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**TOWARDS GENUINE  
PARTICIPATION  
FOR  
THE POOR:**

Critical analysis of  
Village Travel and Transport Project (VTTP) Morogoro, Tanzania

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## **Introduction**

Participation is not a new concept, as far as rural development is concerned, it has been talked and written about during 50s or even before (Vettivel, 1999). Despite more than five decades of practicing participation still there is no common understanding of what participation really means.

The term 'participation' presents a number of difficulties in terms of its definition. White et al.'s 1994:16 in Dulani (2003) imagery of participation as "kaleidoscopic", is perhaps most illustrative of the variety and diversity in these definitions, which, "just like the momentary image in the kaleidoscope, can be very fragile and elusive, changing from one moment to another".

The diverse nature of participation definition has perhaps caused participation process to achieve what most of the development intervention have not expected to achieve. The study conducted by Dulani (2003) for instance, show that the nature of community participation in three case studies from the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) revealed that what constitutes "community participation" in the three cases was very narrow and very limited, while there have been limits on the space for local community engagement in the policy process, his findings also reveal that what constitutes 'community' can represent a narrow group of individuals who have captured the participatory process to have their interests promoted as those of the community.

This explains the fact that though there is wide acceptability of the effectiveness of participatory approaches among development practitioners, still there is an on going debate in literature which express the doubt that, mere participation in development initiatives cannot in itself guarantee that the poor will be able to voice their concerns, given the polycephalous nature of the existing institutional landscape. (Mosse, 2001; Cleaver, 2001).

In the view of these argument participation of the poor without being accompanied with institutional change, will yield more or less the same result as that one of non participation as suggested by Bromley, (1998:87), the poor remain poor because the institutional arrangements rendered them poor before the development intervention, and there are durable pressures –and nontrivial individuals- to make sure that the mere advent of a 'development project' does not somehow upset the institutional arrangements that created the current structure of economic advantage in the first instance.

In such a situation, introducing participation in the same institutional framework will benefit the minority who are able to manipulate any intervention coming on the way to their locality. Mosse, (2001); Cleaver, (2001), rightly said "unmitigated participation holds the risk of confirmation of the pre-existing power structure and often leads to capture by local elites".

“Elite” is used here to describe those rural people who are less poor and more influential. They typically include progressive farmers, village leaders, headmen, traders, religious leaders, teachers, and paraprofessionals. It is they who receive and speak to the visitors; they who articulate “the village’s interests and wishes; their concerns which emerge as ‘the village’s’ priorities for development, it is they who receive the lion’s share of attention, advice and services (Chambers, 1983:18)

So far the question as to what mitigation measures should be in place has not been adequately dealt with. As a result, this work analyses the participation approach of the (VTTP) Morogoro for the purpose of identifying the practical implications of this approach in order to ascertain whether the experience gained from this project can contribute to the mitigation of the risk that participation is likely to face or not. This project was selected because it offered an opportunity to study the interaction of outside interventions with local institutions. It illustrates the argument relating to how local institutions can be an obstacle to participation of the poor. It also provides an opportunity to reflect upon the theoretical implications of the Author’s understanding of the possibilities and limitations of promoting genuine participation of the poor.

The paper bases its analysis on the secondary data, it analyses three VTTP Morogoro documents which was prepared in the year 2004. The first is related to the VTTP approach, the second is about baseline information used for conflict resolutions occurred in the project area due to the project operations and the last is related to management of cooperation among development stakeholders. The underlying theory of this study is radical practice.

Genuine participation in this work is perceived as assisted but self initiated process wherein communities takes part in the development process realizing that they are equal partners in development and are being recognized by other development partners as subject and not an object to change. Such a process comes as the result of increased understanding by the participating community of the framework conditions in which the development process takes place.

On the other hand, this work regards ‘the poor’ as essentially those human beings who, for one reason or another, almost systematically end up at the losing end of the multiple bargains that are struck around available resources and opportunities (DeHerdt 2004). In the existing participation arena, the institutional set up does not allow the poor to participation instead they are being invited to participate; such a situation has culminated to what can be termed justification of “theft” of development benefits by the local “elites”.

## **Participation in perspective**

The review of literature on this work have revealed that despite its widely application the participation concept lend itself to varying interpretations,

something which has prompted the Author to say that after more than five decades of practicing participation still there is no common understanding of what participation really means (See the introduction).

One reason as to why participation concept is confusing is that, participation is about people's interaction determined by the behaviours of the interacting individuals or organizations. Giddens, (2001:664) pointed out that human behaviour is complicated and many sided and it is very unlike that single theoretical outlook could cover all its aspects. That is the reason why, for analysis purposes the tendency has been to put more emphasis on one aspect while ignoring other aspects depending on who is doing the analysis.

Uphoff et al 1979 in Fekade, (1994), for instance, realized that political scientists tend to conceptualize participation in terms of involvement of rural people in decision making, economists often in terms of rural people sharing in benefits, development administrators concentrate on rural people assuming roles in implementation when they make reference to participation. Dulani (2003) pointed out that participation can take different forms and varying degrees, ranging from what has been termed as '*genuine participation*' (White et al. 1994), or '*self mobilisation*' (Pretty, 1994), whereas, local communities are active participants and are empowered to retain control at all levels of the development process. On the other hand Dulani (Ibid) observed that participation has been variously described as '*passive*' participation (Rifkin, 1985); '*tokenism*' (Hart, 1992); '*manipulated*' participation (Bordenave (1994) or '*pseudo*' participation (White et al., (1994). This is the minimal type of participation, whereby control of the project and the power to make decisions rests with planners, administrators and the community's elites, the extent of people's participation being that of passive listeners to what is being planned for them.

Pretty's (1994) seven-step participation ladder (Table 1), may perhaps make a good summary of these varying degrees of participation.

Taking it from these seven steps of participation, we see continues movement from minimum to maximum types of participation. In a way the minimum types of participation is one way of opening windows of opportunities for maximum types of participation (which in this work is termed genuine participation).

In discussing different windows of opportunities for the poor to participate (Cornwall 2002), came up with an idea of participation space. He clustered windows of opportunities for the poor to participate in four clusters; namely; regularized relations, fleeting formations, alternative interface and movements and moments. The first consists of regularized institutions which serve as an interface between people and authorities of various kinds, generally those of the state. In this kind of space, citizens become part of the machinery of governance.

**Table 1: The seven step participation ladder.**

Typology	Characteristics
1. Passive participation	People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. It is a unilateral announcement by an administration of project management without listening to people's responses.
2. Participation in information giving	People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, and research findings are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.
3. Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted or answering questions, and external people listen to views. These external professionals define both problems and solutions, and may modify them in the 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 people's views.
4. Participation for material incentives	People participate by providing resources, such as labour, in return for food, cash and other material incentives. However, the 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. Such involvement does not tend to be at early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather after major decisions have already 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. Participation is seen as a right, and not just a means to achieve project goals. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures.
7. Self-mobilisation	People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used.

Source: Pretty, 1994, 1996; Pimbert and Pretty, 1995 in Dulani (2003).

These institutions may be created by the state, or by actors assuming some of the functions of the state. The second cluster is of more exchanging institutions; one-off meetings, events of exercises aimed at opening up deliberations over policies or service delivery priorities, rather than making decisions. In some cases, they may give rise to more lasting institutionalized structures in which there is regularized, repeated use of participatory processes.

The third cluster consist of relatively durable, institutionalized spaces from which citizens engage in governance either by seeking to influence public policy through advocacy and the mobilization of dissent, indirectly by modelling alternatives, or through providing for the needs of other citizens as an alternative to statutory provision. The last is constituted outside the interface between people and authorities. It provides a way of generating critical mass and potentially important route to citizen's involvement in governance. Of all four, Cornwall is of opinion that the last cluster is the most difficult to define, it consists of actions, movements and moments that produce and rely on the potency on a stark divide between "citizens" and "the state". More importantly, this kind of space is temporary and so it has been impossible to institutionalize it and difficult to co-opt (Ibid: 18-22).

Just as Pretty's (1994) seven-step participation ladder (Table 1), Cornwall clusters also portrays the notion of minimum and maximum types of participation, the first two which he calls invited spaces represents minimum while the last two represent maximum type of participation. Cornwall agrees that the first two clusters are forms of manipulation and co-opt as compared to the second two clusters, however, Cornwall emphasised that, the first cluster of the second category only becomes effective and free from manipulation and co-option risk when *people have themselves chosen to be part of it* (p.21). If this condition is not met the institutions that claims to open the windows of opportunity for the poor to "*take participation space*" becomes a barrier than a driving force for genuine participation.

The above analysis by (Pretty 1994: Cornwall 2002) provides an insight of the conceptualization of participation by Neo-liberals and Post Marxian radical. The idea of minimum types of participation is in line with Neo-liberals conceptualization, wherein empowerment and participation is considered as a harmony model of power in which efforts are taken by the State agencies to collaborate with the Non- governmental institutions to make the efforts of State more efficient and to include identified target groups in the process of development. This implies that the demand and needs of powerless can be met within the existing social order hardly affecting the power of the powerful negatively. (Mayo and Craig 1995)

On the other hand, the maximum types of participation represents, the Post Marxian radical notion of participation and empowerment which focus on bottom up social mobilisation in a society as a challenge to hegemonic interests within the State and Market. The key elements in this process are conscientisation and

collective identity formation around common experience within economic and political marginalisation (Paulo Freire 1996). In this way power is conceptualised as both in relational and conflictual terms.

## **Participation in planning theory**

In this part participation is discussed in the light of planning theories. In Friedmann words planning theories focus on the capacity of the state and its members to intentionally co-ordinate their activities, to get “from knowledge to action”. There are several theories ranging from rational to radical. These theories have been well summarised by Luckenkotter in Westhlo, et al (eds.), (1999), from which this work have borrowed most of the following observations.

### ***Rational planning***

This theory sometimes called comprehensive planning model ideally, operates under the following routine: The politicians define general goals. The planner converts those goals into a hierarchical matrix and explores all possible alternative actions for reaching these goals, and then examines the effects of all alternatives in relation to each goal. The final result is handed over to politicians who are to make final decision. Based on these procedures Luckenkotter (Ibid: 230) opine that in the core of this theory, planning remains a purely scientific-technical process without any interference from outside. In a way this theory gives no room for any kind of participation of the poor.

### ***Disjointed Incrementalism***

This theory is basing on the assumption that time, money, information and mental capacities of planners and politicians are not sufficient to find the best solutions for the highly complex problems of modern societies. Hence, it would be better to tackle only the most pressing problems and strive for small, incremental changes. The theory operates in two ways. First, only a limited number of alternative actions are analysed. Secondly, the analysis and evaluation of alternatives are disjointed and distributed among a large number of organisations within society. Planning is thus decentralized and moves into civil society. As a result, a broad spectrum of perceptions and ideas is captured which would make plans better and more responsive to later changes.

### ***Mixed Scanning***

The mixed scanning theory aims at promoting an “active society” which steers its own development in a self-confident and determined way (Etzioni 1968). Through a process of “consensus formation” the overall goals of a society would eventually emerge (Ibid). In this process the role of planner is to analyse the needs and wishes of the population and simultaneously, investigate the interests of the

politicians. In operationalising this theory planners are mixing the two methods proposed by the rational and the incremental planning model.

### ***Perspective Incrementalism***

This idea was developed by Karl Ganser. In his analysis he divides the planning process into two separate phases. First, planners develop overall goals and standards of quality in consultation with the politicians. These goals and standards are still very broad and do not cover the entire territory to be planned nor do they contain any details. In second phase the goals and standards are operationalised and explained by examples (in terms of practical projects). The planning and implementation of these exemplary projects is done in close co-operation with local actors, including citizens and users.

### ***Transactive Planning***

This theory builds on constant citizen participation. In an atmosphere of “radical openness” the expert knowledge of the planners and the experiential knowledge of the citizens are combined and transformed into collective action (Friedmann 1973:172). In addition to their technical knowledge planners should therefore particularly possess communicative and group-psychological skills. So equipped they would be able, at least in small groups, to reduce disparities among participants in terms of time, money and knowledge. By connecting a large enough number of such small planning groups, Friedmann (1979) opine that a new society of social learning would emerge: hence obtain a truly participatory model.

### ***Dialogical Incrementalism***

This theory defines planning as “dialogical processes aiming at mutual understanding and agreement on future directed collective action (Sager, 1993: 93). This is a step by step process which takes place under the conditions of Habermas’s ideal speech situation: all participants are equal and treat each other as equals, and only the rational power of the best argument prevails. Within this framework the planner is process manager who watches over the fairness of the process (Sager, 1993; 1994)

### ***Critical Planning Theory***

This theory is also more generally based on the Habermas’s works. Forester (developer of this idea) calls for planners to counter the communicative distortions of planning process by alternatives and consequences. Less organised social groups should be provided additional information; they should be advised and involved in the planning process.



Luckenkotter in Westhlo, et al (eds.), (1999:233) observed that comparing Friedmann's and Sager's theories there is hardly any difference between them concerning citizen participation. In contrast to Sager's idealist theories, however, Forester emphasizes the restrictions and practical implementation of more participatory and inclusionary planning. After all, contends (Forester 1980, 1982, 1989, 1993) that planning with citizens would always be "planning in the face of power"

### ***Advocacy Planning***

The advocacy planning theory explicitly side with those people who lack the necessary resources and skills to advance their interests within the pluralistic competition over public resources. It calls for planners to concentrate exclusively on supporting these disadvantaged groups. Like an advocate in a court case planners should inform their "clients" of their rights, provide them with relevant information and represent their interests in a professional manner in public. The long term goal is to enhance the organisational competence and political awareness of these groups, so that they can articulate their matters independently and confidently in the future.

### ***Planning as a Co-operative Action***

In this theory Sell, (1994) proposes to conceptualise planning as a co-operation between the state, businesses and households. In this way planning consist of dialogical processes in which all participants develop a joint understanding and possible solutions to a problem and co-ordinate their actions accordingly. In this process the role of planners is to bring together actors from different spheres of society, they facilitate a co-operative communication process between them and give inputs, stands as advocates for neglected values and interests and mobilise or support the participation of disadvantaged groups of citizens.

### ***Collaborative Planning***

Healey (1997) suggests that this theory builds on the wider concept of "governance", which refers to all kinds of formal and informal process through which collective affairs are managed. In this theory the task of planning, as a policy-driven activity, would be to reinforce and build links between disparate parts of society and create new relation. Planners are to actively include all those who have a stake in particular issues and, recognizing and preserving their cultural differences, to build new shared systems of meaning in order to facilitate spatial co-existence. In open discourse, for which Healy defines elementary rights, duties and resource requirement, trust and knowledge about each other would be generated, thus changing each actor's point of reference for seeing, knowing and acting.

This would in itself lead to a 'soft co-ordination' of activities without the need for formal co-ordination. However, the creation of new institutions or the re-designing of existing institutional frameworks would in the end be needed to establish the collaborative mode of governance in the 'hard infrastructure' of society.

### ***Radical Planning Theory***

The theory perceives the state as an accomplice of capital, and planning as an instrument with which the state ensures smooth accumulation of capital. And that there are some social groups oppressed by the capitalist system. In this case the role of the planner is to deliver them a critical analysis of the concrete forms and sources of their oppression and enhance their independent, critical thinking and action. Planners are to help them organise and develop their own strategies and technically feasible alternatives to planning proposals. He also connects the oppressed citizens to other social groups and builds problem-oriented coalitions and sustainable networks (Kraushaar 1988; Friedmann 1987; 1992). Unlike advocacy planning, radical planning theory aims not at improving the position of disadvantaged groups with the existing society, but to strengthen them in their fight to change the system or to prepare them for an alternative, independent development outside the existing system (Cenzatti 1987; McDougall 1982)

## **Linking participation and planning theory**

This part provides a brief link between participation and the above described theories. For easy understanding the theories are classified into three classes. The Author decides to use rationality based classification of planning theories as presented by (Sager 1993 cited by Luckenkotter in Westhlof et al, (eds.), 1999:236)

The first classification is based on instrumental rationality, whereas in the rational planning theory, simply are no actors other than planners and politicians. But disjointed incrementalism, mixed scanning and perspective incrementalism include, to differing degrees, some involvement of other actors in the planning process. This involvement serves purely strategic goals: with the help of participation approaches they seek to overcome such restrictions as incomplete information, insufficient planning capacities and potential local resistance to plans and projects. The involvement of other actors is to generate information, relieve the administration and increase societal acceptance. This group of theories seems to promote the first four steps of participation as per Pretty's (1994) ladder of participation discussed in the preceding part of this work.

The second classification is based on communicative rationality. This type of rationality is based on human communication. Planning is conceptualised as a dialogue between planners and other stakeholders. All together contribute different views of problems and solutions to the planning process. This process triggers a process of social learning with the aim of undistorted and fair

communication about collective action. However, these communicative planning processes are considered the main source of legitimating plans and not the preceding political decision making process. If compared with the Pretty's ladder of participation this classification seem to promote functional participation and interactive participation.

The last classification is based on substantive rationality. It calls for a new planning model which aims at enabling the oppressed groups through an action-oriented political process. It would be the task of planners to make these groups politically sensitive and to mobilise them for collective action. In this way barriers of political apathy, lack of knowledge and lack of skills should be overcome. In the end these theories aim at a radical change of societal status quo in the direction of an alternative, self-reliant development of formerly dependent social groups. In a way this group of theories promotes the seventh step in the Pretty's ladder of participation, a kind of participation which is more or less genuine.

## **Empowerment and Participation**

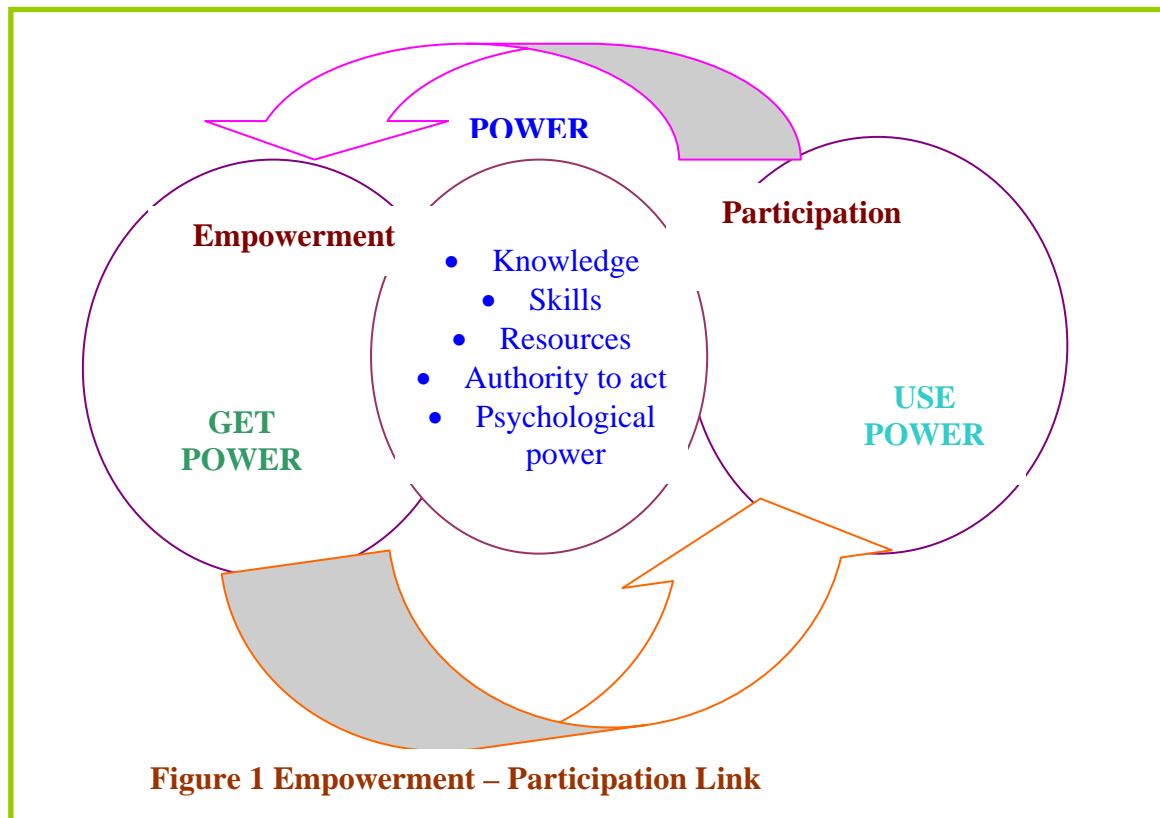
In discussing participation of the poor in development process the issues of empowerment and its relation to participation is crucial. As Adams (1990:72) observed, participation without empowerment is an untenable proposition. This observation shows that for genuine participation to occur the poor must first be empowered. While participation is about bringing groups, often deprived groups, to the table (Fetterman 2005:10), empowerment focuses on enabling these groups to engage in intelligent and shared decision making. Fetterman (Ibid) opined that participation rest on the assumption that people can make intelligent and well-informed decisions and actions when the proper environment is cultivated, and that empowerment has the capacity to create this kind of environment.

In this case empowerment stands to be a pillar in the participation process. Fetterman (1996:16) contends that empowerment, is an enabling and emancipatory concept, expanding this idea Coombe 2002 in Fetterman (2005:10) argued that central to empowerment concept is the importance of individuals and communities having influence and control over decisions that affect them. Although empowerment has several dimensions, Fetterman (Ibid) is of opinion that it is commonly associated with political or decision making power. Similarly, Brugger in Musto ed. (1985:27) pointed out that empowerment is a political ideology which assumes that local populations are politically competent to make decisions about the course of their own socio-economic development.

Post-Marxian groups have viewed empowerment as a strategy for fighting the disempowering activities of both the State and the markets through collective mobilisations of the marginalised groups (Stokke, 1998). According to Laclan and Mouffee (1996) empowerment of the marginalised requires transformation of economic and political relationship towards radically democratized society.

In the view of the above literature, it can be argued that empowerment is all about providing ability to an individual or groups of individuals to act. On the other end, participation is about using the ability gained during the empowerment process (Figure 1). In this work the link between empowerment and participation is explained by using the direct translation of these concepts. The term empowerment comes from the word “empowering”, which means “to give somebody power or authority”. On the other hand the word “power” means; the ability, knowledge and skill, or capacity to do something, the authority to act or do something according to a law or rule. Power can be political, financial or psychological. Based on this translation, empowerment therefore, means the process wherein, communities are equipped with the knowledge, skills and resources sufficient and necessary for changing and improving the quality of their lives. The term participation means “being part”, whereas the word “part” means an integral and essential feature or component of something. Hence, participation means being an integral and essential feature of something (in our case “development process”.)

Figure 1 shows that there is a reciprocal relationship between empowerment and participation. The relationship is in such a way that empowerment enables people to get power (as translated in the middle of figure 1), and participation is the use of the power in the development process. However, based on the fact that practice makes perfect, participating individuals have opportunities to be empowered as they participate in certain development activities whether by being invited or by self mobilization. In other words participation is another way of empowering the participating individuals.



Nevertheless, this kind of relationship should not be considered as a chicken and egg paradox. The reason behind this argument is that, theoretically it is logical to think that one can not precisely participate without being empowered. This implies that for the poor to choose voluntarily to participate they should be provide with “power” as indicated in figure 1. The kind of power which will enable them became competent enough to defend their interests when they take part in development process.

If we just invite the poor to participate without empowering them we are ignoring the power differences that exist between the poor and those inviting them to participate. Such arrogance....may not only undermines the very possibility of equitable consensual decision making, but they may also restrict the possibility of “thinking outside the box” reinforcing hegemonic perspectives and status quo reinforcing solutions (Cornwall 2002:13). Similarly, Gould, (1996:173) pointed out that downplaying the enhancing role of difference at the core of the public sphere removes from the public sphere not only difference but also the creativity that issues forth in imaginative critique and rejection of existing argument and in the generation of new and unexpected frameworks for agreement.

Dependence theorists are of opinion that, the poverty of the countries in the periphery is not because they are not integrated into the world system, or not 'fully' integrated ... but because of *how* they are integrated into the system. Although the theory is arguing on integration at a global level, his idea explains well the danger of integrating the poor in the development process without first enabling them to understand the framework conditions in which development takes place. Cornwell (2002:28) convincingly argues that, enhancing citizenship participation requires more than inviting or inducing people to participate. And it calls for more than simply making spaces available for people to express their needs and exercises in gathering “voices”. ...it requires giving people access to information on which to base deliberation or to mobilize, to assert their rights and demand accountability.

Implicitly, Cornwell (Ibid) argument means, empowerment is not only about the ability of the poor to go through all planning stages, use the locally available resources and/or identify what external resources they need for development process, rather in order to achieve genuine participation, empowerment should help the poor to understand the rules that provides basis for development. Expanding on this issues (Ibid: 27) opine that the weaker participants (in our case the poor) need to be equipped with tactics which will enable them to enter in a public arena armed with the means to assert themselves. He went as far as suggesting the kind of tactics that may be applicable to include popular education, assertiveness training, building skills of argumentation or simply providing people with information about their rights and about the polices that they are being consulted about.

Friedmann 1992 in Kyessi (2002:72) asserts that empowerment has been practiced in the past, but then from the perspective of means to an end rather than an end in itself. Such a conception probably has resulted into most of development actors rush into inducing people to participate without equipping them with necessary tools for participation. Indeed this practice has made the poor to suffer loss by entering into unfair relation. Contending on the same IFAD, (2001) observed that alliances into which the poor enter ... are often unequal and that poor people would benefit more if their alliances with politicians, public and private sector agencies, and microfinance institutions were secured with the involvement of an 'honest broker'. Looking into Rauch (2003) assertion on framework conditions in which development process takes place (Figure 2), one would argued that, so long the space of action for development activities is not influenced by socio-cultural (local) framework conditions only, there is a need for "honest actors" to strive to assist the poor to understand more than their local framework conditions so that they can integrate well in the macro and global economic framework conditions.

Figure: 2 shows that, development process takes place in a space of action which is influenced by four framework conditions. Inducing poor to participate without equipping them with even general knowledge of the existing framework conditions will mean closing them into a "box". Whilst equipping them with such understanding will help them to have proper reasoning and hence hold responsible and accountable those development actors that seem to have bad conduct. And eventually enhance sustainable development.

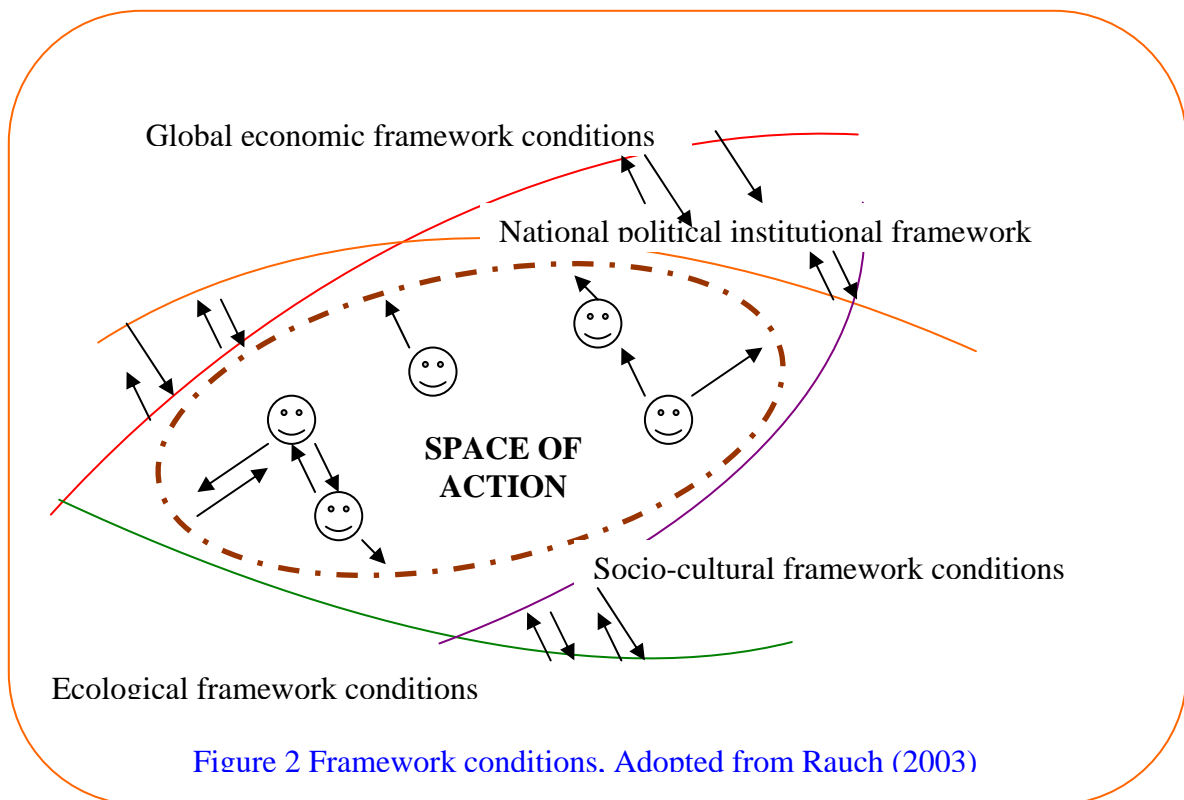


Figure 2 Framework conditions. Adonted from Rauch (2003)

## **Participation and Decentralization**

Decentralization is an attempt of the state to open up windows for more people to participate in decision making. Cheema and Rondinelli (1983:18) opine that, decentralisation is the transfer of planning, decision-making or administrative authority from the central Government to field organizations, local administrative units, semi-autonomous and parastatals organisations, local governments or non-governmental organisations. Kyessi (2002:76) on the other hand observed that, participation of the grassroots groups in planning, implementation and management is one of the advantages of decentralisation.

However, Villar-Singh, (1999:65) asserts that local participation as an important aspect in decentralisation does not happen automatically. Although it is important to have a legal basis for participation, it is a misconception that participation will happen after legitimization. I tend to agree with this assertion because as observed by Liviga 1996 in Kyessi (2002:75), in many countries, the decentralisation programme and its structure have enabled the governments and their agents succeed in having certain things done the way the governments wanted. This in a way reflects a centralised planning where senior officials and agents supervise the planning process, the implementation of development projects and the flow of funds. Normally there is hardly any room for things to be done differently because the officials are appointees of the central government and they are accountable and responsible to not to the people but to the President at the centre.

Thus, Hettne, (1990) contends that despite the theoretical rhetoric placed on community participation, a top-down social engineering approach continued to characterise development projects. Sincere and concrete attempts to empower popular organisations to take a more active role in political and economic decision-making were largely avoided. Similarly, Korten, at el, (1981:183) argues that, although the weaknesses of the centralized approach to development programming are widely acknowledged and therefore local participation as a requirement to project implementation has been mandated; there have been numerous and varied obstacles within the implementing agency, within the community itself and within the broader institutions of the society.

Korten at el, (Ibid:184) provides a vivid example of this problem by pointing out that in Venezuela, while the top policy makers were advocating the promotion of base organization to exercise the representation of collective interests in most of the programmes, had no mechanism for making local adjustment.

In Tanzania, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper "PRSP" (2000:20) indicates clearly the position of the government in the fight against poverty where the poor have to take the lead. The policy paper on Local Government Reform on the other hand clearly states that "local government will facilitate the participation of the people in deciding on matters affecting their lives, planning and executing their

development programmes; and fosters partnership with civic groups. The local government authorities will be transparent and accountable to people. The reform policy paper adds that “the local government reform supports the democratic development of society from the grass root level”, (p.15). While the aforementioned documents (PRSP and LGRP) set the general development framework which clearly indicate participatory and bottom-up organizational development approach, the implementation strategies are entirely left within the individual District local authorities to decide on the extend for involving the village population in the reform process, a situation which allows for lenience and manipulation in opening up for genuine participation to take place.

## **Conceptualising genuine participation for the poor**

The concern of this work is conditions for genuine participation; the key to it is who participate and how they find themselves in the participation process. Do the right people participate? Do they decide themselves to participate or someone else invites them to participate? The definition propounded in this work (see the introduction) asserts that genuine participation occurs only when people voluntarily choose to participate in the development process.

While political will, credibility and commitment of development actors may be crucial, it should be noted that they are only necessary but not sufficient conditions for genuine participation to occur. When development actors get acquainted with the micro situation of the targeted poor, when the poor are helped to organized themselves and when they are empowered with relevant knowledge that helps them to understand the framework conditions in which development process takes place, possibilities of achieving genuine participation are increased.

The process towards genuine participation is inevitably political and by nature demand for institutional change. To illustrate this, the Author use what (Friedman 1987:297) calls social mobilization or radical planning theory. He opines that social mobilization is concerned with structural changes in the very society that the social reform tradition, with its paternalistic ethos, is trying to build up. Instead of beginning with goals and objectives, its starting point is social criticism. And it relies on action from below. It is the people themselves whose political practice is decisive. “The methods may be violent, sometimes subversive, and extra-political”.

Implicitly Friedman means, the journey towards genuine participation involve conflict among development stakeholders mainly the state and the poor. Arguing on the same, Mackintosh, (2000: 91), has this to say “we should expect an inclusive public sphere to be fairly messy and conflict-ridden, a focus for discontents. That is one of its most important functions. Access to public debate and a valuing of plurality and dispute are core elements of a socially inclusive process”



Figure 3, present genuine participation process, which considers conflict and conflict resolution as conditions for take off for genuine participation to occur.

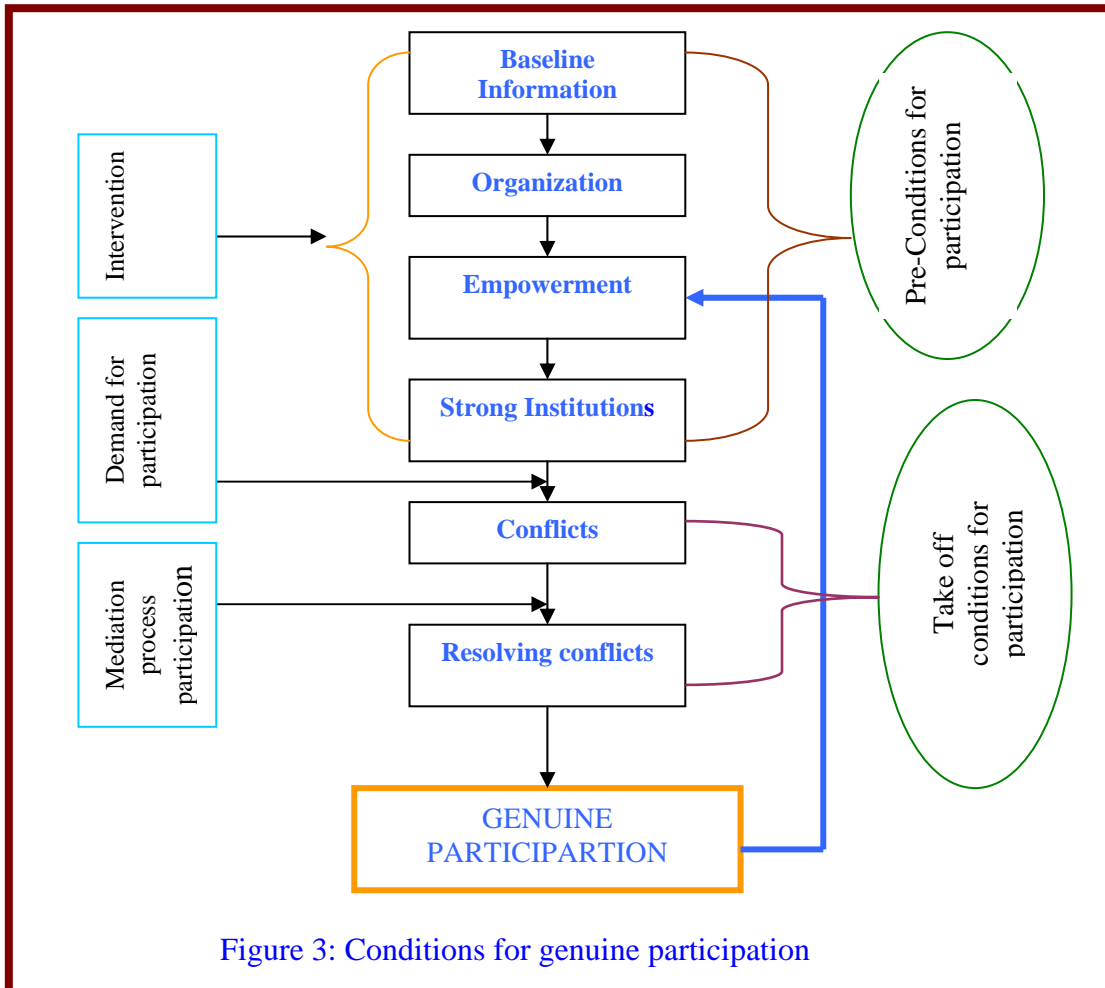


Figure 3: Conditions for genuine participation

The model depicted by figure 3, explains that the genuine participation journey is divided into two main parts. The pre-condition and take off conditions. Essentially the figure shows that, the journey starts by development actor's efforts to get acquainted with the micro situations of the area they want to intervention. This attempt will help him to enable the community to organize themselves and choose to participate in development process. The figure mainly sketches the relationships among the conditions for genuine participation, the explanations of how each of the variables, perceived as conditions for genuine participation are presented here under.

### Preconditions for genuine participation

#### **Baseline information**

Credible and committed development actors who are interested in bring about sustainable development through the participation of the poor, will first seek to know the micro-situations of the area they want to intervene. This can be done by

conducting baseline survey studies. These studies may either base on primary sources, secondary sources or both.

### **Organization**

Based on the observations that the poor are ... unorganised ...and that it is rare to find a body or institution that adequately represents the poor in a certain community or area (Paul Devitt, 1977:23 in Dulani 2003). The second step for an "honest development actor" will be to provide the poor with means by which they can organise themselves in interests groups, mobilise and pool resources, and develop relevant skills and put ideas and plans into action. In organising their own groups, the poor can acquire confidence, know-how, and power to support and manage their livelihoods and initiate change. This is in line with what UNCHS (1994) observed, "By organising themselves, people can make progress to development and manage basic services. If community does not organise itself, it is difficult to achieve the collective action necessary in negotiations with authorities".

### **Empowerment**

This model separates empowerment with participation. However, it recognizes that the poor can be empowered when they participate in a certain development activity. The link between the two has been discussed in chapter two above, in this part the link is shown by an arrow from the genuine participation box to empowerment box. The idea behind the separation between the two concepts is that, empowerment should be considered as an end by itself and not as a means to an end. This consideration will make the development actors concentrate their development efforts towards empowering the poor with undivided attention. The kind of capacities that the organised poor should be empowered with is a key to this model. Those capabilities should enable the poor to understand the framework conditions in which development process takes place, in other words the empowerment should go beyond the traditional practice of enabling the poor realize their potentialities and use their local available resources in projects introduced in their area.

### **Strong institutions**

At this point the development actor assists the interest groups established during the organization stage to build social networks/organisations with rules that will govern their interactions. In the first place the poor can be advised to form small coalitions based on what planners in German term "problematic regions". Regions that know no physical boundaries, rather they operate based on issue or problems that affect a certain group of people in an area that is appropriate and feasible to service. In this case a group of maize farmers in one village may form an association with groups of farmers in neighbouring villages, likewise a group of vegetable growers, fisheries groups and so on and so forth. In the second place,

the poor may be advised to form strong and big coalitions which can help them to voice issues of common interests at a broader perspective. These coalitions may include small scale farmers association which may include poor farmers of all types of crops, Labourers association, Fishermen's associations and small enterprises association.

The strength of an institution does not depend on the coalition aspect only, but also on development and adoption of concrete strategies that will act as guide for the operations of these coalitions. For this matter, the development actor has to assist the poor to develop and adopt what Friedmann (1987:389) calls "transformative theory". A kind of theory that will act as group vision, one that will bring a sense of what is likely to work and what is not, knowledge of institutional constraints, an ability to assess and evaluate different alternatives of actions to be used in their struggle against exclusion.

### **Take off conditions for genuine participation**

#### ***Conflict***

As observed by Giddens (2001:669), society is seen as essentially fully of tension – even the most stable system represents an uneasy balance of antagonistic groupings. For this matter therefore, the emancipation the poor is undertaken in the suppression environment, mainly by the state, market and local elites, and so it requires struggle. The struggle that requires the overcoming of resistance from the oppressors, of which will result into frictions among them. These frictions signify that the empowered poor are mature enough not only to demand for participation space but also to hold responsible and accountable any actor who seems to have bad conduct. In a way they have internalized the philosophy of swimming against the steam, mobilize for action and when they face stubborn resistance they know very well what they have to defend and have tactics to find their way out. In a nutshell, genuine participation process has to result into conflicts, not necessarily violent or revolutionary ones, but a kind of conflicts that will disturb the existing institutional equilibrium. This disturbance should then call for institutional restructuring which should work in favour of the poor.

#### ***Conflict resolving***

According to Hall (2002:59) effective organizations are characterized by a high degree of conflict resulting from their differentiation. However, their effectiveness in the face of high differentiation was explained by their successful conflict resolution. He adds that "Conflict per se, will be detrimental to the organization if it is not resolved".

This observation reveals that though conflicts offers good chances for genuine participation to occur, they need to be resolved immediately as they occurs. Sustained or unresolved conflicts may led to what Fekade (1994:61) termed "over

politicizing development efforts". Of course, this is not what we want to achieve. In this regards, the development actor playing a mediation role should seek to bring all the conflicting parties to a round table discussion to allow for the search of a suitable solutions. In such a round table discussion, participation space is created, the voice of the poor is heard and their demands are presented. This moment will result into a kind of development process that may be termed "pro-poor development". Thus contends Scheidtweiler 1998 in Kyessi, (2002: 73) that, through dialogue and cooperation between local level groups and public authorities' genuine development can be achieved.

### **3.4 Genuine participation**

Genuine participation begins to manifest itself during the conflict phase. At the moment when the poor demand for participation space, it gains momentum during the conflict resolution when the poor gets into a round table discussion with other development stakeholders. The round table discussion provide the poor with an opportunity to participate in making decisions on what happen in their areas, be it in terms of policies, laws, leadership or projects. Having taken part in such decisions the poor will honestly and actively participate in implementing what they have agreed during round table discussion.

Here we need to remember that the six conditions for genuine participation are primarily conceptual. In practice they overlap, intertwine with, and penetrate each other. Thus without baseline information, there is hardly a possibility for organising the poor, without empowerment, no organization, without organization no strong institutions, without strong institutions, no conflict and conflict resolutions, without the two no genuine participation, without genuine participation no empowerment.

## **Participation experiences and the social interface**

The concern of this study is to recommend conditions for genuine participation. The preceding discussion in this work has shown that the most apparent obstacles of genuine participation are manipulation, co-option and capturing which occurs at the interface of the external intervention and local actors. Experiences review in this part give an impress on how these obstacles works in practice.

In Sri Lanka IFAD, (2001) observed that, although IFAD-supported projects aim to promote empowerment and participation, most government agencies and local NGOs have specific sectoral mandates and cannot respond in an integrated manner or on a large enough scale. Community-level involvement in planning and decision making was seen to be marginal: as many as 80 percent of farmer organisations were inactive. Evaluating the Sri Lanka Country Programme, IFAD found that government agencies engaged in project implementation concentrate on service delivery rather than on participation and empowerment.

The concentration on service delivery does not only create dependency among the rural poor, but also actor as a tool to manipulate and/or co-opt the rural poor to support the existing institutions.

A study conducted by Dulani (2003) on Malawi Socio Action Fund (MASAF) participation process, provides an explanation on how the social interface works as an obstacle to genuine participation. Dulani (Ibid) observed that, MASAF argues that one of the crucial design principles in its projects is “communities must play a key role in the identification of activities” (MASAF, 1999:7, 10 in Ibid). However, his findings suggest that the local communities in the projects played very little and limited roles in the needs assessment and project selection phases that their role cannot qualify as being ‘key’ to the subsequent decisions to choose the projects undertaken.

In detailing the low level of community engagement in the needs assessment (Ibid) contends that the consultation process did not take place at an open community forum, but, at “a meeting of traditional, political leaders and religious leaders, convened by the .. School Committee,” this contradicts MASAF’s claims that “*all* members of the community participate fully” in the needs assessment and project selection stage and that these should include “people from all the areas that will make direct use of the project”. He thus, pointed out that given the limited scope for community consultation what ended up being adopted as a community project was in reality a priority project not for the community, but that of the school committee. With regard to this trend of displacing community in the participation Dulani (Ibid) highlights that there is a probability that MASAF projects are open to capture by influential elites, especially politicians, who might use them to advance their own political agenda.

Another experience is that of Cameroon drawn to us by DeHerdt, (2004). His interest was to study participation dynamics in a project concerned with improving living conditions of small scale onion producer in one of the locality in Cameroon. He observed that, the idea behind the project was to organise the ‘poor’ onion producers’ vis-à-vis the supposedly well-organised merchant interests in the onion sub sector. His findings suggest that, despite the good intentions of the project, local elites had easily found their way to capture the benefit of the project leaving the target group even more vulnerable than before. One of the important elements he considers in his analysis was the identity of the local persons the NGO was able to contact. In this regard, he realised that the person who represented the locality during the planning process was a laid-off employee from one of the big cotton companies in the village. He was also active in the protestant church and active in politics. DeHerdt (Ibid) opines that this profile did not necessarily make this person the most ‘representative’ poor onion producers; it is rather the profile of one of the most ‘urbanised’ villagers.

He further, observed that in the locality, the NGO works through the ‘Union of Onion Producers’, an organisation that was created specifically as the local

intermediary of the project intervention. Its president sits on the village council as a representative of the ruling party. He is married to one of the only literate women in the area. Another dominant member of the 'Union' is one of the descendants of the local customary chief, and one of the only owners of a formal land title (18 hectares, compared to an average acreage of 2.5 ha per household in the same village). So as it turns out, he is neither poor, nor a peasant and might even be argued to be one of the 'exploitative' traders the project was supposed to counteract. All in all, the study also observed that, the NGO seems to have been in contact predominantly with the local elite and more in particular with those members of the elite who can truly be characterised as 'brokers', operating at the rural-urban interface.

These experiences are but few examples which show how social interface between the local actors and external interveners can constrain the poor to take part in the development process. Indeed in such a situation even an "honest external actor" can end up serving unintended clients. Notwithstanding this perplexing situation the VTTP in Morogoro Tanzania has been hailed to signify what can be achieved using a grass roots approach and ensuring that the poorest and most vulnerable in society are consulted effectively (Davis, 2000); the VTTP Morogoro approach has resulted to villagers owning up the process of solving their development problems and that people are now more aware of their rights and obligations, and their relationship with their government (ERB in URT 2002), VTTP Morogoro has an excellent experience in village institutional building .. (PO-RALG, 2003) and that the VTTP in ... Morogoro/Mvomero model was the best (as compared to other pilot projects in the country), (PO-RALG, 2003). It is due to this reason, this analysis was done to ascertain whether the VTTP Morogoro is worthy to be hailed and whether its approach offers window of opportunities for the poor to participate.

## **Participation in the case Of VTTP Morogoro**

### **Background to the Project**

The introduction of the VTTP in Tanzania was based on the premise that, the majority of the country's population (about 80%) lives in rural areas. Wherein, rural isolation has been the major element in the country's poverty situation, because the isolated communities can not participate effectively in the socio-economic development process. This fact has widely been acknowledged in both the Rural Development and the Poverty Reduction Strategies of the country.

For the rural people to improve their lives, they need to access the basic needs and opportunities in agriculture, health, education, financial services and information. It was against this background that Village Travel and Transport Programme was formulated in order to address and improve rural travel and transport situation and consequently contribute in the poverty reduction efforts of the rural population.

The project was established as pilot projects in seven different districts in the country. These are, Masasi, Iramba, Muheza, Iringa rural, Mbozi, Rufiji and Morogoro rural which later was divided into Morogoro and Mvomero districts though remained with one District council. Each project in these districts had its own donor.

The VTTP Morogoro which was carried out in three divisions of Morogoro and Mvomero districts was established in the year 2000 and phased out late 2004. This project was assisted financially by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). It came into being as the agreement between the governments of the United Republic of Tanzania and Switzerland in August 2000, with goals and objectives that support the importance of empowering communities through participatory learning and action in the road sector activities.

### ***VTTP National Institutional Framework***

The information obtained from the VTTP-cooperation manual (2004) shows that, VTTP National philosophy asserts that the design and implementation of the project should aim at achieving three important aspects namely; Village communities making decisions and priorities of interventions on their own, the Government or donors limiting their input to technical, financial and material support; and the District Councils collaborating with NGOs, Private Sector Agencies and Donors

### ***VTTP Morogoro Institutional Framework***

The project used Rapid Organizational Appraisal to determine the appropriate institutional arrangements, wherein the potential actors were identified to include the local communities, District council, NGOs and the private sector. These were identified as key actors in collaborating with the VTTP through a system of contractual agreements. The institutional framework for a broad representation of actors in the district project management committee was elaborated in the memorandum of understanding and agreement between the Government of the Republic of Tanzania and the Government of Switzerland, wherein it was agreed that, the projects initiated by communities will be managed by and implemented by the respective communities with technical and organizational support services from local NGOs, Private sector, the District council, village councils and central government.

The Project was organised under a Project Steering Committee (PSC) which comprised of District council Executive Director (DED), Project coordinator, VTTP National coordinator, 4 community/ interest group representatives and 2 representatives from NGO/Private sector collaborators. The PSC was charged with the responsibility to ensure the overall supervision and coordination of the project support.

The VTTP Morogoro immediately objectives were as given here under;

- To empower the communities in organizational, technical, economical and financial terms so that they can plan, manage and evaluate their own activities related to rural travel and transport in a sustainable manner.
- To capacitate the local organisations (District Council, Non-Governmental Organisations and Private Sector) in terms of technical, organizational economical and financial so that they can deliver quality services related to travel and transport to the communities to supplement their efforts.
- To clarify the legal framework of different actors (Village and District leaders) so that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities, and to promote integrated transport planning between village and district level.

### **VTTP Participation approach**

The project crafted its Participatory approach and named it “U UWAMA”, as defined in the U UWAMA Learning manual (2004:7), U UWAMA is a Kiswahili acronym for U wazi na U wajibikaji wa Wananchi na Asasi zao katika Maendeleo literary meaning Transparency and Accountability of People and their institutions in Development. It is a participatory learning and action oriented process that places more emphasis on result by people themselves.

The manual further indicates that, PRA and U UWAMA were used in the VTTP to complement each other, because VTTP views PRA as one time event focusing on situation analysis and U UWAMA as an on going process in the life of the project and even beyond to ensure transparency and accountability of actors. The U UWAMA process is organised in four phases (Figure 4). This part provides a brief review of the four stages as they have been explained in the U UWAMA Learning manual.

The first stage is the awareness and assessment stage; the manual (Ibid: 10-20) attests that the this stage aims at making people conscious of who they are in relation to the environment in which they live and the extent to which they are capable of using it. This stage has the following steps:

First the actor has to contact village or ward leaders, then conduct awareness meeting with village and ward leaders, receive request from the village council, group or individual for support, discuss the request in the Village Assembly, conduct assessment of the village situation through PRA and finally facilitate feedback of the PRA results to the village assembly.



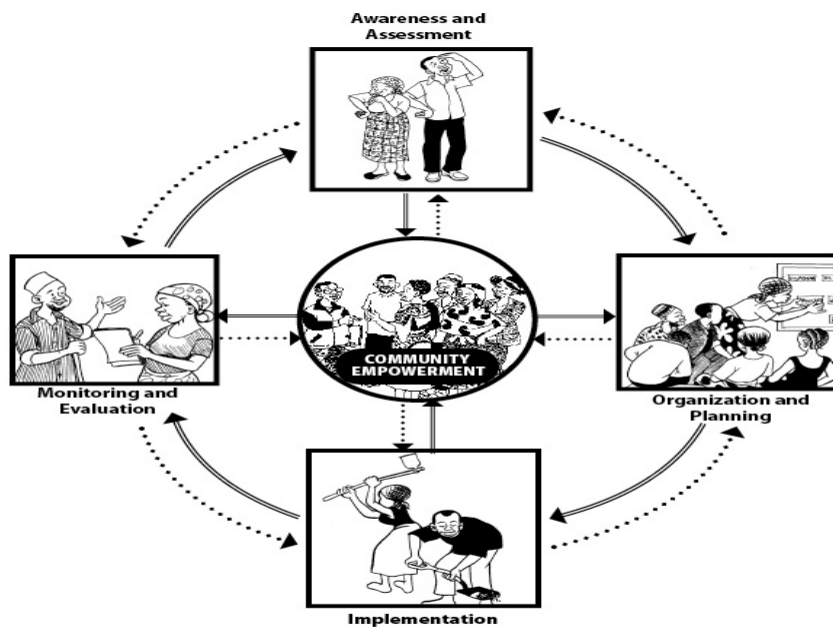


Figure 4: The Uuwama learning process (Uuwama Manual 2004:9)

The second stage has to do with organization and planning; according to the manual (Ibid: 21-22) at this stage the villagers/community members organize themselves and develop relevant mechanism for implementing designated activities. It is also during this stage various stakeholders at village and other levels above it are identified with the appropriate linkages in enhancing development agenda. Furthermore, various stakeholders are introduced to planning as a prerequisite for effective development.

The last but one stage is about implementation; at this stage the manual (Ibid: 26-27) contends that, it should be note that stages of Uuwama learning process are not mutually exclusive and therefore, there are some overlapping features in different stages. This is brought about by the needs and demands at different stages as a result of emerging dynamics. For instance issues related to organization and planning necessarily overlap into the implementation stage calling for re-organization, re-planning and processes of the like. So the process calls for a back and forth movement and a cyclical approach to learning and action leading to development.

Finally, the process concludes with the monitoring and evaluation stage; at this juncture the manual (Ibid: 36-37) express the need for training the communities in the importance of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), the meaning of M&E, the correlation between planning and the M&E, introduce them to simple M&E tools and encourage them to use these tools in monitoring and evaluating their group development activities as well as activities of their partners in development.

## **Conditions for participation in VTTP Morogoro**

This part presents the conditions for participation in the VTTP Morogoro based on the reviewed studies. The aim is to find out whether the theories confirm or refute the VTTP participation process in practice.

### ***Baseline information***

As noted early in this work seeking for baseline information before the actual intervention is an important exercise. The reason associated to this importance is that it enables development actors to understand the micro-situation of the area for intervention and thus puts them in a better position to assist the self-initiation of the participatory process. The VTTP participation process had the same conception of this matter. Deducing from the first stage of the U UWAMA process (the assessment and awareness stage discussed above), it is emphasised that the intervention starting point is situation analysis through PRA.

Further more the study has identified that before the inception of the project the VTTP actors did an Action research in the area of intervention. They also facilitated a study done by a team of four staff from Morogoro District Council in December 1999. The study had to do with identification and appraisal of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating in the Morogoro Rural District. It was identified that there were about 12 NGOs in the district, which faced inadequate community participation, collaboration among them and were competing for doing similar activities in a given geographical area in the district.

### ***Organization***

From the VTTP experience interest group formation was a very important feature that characterized organization and planning stage. U UWAMA learning starts by giving the communities the rationale for organizing themselves in groups wherein the reasons for organizing were explained and the dynamics of groups in making things happen that would not have otherwise taken place was also underlined. Groups were enlightened on how to set goals and objectives to enable group participants know why they have to come together in a development group.

Activities for accomplishing the set goals and objectives were another important point that was underlined by U UWAMA learning. Because travel and transport problems came at the top of the villages' agenda following the outcomes of PRA, development groups in different parts of the project were formed around the following road sector activities; Road rehabilitation and maintenance, construction of road bridges, casting of concrete culverts, construction of road culverts and installing them, footpath improvement, construction of footbridges, promotion of donkeys as intermediate means of transport and non transport Activities. The groups were also assisted in the areas of organisation structures and formalities -

that is who does what, rules and regulations binding group members, legality and resource mobilization.

### ***Empowerment***

The understanding of empowerment in this work has a wider coverage of capacity building that enables the poor to possess power. As has been mentioned in the preceding parts of this work, empowerment is about getting power in terms of knowledge, skills, resources, authority to act and psychological power. VTTP experience has shown that empowerment was done in terms of supporting the communities in two ways. The first kind of support includes finances that were disbursed by the project support unit to kick start the project activities. This also included capacity building in terms of skills development to meet the technical requirements of the activities.

The other kind of support was to enlighten the community on their own rights/obligations and those of the institutions like village councils and district council. The specific empowerment knowledge inputs that VTTP provide to the community were:

Civic knowledge to stimulate villagers and authorities to find solutions to their institutional constraints by comparing what is happening in relation to what should be happening in accordance with established frameworks and mandates. VTTP has done this by providing relevant legal documents related to community mandates on sector policies, e.g. Local Government Act number 7 and 9 of 1982, revised version 2000, the highway ordinance 1967 and revisions of subsequent years.

Provision of relevant materials on constitutional mandates of citizens; for instance Article 8(1) on the power of people and government Articles 19-30, basic human rights and duties article 145 and 146 powers to the public and provision of the constitution. Training in leadership, cooperation management, village budgeting and making by-laws. For political acceptability, the project provided knowledge on selected articles of the ruling party's manifesto with relevant policy statements e.g. good governance.

The project also has made relevant local government laws accessible to the local communities by translating them into Kiswahili. This has been one of the most important break through and a turning point in the empowerment of the local communities as they have been able to demand their right of collecting taxes in their area of jurisdiction (UUWAMA Manual: 28-29).

### ***Strong institutions***

The issue of strengthening institutions has two aspects; the first aspect has to do with assisting the initially established groups to form alliances which are more

powerful than the small groups. The second is that of helping the group to establish and adopt strategies that will assist the alliances to find out their way out.

Concerning the first aspect, the VTTP experience shows that the civil interest groups formally established during the organization phase had eventually initiated a strong coalition known as Village Development Committees (VDCs). All three VTTP documents (UUWAMA, Cooperation Manual and Mdendemi report) reviewed by this study, contend that the coalition was strong enough to pressurise the existing institutions, in particular village governments to provide participation space.

The Cooperation Manual (2004: 10) for instance asserts that, these (interest) groups were included in the improvement of village governance structure through formation of Village Development Committee so as to bring about cooperation within village institutions. The participation space attained by the interest groups in the VTTP area through their Village Development Committees (VDCs) seems to be in line with what Cornwall, (2002) termed regularised participation space. A kind of space consisting of regularised institutions, that serves as an interface between people and authorities of various kinds, generally those of the state. In this kind of space, citizens become part of the machinery of governance. These institutions may be created by the state or by actors as it has been in the VTTP case.

Apart from formation of VDCs, the project has successfully assisted the strengthening of village governments in the project area. In this regard village councils (one of the important organs in the village government cycles) in the project area, has agreed to cooperate among themselves by forming community Road Boards (CRBs). The Cooperation Manual (Ibid) indicates that, the dynamics that emerged out of the operationalisation of Community Road Boards result into formation of Village Council Alliances in the divisions of Mgeta, Matombo and Mkuyuni.

The Village Council Alliances came into being through the signing of contracts in the three divisions with clear stipulation of mandate, roles and functions. The mandates of the alliances cover supervision, resource mobilization for joint action, consultation and negotiation for common areas of interest.

Another important aspect of organizing revolved around assisting village institutions e.g. village governments and committees make proper self-assessment and determine the extent to which they were functional in terms of delivering the expected services to the communities.

This began with development groups but it later became the issue of village institutions and hence intervention in the implementation stage e.g. training in planning, legal framework, among others. The necessity of linking with other

institutions vertically and horizontally was also underscored during this phase e.g. links with private sector, the NGOs and CBOs both at village and district level, as well as links with the district council and central government. In a nutshell, the institutional change in the VTTP area can be viewed as shown in the figure 5 below;

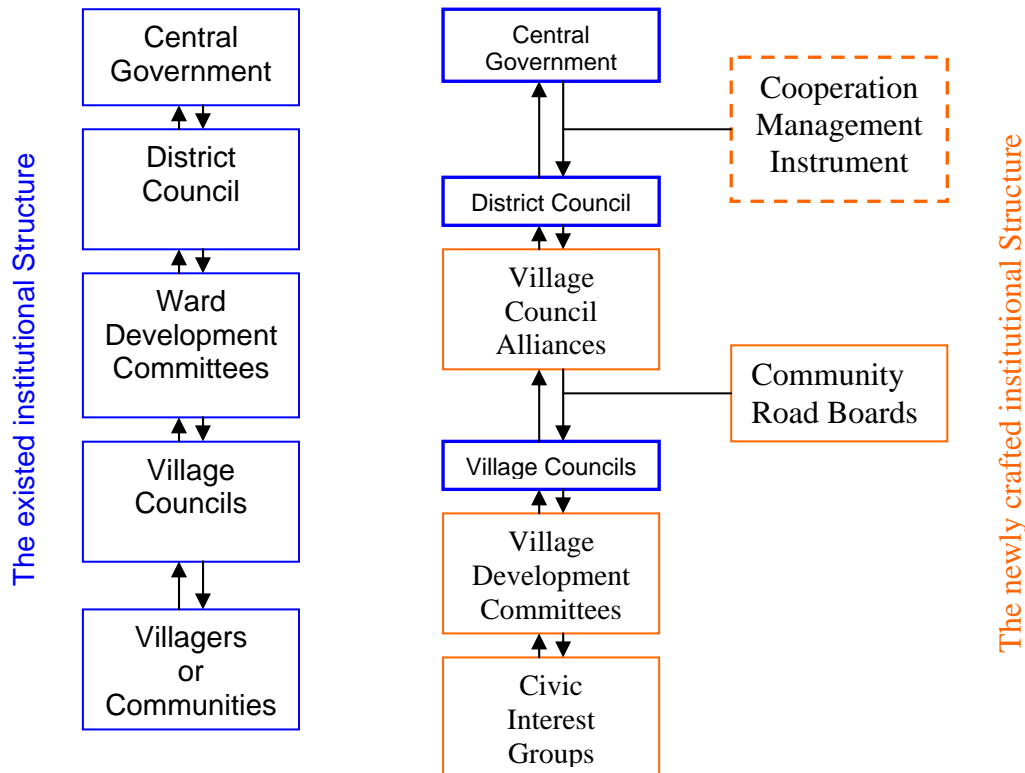


Figure 5: Institutional change in the VTTP area.

Figure 5 shows how the newly crafted institutions fit and conflict the existed institutions. The information obtained from VTTP documents reviewed by this study shows that except for the proposed cooperation management instrument, all the newly crafted institutions were actively functioning during the operation of the project.

### ***The role of conflict and conflict resolution in achieving genuine participation***

The framework discussed earlier in this work considers conflict and conflict resolution as take off conditions for genuine participation to occur. It was so conceived because, allowing for genuine participation means gaining power by the poor and the vulnerable on one hand, while on the other hand means losing power by those already in power.

This transaction will inevitably result into conflict between the two groups, because those in power would like to maintain their status quo. However, the framework suggest that conflict should be a means and not an end by it self. This can be achieved by having them resolved as and when they occur.

With regards to arising **conflicts**, the VTTP experience in Morogoro shows that, conflicts and conflicts resolution has played an important role in making the project achieve what has been achieved. As per Cooperation Manual (2004:4), such a situation was expected to occur, despite favourable local authorities' legal framework which prevails in Tanzania.

The prevalence of conflicts was expected due to the understanding that the participation approach of the project will equip people with capabilities to question the existing institutions. This has been the case in the VTTP area wherein as a result of enlightenment the voice of the people has been amplified and hence has been able to question some of the malpractices and demand for certain rights in accordance with the constitution or the existing laws in the country. In some instances some village leaders were replaced constitutionally.

The manual (Ibid) further indicates that, there has been surrounding confusion over the objectives and mandates of the institutions crafted by people in the VTTP intervention area. This confusion has been stirred up by leaders who are accustomed to the old system of operation. Consequently, there has been a blatant interference in the operations of the crafted institutions, aimed at undermining their efforts.

In explaining the conflict prevailed in the VTTP area, the Economic Research Bureau in the United Republic of Tanzania final VTTP Review Report, (2002) indicated that the VTTP results were not welcomed by some people; because those who benefited from the status quo were definitely not happy with these new developments since their individual interest are being threatened. It was thus not surprising that peoples' representatives went against the people they purport to represent in development matters.

An example cited to substantiate how people's representatives went against the people they represent is given in the Cooperation manual (2004:21), wherein it is indicated that, during the Wrap-up workshop on self-evaluation on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2003 it was reported by participants from Kibungo Juu ward that their councilor was against the self-initiated groups. This councilor was going around the villages telling the group members and other people not to participate in any of the road activities because they were illegal. Consequently some of the groups in the ward collapsed to the detriment of the voluntary spirit in public action.

Other sources of conflicts were identified by Mdendemi (2004:2-3) in the first place he observed that road contractors in the VTTP area were not cooperating with village governments, wherein they used casual labourers from other areas outside the VTTP area to work on periodic road maintenance. In this case the civic road interest groups with stock of skills were by passed and thus there were lots of complains from these groups. According to Mdendemi the use of labourers from outside the villages implied denying not only income to local community, but also their ownership.

In the second place Mdendemi (Ibid) observed that, there was interference of legal mandate of the village government by the District council, such that village councils were totally eclipsed by the District council contrary to the Local government Act No. 7 section 25. Mdendemi expressed that this conflict mainly was the struggle of the village councils to get their legal right for revenue collect and enforce by laws.

In such a situation like this, the role of **conflict resolution** is evident, to help in bringing about order out of this chaos. The VTTP Morogoro experience shows that conflict resolution or as the VTTP named it "cooperation", was a continuous process of the U UWAMA Learning approach. The reason associated to this is that conflicts are bound to occur at all stages of the U UWAMA process, whether during assessment and awareness, organization and planning, implementation or monitoring and evaluation stage.

At the assessment and awareness stage for instance, the cooperation manual (2004) indicates that there has been intimidation of people who participated by their leaders. Because these leaders presented false information in order to mislead/discourage people's participation. At this stage VTTP facilitators had to clarify and expose people to their right and freedom of expression.

In the case of Organization and planning stage, VTTP experience suggests that cooperation with peoples' crafted local institutions and NGOs Cooperation management need to address the issue of how emerging village groups and the interests of peoples' crafted institutions can be mainstreamed and represented in the decision making process of public interests in view of limited performance of the old system.

Inputs from different sources are needed in the final formulation of cooperation strategy. Strategy for cooperation need to be approved by all participating stakeholders in the village and district to enhance collaboration of actors. From this background, data were collected by Mdendemi, (2004:1) to get information which was used as a base for establishing cooperation mechanism among development stakeholders in the District.

Among other thing Mdendemi (Ibid) asked the respondent to give their general views on the current cooperation status among different development stakeholders and suggest the modality of cooperation arrangement that is likely to be sustainable. The main recommendation of Mdendemi's study (Ibid: 10) was that, there is a need to have a forum for District development stakeholders where agreement can be reached of; among other things, what are the constraining problems in their operations, how are they going to be solved, what will be the roles of different stakeholders and which institutions seem to be necessary for enforcement of the agreement.

Following this recommendation, VTTP Morogoro, on 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2004 supported a workshop involved district stakeholders (Morogoro District Council, Village Council Alliances, District Council Officers', Non-Government Organisations) to reformulate a cooperation strategy basing on views of the village people for Morogoro/Mvomero districts. In this workshop village and district participants carried out stakeholders' analysis to identify problems, interests, potentials and possible areas of conflict for various stakeholders.

A cooperation strategy based on conflict resolution mechanism was proposed with activities to be performed and assignment of responsibilities was put in place to village and district actors to effect cooperation. It was a consensus of all development actors that their actions will be geared towards meeting the demands and needs of the poor as determined by the poor themselves. As such a bottom-up development approach has been adopted by all.

As per Cooperation Manual (2004) to avoid putting responsibility and accountability of coordinating district cooperation management in many hands, the District Commissioners Office was mandated by actors with the responsibility to initiate follow up and monitor the implementation of activities for cooperation.

## **Critical analysis of VTTP approach**

### ***The VTTP Morogoro inspiring experience***

The theoretical framework for genuine participation argued in this study sets high standards that may seem to be not realistic in a short run. However, the VTTP Morogoro experience has demonstrated what can be done to meet these standards. Although it can not be argued that VTTP has achieved genuine participation for the poor, still what it has achieved signifies that the forging of genuine participation for the poor is possible. This part presents some VTTP Morogoro inspiring experiences that are in line with the theoretical framework argued in this work.

VTTP has tried its level best to promote organisation of the village communities into civic interest groups and hence solved the problem of dealing with unorganised communities. This is an important step in community participation because in organising their own groups, marginalised people can acquire confidence, know-how, and power to support and manage their livelihoods and initiate change (IFAD, 2001). The organizing experience was accompanied by empowerment package. Indeed the VTTP Morogoro empowerment has provided an aroma of its own kind that need to be commended. As it has been indicated in the preceded parts of this work, the VTTP empowerment approach offers not only the understanding of the project specific issues but also the broader perspective of the framework conditions in which development process takes place.



This perspective enabled the villagers to enter into what Cornwall, (2002) described as public arena armed with the means to assert themselves. Has helped them to “fighting the disempowering activities” (Stokke, 1998), “make intelligent and well-informed decisions” (Fetterman, 2005) and “thinking outside the box” (Cornwall, 2002).

Since then it has been impossible for villagers to question the credibility of their leaders, but with the VTTP empowerment package villagers has been enabled to hold their leaders accountable. This is in line with Cornwell (Ibid) idea that empowerment requires giving people access to information on which to base deliberation or to mobilize, to assert their rights and demand accountability.

The hailed achievement of the empowerment approach of VTTP has given birth to strong institutions, which is also an important condition in achieving genuine participation. As it has been indicated early in this chapter, the civic interest groups in each village where VTTP operated were enabled to form their Village Development Committees. Although the efforts of these development groups were later incorporated in the village councils, the attempt gives hope that there is possibility of having villagers in strong and relatively big coalitions than their groups which may be dealing with specific interest. This attempt makes the project to be considered as one of the rare cases succeeded to build institution for the poor, as observed by Paul Devitt, 1977:23 in Dulani (2003) it is rare to find a body or institution that adequately represents the poor in a certain community or area.

Assessing the VTTP in terms of decentralisation one will argue that its approach has been effective on local government reform in the district. The legal clarification and other activities related to capacity building did not only strengthen the civic group institutions but they also strengthened the existed institutions. The coalitions of village councils were strong and transparent and more accountable to the villagers than the ward councillors who represent villagers in the district council. This achievement shows a prototype of effective decentralisation through which, if “honest actors” are involved genuine participation of the poor can be achieved.

More importantly is the way VTTP managed to create and successfully resolve conflict among development stakeholders at each stage of the VTTP participation approach. It is quite obvious that, it is too difficult to contradict the status quo, especially in a stable and rigid system like that of Tanzania where VTTP operated. This experience is in line with Hall, (2002:59) findings who emphasised the need to have conflict resolved as soon as they occur. More so, it demonstrate the possibility of applying radical approach without “over politicizing development efforts” as warned by Fekade (1994:61).

### **How pro-poor is VTTP Morogoro participation approach?**

The bottom line of the questions that guided this study was to underscore whether VTTP Morogoro managed to achieve genuine participation of the poor or not. Of interest to this issue was to underscore who participated and how, i.e. notwithstanding the inspiring experience of the VTTP Morogoro, the question whether the poor in the VTTP area took part in initiating change on their own or not is addressed in this part.

One of the commendation to the project is that “VTTP approach ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable in society are consulted effectively” (Davis, 2000) however, the findings of this study suggest that though there has been a remarkable change in the institutional landscape that may have allowed the participation of the poor in the project area, still there is little evidence to substantiate whether the poor took part in that process.

In all the three document reviewed by this study, there is no clear definition of who are the poor that the project purports to work with. What can be seen is that **Village** Travel and Transport Project (VTTP) with its Transparency and Accountability of **People** and their **Institutions** (UWAMA) seems to be about “Village people and their institutions” in their totality irrespective of whether their rich or poor. As it has been indicated in the UWAMA process described earlier in this work, all the stages of this approach present the villagers as if they have the same status. It was observed that the terms community, villagers, village and village council are used interchangeably to mean the same thing, perhaps “Village people”. The UWAMA Manual: (28-29) indicates that translating relevant local government laws into Kiswahili and making them accessible to the **local communities**, has been one of the most important break through and a turning point in the empowerment of the **local communities** as they have been able to demand their right of **collecting taxes** in their area of jurisdiction. In this case the manual claims that the local communities and the tax collectors in the VTTP area are the same.

Further more, in the early cited study of Mdendemi (2004:1) it was indicated that information was collected through discussion with the members of village councils, community road boards, NGOs, officials from the district council, district commissioners and project coordinator, participation support unit, village travel and transport project. Yet in the same study Mdendemi (Ibid: 4) came up with the findings that **villagers** were unsatisfied with the intervention measures taken by the District council. This implies that in this particular study Mdendemi’s definition of villagers, village councils and community road boards seem to be the same.

This kind of definition assumes that the village communities in the project area are homogenous and that every member has equal opportunity and access to resources and power. This assumption contradicts the radical planning theory discussed in preceding sections as well as Marx’s observation, that “in any society

there are some social groups oppressed by the capitalist system” and that societies are divided into classes with unequal resources; since such marked inequalities exist there are divisions of interest which are built into social system (Marx in Giddens 2001:669).

Being a pilot project, failure of the VTTP approach to define the village communities in its respective social class poses a significance question of whether the replication of the approach will achieve the same result. Hence this study suggests that successful replication of this approach depend on the consideration of the following criticisms.

The Uuwama approach is not immune to manipulation, cooptation and capturing of development benefits by local elites. This argument is substantiated by comparing the conditions of genuine participation for the poor argued in this study with what the VTTP approach advocates.

The framework asserts that it is important that baseline information is collected from the people that the project is intending to serve. However, the VTTP approach suggests that baseline information should be collected by the use of PRA to include villagers in a form of village assembly. The approach shows that to access the village communities you need to contact village or ward leader so that they can arrange for the village assembly.

This requirement confirms to the findings of Devitt, (1977:23) that, outsiders and government officials invariably find it more profitable and congenial to converse with local influentials than with the uncommunicative poor. On the other hand assuming that every in the village have equal opportunity in the village assembly contradicting Devitt's; and Chambers' observations, that “the poor are often inconspicuous, their voices may not be heard at public meetings in communities where it is customary for only the big men to put their views (Ibid)” and that “the poor are isolated from the outside world ... they don't go to the public meetings or they go and do not speak (Chamber 1983).

For this matter the steps suggested in the Uuwama awareness stage do not necessarily allow participation for the poor; rather they are subjecting the poor to institutions that might be argued to be comprised with the 'elites' that the project is supposed to counteract. Thus, replication of this approach without any mitigation will result into identification of wrong target group in such a way that development project, originally intended to be adapted to the poor villagers through participatory process, will be 'smuggled' by the local 'elites'.

In organising the communities the project experience shows that, because travel and transport problems came at the top of the villages' agenda, development groups in different parts of the project were formed around different road sector activities. While the adoption of road sector activities sounds to have been drawn up in a participatory way, it was undeniably a blueprint, designed at the national

level as indicated early in this chapter that the project came into being as the agreement between the governments of the United Republic of Tanzania and Switzerland in August 2000, with goals and objectives that support the importance of road sector activities. Such an approach is of course not sufficiently flexible or open to be negotiated in terms of local opportunities or constraints.

Indeed it is unrealistic to claim that all the villagers in the VTTP area were interested with road sector activities, rather this claim support the argument that, it is as if project 'ownership' - so important for guaranteeing the sustainability of an intervention - is crucially determined, by the capacity of the project planner to present his or her actions as part of a local development agenda. DeHerdt, (2004)

Regarding to empowerment the VTTP package suggests that the first kind of support includes finances that were disbursed by the project support unit to kick start the project activities. This kind of empowerment in most cases creates what can be termed "superficial" participation whereas villagers are willing to participate so long they are paid by the project. The conflict between the contractors and villagers in the VTTP area indicated by Mdendemi (2004) shows that the motive of the villagers was not to participate for their village road improvement per se; rather it was a matter of getting an employment. This observation is in line with what Dulani (2003) observed in MASAF projects that, the participation in three MASAF project was closely tied to the monetary incentive, without which the participants have no stake in prolonging the project.

Another point of criticism is how pro poor is the VTTP institutional building approach. DeHerdt, suggest that pro-poor institutional change is not a simple matter of finding and implementing a new design or applying a 'best practice' DeHerdt, (2004). It must address the issue of manipulation, co-optation and capturing.

The VTTP experience with regards to promotion of strong institutions seems to have mixed breed. These breeds are civic institutions and government institutions. The finding of this study suggests that the civic institutions developed in the VTTP area were later co-opted by the strong government institutions. This observation is clearly indicated in the Cooperation Manual (2004: 21) that (the civic interest) groups are well represented within the village councils through the "Village Development committees (VDCs). Although this kind of participation space gained by these groups is commended, it will be helpful and effective in a short run because it has integrated the civic movement into the government bureaucracy, of which Friedmann attests that such kind of behaviour need to be avoid if the radical practice is to be successful (see Friedmann 1987:303).

The argument that the civic movement was co-opted is confirmed by asking the question who decided to include the VDCs in the VCs? This study observed that the decision (to include these groups) was reached in a workshop at Nyandira (one of the villages in the project area). The workshop was attended by

councillors, the District Council chairperson, Departmental heads for planning, Community Development, Manpower development and works, Village Chairpersons, NGOs, and Private Sector organization. In this list of attendance there is not representative from any of the VDCs to substantiate whether they have agreed to cooperate with the village councils or even to contribute on the modality of cooperation (see Cooperation Manual, 2004: 10).

The co-option of the civic movement resulted into stagnation of institution growth, because after formation of the VDCs with membership limited to one village the document reviewed shows no further institutional development in the area. This situation contradict the radical planning theory which requires a development actor engaged in institutional change to connects the oppressed citizens to other social groups and builds problem-oriented coalitions and sustainable networks (Kraushaar 1988; Friedmann 1987; 1992). Based on this theory therefore, if at all the civic interest groups represent the poor then what VTTP did was to help the poor surrender themselves to their "opponent", the village government and other powerful actors in the district.

The successful co-option of the civic movement resulted into the other breed of institutions, the strengthened government institutions at the village level. Again at this juncture VTTP does not distinguish between the civic institutional movements and government institutions. This is clearly indicated by Mdendemi's study (2004:8) that already in place in these (VTTP) areas are various civic interest groups, VDCs, CRBs, VCs and VCAs all of which have been established by the community members themselves. This argument gives an impression that the co-option of VDCs did not happen accidentally, instead the civic movements were used to kick start the local government reform. Of course, there are reasons to expect this. To begin with, this project is government owned, operating under the auspice of President's office Regional Administrations and Local Government (PO-RALG). This restricts the project to the existing legal framework with regard to institutional change, as indicated in one of its immediately objectives that the project has to clarify the legal framework of different actors (Village and District leaders) so that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities, and to promote integrated transport planning between village and district level (Cooperation Manual, 2004).

Further, the immediate objective related to building strong institutions in the project area as conceived before the beginning of the project does not include strengthening of the civic movement. As it is indicated in the Cooperation Manual (Ibid) that the project has to capacitate the local organisations (District Council, Non-Governmental Organisations and Private Sector) in terms of technical, organizational economical and financial so that they can deliver quality services related to travel and transport to the communities to supplement their efforts.

Eventually it returned out that, the route the civic movement was to take was taken by the government institutions. Instead of assisting the interests groups to form

strong coalitions with other interest groups in neighbouring villagers, village councils in each of the three divisions where VTTP operated established Village Council Alliances. The reviewed document indicates that these three Alliances are politically stronger as compared to the existing Ward Development Committees and the Councillors who represent wards in the District council. Consequently, most of the conflict and conflict resolutions occurred in the VTTP area were struggle of politicians in different levels of government in the districts to sort out which form of decentralization should they practice. This argument is supported by two observations, one is that, the information used as a base line data for conflict resolution was not collected from the villagers (see Mdendemi, 2004) “perhaps because they do not hold substantial stake in the conflict”. Two, the civic interest groups were not represented in the conflict resolution meeting (Cooperation workshop) (see Cooperation Manual 2004). In that workshop it was agreed that a meeting of appointed or elected representative from each group of development stakeholders be convened by the District Commissioner to identify the members who will be in the follow – up standing committee on cooperation management. This committee is anticipated to comprise members from all categories of stakeholders (GOT, MDC, VCA, CRBs, NGO and Private sector) (Ibid: 29). Yet at this moment the interest groups are not going to be represented, however based on the VTTP implied definition of the village communities one may argue that these groups are represented through VCAs and CRBs.

These observations suggests that, VTTP used civic movement as a means to strengthen local government institutions, with the belief that achieving effective government will lead to improved conditions of the villagers.

## **The role of development actors in facilitating genuine participation process**

The discussion in the preceding parts of this work shows that, it is difficult for non-poor to open a window of opportunity for the poor. This process therefore requires the facilitation of pro-poor, honest and committed actors.

More so, the fact that this process is inevitably political and that it involves conflicts, it requires radical thinking and acting, bold and competent actors, who can predict what will happen next and what will be their next step for that matter. Actors who can communicate, catches people’s attention and gets them in the process of initiating their own actions, who can hold development process on one hand and political process on the other hand and one who are able and ready to “swim against stream”.

In the reviewed documents the role of development actors is explained in terms of what they are expected to be and not in terms of what they actually did in the project area. This is so probably because it was not the scope of these documents to describe the role of these actors. However, based on what happened it can be summed up that the role of development actors in the project

area was that of “back stopping” i.e. facilitating the villagers as catalyst through out the stages of the U UWAMA process. The development actors provided villagers with inputs they needed at each stage, whereas the process ended up achieving what we can call “assisted but self initiated change”

Although the document provides no much information about the role of the actors, this study recognises that their role is important in facilitating genuine participation of the poor. Therefore, a brief description of what can be the role of these actors is presented in this section. Based on the fact that genuine participation requires radical practice, Friedmann’s description of “what do radical planners do?” (Ibid: 303-306) is used to briefly explain what is expected to be the role of the development actors in facilitating genuine participation of the poor.

Radical planning begins with a critique of the present situation. This critique is not merely normative; it contains a strong analytical element which allows us to interpret, understand, and explain why things are as they are. In this case the role of the actors is to help in the mobilisation of radical practice by providing a critical account of the situation to be changed.

Once the poor are aware that things are not as they might be, and that they are capable of being changed, the next question is, how? The actors can help the poor to search for practical solutions to the problems perceived by them. To this search, they bring a strong analytical ability, a sense of what is likely to work and what is not, knowledge of institutional constraints, knowledge of what has worked or failed elsewhere, and an ability to asses and evaluate alternative solutions.

Devising an appropriate strategy, which is the next step in radical practice, requires timely, accurate, and richly textured information. Actors can provide mobilised groups with the intelligence they need for devising a successful strategy of action.

Most solutions to deep-seated problems, even radical, transformative solutions, have technical aspects that must be considered: questions of design, of cost, of location, and so forth. Actors can help mobilised groups refine the technical aspects of transformative solutions.

Development actors have a role of helping the poor to learn themselves from their own experience, experts and other groups’ experience. They may use methods like open discussion, self-criticism, role playing, maintaining a collective memory, video film and writing; sharing experiences by word of mouth and/or arranging for exchange visits with other mobilised groups who may be interested in the experience.

Radical practice is oppositional. Sooner or later, it will run up against the state and its regulatory and repressive agencies. What happens then will be guided by the strategy that the mobilised poor have adopted. Actors can mediate these

encounters with technocracy by adopting the latter's jargon and presenting group demands in ways that are likely to meet with the approval of the state.

Group process is difficult to manage, and the tendency to concentrate information, knowledge, and decision-making in small leadership elite is very common. Normally in any group process, there is an oligarchical tendency. Actors have a responsibility to resist this tendency and to ensure the widest possible participation of all members of the group during the entire process.

Actors have to assist the poor to develop persuasive ideological statements, statements that are time coherent, intellectually sophisticated, morally persuasive, and simple in expression. The function of these statements is to legitimate emancipatory practice, to sustain this practice in adversity, and to disarm and de-legitimise the opposition.

For all the reasons enumerated above, the development actors must never be far removed from the action itself. They must work with the poor communities to get more knowledge of what is required in assisting the community.

## **Conclusion**

This study was conducted with the aim of addressing four objectives which are in line with the following questions; what conditions have caused the poor to (not) participate in the VTTP Morogoro, how conflicts among development stakeholders in the VTTP area have (not) resulted into (non) genuine participation, what should be the role of development actors in facilitating achievement of genuine participation and what conditions for genuine participation should be proposed based on the experiences and lessons generated from the project.

The pre-conditions for the poor to participate or not as set in the framework of this study are; the seeking of baseline information to understand the micro situation of the target group, organising the poor, empowering them and promoting the building of strong institutions. In this regard the study has demonstrated that the practice of the VTTP Morogoro as examined in the light of these conditions comes closer to the process of genuine participation. However, the findings of this study suggests that it is difficult to conclude that these conditions have caused the poor to participate in the VTTP mainly because of two reasons; one, the decision of the project to intervene the village community as a whole without disaggregating it into different classes. This decision risk the project to an evident and well-documented problem of capturing of participatory process either by a landed, 'traditional' elite (Platteau&Gaspart, 2003; Platteau&Abraham, 2002; Conning&Kevane, 2002) or by 'downsized' state bureaucrats (Platteau&Gaspart, 2003, Chabal & Daloz 1999). At their respective levels, they behave like "interface experts" (Hilhorst, 2003) or "development brokers" (Bierschenk, de Sardhan & Chaveau, 2000 in DeHerdt 2004), who are able to manipulate and exploit outside intervention as well as local expectations on their own behalf.



Two, the decision of the project to stick to the existing legal mandate; this decision restrict the project to strengthen existing institutions, which in the opinion of this study they do not allow for the genuine participation of the poor. The study has demonstrated that, if the interest groups formed in the VTTP area comprised of the poor, then their strong institutions (VDCs) formed thereafter, was used as a means to achieve local government reform; and not with an interest to institutionalize quiet new parallel institutions which would hold the existing institutions responsible and accountable for their action.

Regarding to how conflicts have resulted not, into genuine participation or non genuine participation of the poor, the study has demonstrated that the conflict between the interest groups and the village governments has resulted into regulated participation space, wherein at the later stages it turned out that the conflict come to be a “deal” among politicians at different levels in the district. In the opinion of this study, what have been achieved through conflicts in the VTTP area was not genuine participation of the poor, rather it is genuine participation of the politicians in the process of trying to fit themselves in the legal mandates as clarified to them by the VTTP intervention.

In a nutshell it is worth to conclude that, though the VTTP experience is inspiring and should be commended for what it has achieved, this study has been hinged on a dilemma, between the theory of the project and its practice. The study has demonstrated that the Uuwama process is not immune to manipulation; co-option and capturing by elite, yet what is documented to have happened in the VTTP area with regard to formation of interest groups and strong institutions (particularly the VDCs) seem to take a form of non manipulative, non co-optive and movement that can not be easily captured. Would it have been that the correct definition of the poor was adopted and that the interest was not to stick to the existed legal mandate the result would have been different. This dilemma led to the conclusion that, being a pilot project the replication of the VTTP approach is not one to one function. That is if the same result is to occur to other places something more than Uuwama process need to be searched for.

Nevertheless, though VTTP has been hailed for its ability to promote participation of the poorest and most vulnerable in society; this study suggests to the contrary, because it has demonstrated that what was promoted by VTTP in its area of operation was effective decentralisation. It assumes that once decentralisation is achieved the poor will participate effectively. However, this assumption is not in line with literature (Kyessi 2002; Villar-Singh, 1999; Hettne, 1990; Korten, 1981) wherein it is observed that, though participation is one of the advantages of decentralisation, it is a misconception that participation will happen after legitimization. In many countries, the decentralisation programme and its structure have enabled the governments and their agents succeed in having certain things done the way the governments wanted Liviga 1996 in Kyessi (2002:75), as it has been the case in the VTTP area where most of the decision were done by politicians without adequate representation of the interest groups formed by

villagers. The fact that VTTP is good at decentralisation is also acknowledged in the VTTP Cooperation Manual, (2004:2) wherein it is argued that, the formation of CRBs and VCAs in the VTTP Morogoro has been one of the most important lessons to be drawn for government reform process which is based on evolutionary and bottom up approach.

As far as the role of development actors in facilitating genuine participation is concerned, it came out clearly in this study that their role is important in bringing about assisted but self initiated change; by acting as catalysts, back stoppers, whistle blowers or watch dogs to the poor communities.

## **Recommendations**

This part presents general recommends with regards to what can be done for genuine participation to occur and recommendations to be considered by VTTP Morogoro.

### **General recommendations**

Basically the study recommends that the for genuine participation to occur the conceptual framework argued in this study should be adopted, with more emphasis on the following specific actions;

Interventions aiming at improving life of the poor, should in the first place define who “are the poor” they want to work with. This will help in monitoring and evaluating the progress and the result of the project. More importantly is that during collection of baseline information whether for situation analysis or for conflict resolution; the information should be collected from the people or the area intended for intervention.

Formation of civic groups should base on genuine interest of the communities. However, if the project goal has been already fixed and there is no flexibility, instead of manipulating the communities by presenting the project goal as a local agenda communities should be “sincerely” informed of this reality.

If the intervention seek to use self help initiative during the maintenance phase of the project, it is better even during the implementation phase the same initiative is used. The reason behind this is that if people are paid to participate in implementation, no one will be willing to participate in maintenance phase without payment. Other wise the project has to put in place mechanism which will ensure availability of maintenance fund after the termination of the project.

Empowerment of the poor should not ignore the relationship between the poor and other groups in the community. A good intervention is the one that create constant tension in the community without allowing emergence of violent conflict. This is possible if the intervention is improving the conditions of the poor without

significantly harming the conditions of other people in the society. This explain the fact that empowering the poor means reducing some power from the powerful; in this case development actors have to improvise an alternative ways to contain pressure that may result from those who has their power reduced.

Civic movements should be encouraged to form strong coalitions instead of being incorporated into government bureaucracy. This will result into true civil society movement, a movement which has target group legacy. This kind of institutions is instrumental in creating genuine participation. It has the ability to demand for transparency, responsibility and accountability from those in power. It represents the voice of the people as compared to any other kind of civil society movement.

Given that genuine participation takes a form of radical practice, the selection of development actors to facilitate this process must not only base on people with academic qualification. The selection should pick from people who have manifest skills in radical practices and those who are ready and able to swim against the steam, people who can play a role of whistle blower or watch dog to the poor communities.

### ***Case Specific recommendations***

For effective future action of the VTTP it is recommended that, the above recommendations and criticisms made by this study are considered.

As the project has been phased out it is recommended that an independent ex-ante evaluation is conducted to generate more lessons to be incorporated in VTTP future actions.

Given that this study has identified discrepancy between the VTTP theory and its practice it is also important that studies are conducted to harmonise this situation.

Due to the fact that effective decentralisation achieved by VTTP can not be assumed to automatically have benefited the poor, this study recommends that something has to be done to ensure that the decentralisation translate to increased participation of the poor communities.

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