. . . . Here you ask the participants to comment on your interpretation of the data. That is, you take your tentative findings back to some of the participants (from whom you derived the raw data through interviews or observations) and ask whether your interpretation "rings true." (p. 26)

In addition, the researcher used Guba and Lincoln's (1994) four stages of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability to establish trustworthiness.

The researcher listened to, translated, and carefully transcribed the voices and words of the participants and organized the data for each interview session. This was achieved by comparing the transcribed text with the taped interviews and by circulating a clean draft for comment to each participant. The draft was given to each participant to check for accuracy of their words. Then, the participants confirmed that these were their own viewpoints, thoughts, intentions, and experiences as reported by the researcher.

Researcher's Field Journal

The data-collecting process was aided by the researcher's field journal. The field journal was used to record the researcher's daily and personal reflections of the daily activities of the research setting. Merriam (1998) defined a fieldwork journal as "an introspective record of the researcher's experience in the field which may include researcher's ideas, fears, mistakes, confusions, and reactions to the experiences" (p. 110). During this process and the days that followed data collection, the researcher learned

many valuable lessons. The journal entries reflected the lessons from the women participants in this study and the nature of qualitative research.

The researcher faced some soul-searching moments before the research project began. Most of these moments were filled with personal doubt of the process and of the ability to capture the women's stories. In addition, the fact that the researcher was an African male doing research on African females also created some anxiety. One of the questions was whether the researcher would be accepted, knowing that the African culture was male dominated and that this was an African women's organization. On the other hand, would the participants willingly offer to tell the researcher their stories without holding back, fearing that an African man might not understand the realities of African rural women? All these were dispelled by the fact that for the first few days the researcher stayed in one of the participant's home. Alice was extremely helpful in providing the researcher with helpful hints of how a foreign male should behave around African rural women. In those first days, the researcher appreciated Alice's role as a gatekeeper and cultural broker. Asking simple questions about greetings, food, and which questions would be appropriate to ask the participants yielded invaluable answers that filled a day-to-day recording in the journal.

The researcher also had prepared himself by reading articles that would inform him of ethical behaviors in a cross-cultural setting. The researcher in every interview related to the women that the purpose of the research was not just for him to receive a Ph.D. The research was for the women. It was relevant to where they were and where they would be in the future. It is information that they would use to advance their cause (Adamson & Donovan, 2002). Since this was not the researcher's home country and tribe,

it was important to respect worldviews and value systems (Fischer & Ragsdale, 2006). The different forms of hospitality, such as eating boiled coffee beans and long conversations about everything else before the research, were all important lessons. This required the “researcher’s flexibility” (Liampputong, 2008) and patience. At times, the researcher could not finish asking all the questions. At other times, the researcher had to be cut short: In one instance, the women wanted the researcher to observe a beer harvest ceremony.

On other occasions, the appointment to meet one participant would be flexibly turned into focus groups because the participants would all decide that they would accompany that one participant. This actually helped the researcher to rely on focus groups as a complementary data collection instrument (Bailey, 2012). It was during incidents such as this where collective cultural metaphors would be used, such as the contextual metaphor for collaboration, *kuchochea*; all the participants concurred that this was their perception of the participatory process.

As the researcher interacted with these rural women by visiting their homes and being part of their daily activities, the researcher realized that these women had dual roles. They were not only taking care of their families as mothers and wives but also involved in home-based businesses that supported their families economically. This was a picture of resilience, and for the researcher, it was an unforgettable lesson of how uneven the roles in the African home are. During this time, the researcher was also reading a book by Sachs (2005). Sachs declared that we can end poverty in our lives, and the researcher wondered about what it would take to end poverty as we know it.

At the end of the five weeks with the women of Bukoba, there was no doubt that ending extreme poverty was a possibility. The women of Bukoba were doing it, one small economic-development project at a time. The women's daily struggle, hopefulness, and resilience gave the researcher momentum for the study and for the future. It is impossible to forget the women of BUWEA. By inviting the researcher into their space to listen to their voices, the researcher gained perspective of the hopes and dreams of rural women and their commitment to work for the empowerment of all women.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the community stakeholders' perceptions of the participatory process in development projects. This chapter provided a discussion on the qualitative research questions, the qualitative methodology, the research design, the selection of study participants, the role of the researcher, the data collection, the protection of human subjects, and the qualitative analysis. Qualitative data were collected from targeted participants through interviews, focus groups, observation, and a field journal.

Chapter 4: Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the in-community stakeholders' perceptions of the participatory process in development projects.

Specifically, the study sought to explore the following five topics:

- the contribution of an in-community stakeholder's understanding and perceptions regarding the participatory approach to the achievement of development projects,
- the influence of an in-community stakeholder's involvement in the project-design process on the achievement of development projects,
- the influence of an in-community stakeholder's involvement in the project-evaluation process towards the achievement of development projects,
- how an in-community stakeholder's understanding of the participatory approach contributes to the achievement of development projects, and
- how an in-community stakeholder's participation in the design and evaluation process of projects influences the achievement of development projects.

The participants belong to the Bukoba Women's Empowerment Association (BUWEA).

This organization is in partnership with the WGC, an organization that uses a participatory-development model in development activities in a third-world country. The researcher used a case-study design in order to understand the experiences and perceptions of poor women involved in development projects.

This study's theoretical framework was adapted from the Freirean dialogical approach. In this approach, Freire (1993) believed that the poor have the capacity to

reflect, conceptualize, critically think about their condition, and make decisions for social change. This approach served as a guide to listening to the perspectives of the women in a rural area. This is in line with the general understanding of the participatory approaches to development as explained by Arnstein (1969): “Participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the power holders to claim that all sides were considered, but make it possible for only some of those sides to benefit” (p. 216).

In the process of listening to the participants, the researcher was able to uncover various nuances of the phenomenon from several angles. The researcher employed the following methods to obtain his data: (a) semistructured interviews that posed open-ended questions to the participants, (b) observation of the participants in their natural setting, and (c) a field journal to record day-to-day occurrences unveiled by the study. The use of the interview questions aided the structure of this study and was a great source to facilitate the gathering, organizing, and recording of information. This helped the data analysis. The data collected were organized into themes that represented the occurring and recurring themes in the voices of the participants. Qualitative research experts Marshall and Rossman (2011) stated that it is the process that “brings order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data” (p. 111). The researcher used coding to examine the collected data in order to identify themes in a strategy known as categorization. This provided a pattern of meaning that the participants attached to the phenomenon and allowed the researcher to discover various themes from the data.

Overview of the Setting

The research was carried out in a period of five weeks. Four weeks were spent interviewing and observing the participants in a local region of the United Republic of Tanzania. One week was spent with three key informants who had traveled to Uganda to carry out some business for the organization. All the interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and then transcribed with the permission of the participants. The participants' enthusiastic responses given during the interviews provided the main data for this study; they were translated from the Kihaya and Kiswahili languages into English. During the four weeks in the local region, the researcher lived in the home of one of the key informants that also acted as a gatekeeper. The participants welcomed the research process, even though it may have intruded upon their space. This kind of professional intrusion was not foreign to the participants. What was foreign to them was the fact that a man was doing the research on rural women. The participants expressed surprise but welcomed the researcher warmly. In every interview, focus group, or observation process, the researcher would mention to the participants the purpose of the study. All the participants agreed to do the interviews openly without being coerced by the researcher. As it is central to Freire's dialogical epistemology, the researcher was able to have dialogue that was participatory, open communication focused around critical inquiry and analysis (Freire, 1992). This kind of dialogue enables the participants to "speak a true word" and overcome their "silencing" (Freire, 1994, p. 16). After the consent forms were signed and all culture protocols were observed, such as having tea or a meal prepared by the participants, the participants would openly comment, as participant Getu spoke for the group:

This is amazing! A man is interested in what we poor women are doing in Bukoba. We have not had a man interested in what we are doing. When African men come to us to ask questions, it is always in context of the law. You know, they want to make sure that we are doing our things without interrupting anything and within the law. We have never received a man that wanted to learn or that thought that what we are doing is that important to write about. You are welcome, you are very welcome. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

In keeping with the Kihaya culture, before any meeting would go on, they would offer food, tea, or sometimes a basket of boiled coffee beans. Due to the fact that the researcher is from another African country and was not familiar with this custom, in the first days it was confusing. Until the researcher accepted the coffee beans and began peeling the skin and eating the beans, no communication would proceed. After that point the participants would talk freely, as if the researcher was not a stranger. It was a sign of mutual acceptance. It communicated that we were no longer strangers. Also, in keeping with the African culture, the researcher was no longer seen as being just a man coming to the participants to do research. Everywhere the researcher went, he was introduced as “Our son who is in school in America.” This was a common sentiment from the beginning of the research.

The researcher had set out on April 30, 2012, from San Antonio, Texas, through Europe, then to Uganda, and then he took a nine-hour bus ride from Kampala, Uganda to Bukoba, Tanzania. On arrival at the bus terminal in Bukoba, the researcher found three of the women participants waiting. The researcher was accorded with a gracious welcome. Although the researcher had never met these women, he felt at home. The researcher had the privilege of staying in the home of the chairman and cofounder of BUWEA, who was also one of the participants. In the key participant’s home, the researcher used Swahili and English to communicate. The people of Bukoba speak Swahili, which is the official

language of Tanzania. However, they also speak the Kihaya tribal language, which is a Bantu tribal language. The researcher, coming from a different tribe in Uganda, could pick up some Bantu words that were common in the Ganda tribe to which he belongs.

In every village and meeting, the participants looked upon the interview process as a way of communicating something that they had learned, and they hoped that the information gathered would help other women. This group of women was eager to share their personal journeys and stories of how they had been emancipated from being unproductive, rural women. The researcher noticed that the participants expressed themselves in detail and were keen to lead the researcher to the projects of the organizations with great pride. This enhanced the research because it aided the observation process.

Demographics Overview

This section presents the demographic information of the participants for this study. For the purpose of anonymity, descriptive statistics and tables are used to present the selected demographic characteristics of the participants. The demographic variables of interest were purposefully selected to enable the reader to have a clear picture of who these women are and what they do in the BUWEA organization. For this study, a total of 58 women participated: (a) 13 groups were visited and observed, (b) eight focus groups were interviewed, and (c) nine key participants were interviewed (see Table 2). All this documentation provided the data for this section. The backgrounds of these nine key participants relevantly represent the settings of the 58 women who actively participated in this study. The following section outlines and presents the women's stories told in their own words as much as possible.

Table 2

Description of Key Participants

Key Participant	Age	Education	Position in BUWEA
Alice	53	Secondary	Founding member
Benna	45	Secondary	Founding member
Charity	45	Primary	Founding member
Dina	40	Secondary	Founding member
Eunike	51	Primary	Founding member
Fatuma	45	Primary	Founding member
Getu	35	Primary	Founding member
Hanifa	39	Primary	Founding member
Inge	43	Primary	Founding member

Researcher's Experience during Data Collection

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) provided helpful suggestions that allowed this researcher entry into the lives of the BUWEA women with ease. It was the privilege of this researcher to stay in Alice's home, a key participant and one of the cofounders of BUWEA. She lives with her husband a few minutes from the Bukoba town. The couple has four grown children who now live and work in Dar El Salam, the capital city of Tanzania. Alice acted as a gatekeeper and introduced the researcher to the group. Without Alice's help, it would have been extremely difficult for the researcher, as an African male, to enter the world of African women.

Prior to the researcher's arrival in Tanzania, the researcher had communicated with Alice through telephone and e-mails, and he had given her a general idea of what he wanted to accomplish during his data collection. The researcher had provided her with a letter explaining the study, the IRB forms, and also sample questions for the study. Upon

his arrival, the researcher did not try to accomplish much; he wanted to meet and get to know Alice and her family. This experience proved to be quite valuable. Alice and her husband, a couple of days prior to the researcher's data collection activities, had asked a lot of questions, and the conversations that followed allowed the researcher to appreciate the efforts of the poor, rural women.

The first couple of days were logistical in nature. The women showed the researcher around different places and wanted him to be as familiar as possible with life in this rural town of Bukoba. This helped ease the researcher into the context and realities of rural women. The researcher's questions were nonspecific. This allowed the women to respond without the pressure of giving the right or wrong answers and without any influence from the researcher. The participants were eager to introduce him and include him in as many activities of the group as possible. This allowed ample time for nonparticipant observation of the group. The participants would often refer to the researcher as "our son." On the first day of official data collection, Alice introduced him to the group and said the following:

This is our son, who has come to learn what we do here in Bukoba. He will be coming along to see various projects. Please, welcome him, and let him see and learn as much as he can. His work might be helpful to other women in the world where he comes from. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

Alice then gave the researcher a general overview of the group. The Bukoba Women's Empowerment Association (BUWEA) began in 2001, under the name of St. Cecilia's Group, as a prayer group of 10 women. In 2005, BUWEA became a registered nonprofit organization under the Tanzanian government. The vision is to raise the economic status of women in the Kagera region by advising and helping them to form small economic support groups and provide them with microloans, business advice, and

training. Alice informed the researcher of the plight of women before BUWEA and its partnership with the WGC. Alice explained:

She is uneducated, with an absent husband, six to 10 children who live in abject poverty and the pressures of fitting into a system that favors men over women, boys over girls. Many of our women were married off at a young age. They did not have the opportunity to go very far in school. Our organization is trying its best to educate and empower these rural women to take care of themselves. As you will see with the villages that we will visit tomorrow, these conditions are changing. Our women have hope. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

In terms of the organization's growth, BUWEA has grown from having one group in 1998 to 62 groups in 2012, with an average yearly income of \$10 in 2001 and \$55 in 2012. The researcher observed that the lives of these rural women rotate around different projects (see Table 3), but the predominant economic activity in the Kagera, Buloba region is agriculture. Most of the women in BUWEA have a garden with a variety of crops, such as bananas, sweet potatoes, cassava, and coffee. The researcher noticed that the women also tended small animal farms.

Table 3

Summary of BUWEA Projects

Group	No. of Groups	Project
Kiziru	3	Maize milling
Kabale	3	Home-based businesses
Birongo	2	Home-based businesses
Amani	1	Horticulture
Tuwinawe	2	Animal husbandry
Kishanje	3	Crafts, farming, and water tanks
St. Cecilia	3	Poultry, pigs, and farming

Themes

When the researcher began to analyze the transcripts from the interviews and focus groups and the notes from his personal journal, he noted that the participants had used metaphors, word pictures, and stories to answer his questions. Through this process of analysis, the researcher discovered common words and phrases that depicted the women's understanding and perception of the participatory process: "building relationship," "involvement in our own development," "taking responsibility," "allowed to make decisions that affect us," "working together," "having full ownership," and "gaining and improving our indigenous knowledge." A number of issues also emerged from the participants' voices, such as "empowerment," "self-esteem," "a sense of respect," "pride," and "developed abilities." Relations, collaboration, and decision making were topics that emerged as well. The researcher then identified seven themes that were common to all the participants: (a) relationships, (b) collaboration, (c) involvement, (d) knowledge, (e) responsibility, (f) ownership, and (g) decision making (see Table 4). The women's perceptions of the participatory process will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Table 4

Seven Identifying Themes

Theme	Participant's Quote
Relationships	"our understanding of participation begins with our building of relationships with our sisters and the development of these relationships through the years" (Alice, personal communication, March 16, 2012).
Collaboration	"participation is like <i>kuchokeya</i> which in his culture is collaboration . . . they are not doing things for us . . . they are working together with us" (Alice, personal communication, March 16, 2012).
Involvement	"we are all involved, we come up with ideas. These are our projects that are started to solve our problems. Our sisters encourage our involvement from beginning to the operating stage" (Getu, personal communication, March 19, 2012).
Knowledge	"it is to gain knowledge and it helps us to find ways that work for us and also allows us to try out new things" (Fatuma, personal communication, March 27, 2012).
Responsibility	"we choose what we want to manage . . . the responsibility of these projects is in our hands" (Alice, personal communication, March 19, 2012).
Ownership	"we are encouraged to think differently . . . ways that make sense to us because at the end of the day, these are our projects . . . meant to empower our communities . . . they ask us what we think because they know we are the owners of our development" (Getu, personal communication, March 19, 2012). "they do not live here . . . they come and go and . . . we have full ownership of these projects . . . we have gained trust from them and they trust . . . they have never tried to own or control what we do . . . I think that is why our relationships are strong" (Inge, personal communication, March 26, 2012).
Decision making	"our participation is not like our marriages, where we are not allowed to make decisions . . . we are allowed to talk, plan, and make decisions" (Eunike, personal communication, March 16, 2012).

Relationships. Alice, cofounder of BUWEA, said the following at our first interview:

When we talk about participation, we must go back to the beginning of the BUWEA group. By the time we met, we had nothing except for a few handmade baskets and some ideas of what we wanted to do. It was just a community of women who had common problems. As we listened and prayed together, we developed a bond. We became sisters and cared for each other. Our understanding of participation begins with our relationships. We were related to each other because of our common problems. When we began working with the WGC, we continued building these relationships. We felt that although they were not African, they understood us and wanted to have a sisterhood relationship. (personal communication, March 17, 2012)

Like Alice, most participants related to the theme of relationships in the many interviews and casual conversations that the researcher had with them. In their homes, these women showed the researcher the pictures in the family albums of many of the leaders and visitors that were part of the sister organization. In this culture, the inclusion of pictures in the family album denotes a special relationship. The researcher noticed that in every home of the key participants, the participants shared their stories by using the family album. They looked upon the members and visitors of the sister organization as sisters.

Fatuma described this relationship by telling a story:

When we talk about participation, our understanding is that it is a relationship. Before partnering with the WGC, we had so many challenges. Some of these challenges were challenges of obtaining credit. No bank could loan rural women money. Banks needed collateral. We are women; women in this culture did not own land. Many of us were dependent on our husbands and as men in our culture, they were not very encouraging. It was impossible to get personal loans. This is why we thought of the "Merry-Go-Round." When the executive director of the WGC met us, we were a fully independent group with our own leadership structure and our own ideas. What she did was to listen to us, visited our villages, and asked a lot of questions. We really grew to love her. She had not given us anything, but we could tell that she wanted to know and understand what we were doing. By the time she left to go back to America, it was as if we were sisters. In the process, she facilitated our growth. Through the years, we felt empowered, self-confident, with improved self-esteem, and we have learned to make our own decisions as women. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

Alice and Benna were invited to a conference in the U.S. that showcased the work the WGC was doing in the third world. Neither woman had ever traveled outside of Tanzania. They look back on this trip and recognize that they were building relationships with the organization. Alice and Benna understood participation:

When the WGC invited us to their headquarters in the USA, we did not have any fear but the fear of the planes. We knew that we had great relationships with them. They treated us like we treat them when they are here. We sat in this conference with all these learned people, and they treated us and our ideas with respect. When we arrived in America, we were welcomed with love and felt at home and not different from the people they were meeting for the first time. The people in San Antonio were as happy. Even though we were terrified that it would be hard to live with the educated people at the university, they felt welcomed and that they learned from each other. (Alice, personal communication, March 16, 2012)

The women's conversations during the interviews revealed a lot of emotion when they talked about the relationships they have with the sister organizations. Getu invited the researcher to do the interview at the shores of Lake Victoria. She mentioned to him that their group loves to invite the WGC to a fish-fry restaurant at the shore. It was during a meal that Getu commented on the same issue:

These people are not very different from us. When they come here, we spend a lot of time in training and also working on our project. However, we also spend a lot of time relating to each other. They share about their families, and we also do the same. We have discovered that we have good relationships because we share a lot of things in common. (personal communication, March 17, 2012)

Each of the participants had a story that related to the theme of relationships. It was the women's understanding that the process of their development is built on the good relationship they have developed with the members of the WGC. Fatuma relayed a story that she said was extremely meaningful. One of the directors of the WGC visited the

women's group, and they had an opportunity to stay in the same room during a training session:

We spent the whole night talking. We talked about our childhood, marriage, children, and our husbands. I discovered that although the director was from another culture, we had so much in common. I discovered that women's problems and challenges everywhere are the same. In the process of talking, we thought of ways of helping out the team [BUWEA]. During that conversation that night, I felt very close to this very different woman. I am an African woman, and she is a Muzungu, but we had a special bond. We laughed and cried together. We have a special relationship. Despite my present social condition as a rural woman, I felt very close to her. (personal communication, March 17, 2012)

Based on the researcher's observations, the relationships that these women talked about were not an uncommon occurrence in the community. As women in the village setting, they had established good relationships among each other. Benna confirmed this observation:

We knew each other, had good relationships, and cared for one another. We expanded our relationships and knowledge. For me, these are the things I see in the WGC. This is how we have been able to work together and do so much. We feel like we are all sisters. We have a bond and a relationship. They understand us, and we understand them. (personal communication, March 15, 2012)

Collaboration. The participants reflected often on what participation meant to them. The researcher observed that the participants wanted as much as possible to put this understanding in their own terms. Whenever the researcher asked what participation meant to them, the participants often preferred to use the word collaboration. Alice commented, "collaboration made more sense to us" (personal communication, March 16, 2012). Eunike, during a focus group interview, stated the following:

When we talk about participation, we think of collaboration. It is more than just participating because the collaboration process to us and especially to me is like *Kuchekeya Maendeleo*. If you can, look at it this way: We knew that we wanted to cook, we cut the wood and started the fire and put the saucepan on the fire. What our external stakeholders did was to collaborate with us in aiding our projects. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

Most of the participants were aware of the WGC and the other relationships they had that were initiated through them. There was a remarkable difference in how participation occurred. The women viewed participation as a collaborative process. They explained how this organization brought them in contact with other organizations. Dina had similar sentiments when the questions of participation and evaluation came up:

We evaluate the projects collectively and share information and ideas with the WGC. We plan quarterly and whenever there is a need. We plan and implement the projects. We are the ones who evaluate whether they will work or not. We share our ideas with our partners who encourage this type of collaboration. This helps us to come up with projects that we know will work for us. The partners share the knowledge, and we are involved to share our African knowledge. When they come, we feel like we are all sisters. They dress like us, eat with us, and they even do our dances with us. Because of this, we have gained confidence, respect, and feel like we have something to contribute as well. (personal communication, March 17, 2012)

The researcher realized that collaboration is an aspect that these women believe they had before the external stakeholders started to work with them. All these projects are built on local knowledge. Alice explained:

It is our custom to work together and not against each other. Our culture teaches us to work together in our social groups at birth, death, and burial ceremonies. We discuss our social issues. I am a leader and a BUWEA board member. I participate by attending the meeting, sharing with other board members, giving opinions, and making decisions for BUWEA and collaborating with the WGC. The WGC works and asks us for our opinion. The executive director asks what we think and that is how we work together. If there is information or other people we need to meet in order to work on the success of the project, we collaborate to see that we meet them and they help and allow for the communication. (personal communication, March 19, 2012)

The participants also described to the researcher what was happening in Kishanje. Kishanje is one of the villages where the BUWEA group has a project as a result of their partnership with the WGC. The group consists of 13 women, and they each have a home-based business ranging from animal husbandry to brewing local beer. They have one

project that brings them together; this is what they called “the water tank initiative.” The women learned how to build water tanks in order to harvest water. Almost seven hours a day were spent in trying to fetch water from the well miles away. They would wake up every single morning with their children at the crack of dawn and walk for miles down uneven paths to the nearest water hole to collect water. The water was filthy with flies buzzing around and animals drinking from the same source. Their lives rotated around looking for safe, clean water until they were introduced to the idea of building water tanks that would harvest rain water. Getu said:

When we found water, we had found water. It did not matter whether what color of what animal was sharing the water. . . . we had found water. In several instances, we would meet herdsman who had brought their cattle to these water holes. We were not allowed to draw water from the water hole until the herdsman were satisfied that the cows had had enough. When we had returned from this grueling journey, we could start the rest of our day. (personal communication, March 19, 2012)

On the day of that interview, the researcher was deeply moved by the conditions and realities of these rural women. With the vastness of one of the largest lakes in the world, Lake Victoria, nearby, these women were sharing water with animals. It was during dinner that the researcher shared his reflection with Alice. Alice mentioned that the women had not addressed all the negative issues that surrounded the water problems.

She explained:

Expose our sisters to the dangers of sexual harassment, assault, and animal attacks. It was especially tragic if our teen girls found men at the water hole. We have many cases of rape and other problems. Girls also would miss school. If you have to spend six to seven hours looking for and fetching water, how good are you going to be in school? My son, water is not only a sanitary or hygienic problem, it is a women’s right problem. We as a group, we were looking for ways of solving this problem. We tried to work with the government to help us dig wells, but they promised and never delivered. (personal communication, March 19, 2012)

This group has five water tanks, and these water tanks harvest enough water for 80 people or about 10 families. The women built and maintain the water tanks. The researcher observed that this was a great source of pride in this community. The women told stories with great excitement for this achievement. They told the researcher that their health and the health of the community improved as a result of the water harvest. This was a result of what they described as collaboration between external stakeholders.

Benna told the story:

We had an opportunity, with the GWWI [Global Women's Water Initiative], to travel to Uganda to learn how these tanks are made. We returned to the village with the help of \$1500. Participation to us meant that as women in this project, we collaborate with each other and also with our sister organization. After a collaborative effort between our team and the WGC and the GWWI, we received a grant and training. We began building these tanks. Each tank serves almost 10 families. We collaborated in building these tanks. We can now harvest water from the roof tops into the tanks. We also received training in maintaining them. Collaborating with other people outside us has helped us a lot. (personal communication, March 19, 2012)

Dina was eager to explain to the group what she felt this meant. It was evident that she was speaking for the entire group. The entire group agreed:

What I think is like *mshabaha*: they facilitate, not dominate. It is a good relationship, which keeps us united and concerned with each other to listen. How could we uneducated women do the things we have done? We have discovered that there is strength in coming together to work together, *umoya ni nguvu*. The success of this community group is that we collaborate with each other and our partners. We, together, look for ways of helping ourselves. Our relationship is not one-sided. The WGC sisters have come down to cooperate with us. They are with us, and now our group has changed. We are not the people that we were in 1999. We are stronger, and we have been able to develop ourselves. (personal communication, March 19, 2012)

This researcher had the benefit of continuing the day's discussion, though sometimes they would end in the late hours of the night. The researcher was struck by the ease with which Alice used metaphors to describe participation. It should be noted that Alice is

legally blind and takes care of her husband who is paralyzed and cannot walk, bathe, or dress himself. Every evening the researcher observed the care Alice had for her husband. It was during moments like this one that Alice explained that the WGC and BUWEA were like her and her husband as a couple:

My husband used to have the ability to help himself before the tragic day that he was paralyzed. It has been 10 years now. He is dependent on me to help him reach anything he wants around the house. We share the responsibility. As you can see, I am blind, and he cannot walk. I am his legs and arms, and he has become my eyes. This is the relationship we have with the WGC. (personal communication, March 18, 2012)

Involvement. The researcher met with Alice at the BUWEA office in Bukoba; the plan was to visit a women's group in an area called Kizuru. This group was in a local village, a distance of 10 to 15 km. This was a group of 17 women. Alice had arranged for the transportation from the office to the village, so Alice and the researcher set out in the morning. It took about one hour to make it to this village. The village was no different than the villages that the researcher had visited previously. One could see banana plantations and coffee plantations everywhere.

The people in this area are mostly subsistence farmers. Women were everywhere on the road side. They were carrying either water or a hoe to tend to their farms. The researcher noted that there were few men in sight. Before approaching the village, the researcher asked Alice about the absence of men. Alice reflected:

As you know, ours is a patriarchal system. Apart from the fact that men in this culture tend to think of women as property, we have serious problems of unemployment and lack of income. This prevents men from fulfilling their male roles as head of household and breadwinner. This is why you have seen an increase in the women taking up roles that were predominantly for men in the past. Our men are in the cities where they took up work and sometimes another wife. So these women are left in the villages to take care of the family. However, with most of these women, you will find widows with six to eight children. The husbands died of AIDS. (personal communication, March 19, 2012)

Because the vehicle could not access the tiny road that led to the village, Alice and the researcher left the vehicle and walked up the hill using the footpath. There was a group of women sitting in the banana plantation, and when they saw Alice and the researcher, they began singing a welcome song in Kihaya. Everybody moved into the house of one of the members of this group. The women sat on straw mats and the researcher was given the only available stool to sit on. The researcher wanted to identify with the women and not sit on the stool, but the women insisted that this was their culture. The researcher noticed that these women worked together in preparing tea and cassava roots. As some remained in the house, others were busy preparing cups to serve tea and food to the rest. On the outside, there were cows, pigs, and chickens running around for food. This was a busy rural setting. The houses had no electricity or indoor plumbing, and many of the homes were made of clay bricks with a dirt floor. On the walls of this home hung old pictures of the former and current president of Tanzania, Mr. Kikwete.

This women's group was involved in home-based agricultural projects that were a result of the partnership with the WGC. The WGC had initiated a business partnership with women in the United States called the Global Business partnership. A woman or groups in the United States would partner with a rural woman by buying a goat, a pig, or a cow. After extending the welcome, the women showed the researcher a mill. The researcher was interested in knowing how they got the mill, and the leader of the group explained that they would produce maize in cassava and millet and when they wanted to grind it, they would walk four to five hours, carrying sacks weighing 45 to 50 kg. One day, they decided in a meeting that they would find ways to make this easier. And through their partnership with the WGC, they were able to get a grant from the American

Embassy and buy the milling machine. The mill made their lives easier: The women paid the same price to grind their produce, and the money earned would maintain the mill. What amazed the researcher was that these women were eager to share any information. First, they explained what this project meant to them. Many said that because of this project, they were able to send their kids to school. They had one thing to say: *Muradi nzuri*. This phrase means intention, plan, or resolve. After talking to the group, the researcher decided to interview Dina, the leader of the group, about the participatory approach. She said:

Before the project was implemented, we knew our need, although we did not know what to do. We knew that we needed a mill, but we did not know how to get it. We had never talked to the American Embassy, but through our relationship with the WGC, all of us became involved in finding a solution to the problem of our community. We exchanged ideas that allowed us to have a better focus. To us, participation meant that we had to be involved in helping ourselves. It meant involving ourselves to set up the project. This allowed us to work on the problem collectively. To us, participation is involvement. As you can see, we run the maize mill, and we run our books. Participation has helped us to be involved in running our business. Our partners have helped us to do this successfully. The whole community has benefited because we were allowed to be involved in the entire process. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

While talking to Alice about the maize mill, she explained something similar by recalling how the maize mill project came into being:

When we shared our problem with the WGC, they wanted us to come up with a solution. The women had, in one of the meetings, mentioned that they travel almost 20 miles to the nearest maize mill. They had suggested that it would be beneficial to have a maize mill in the community. The WGC initiated a process through which I and Benna visited the American Embassy. Visiting the Embassy was a moving experience for us. We are rural women without much education and here we were in the presence of the American Ambassador. With the training we received from WGC, we were able to write a grant, and we were granted funds to buy the maize mill. (personal communication, March 27, 2012)

The theme of women's involvement as a means of participation was not limited to just one village. When the researcher visited another village called Kabale, the theme

resurfaced through conversations with the participants. Kabale is about 45 km from Bukoba. In Kabale, there were 12 women represented, and each of them had what they called a home-based business. Some women had farming projects where they planted beans, coffee, bananas, and soy. Each person managed a single business. As the researcher talked to the participants, they explained that in their organizations, they do not work as individuals but as groups. Each group has leadership that helps coordinate the ideas and practices of that group. Hanifa, who was tasked to introduce me to these groups, explained:

Participation to these groups means that everyone is involved. The partners we have do not tell us what to do or come up with the ideas. We come up with the ideas, and the partners give us knowledge and ask what we think. We have learned a lot of things, yet we did not go far in school. Most of these women are uneducated. From the initiation of the project to the implementation, we are involved. At the end of the day, these are our problems, our solutions, and the results benefit us. As a leader, my role is to visit these groups. We talk and identify the problems of the community and see ways of solving them by involving the community. Our friends, the WGC, have worked with us better, and as a matter of fact, they encourage our total involvement in these projects. Our involvement has really strengthened our groups. It helps us to be creative. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

The researcher observed that, among many of the projects, there was the same agreement about the idea of involvement. It was clear that these women's groups had their own opinions and ideas. Many talked about the fact that the small home businesses were their initiation and that they were involved from the beginning. They looked at their personal involvement as one of the strengths in the participation-approach development with their external stakeholders. Charity explained what participation through involvement meant:

When we received a business professor through the WGC, he shared and gave us information on marketing. Even though we had this information, we were allowed to share our experiences of how African women market products operate. In our

villages, when we want to sell something, we take it around, blow a cow horn or fold banana leaves into a funnel, for instance, when we have beer to sell. We received the training, but we knew that they were helping us in order for us to be better involved in our projects. That is why we had teaching on marketing and bookkeeping. The training allows us to be involved in our small businesses. (personal communication, March 14, 2016)

Based on their experiences, the participants believe that participation means all of their involvement. They believe that the external stakeholders allow them to participate in every stage of the development process, including in the fundamental basics of life. Getu put it this way:

Participation for us means all of our involvement. It has been in our group from the time we began. It was a prayer group; we came together because we all came from the same church, church *Ya Katolika* [Catholic Church]. We participated in prayers together. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

Alice added:

All these projects are built on personal and community involvement. It is our custom to work together and not against each other. Our culture teaches us to work together in our social groups; at birth, death, and burial ceremonies, we all work together. Our partners realize this fact about our culture and encourage and promote this type of thing. What we understand is that that is the way they want to work with us. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

When the researcher asked participants what their involvement in the group was, Benna said, “My contribution has been able to make the project grow. I am involved by evaluating the profits and loss of the project” (personal communication, March 16, 2012). Fatuma said, “I involve myself in BUWEA’s different activities, like attending different seminars, participating in development seminars, helping and giving a helping hand in development activities. I help mobilize the society and sensitizing them about the importance of soy” (personal communication, March 16, 2012). Inge had this to say:

I participate in different processes of projects supported by the WGC to BUWEA. I participate in the initiation of the project, implementation, evaluation, monitoring, and control. I participate from the beginning to the end, for example,

the water project in BUWEA Kishenje. As a leader, I am a creator, innovative, and eager to learn. My participation is to identify problems that my community faces and to see a way of solving them by involving them. (personal communication, March 28, 2012)

Knowledge. On the way back to Bukoba town, the researcher asked a question about the evaluation process. Alice answered the following, stressing that knowledge of one's own community and the sharing of knowledge between organizations and communities is significantly important because it contributes to the success of each project:

We evaluate our projects collectively and share information and ideas with the WGC. We plan quarterly and whenever there is a need. We evaluate our projects. We are on the ground; we know what works and what does not work. This process has allowed us to share ideas with our partners. We have our own knowledge of how things work and are done here, but we also have been helped a lot by the WGC and other groups. For example, they share knowledge when they come here and make seminars on business and marketing. They share knowledge. From the beginning, they have shared knowledge as we have also shared knowledge. For example, when we met the executive director, after she had spent some time looking at our small project and visiting 10 of our villages, we knew that we had connected and now had a relationship with a person who cared about what we wanted to do. On the last day, we asked for her address, and she simply told us that there was another way that would be quicker for us to communicate. She took the group to an internet café. None of us had been at an internet café. It was a place for young people and some "big" men. She taught us how to get e-mails, and we opened up an e-mail account that day. When she returned to the USA, we would check the internet every day until one day when we got an e-mail from her. We were all very excited. She had shared new knowledge. We were now computer literate. We were no longer afraid of computers or regarded them as machines used by men and teenagers. We had gained basic computer skills to communicate to the outside world. We looked forward to reading the e-mails to each other. (personal communication, March 19, 2012)

The participants seemed to share the same sentiments when the researcher had a focus-group interview the next day at the BUWEA office. This is a three-room office where they do all their communications, and it also houses all the important documents for the organization. That morning, the researcher was introduced to the eight women who had

started BUWEA and was offered some soy milk that was being processed in the adjacent room. The researcher was told that it was soy chai, so he asked about the soy project. The women explained that they had limited knowledge of the importance of the soy grain. It was not a grain that they planted. If they planted it, they would harvest, dry, and then roast the soy bean and eat it as an accompaniment with tea. They were introduced to other ways of using the grain when they began collaborating with the WGC. Benna explained:

The soy project is going to be one of our largest projects. The WGC came with a professor who showed us how to make soy milk. We got so excited and thought of how we could improve on what they had taught us. Our local knowledge told us that people in Bukoba would be skeptical about just the soy milk. So, we began using vanilla and chai to the soy milk. Through collaboration with the WGC, we acquire knowledge, which allows us to think of ways that work for us. In the case of soy milk, we shared with the WGC group that was training us. They were excited and encouraged us to think and continue thinking in ways that would work for us. You see, they shared knowledge, and we shared our knowledge. They provided essential means of training, shared good information with us that helped to keep the wood burning. (personal communication, March 18, 2012)

The participants believed that the soy project allowed them to share and grow in their knowledge. Their work was made easier, their children were able to go to school, and other projects sprouted from the initial project. Benna continued:

We got skills about project management which involves project initiation, monitoring, and evaluation. It helps the sustainability of the project by taking care of the project and control. As a result, I am going back to school to learn about marketing and project planning. Without the WGC, I would have never been able to do what I do or even know what to do. Our organization has acquired a lot of knowledge in problem solving as a result of the training we receive. (personal communication, March 29, 2012)

Inge stated:

We had already started to build the house and when the WGC came in, they started advising on how to enlarge the soy plant. They advised on having more than one entrance, and we see that their advice was helpful. (personal communication, March 29, 2012)

The knowledge that the external stakeholders shared with these groups was just more than advice on growing or processing soy. The women also acquired knowledge on how to use different means of communication through the help of the external team. Alice said the following:

The WGC's role is to respond to our initiatives. For example, we wanted to continue communicating with the executive director through writing the first time she was here. None of us knew anything about the internet. We thought that if we got her address, we would write to her. However, she told us that sending letters would take a longer time. She took four of us to the internet café, paid the fee, and helped us to open e-mail accounts. None of us had ever touched a computer. She taught us and encouraged us to e-mail and communicate with her. In the process of building a relationship and communication, we gained knowledge of computers. Now we have our own computers at the office, and we also have small ones that we are trying to take to other women in the villages in order to expose them to things that would help them. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

Participants also expressed their appreciation for the relationship that they had with the sister organization. Hanifa relayed another story:

When the WGC brought a marketing professor to teach us marketing. We heard useful information, but we were allowed to share our experiences of how African women market products. In our villages when we want to sell something, we take it around and blow a bull horn, or we fold a banana leaf like a funnel, and we go around the village announcing what item and sharing what we have made. When it is banana beer, we allow people to gather for a tasting party. Although we had learned from the professor a different way of doing marketing, we were allowed to share our knowledge with him and then collaborated on how to take something learned from him and use it with our local knowledge. We are the ones who know what we want. We have lived like this for a long time. We may not understand how it is done in the Muzungu world, but we know what works for us here, our reality in the BUWEA office. So for us, we understand participation as expansion of knowledge. We have learned to do things differently but we also have improved the way we used to do things here in Bukoba. (personal communication, March 22, 2012)

Alice said:

We have over 62 projects amongst 350 women. All these projects are built on our local understanding of how things work here in Bukoba. As a result of the participation, we women know how to bank money, budget. We have the

confidence to any organization and other “big people” in the community. We have been empowered and have confidence to represent our organization. For example, we have, through the WGC, met the mayor of our town. He is coming this evening to look at our soy project. He is proud of what simple, rural women are doing, and he listens to us now. He thinks, like the community, that we have gained knowledge that could help other women in the communities. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

Dina added:

We often are invited to present seminars by sharing our knowledge with other women groups in this area. This would not have been possible if we had not connected with the WGC. They have given us knowledge that does not only help us but also the communities. (personal communication, March 16, 2012).

To some of these women, participation means a relationship in which their partners help them to also gain knowledge of the market for their products. Fatuma had this to say:

At the end of the trip, the executive director of the WGC decided to buy our baskets. She told us to send more baskets. She said she would find a market for our products and that is how our products made it on the international market. Her role and that of the WGC has been to facilitate and support what we are doing. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

Alice used a metaphor to further define the kind of relationship in which one party, the WGC, supports the growth of the other party, BUWEA. Alice stated, “It has been like helping a walking baby. You do not walk for them. You let them walk by stretching your hand to help them” (personal communication, March 16, 2012). To Eunike, participation also means partnership. She explained:

To me, collaboration with these sisters is unity or partnership. You cannot have it without working together. If someone is doing it for you, then it is not partnership. I think it is something that gives us strength to work together. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

Another key aspect the participants discussed was that the partners share knowledge and allow the women to be involved by sharing their African knowledge.

Fatuma explained:

When the partners come, we feel like we are all sisters. They eat, drink, and dance like us. We do not fear them, they are sisters. For this reason, we have gained confidence, respect, and we feel like we also have something to contribute. (personal communication, March 17, 2012)

Alice said, “I get different ideas or challenges from others. I learn from other businesses to improve mine” (personal communication, March 17, 2012). It was equally important for Dina to not only acquire knowledge from others but also share her knowledge and skills. She explained:

We have been able to learn and acquire knowledge in how to govern ourselves effectively. I give my opinions and views in the different meetings which are provided. I involve myself by improving my projects as well as the group’s projects. I give my opinion and ideas in different seminars provided. I also try to be creative in different projects that I think may bring development. (personal communication, March 17, 2012)

While at the Bukoba office, the researcher engaged in a conversation with the participants about participation and control of the projects. The participants in a focus group showed an understanding of what participation and control meant. From their narrations, the researcher realized that the women also emphasized the idea of control. The women at BUWEA believe that the relationships they have established with their partners have not robbed them of the power to lead, but rather empowered them through knowledge to stand on their own and be in control of everything they do. Benna commented, “We have been given the strength to stand on our own. We did not have an office; now, we all meet here and discuss the problems that concern us. The WGC works with us on our own interest” (personal communication, March 28, 2012). Alice clarified:

We have much more to do because we implement the programs. We know, though, that our aims are the same. We believe that they want us to control and own our own development. We have been so empowered that we control all our 61 projects. They are ours, and they are helping us. We have tried to learn and take control of every project with the knowledge we acquire. Many men that come to see our projects think sometimes that there is a man or men behind the projects, but we tell them it us rural Bukoba women. This has allowed and brought a lot of respect to us from men. We even get invited to seminars to speak about our projects. (personal communication, March 28, 2012)

Based on the participants' stories and the researcher's observations, it can be deduced that knowledge led them to feel empowered and to take control of their projects. Charity said:

We do not only control big projects. We did not begin with big projects like the soy plant and the maize mill. Through our corroboration we have learned to manage and control small projects. We do daily follow-ups of my projects with our workers. We evaluate our businesses and have been doing that since it started. We keep records of our home-based business and also these big businesses or projects. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

Responsibility. The soy project was started by the women's group because of their desire to have one major project. A participant explained that they were interested in the idea of sustainability. In other words, they wanted a project that would sustain other projects in the event that most of the donors moved to other places. She realized that even though 350 individuals benefitted from the external stakeholders, their community was still in need of one such project. Benna explained:

The soy project began as a small project; we were used to, for many years, to planting a few crops of soy. We harvested the soy and roasted it. We did not know that anything would come out of soy until our partners came and taught us how to make more products out of soy. They taught us how to make powder milk, and they were surprised that when they started teaching us, we experimented what else we could with the soy milk. We could add sugar, vanilla, and other spices. We came up with new ideas and moved beyond what our partners taught us. We realized that participation means that we take responsibility of the projects. This big soy project is one example of how we simple, rural women can have the ability to help ourselves. The WGC does not try to own us but empower us. At the end of the day, we are responsible for making this project work. The women

choose what they like and what they can manage. The responsibility of our development is in our hands. (personal communication, March 17, 2012)

Alice later explained the reasoning behind the soy plant. She said:

Our organization operates by providing small loans to rural women. The loans are given with a small interest. When the WGC began working with us, they challenged us to have a self-sustaining mindset. They wanted us to think how we can operate without them. They were training us to manage the organization and the projects in ways that does not depend on them or the time. When they trained us with soy processing, we decided to start a bigger project after we discovered that our people like the soy milk. We have now this project that will be a stimulus to all our projects. In the future, it will act like a revolving fund to give out more small loans to more women. This means, as a result, we will be responsible for all our projects. This is what the executive director of the WGC has been teaching and asks us to do. (personal communication, March 19, 2012)

The researcher also had the opportunity to visit Charity's project. She proudly directed him to the back of the one-room house and explained the cow project. Charity had received a small loan to buy a cow from the Global Business Partnership through the WGC. She wanted a project that would fit her environment and would meet the needs of the community. Charity's project had begun with one cow and now she had three. And she had to learn how to take care of cows in a zero grazing area. She further explained:

The WGC never initiated this project. This is my project. I knew what we wanted. I looked for a project that would fit this environment and made a decision collaborating with the WGC. We sat collectively as a group and discussed what we wanted to do. In BUWEA, we are allowed to take responsibility. Participation allows us to be responsible for our own projects. I am responsible for learning how to take care of the cows. When our group receives the small loans, they have the responsibility of knowing how to invest that money and also make evaluations. (personal communication, March 17, 2012)

Through observation, the researcher realized how the theme of responsibility was extremely important to all the participants of the BUWEA group.

Ownership. The participants expressed the value of each person's responsibility in the projects that they initiated as a group. At this point, the researcher wondered how

each person's responsibility contributed to the development of the project. So the researcher posed the following question: What kind of contributions are made by the women to the participatory process? Benna said:

We plan the projects, we run the project, and estimate the running cost of the project. We are also responsible for preparing the tools which are needed to run the project. In many districts of this country, you find that the projects belong to the donors. You will see the donor's name on each project. This is not the kind of relationship we have with the WGC. We own these projects because they have helped us understand that we own our own development. They are not doing things for us without us. We are working in collaboration, and this allows us ownership of our development. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

Dina also told a story that reflected this understanding:

There is a Masai story that I want to share with you; the government wanted to bring electricity to the Masai communities. However, they never communicated the use of electricity. So, the Masai started climbing the poles and cutting down the wires to make beautiful jewelry. When the government asked why the electricity wires were cut down, the Masai response was, "which electricity?" The government had never sensitized the people of the use of the electricity. For us in BUWEA, our partners, the WGC, endeavored to sensitize our people because at the end of the day, as you saw the water tanks, we are the ones who benefit. So that means that we take ownership. We build and repair the tanks because they are ours. We give and collect interest from the loans because it is our money. (personal communication, March 23, 2012)

The researcher observed the high level of personal ownership while visiting the Amani project. The level of participation in this discussion had a common thread. The language was "our" and "our projects;" there was a sense of ownership. The Amani project has the youngest members. It is located about 10 km from the BUWEA office and is adjacent to the soy-plant project. It is a group that consists of eight young women between the ages of 20 to 28 years old. They are involved in horticulture and vegetables. They received a loan as a group through the Global Business Partnership of the WGC. Hanifa supervises this group. She explained:

As you can see with this project, like many of our projects, they fit the women properly. The WGC would not know what to do in this area. They are not from Bukoba. We as women from Bukoba know what we want. Our partners help and facilitate our owning of these projects. These are very small projects, but they are what exactly fit these women and this environment. Our role is very important. We start these projects and run these projects for us. (personal communication, March 23, 2012)

Most participants also mentioned the joy they felt because participation allowed them to have ownership. Because they have ownership of their projects, the women have gained self-confidence and respect from the community. They are known as managers and contributors to society. This has also enhanced their standing in the family and in the government. On several occasions, the Mayor of Bukoba and the Minister of Agriculture have visited the women's projects. Alice commented:

When these big men [important men] visited our soy farm at Nkenge, they were amazed that we rural women own such a big and well-organized farm. We did not have a foreign representative from America running our farm. We were running it ourselves. (personal communication, March 19, 2012)

On one such occasion, the researcher observed the mayor of Bukoba visiting the soy project and overheard him say that he was amazed at how responsible these women were. Getu said, "If this project had been given to the men or to the government, it would have failed" (personal communication, March 15, 2012).

Decision making. Participants described the participatory approach as a means to enhance their decision-making capabilities. One key participant said that through the years, their group has felt empowered and self-confident, with improved self-esteem. Most importantly, they have the capability to make their own decisions. She emphasized that this has been as a result of the participatory approach to development. As a result of participation, the participants' lives have drastically changed. Inge described this as life changing in the following statement:

When we began communicating with the WGC, they would support our projects with funds. But the WGC never initiated any projects; these were our projects. We knew what we wanted. In the beginning, we wanted projects that would be home-based; projects that would allow women to work within their environments. Each group, of the 61, made their own decisions because they felt empowered by the donors. Our participation is not like our marriages where we were not allowed to talk, plan, or make decisions. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

Participants reported that because of the process of participation, they were able to start projects that have been sustainable. Their participation involves the training they receive from the donors, which then allows them to be part of the decision-making process. The external stakeholders ask them what they think, and they also support projects that come out of the decision-making process. Hanifa described the process:

Since we are the ones who initiate these projects, we do evaluate them to see if they will work. We start small to test if the project will work. We make the decision on whether to move forward or retreat. And later, when we realize that it does work, we add more money to the project. We are the ones on the ground and therefore know what will work or not. Sometimes, the WGC helps to give knowledge on how to evaluate the projects, but they let us make the decision. Decision making is very important to us. (personal communication, March 17, 2012)

Alice explained how participation has empowered their decision-making process. She said:

It was a collaboration of bringing ideas that we can act on. The WGC gave us the freedom to do what we wanted. Participation helps us to get more knowledge that we pass on to other women. Both sides have been open-minded. Everything has been shared from the WGC and from us. We communicate and dialogue and despite the fact that the WGC has more knowledge, they come down to the level of the poor, uneducated women and discuss issues that empower women in decision making. (personal communication, March 19, 2012)

Working with the WGC did not stop these women from making their own decisions. It rather empowered them to come up with ideas that they all agreed on and then initiate different projects accordingly. Inge stated:

Our group BUWEA began as St. Cecilia group. It was a group of 10 women. We all wanted to be together and pray for the many challenges that we face in our families. As we met to pray, we decided that praying was not enough. We devised a circle that we called “Merry-Go-Round.” We each contributed a dollar to the circle and gave our money to one of the women to invest in weaving baskets. Baskets would be sold and a small interest reinvested in the circle and given to another woman. We sat together in the group, at which this time was growing and agreed to basket weaving. Many women wanted to work from home, starting projects that would be managed while taking care of their families. We made these decisions ourselves. (personal communication, March 16, 2012)

The leader said that the women choose what they like and what they can manage. It is for that reason that they are called home-based projects because all of the women want to work in a home. They work as a group to discuss how to find funds to finance the projects. Benna explained this in a Swahili proverb: “*If someone gives you a cow, don’t ask for a milk container*” (personal communication, March 16, 2012). Together these women not only make decisions on how to operate their projects, but also decide the future of their projects.

Summary

In this chapter, nine key participants of the BUWEA group represented the voices of the organizations. The participants of this study had the freedom to express themselves, and their perceptions were presented in their voices and words as accurately as possible. The themes represent the perceptions of the in-community stakeholder participants involved in participatory-development projects in the Kagera region in Bukoba, Tanzania. The themes represented the women’s awareness of the participatory process with an indigenous epistemology. The seven identified themes were (a) relationships, (b) collaboration, (c) involvement, (d) knowledge, (e) responsibility, (f) ownership, and (g) decision making. The researcher discovered that the women

communicated a great sense of self-esteem. They felt empowered, and they had become owners of their own development.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the in-community stakeholders' perceptions of the participatory process in development projects. The study was carried out in the Kagera region in Bukoba, Tanzania. Specifically, the study sought to explore the following five topics:

- the contribution of an in-community stakeholder's understanding and perceptions regarding the participatory approach in the achievement of development projects,
- the influence of an in-community stakeholder's involvement in the project-design process on the achievement of development projects,
- the influence of an in-community stakeholder's involvement in the project-evaluation process on the achievement of development projects,
- how an in-community stakeholder's understanding of the participatory approach contributes to the achievement of development projects, and
- how an in-community stakeholder's participation in the design and evaluation process of projects influences the achievement of development projects.

In this study, the participants were all women who belonged to the Bukoba Women's Empowerment Association (BUWEA), an organization that uses a participatory model in development projects. The researcher used a case-study design in order to gain an in-depth knowledge of their understanding of the participatory process in their own community developments. In this chapter, the researcher summarizes and discusses the main findings represented in the seven themes that emerged from the participant data, examines their implications to the participatory discourse, and suggests

recommendations for future research. The seven themes are as follows: (a) relationships, (b) collaboration, (c) involvement, (d) knowledge, (e) responsibility, (f) ownership, and (g) decision making.

Theoretical Framework and Discussion

This study was guided by a theoretical framework from the Freirean approach through which the listening to and understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the poor involved in development were realized. Freire (1990) objected to a top-down mode of learning common among development agencies in which the teachers marginalized the poor people and treated them as passive recipients of knowledge. From the women's comments in this study, it was clear that the women were aware of their realities. And as a result of being listened to and allowed to be active participators in their development, they had charted their own course. Freire (1994) stated:

I cannot understand human beings as simply living. I can understand them only as historically, culturally, and socially existing . . . I can understand them only as beings who are makers of their "way" in the making of which they lay themselves open to or commit themselves to the "way" that they make and that therefore remakes them as well. (p. 97)

For these poor, rural women, there was a great appreciation for the role that the WGC played; the organization acted not as deciders, but as facilitators, to put them through the process of "conscientisation." According to Freire, conscientisation "is an ongoing process by which people move toward critical consciousness, develop critical levels of awareness of their reality and take action to change it—a process that gives voice to people submerged in a culture of silence" (as cited in Nkuba, 2007, p. 67). Freire emphasized the characteristics of humaneness that are reflected in love, hope, and empowerment. This was evident in Benna's response to the participatory process:

Participation has allowed us to actively involve ourselves in the development of our communities. We have gained skills, knowledge, and capacities to think in ways that are new and were foreign. We are no longer limited. It is not that we did not think, but as women, we were never allowed to think in these ways. For example, since we have this new big project [soy plant] we have had to think of how we are going to run it. This is the reason I have enrolled in the community university that you saw close to my home. I want to understand modern methods of marketing. Ten years ago, this could have been impossible. The WGC did not tell me to go back to school; they just helped to open my eyes to the possibility. (personal communication, March 28, 2012)

The study highlighted the narrowing of the gap between external stakeholders and in-community stakeholders in the participatory-development process. It was evident in this study that when the poor are at the center of the participatory process, development is achieved and the poor are empowered, leading to sustainable development. As Courtney et al. (as cited in Godinot & Wodon, 2006) urged, “the projects which are the most successful in reaching the poorest tend to be based on the aspirations they carry deep inside of them but often have difficulty expressing” (p. 8). Most participants in this study believed that the participatory nature of the WGC had allowed them to achieve the development that previously was but a dream to their communities. When the rural women were given the opportunity to participate, it created within them the capability to make decisions for their future. In one of her interviews, Alice declared the following:

We rural women were always governed like property. We were never allowed to make any decisions due to the fact that we live in a patriarchal society. Our involvement with the WGC has not made us bigger than men, but it has elevated us to human level. We are not looked upon as property or helpless women. Our husbands have come to respect our capacity to think, plan, and manage money and the community as well as the government looks at BUWEA as a contributive factor to the development of the entire Kagera region. They are now thinking, “how do we get these women to teach other women and men.” (personal communication, March 28, 2012)

It was evident that the women had become used to initiating, implementing, and evaluating their development. Benna said:

When we sit in our BUWEA meetings, we plan, we dream of projects that we think will work for us. We are not under any pressure to come up with projects that the donors like. As a matter of fact, they have always asked us what we want to do. When we plan and present these needs, they have always listened and acted or directed us where we can have access to what might help us. We are not silent partners in our development. We are active and that has brought a lot growth to our group. (personal communication, March 26, 2012)

This study showed that when the rural poor are increasingly involved in the process of developing themselves at the various stages of development, capabilities and capacities are increased that enable them to own and manage their destinies in collaboration with external stakeholders. Participation then becomes a vehicle that empowers people to mobilize their own capacities. They become key actors on the stage of their own development. They can make decisions and have control over the activities that affect their lives.

The keystone of this study is summarized as follows: effective participation requires the active involvement of the in-community stakeholders, incorporating their perceptions of the process. The participants in this study revealed new ways of thinking about the participatory process, and they defined what participation meant to them. These perceptions revealed to the researcher a new approach and a new language that is not present in the literature regarding the participatory-development process. Most external stakeholders use their own framework to define what participation means, restricting the in-community stakeholders' participation to an external vision. Therefore, the in-community stakeholders' perceptions are not taken into account.

Summary of Themes and Connections to Existing Knowledge

Relationships. In every conversation the participants had with the researcher, they indicated that the participatory process was about building and nurturing

relationships. This is the aspect of the findings that was uncommon in the participatory and development literature. The participants looked upon the external stakeholders as their sisters, although they were separated by diverse cultures, geography, background, and race. In an interview, Alice mentioned, “we have come to understand the common bond we have is that women’s issues are the same everywhere” (personal communication, March 29, 2012).

As the researcher reflected on the numerous personal journal entries, one aspect was common in all the daily entries. There existed a deep relationship within the two organizations. The participants talked about the WGC as friends, and they were quick to tell personal stories that initiated and created the bond. Perhaps one of the aspects of the building of these relationships was the fact that the executive director spent several weeks just observing, listening, and getting to know the BUWEA women. In addition, the participants talked about the WGC’s deliberate actions in crossing and identifying with the culture of the BUWEA women. As Getu said , “they come here, they dress like us, eat our food, and associate with us like in all our activities” (personal communication, March 16, 2012).

Collaboration. At the beginning of the research process, one of the assumptions that the researcher had was that perhaps the participants would not understand the term participation or the participation process. The researcher realized that the participants understood the term participation but desired to use the term collaboration. The term collaboration was used in almost every interview setting because it fit their perception of the participatory process. As Alice said, “in collaboration, we are working together, they are not doing it for us, we are engaged in our own development” (personal

communication, March 16, 2012). This fits quite well with Freire's (1994) framework that states that participation allows the marginalized to "speak a true word" (p. 23). The participants were fully aware of their world. Although uneducated, the BUWEA women were aware of the participatory process and used the word collaboration in their explanations to define it. The group explained:

In collaboration, we all come up with something. We are all weak, and we are strong at some level. When we come together, we all understand that we have a common goal. We want to develop ourselves, families, and communities. We Kuchochea. We are stimulating something that is already there. We are in collaboration with the WGC. They came and stimulated our progress with finances, knowledge, and other important things that have uplifted us as women in Bukoba. Each one brings something to the table for the good of the group. We are not just participants, we are collaborators. (personal communication, March 17, 2012)

Involvement. The findings of this study also showed that the participants believed that the participatory process meant their own involvement in the development projects. Although they considered themselves uneducated in comparison to their partner organization, the WGC, they perceived that participation allowed them to be involved. As a result, these women had a voice. In this study, the participants felt included in the process that precipitated their involvement (Gaventa & Robinson, 1998). Therefore, the findings show that they perceived the process as involving them from the beginning to the end (Chambers, 1990; Gujt & Kaul, 1998).

Knowledge. The study found that one aspect of participation is the building of capacity in which partners develop their understanding, knowledge, and skills. In this study, the participants also perceived the participatory process to be one where knowledge is obtained and shared. Wilson and Wilde's (2003) framework of community

participation suggests asking questions that provide a better understanding and evaluate whether a community is participating:

Influence. Partnerships involve communities in the shaping of regeneration plans and activities and in all decision making.

Inclusivity. Partnerships ensure that groups and those interested in the community can participate, and they oversee the ways in which inequality is addressed.

Communication. Partnerships develop effective ways of sharing information with communities and develop clear procedures that maximize community participation.

Capacity. Partnerships provide the resources required by communities to participate and support both local people and those from partner agencies to develop their knowledge and skills.

Hence, the findings of this study support Wilson and Wilde's (2003) framework. The participants indicated at various levels of the relationship with the WGC as gaining valuable knowledge that was being applied towards the development process. Beyond that there were some unintended results, such as Benna's desire to complete college. She expressed the following:

I would have never been able to return to complete college. I thought that I was old and now useless. My whole life was to prepare my children to go through college but because of the WGC emphasis on gaining more knowledge, I have joined college in order to study marketing. Our big project [the soy factory] needs for us to know modern marketing. We can't wait on the WGC to train us in everything. We have enough knowledge to now see what we have and what we need. (personal communication, March 19, 2012)

Responsibility. All the participants in BUWEA also perceived the participatory process as responsibility. It was evident in the responses that the participants had taken charge. From the naming of the organization to the collection of fees within the 62

groups, the participants had taken responsibility. They were choosing projects that were good for them and projects that fit within their context and realities. From the small home-based business to the large soy flour and milk production, the participants shared the responsibility. Participation to them meant that they got to choose what they liked and what they wanted to do. As the literature indicates, participation provides for equal responsibility (Sen, 2000; Muthuri, Chapple, & Moon, 2009).

Ownership. In addition, the findings of this study showed that the participants perceived the participatory process as gaining ownership. This sense of ownership was a direct result of the sensitization by the development agency, the WGC. In this organization's participatory framework, they endeavored to train and build skills that communicated to the women that these were not the development agency's projects but the women's projects. This was also evident in the way that the WGC began the consultation process. The participants overwhelmingly claimed, "these projects and programs are for us" (Alice, personal communication, March 16, 2012); "these projects do not have the names of the donors" (Getu, personal communication, March 17, 2012); and "these are for the women's development" (Inge, personal communication, March 16, 2012). These findings tie in well with the theory and practice of development found in the literature, which gauge participation, in part, by gauging ownership. When in-community stakeholders participate fully in the development process, they gain ownership of the process and their projects (Krishna, Uphoff, & Esman, 1997; Green & Hunton-Clarke, 2003).

Decision making. All the participants in this study communicated that, as a result of the participatory process, they had gained capacities for decision making. The

literature on participation states that “through its representative community structure, [in-community stakeholders] should make decisions about what should be constructed, how it should be designed and constructed, who should work on the project, as well as the rates and system of employment” (Adato & Haddad, 2002, pp. 6–7). Furthermore, the literature on participation notes that one of the goals of participation is to aid decision making among in-community stakeholders (van den Hove, 2000). The participants of this study communicated they were at a place where they were trusted, could make decisions about their projects, and knew how they wanted to govern themselves. Many of the participants specifically expressed appreciation that, in the WGC, they now had sisters that trusted them, “not like our men who did not trust us but just told us what we were to do” (Inge, personal communication, March 16, 2012).

A Contextually Sensitive Collaborative Process Model

As the participants reflected on what they perceived to be participation, their voices revealed a local-context understanding of the participation process. The participants used *kuchochea*, a Swahili phrase meaning to stimulate what is already there.

Alice described this process:

We know what we want to cook, we know where the firewood is. What is important to us is to collaborate *kuchochea* with others getting the firewood, making the fire, and then pushing the embers into that flame in order to get whatever we want to cook ready. In this process we work together, hand in hand with our sisters to bring about development. (personal communication, March 29, 2012)

In this metaphor, the participants contribute what they know about the process and their experiences to *kuchochea* in their development. As in-community stakeholders, they are using their local know-how of the process to contribute to development. The participatory process is also in their language and in their own voices. In their ground-breaking

research for understanding global cultures, Gannon and Pillai (2010) quoted the use and need for cultural metaphors:

The great pedagogic value of figurative use of language is to be found in their potential to transfer learning and understanding from what is known to what is less well-known and to do so in a very vivid manner. . . . Metaphors are necessary because they allow the transfer of coherent chunks of characteristics—perpetual, cognitive, emotional, and experiential—from a vehicle which is known to a topic which is less so. (p. 3)

In this case, the poor are not blindly following principles that have been influenced and initiated by the Western culture through development agencies. They define terms through their own lenses and through colorful metaphors. So, participation is not defined for them, and then they are being invited to the table to participate using the Western perceptions of participation.

Participation, as the research shows, is an interdependent and mutually reinforcing relationship between the development agencies and the in-community stakeholders. It ceases to merely be a process that meets the needs of the poor. It is to significantly and explicitly recognize the voices and the perceptions of the in-community stakeholders in the entire process, which becomes an effective participatory structure. Otherwise, participation will reflect the old pattern of a top-down process (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2010). Development agencies should have in their participatory framework the understanding and perceptions of the in-community stakeholders. This will create a higher level of participation, which would be both desirable and beneficial. Local understanding and contributions of the in-community stakeholders, and their appreciation and acceptance of multiple perspectives, can successfully model a participatory process that can build capacity and bring about sustainability. Furthermore, consulting local people at the initial stage allows the voices and local experiences to be included in

development projects. In the process, local people get a chance to cast their voices in the project, undertaken for their well-being. It has been widely observed and accepted that indigenous knowledge plays a significant role in building sustainable economic projects.

It is important for the external stakeholders to acknowledge the many different ways that in-community stakeholders perceive participation because, as this study showed, there is no universal blueprint for participation. While the principles of participation will effect community development, there is a need for going further with the process by taking into account the perceptions of the in-community stakeholders. The participatory approach to development has been promoted in the West, mainly by Western scholars and Western development agencies. In the West, people think mostly in a linear fashion and have a way of communicating that is different from the people they work with in rural communities. In order to have meaningful dialogue in development, it is important that the voices of the rural poor are taken into account. The context of the poor and the meaning they attach to the participatory process is important. Most participatory processes are used in a uniform fashion from country to country, as if the people in these countries think alike. Freire (1970) explained:

One cannot expect positive results from an educational or political program which fails to respect the particular view of the world by the people. Such program constitutes cultural invasion, good intentions notwithstanding. The starting point for organizing the program content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people.
(p. 84)

The participants in this study were aware of the process of participation but were even willing to say, “we understand but we prefer” because in their context, that is what makes sense. They were using *kuchochea* as a metaphor for self-development (Ortony, 1975). As Freire (1985) further suggested, we must “not believe in the myth of the

ignorance of the people . . . they cannot sloganize the people, but must enter into dialogue with them . . . or otherwise, education (development) continues to be a form of social manipulation” (p. 159). Understanding the in-community stakeholders’ perceptions will go a long way toward exposing anything that would impinge on the process that would reflect the same status quo of the bottom-down process of development.

Based on the conclusions, analyses, and discussions of this study, the researcher designed a contextually sensitive participatory model, which includes four stages (see Figure 5). The first stage is crucial because it involves the external stakeholders’ analysis or investigations of the contextual participatory process. The purpose for this stage is to gain an in-depth understanding of various cultural metaphors that inform participation. This inevitably requires time and commitment from the external stakeholders, but it allows the perceptions of the in-community stakeholders to emerge. This ensures that the local poor are directly involved in the participatory process, since their voices have been respected and accounted for before the process. This might require a qualitative approach, such as an in-depth case study, an ethnography study, or a participatory action study. The overall aim is to purposefully include the rural community in the participatory process. Following this in-depth analysis of investigations is the second stage, which is the structuring of the participatory process to fit the in-community stakeholders’ perceptions. The third stage involves triangulations. This stage is meant to measure how far or how close the perceptions of the participatory process are from the external stakeholders and the in-community stakeholders. This will include the aligning of contexts and providing direction for collaboration. This would be the stage of documentation or a stage that provides a blueprint of how the external stakeholders and the in-community stakeholders

are going to collaborate. It requires roles and evaluative and accountability instruments to be initiated by both entities. This will ensure the continual learning and dialogue throughout the process. The fourth stage is the fully developed participatory process model that reflects the perceptions of both the external stakeholders and the in-community stakeholders. Documentation at this stage is imperative for a continual learning and evaluative process. Although this model has not been tested and will require further studies to substantiate its relevance in the field of participatory development, it remains a suggested small step in the complex nature of understanding the participatory process.

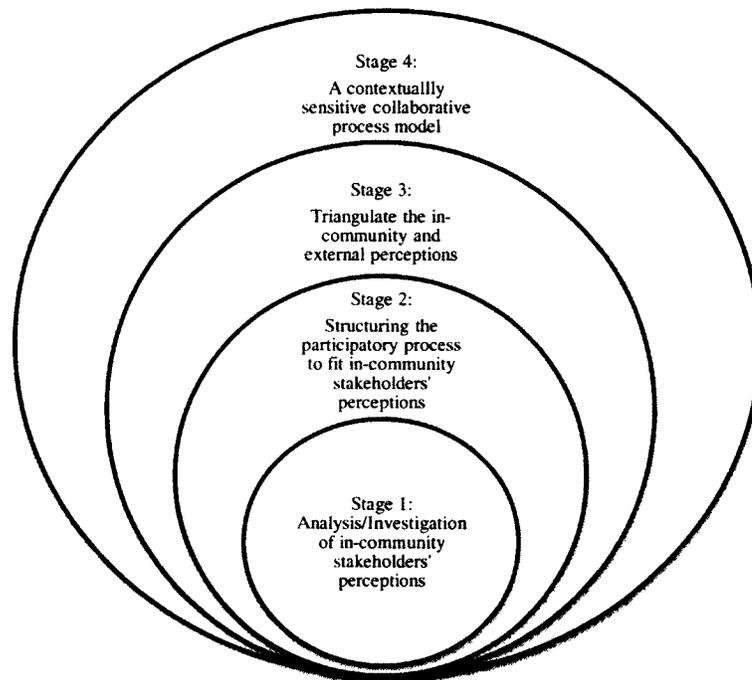


Figure 5. A contextually sensitive participatory process model.

Implications

In order to provide a degree of participation that will include the perceptions of the in-community stakeholders, development agencies will have to consider the following:

1. Time—It takes an enormous amount of time to build the necessary relationships that will allow the perceptions of the in-community stakeholders to emerge. The time spent in the community to understand how that community perceives participation will enhance the overall participative relationship.

2. Flexibility—Development agencies will have to be flexible in the process. There is a lot of learning that goes on when people from diverse cultures decide to work together. The Western processes of participation may have to be dropped and, for the sake of developing the local communities, a community participatory understanding may have to be adopted. Pimbert (2004) wrote:

Eliciting and making visible diverse local realities, priorities, categories and indicators through participatory learning is still very much needed today to challenge top-down, “one size fits all” science, policy and practice. . . . However, claims that one tradition of knowledge and practice (local, vernacular systems versus external, science-based systems) is always better than the other may ultimately restrict possibilities. Instead, a key challenge for participatory learning action lies in creating safe spaces where plural traditions of knowledge can be purposefully combined. (pp. 50–51)

3. Documentation—Participatory-development language that governs much of the participatory process is deeply influenced by Western culture. In the last three decades, there has been hardly any literature that reflects the perception of the

in-community stakeholders. The community is supposed to adopt the participatory blueprints that come from the West, and that is considered participation. There is a need for development agencies to increase the capabilities of the in-community stakeholders to document their own terms and conditions and include those in the participatory process. This is, essentially, taking people's perceptions as the starting point. This would mean research and documentation of the in-community stakeholders' perceptions of the participatory process.

4. Humility—Development agencies are perceived to be more knowledgeable and more powerful than in-community stakeholders. The questions of different dimensions of power, process, and capacity are the concerns of the typologies addressed in Chapter 2. Relying on the checks and balances of the Western understanding of participation would hinder effective participation. There is a need for development agencies to spend the necessary time learning from the poor. The perceptions of the people should be recognized as an asset in the participatory discourse.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed the participants' perceptions of the participatory process; it was depicted in their voices. The women of BUWEA were able to reflect in a way that showed they were aware of the process, and they provided an understanding of the world around them. They critically analyzed and were able to articulate the participatory process in their own language. The stories they told revealed that they had been empowered and had attained a level of self-worth and self-esteem.

This created an evolutionary process that allowed the researcher to appreciate the resilience and dedication they had to their development.

It was evident that the collaborative-development approaches were initiated to counter the top-down, science-led transfer of technology paradigm and had also achieved the goal of sustainability and social impact not only for the women, but also for their communities. By soliciting perceptions of participation from the in-community stakeholders, the development process that would ultimately lead to the sustainability of economic projects could be more effective. What is needed is a contextual analysis and dialogue to be carried out in any community before any participatory approach is initiated (Lange, 2012). In the end, the process should bare the perceptions of the in-community and external stakeholders to provide a unified framework for effective participation.

Recommendations for Future Research

The perceptions of in-community stakeholders are important in the participatory process. If development agencies that practice a participatory approach are to be effective with the process, the perceptions of the rural poor must be heard. The general recommendation is that qualitative studies of this nature be conducted to illuminate the perceptions of the rural poor. In addition, a participatory action research study could be helpful to pave the way for a better understanding of the process and also provide a documented blueprint for the in-community stakeholders as they engage in development organizations. Future research should consider examining the perceptions of women in an urban setting and comparing them with the perceptions of the rural women in this study. Furthermore, this study took place in rural Africa. Similar studies could be replicated in

other third-world countries. This research could be a catalyst to understanding other development efforts involving women.

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Appendix A

**Application for Institutional Review Board Approval Form
University of the Incarnate Word**

(PLEASE TYPE INFORMATION)

Title of Study: *Participatory Development: An Investigation of In-Community Stakeholders' Perceptions*
Participatory Development: An Investigation of In-Community Stakeholders' Perceptions

College/School or Division/Discipline: **Ph.D. Organizational Leadership (School of Graduate Studies)**
Ph.D. Organizational Leadership (School of Graduate Studies)

Investigators			
Principal Investigator - A UIW PI must be designated for all projects in which UIW is engaged in research.			
Name: Gerald K. SseruwagiGerald K. Sseruwagi	Phone #: 210- 882- 764021 0-882- 7640	E-mail: saseruwag@student.uuiwtx.edusaseruwag@student.uuiwtx.edu	
Co-Investigator(s) – List all co-investigators and provide contact information on each one			
Name:	Phone #: Click here to enter text.	E-mail: Click here to enter text.	Address: Click here to enter text.
Faculty Supervisor of Project, Thesis, or Dissertation			
Name: Dr. Osman OzturgutDr. Osman	Phone #: 210- 829-	E-mail: ozturgut@uiw.eduozturgut@uiw.edu	Address: 4301 Broadway4 301

Ozturgut	313721 0-829- 3137		Broadway
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Research Information		
Research Category: <input type="checkbox"/> Exempt <input type="checkbox"/> Expedited Review <input type="checkbox"/> Full Board Review		
Purpose of Study: The purpose of this qualitative study will be to investigate the community stakeholders' perception of their involvement in the participatory process in achievement of development projects in Tanzania. The purpose of this qualitative study will be to investigate the community stakeholders' perception of their involvement in the participatory process in achievement of development projects in Tanzania.		
Number of Subjects: Click here to enter text.	Number of Controls: Click here to enter text.	Duration of Study: Click here to enter text.
Does this research involve any of the following:	YES	NO
Inmates of penal institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutionalized intellectually handicapped	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutionalized mentally disabled	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Committed patients	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intellectually handicapped outpatient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mentally disabled outpatient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnant women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fetus in utero	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Viable fetus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nonviable fetus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dead fetus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In Vitro fertilization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minors (under 18)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For each "Yes", state what precautions you will use to obtain informed consent? N/AN/A		
How is information Obtained? (Include instruments used. Attach copy of instrument to this application.) Click here to enter text.		

Confidentiality – Are data recorded anonymously? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If answer is “No”, how will the study subjects’ confidentiality be maintained? Click here to enter text.			
Benefit of research: Click here to enter text. This study investigates in-community stakeholders’ perceptions of the participatory process in development. It will have no particular benefit to the participants that will be gratuitous. Participation will be optional. However, this study will significantly add to international development literature, give voice to the participants’ perceptions. Consequently, this information can assist people and organizations involved in development work for the poor in the third world as an evaluative instrument.			
Possible risk to subjects: No possible risk to participants.No possible risk to participants.			
Funding Source: NoneNone	Funded by: NoneNone	Grant Proposal Pending: NoneNone	Not Funded: <input type="checkbox"/>

CHECKLIST:

- Research protocol
- Informed consent documents
- Instruments used for data collection
- CITI certificate of training on the protection of human subjects

If change in research occurs the Board must be notified before research is continued.

SIGNATURES		
Original Signatures are required. This application will not be processed until all signatures are obtained.		
Signature of the Principal Investigator The undersigned accepts responsibility for the study, including adherence to DHHS, FDA, and UIW policies regarding protections of the rights and welfare of human subjects participating in the study. In the case of student protocols, the faculty supervisor and the student share responsibility for adherence to policies.		
Print Name of Principal	Signature of Principal	Date:

Investigator:	Investigator:	
Signature of Faculty Research Supervisor – Required By signing this form, the faculty research supervisor attests that he/she has read the attached protocol submitted for IRB review, and agrees to provide appropriate education and supervision of the student investigator above.		
Print Name of Faculty Supervisor:	Signature of Faculty Supervisor:	Date:
Signature of Co-investigator(s)		
Print Name of Co-Investigator: 1. Continue if there are more co-investigators. All must sign.	Signature of Co-Investigator:	Date:

APPROVAL SIGNATURE(S)		
Signature of the IRB College/School Representative:		
Print Name of College/School Rep.:	Signature of College/School Rep.:	Date:
Signature of the IRB Chair (if needed)		
Print Name of IRB Chair:	Signature of IRB Chair:	Date:

Application Number:
The Researcher must use copies of the stamped consent form. Other communications to the study subjects must also be stamped with the IRB approval number. Electronic surveys must have the IRB approval number inserted into the survey before they are used.

IRBs are filed by their number and helps the Graduate Office keep track of submissions and communications. Please refer to this number when communicating about the IRB.

Appendix B

Consenting to This Study and Consent Form

Consent Form

I, _____, agree to participate in a case study as part of a doctoral dissertation by Gerald K. Sseruwagi chaired by Dr. Osman Ozturgut from the Department of Education at the University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas titled *Participatory Development: An Investigation of In-Community Stakeholders' Perceptions*. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can stop taking part without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is designed so that the researcher can gain some understanding of my perspectives of perception of the participatory process in economic development activity I am involved in at this time.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following:

1. Attend three one-hour interviews with the researcher.
2. Clarify any follow-up questions the interviewer might have when interpreting my words.
3. Allow the interviewer to observe my activities/or of my group for three sessions one hour in length for each visit.
4. Share relevant documents with the interviewer such regarding the process of participation in development work.
5. Check for accuracy in the researchers' transcripts and findings when depicting my information.

I understand that:

- The researcher will audiotape conversations and interviews that occur between the researcher and me.
- The data will be kept by the researcher and will be shared while maintaining confidentiality with Dr. Osman Ozturtgut.
- The researcher will analyze the data and keep it for no longer than one year for educational and research purposes after the last date of data collection.
- No risk is expected but, if I experience some discomfort or stress during observations or conversations, then I can choose to discontinue my participation in the study without any penalty.
- No information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others, except if it is necessary to protect my welfare. I will be assigned a pseudonym which will be used in interview transcript and all other data documents.

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form, to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Researcher	Signature	Date
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Participant	Signature	Date
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Please sign two copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Appendix C

University of the Incarnate Word Letter



3/16/20123/16/2012



Dear Mr. Sseruwagi:

Your request to conduct the study titled *Participatory Development: An Investigation of In-Community Stakeholders' Perceptions* is approved as an expedited study. Your IRB number is 12-03-002 and was approved on 3/15/20123/15/2012. Attached is a copy of your scanned IRB. The file includes the application with IRB number and the stamped IRB consent form. Please use copies of these stamped documents when you communicate with or consent your subjects. Electronic surveys or electronic consent forms, or other material delivered electronically to subjects must have the IRB approval number inserted into the survey or documents before they are used.

Please keep in mind these additional IRB requirements:

- This approval is for one year from the date of the IRB approval.
- Request for continuing review must be completed for projects extending past one year. Use the **IRB Continuation/Completion form**.
- Prompt reporting to the UIW IRB of any proposed changes to the approved research activity.
- Any change in proposal procedures must be promptly reported to the UIW IRB prior to implementing any changes except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Use the **Protocol Revision and Amendment form**.
- Prompt reporting to the UIW IRB of any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.
- IRBs are filed by their number. Please refer to this number when communicating about the IRB.

Suspension or termination of approval may be done if there is evidence of any serious or continuing noncompliance with Federal Regulations or any aberrations from the original application.

Congratulations and best wishes for successful completion of your research. If you need any assistance, please contact the UIW IRB representative for your college/school. You will be receiving a copy of this letter in the mail at the address indicated on the IRB application.

Dr. Helen Smith
Chair, University of the Incarnate Word IRB

Appendix D

Women's Global Connection Copyright Permission

From: Dorothy Ettlting [dorothy.ettling@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Wednesday, December 12, 2012 1:48 PM
To: Gerald Sseruwagi; Sseruwagi, Gerald K.
Subject: Permission

Gerald Sseruwagi
Ph.D. Candidate
University of the Incarnate Word
San Antonio, TX

With this email, permission is granted to Gerald Sseruwagi to use the graphic picture of the Women's Global Connection process of empowerment through cross cultural education and leadership development in his doctoral dissertation.

Dorothy Ettlting
Women's Global Connection
dorothy.ettling@sbcglobal.net

Appendix E

Journal of the American Planning Association Copyright Permission

From: Paula Bettencourt [PBettencourt@copyright.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 06, 2012 9:36 AM
To: Sseruwagi, Gerald K.
Subject: Permission Request from Journal of the American Planning Association

Hello Sseruwagi,

Thank you for contacting CCC, RightsLink. It was very nice speaking with you. As discussed below is the confirmation for no permission required for the use from this publication.

Taylor & Francis is pleased to offer reuses of its content for a thesis or dissertation free of charge contingent on resubmission of permission request if work is published.

Title: A Ladder of Citizen Participation
Author: Sherry R. Arnstein
Publication: Journal of the American Planning Associates
Publisher: Taylor & Francis
Date: January 7, 1969

Kind regards,

Paula

Paula C. Bettencourt
Customer Service Representative
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