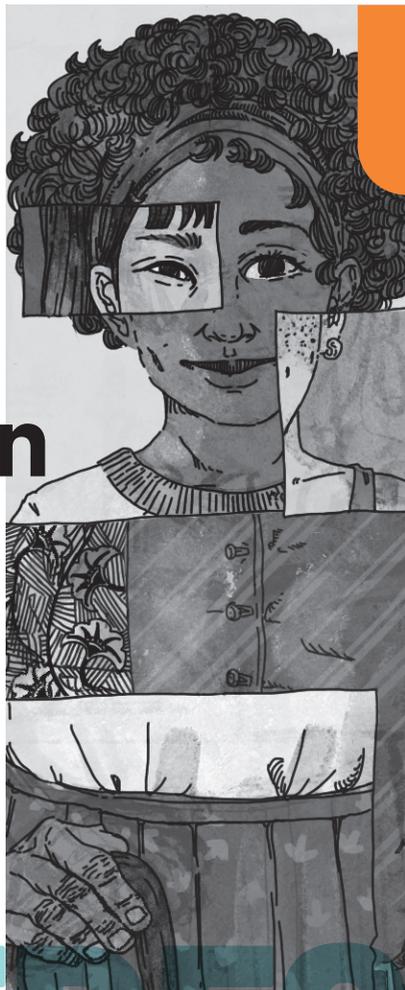


INSPIRING EXPERIENCES  
AND METHODOLOGIES

# Inclusion for transformation



LES COLLECTIONS DU F3E

# REPÈRES SUR



INSPIRING EXPERIENCES  
AND METHODOLOGIES

# Inclusion for transformation



## **ABOUT F3E**

Created in 1994, the F3E is a network of actors in international solidarity and cooperation. By offering them complementary innovative methodologies (evaluation, capitalisation, change-oriented approaches, quality approach, gender approach, etc.), the F3E contributes to strengthening their skills. It encourages them to improve their practices in order to achieve an impact that brings about social change. It is a multi-actor network of over 90 French organisations: associations, NGOs, local authorities, networks, foundations and trade unions.



# THANKS

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## **PREFACE**

### **INCLUSION FOR TRANSFORMATION, A JOURNEY IN COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE**

As a multi-actors French network for the evaluation of practices, our goal is to contribute to the enhancement of the skills of actors involved in solidarity and international cooperation, and to improve the impact of their initiatives. Our ambition is the collective development of practices for the evaluation and investigation of initiatives for social change, both in France and internationally. Accordingly, F3E has embarked upon a process of collective reflection, as a means of fuelling this brief, which is intended to promote equitable and sustainable social change. For over 25 years, the F3E network has brought together nearly a hundred civil society organizations, territorial authorities and foundations, who have sustained their operations through the dynamics of a learning network.

Over the years, F3E has consistently undertaken the collective investigation of processes for the continuous improvement of initiatives. Together with its members, F3E trials innovative methodologies as levers for change and the reduction of inequalities, proposing approaches and methodologies which are appropriate to practitioners both in France and internationally: change-oriented approaches and the gender-based approach. Ever conscious of the need to expand this corpus of processes and methodologies, F3E is inspired by the practices of its members, and of other actors involved in international solidarity or in the social and solidarity economy, as a means of lending substance to those reflections and enriching the tools it provides.

At the core of the reflections set out in this work lies the exploration of the assumption whereby inclusion constitutes a powerful lever for the promotion of the social changes which we wish to see. This has been observed, firstly, through the deployment of change-oriented approaches. These reflect the benefits of methodologies which are

focused upon actors, who are considered as essential agents of change. This has also been observed through our work on gender, particularly the intersectional gender approach, adopted by F3E in 2021. This permits the identification of exclusions associated with gender identity and sexual orientation, but also those associated with issues of race, class, age, health, etc..

Accordingly, in this work, we address our capacity for the adoption of inclusive practices which will be vehicles for equitable and sustainable social change. We raise the question: how are we to achieve *Inclusion for Transformation*?

In our view, it has been important here to provide some comparative analysis of the concept of inclusion, and to open up a pathway which, we hope, will provide actors in social change with the resources to join us in the more detailed investigation of its practical implementation.

*Inclusion for Transformation* represents both a book and a learning process in collective intelligence. In order to produce this work, we have joined forces with practitioners from organizations who work for the promotion of social justice, both in France and internationally, consultants and researchers. Our objective was to provide a forum for exchanges between a plurality of actors with a variety of experiences.

Our invitation for contributions was wide-ranging, resulting in the production of ten articles, which we are pleased to present here. We have received input from contributors living in France, but also in Colombia, Belgium, Benin, Ecuador, the USA and Senegal. We have organized a series of workshops, based upon peer-to-peer exchanges, as a facility for receptive communication between contributors and the provision of mutual support for the drafting of their articles. We would like to express our warmest thanks for their unfailing commitment throughout the participative process which led to the production of this work, and for communicating their thoughts and experiences in a spirit of authenticity.

The editorial committee which we have brought together has played a major role in this collective journey. Comprised of experienced persons from various backgrounds, this committee has addressed the issue of inclusion while delivering its own input and situated knowledge. This editorial committee has been responsible for the structuring of this work, and for the detailed review of each article, and has assumed the role of keynote speaker during the conduct of workshops. Its proposals

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have had an extremely positive influence upon the quality of exchanges and articles. At this point, we would like to express our warmest thanks to the members of the editorial committee for the abundance of their commitment to this process.

We hope that these contributions will inspire you, and will encourage you to pursue, with us, the process of reflection on transformative inclusion.

### Aude Hadley

Secours Catholique - Caritas France  
For the Administrative Board of F3E

### Claire de Rasily

Coordinator of the development - F3E  
For the *Inclusion for Transformation* Team

This glossary is intended to explain some of the concepts addressed in *Inclusion for Transformation*. Some of these are presented together, in order to highlight the links between different ideas or, conversely, their differences. The explanations set out here are intended to assist the understanding of readers, and do not constitute scientific definitions. It should also be observed that some concepts are understood in a more particular or specific manner in certain articles. In this case, the authors concerned have expressed their point of view in detail.

### ACTORS

In the interests of transformative inclusion, which is the specific subject of this work, we would consider it is important to specify and differentiate the persons and social groups involved in initiatives, in order to permit a systemic interpretation of power relationships at work and to classify their involvement.

The term **interested parties** describes institutions, organizations, communities, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in a given initiative, without necessarily being active participants therein.

In the vocabulary of public policies, particularly concerning development aid, **beneficiaries** are persons, communities, groups or organizations who fulfil the conditions required to support the organization of an initiative (a scheme, programme or project) for the improvement of their living conditions. This term is now attracting increasing criticism, as its semantic field refers to the principle whereby the persons affected by an initiative are perceived as the recipients of aid, in most cases of external origin, without actually assuming an active role in the promotion of the social changes envisaged.

The term **actors** and/or **stakeholders** encompasses a diverse range of persons and groups: civil society associations, public authorities and institutions, but also social enterprises on a local, national and international scale, not forgetting the communities affected by the project concerned and the people who make up these communities. Stakeholders play a critical role in the execution of an initiative, whether this is defined as a scheme, a public policy, a programme, a project, etc.. Although this definition highlights the capacity for action of each party and

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establishes a dynamic of reciprocity, it nevertheless entails a risk of the blurring of systemic inequalities between the stakeholders to whom reference is made.

In this context, the term **community** describes a group of persons who share a common identity, constituted by shared standards and/or culture and/or values. The term community implies a sense of belonging to a social group, by reference to a certain number of criteria which, in some cases, may be cumulative. Communities define themselves, for example, by reference to issues of race, religion, gender, sexual and/or romantic orientation, health, age, class, etc.. Each individual may simultaneously be a member of a number of communities. This membership also varies over the course of a lifetime, and is sometimes a matter of personal choice, although this choice may also be removed, where membership of a community is defined at societal level. In French public debate, the concept of community is sometimes perceived in a pejorative light, whereas this concept is valued in French-speaking Quebec and in numerous societies throughout the world. In the present work, the term community is employed to describe persons affected by social changes, by way of distinction from the concept of a beneficiary. In practice, consideration is given to the ability to take the initiative, and to exercise agency. It should be borne in mind, however, that communities are not to be considered as uniform wholes, as the majority are permeated by inequalities. For example, a community of young people may include young women and young men of various social classes, sexual and romantic orientations, who may or may not be subject to racism, etc..

## SYSTEMIC, CHANGE-ORIENTED AND INTERSECTIONAL GENDER APPROACHES

The concept of a **system** increasingly emerged in the wake of the Second World War, particularly through the work conducted at the University of Palo Alto in the USA by Gregory Bateson. The concept of a system, originally employed in biology, expanded progressively to encompass a variety of fields, particularly economics, psychology and sociology. In practice, it became evident to scientists that traditional approaches were no longer adequate for the analysis of complex phenomena, characterized by uncertainty and constant change. The systemic approach is thus based upon the concept of complexity, specifically as applied to the field of sociology by Edgar Morin in his work *The Method* (completed between 1977 and 1991).

The **systemic approach** is an interdisciplinary methodology which applies to the social field. Edgar Morin defines a system as “*a series of elements in dynamic interaction, organized in pursuit of a goal*”. The systemic approach also involves the generation of models, the function of which is the analysis of series of mutually interdependent elements, from a dynamic perspective. Accordingly, the systemic approach constitutes a global process, whereby it is considered that a system cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts. For this reason, the systemic approach emphasizes relations between the various elements of a given system (rather than analyzing the structure of these elements).

The systemic approach considers objects under analysis in the context of their environment, their function and their mechanisms. The systemic approach may therefore investigate:

- the “purpose” of a system (or teleology);
- levels of organization;
- potential stable states;
- exchanges between parties;
- balancing and unbalancing factors;
- logic loops and associated dynamics, etc.

While the systemic approach has achieved distinction in human sciences, by the application of structuralist and functionalist approaches, it has also been reappropriated by scientists working in the materialist field, particularly in terms of perspectives for the analysis of power relationships.

The term **change-oriented approaches (COA)** describes a corpus of methods and tools inspired by theories of change. These highlight the qualitative impacts of initiatives for international solidarity, whilst taking account of the complexity of the systems within which these initiatives operate. These approaches involve the contribution of stakeholders, whether in planning, monitoring or evaluation. COAs encourage the various stakeholders to establish a positive and long-term shared vision. In an ideal version of COAs, each stakeholder then assumes a publicly visible commitment to a pathway of change (in terms of representations, attitudes, behaviours, practices, relations, etc.), in order to achieve a jointly-defined vision and conduct corresponding activities. Regular monitoring and evaluation are undertaken, in order to gauge the impacts of activities upon the changes pursued, and in the interests of the ongoing improvement of initiatives.

The concept of **gender** identifies the social construction of differences between males and females in a given society at a given time. This concept provides a grasp of social relations between individuals, including relationships of power and dominance, which may be deconstructed. The gender perspective encourages

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the visualization and analysis of the social construction of gender, and thus of existing inequalities, not only between men, women and gender minorities, but also within each of the above-mentioned groups. The gender perspective is therefore necessary in order to combat gender-based inequalities.

The **intersectional gender approach** addresses the complexity of identities and social inequalities by the application of a systemic approach. Whenever the concept of gender interacts with other relationships of power based upon skin colour (perceived race), social class, caste, sexuality, age, disability, etc., reference is made to intersectionality. The intersectional gender approach argues against the hierarchical classification of these criteria for social differentiation. This approach considers the plural nature of oppressive systems, and takes account of their interactions in the generation of social inequalities.

## INCLUSION

Commonly employed in the vocabulary of stakeholders in social change in English-speaking contexts, the concept of inclusion is adopted in a varying manner, according to the fields of expertise of civil society organizations, in France and internationally. In human sciences, deliberate reference is made to social inclusion, i.e. the position of individuals either outside or within larger systems of stakeholders. Initiatives which, ultimately, are aimed at the achievement of social transformation require the commitment of a variety of stakeholders: local, national and international civil society organizations, public authorities, etc.. The emergence of collective action and “working together” thus raises the issue of inclusion in a broader perspective.

In a paradoxical departure from its Latin derivation *inclusio* – meaning “imprisonment” – inclusion frequently involves the admission of persons to areas from which they were previously excluded. In the field of international solidarity, persons described as vulnerable or excluded are, in most cases, those affected by social changes. The concept of inclusion is sometimes criticized, on the grounds that it can be seen as perpetuating power relationships. A distinction is thus drawn between a central space (within which society is “made”) and marginal spaces (which are presumed to be outside society). From this perspective,

inclusion is synonymous with the assimilation of the margins by the centre, thus implying the adoption by marginalized persons and communities of the standards and behaviours of the centre. Here, we propose a vision of inclusion which is described as “transformative”. In this case, inclusion involves the expansion of decision-making forums to include individuals and communities who are affected by social change, at every stage in the conduct of initiatives. Transformative inclusion is thus intended to highlight the expression of marginalized voices, through the recognition of their specific features, on the basis of situated knowledge.

## EMPOWERMENT AND THE REINFORCEMENT OF AGENCY

The term “empowerment”, which describes the concept of the reinforcement of agency, has been employed since the 1970s in a variety of fields, including psychology, social action, health care, community schemes, etc.. Feminist movements in Latin America, India and Africa have progressively appropriated the concept of empowerment, which enjoyed increasing resonance in the 1980s. This concept also features strongly in initiatives involving marginalized communities in the USA: African Americans, women and the LGBTQI+ community. In this sense, empowerment is conceived as a process of transformation based upon the root knowledge of individuals and communities who are deprived of agency, or restricted in the exercise thereof, and who face a situation of dominance. Empowerment is defined as a process which involves the construction of new capacities for social change by combatting systemic inequalities.

Initially translated by French equivalents for the terms “capacitation” and “autonomy”, the term empowerment became increasingly widespread in the French-speaking world during the 1990s and 2000s. This phenomenon is associated with the emergence of a variety of practices which lay claim to empowerment, from projects for the self-reliance of local communities through to corporate management. International institutions have also appropriated this term, initially as an instrument for public development policies associated with gender, and subsequently as an integral element of agendas for combatting poverty. Numerous definitions of empowerment have emerged, thus blurring the clarity of its meaning, both in theory and in practice. In this context, it is increasingly associated with the reinforcement of economic capacities, with the progressive erasure of its social components. This is compounded by an emphasis upon individual choice and top-down logic, to the detriment of its original community dimension (associated with collective and root-based origins).

The multiple meanings and shifting sense of the word “empowerment” represent a challenge to stakeholders in social change (communities, social movements, civil

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society organizations) with respect to the relevance of its use. While some parties have opted for the reappropriation of the term empowerment in its original sense, others, conversely, refer to the development or reinforcement of “agency”. For this reason, both terms will be found side by side in the present work, according to the sensibilities of authors and the organizations to which they belong.

Above and beyond issues of vocabulary and translation, the reinforcement of agency and empowerment are understood here in their original sense. Accordingly, the reinforcement of agency and empowerment imply the increasing control by individuals and communities of their lives and of their potential for emancipation from systemic inequalities. Reinforcement of agency and empowerment describe a process for the construction of capacities for self-determination and action, in a psychological, social and economic sense. Reinforcement of agency or empowerment involve, firstly, personal and individual emancipation (for example, in terms of education, self-confidence, etc.) and, secondly, social and/or collective emancipation (for example, access to rights, material and cultural resources, etc.).

## RACIALIZATION, TOKENISM AND SITUATED KNOWLEDGE

The terms **racialization** or **racialized person** were originally employed in human sciences for the analysis of racism as a social construction. A racialized person is a member of a minority group, who suffers from stigmatization, discrimination and abuse as a result of this membership. Minority groups or races are defined by combinations of characteristics: religion, skin colour, hair type, language, region or continent of origin, etc.. In this context, the term “racialized” is intended to distinguish the socially-constructed character of differences from the essence thereof. Thus, according to these terms, race is neither biological nor objective, but is a social construction which is employed for the representation, categorization and exclusion of individuals or communities. Racialized persons are now appropriating this term in order to differentiate themselves from persons described as “white” and dominant, i.e. who are not victims of racism.

**Token** is an English word for any emblematic item. **Tokenism** is a practice involving symbolic efforts for the inclusion of marginalized individuals or communities, in order to evade accusations of discrimination. For example, this term is used

to describe a situation in which a person is recruited or assigned to a post for reasons associated with their personal characteristics, including gender, religious beliefs or racialization, rather than on the grounds of their skills and knowledge. This practice is generally presented as fair vis-à-vis the community of which the person concerned is a member but, in reality, is manipulated by organizations who wish to lay claim to inclusivity. Tokenism is also a term employed in psychology to describe situations in which the proportions between social groups are highly unequal. Persons in the least represented group are described as “tokens”, and other persons as “dominant”.

The concept of **situated knowledge** was developed by feminist researchers, specifically Donna Haraway, Sandra Harding and Patricia Hill Collins, from the late 1980 onwards. Feminist research work has shown that the socialization of researchers, together with their experience, shape their thinking and influence scientific production. Accordingly, any citation of scientific objectivity may, paradoxically, conceal the perpetuation of sexist, racist or class stereotypes, etc.. In this context, academic knowledge becomes both scientific and political, as these two terms are no longer in opposition. It is therefore up to each individual to identify their own “standpoint” and the influence of their own experiences upon the generation of knowledge.

From the intersectional gender perspective, Patricia Hill Collins has shown how black feminist sociologists occupy the particular role of “outsiders within” in the scientific community. They also find themselves at the point of intersection of various fields of socialization. Their viewpoint consequently represents a specific awareness, a situated knowledge which permits the emergence of new knowledge in the university environment. The issue of situated knowledge is also embraced by feminist organizations, who employ it as a lever for empowerment.

The concept of situated knowledge may be advantageously employed by stakeholders in social change, in an extremely wide variety of fields. This concept gives voice to those affected by initiatives: individuals, communities, marginalized persons, etc.. The use of situated knowledge can result in a radical change in the perception of a given initiative and improve its impact, as reflected by a number of articles and the postscript of the present work.

## INTRODUCTION

The simplest way of defining inclusion is probably to describe it as the opposite of exclusion. Commonly employed in the vocabulary of actors in social change in English-speaking contexts, the concept of inclusion is adopted in a varying manner, according to the fields of expertise of civil society organizations, in France and internationally. In human sciences, deliberate reference is made to social inclusion, i.e. the position of individuals either outside or within larger systems of actors<sup>1</sup>. In a paradoxical departure from its Latin derivation *inclusio* - meaning “imprisonment” - inclusion frequently involves the admission of persons to areas from which they were previously excluded. In the field of international solidarity, persons described as vulnerable or excluded are, in most cases, those affected by social changes. Initiatives which, ultimately, are aimed at the achievement of social transformation require the commitment of a variety of actors: local, national and international civil society organizations, public authorities, etc.. The emergence of collective action and “working together” thus raises the issue of inclusion in a broader perspective.

While the principle of the combined involvement of various actors in common initiatives would appear to enjoy support, the adoption of inclusive process frequently proves to be an extremely complex exercise, which deserve particular attention. This gives rise to a series of questions: What do we understand by inclusion? Who is to be included? Why, and on what grounds? How is inclusion to be achieved? How is inclusion manifested in partnerships with local actors? Where do we stand, in terms of the involvement of persons and communities affected by changes? What are the links between inclusion and empowerment? What are the points to be observed and inspirational practices? How is transformative inclusion to be incorporated in our practices? How is inclusion to be deployed and monitored over the full duration of an initiative: from planning through to evaluation, including arrangements for monitoring and deployment?

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1. The concept of social inclusion was highlighted by sociologist Niklas Luhmann (1927-1998). It is defined as the opposite of exclusion, and refers to the role of individuals within larger social systems. A commitment to inclusion involves a variety of fields, specifically those covered by Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR).

Far from attempting an exhaustive analysis of the issue of inclusion, this work highlights particular experiences, and encourages a dialogue between these experiences. Accordingly, the objective here is not to deliver “off-the-shelf” tools, nor the targeting of any exemplary approach, but to raise awareness and encourage consideration of the manner in which civil society organizations can address issues of inclusion, in the interests of transformation. For this reason, the visions of inclusion set out in this work are extremely diverse, and sometimes depart from the beaten track.

Getting to grips with *Inclusion for Transformation* is more a matter of exploration than the consultation of a guidebook. This collection provides access to a number of relevant approaches and methodologies, though articles which describe models and tools. Nor is *Inclusion for Transformation* a work for the pooling of “good practices” - a given practice is never exclusively “good” or exclusively “bad”, and the reality in the field is frequently far more complex. The intention is rather to share the narrative experiences of actors who have played the game, with substantial commitment, and to investigate their practices according to the proposed process for appraisal. For this reason, the articles in this work pay equal attention to successes, adaptations required and obstacles to initiatives. These narratives are a reflect of resilience and continuing prospects for transformation. Accordingly, this work can be considered from a perspective which is instructive to both authors and readers, which encourages personal reflection and inspires collective thinking.

While each article constitutes an independent whole, it is worth highlighting the links between them. *Inclusion for Transformation* can thus be investigated by following three different strands, according to the focus of interest of the readers concerned.

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**Methodological strand.** This involves a selection of articles describing reflections and feedback from the implementation of tools associated with inclusion, from planning to evaluation, and including the issue of empowerment.

**Inspirational experience strand.** Articles under this heading are the experiential narratives of practitioners, who undertake an objective analysis of their practices in the field of transformative inclusion and empowerment.

**Thematic strand.** This strand on the theme of inclusion follows an alternating sequence of articles dedicated to methodologies and inspirational experiences, in three phases:

- First part: Who is to be included?
- Second part: In pursuit of a community-based approach.
- Third part: Empowerment, viewed through the gender lens.

The first part of this work is comprised of articles which respond to the question: Who is to be included? Inclusion is described herein as an opportunity to change perspectives and challenge stances adopted. These articles include a discussion of issues associated with participation, and address the reciprocal relations involved in partnerships, whilst also providing an invitation to reconsider the role of all actors involved in support work.

In *Measuring Stakeholder's Engagement: A Practical Approach*, Anh Thu Hoang and William Pate describe the positive impacts of the inclusion of actors in initiatives, whether locally or internationally. The authors identify simple and adaptable tools which permit the definition of objectives for the involvement of actors. More specifically, they argue in favour of the inclusion of the persons concerned, commonly described as beneficiaries, throughout the project life cycle, from planning through to *ex-post* evaluation.

Yannick Billard, of the association "Pays de Savoie Solidaires", which works for the Department of Savoie in France, is co-author of an arti-

cle with Serigné Maphaté Samb, from the Department of Bignona in Senegal. They describe their method of "crossed views" for the consideration of persons living with a disability. Inclusion is addressed here from the perspective of the pooling and communication of practices between the two territories. This article highlights the benefits of a stance of reciprocal cooperation in relations between partners. Inclusion is conceived here as "acting together".

Charlemagne Bio, from the NGO "Aide et Action", challenges monitoring and evaluation methodologies which do not take sufficient account of changes experienced by "support staff", i.e. the staff teams of civil society organizations, both in France and internationally. Analysis of indicators of change considered in conjunction with an education programme associated with the constitution of collective knowledge, indicates that this support staff is not included among the actors targeted. However, the progressive development of their support policies, together with the enhancement of know-how, are regularly cited as unexpected consequences. Civil society organizations are therefore called upon to join the circle of actors who are involved in, and affected by the changes sought. In this case, inclusion represents an invitation to self-observation.

The second part of the work is devoted to the role of communities in inclusion processes. It describes how communities have been invited to participate in action-research processes, and/or to monitor the experience of a community-based approach in relation to actual conditions in the field.

Vincent Henin and Paula Uglione, of Louvain Cooperation, address the issue of empowerment through the Environmental Integration Tool-based approach. This methodology is described as an "invitation to dialogue" between, on the one hand, Louvain Cooperation and, on the other, supported entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector, in the interests of the more effective reconciliation of economic and environmental issues. This approach is thus established as a tool which connects entrepreneurs with their ecosystem at every stage of an initiative: diagnostic analysis, definition, monitoring and evaluation. Inclusion is conceived here as the involvement of users.

Florian Perrudin, of the Essentiel association, takes our readers on a journey to the Republic of Guinea. This article describes, in fine detail, the complexity associated with the engagement of action in the field of community health care. We thus follow the association's own

# INTRODUCTION

questionings of the “balancing act” which it undertakes between the observation of working principles in communities and the consideration of constraints associated with the deployment of projects. This article also encourages a greater dialogue with public authorities, in the interests of promoting community-based schemes. Inclusion is considered here from the perspective of collective participation.

The French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD) has provided a collectively drafted article, coordinated by Emeline Hassenforder. This article sets out a methodology and tools which are intended to secure the inclusion of women and young people, from the planning stage onwards, and throughout the monitoring and evaluation of an agricultural programme in rural areas of Tunisia. Through this narrative on its action-research initiative, CIRAD sheds light on the manner in which international and local organizations can adopt an inclusive stance, which involves young people and women, whilst taking account of their particular characteristics.

The third part encourages the observation of existing links between inclusion, gender, intersectionality and empowerment. Over and above issues associated with the representation or “targeting” of women initiatives, the question arises of how genuinely empowering spaces are to be created. How are specific factors in the situations of women and/or gender minorities to be considered? How does this influence initiatives? These questions are addressed through experiences in the field and the modelling of empowerment processes, together with the consideration of the role of evaluators in the dynamics of social change.

Klára Hellebrandová and Arnaud Laaban share their experiences as evaluators, describe methodological tools and argue in favour of empowerment as an approach to social change. This article addresses, in a detailed manner, issues of exclusion, vulnerability and disempowerment, through an intersectional interpretation of power relationships. It thus sheds light upon certain blind spots in the conception and evaluation of international solidarity projects. It also casts a critical eye on the manner in which effectiveness is perceived by funders. Finally, it

shows how the inclusion of communities, simultaneously incorporating the situated knowledge of persons and collective action, constitutes a cornerstone of equitable and sustainable social change.

Laure Turchet and Louise Lacoste analyse the pathway followed by the “Carton Plein” French association in order to promote the inclusion of homeless women, through the “First hours” device for re-integration through employment. They set out their interpretation of the support of women and gender minorities, which takes account of the sexism and sexual abuse to which they are subject. Over and above a quota system, and the requisite access of women to this device, they describe the construction – still in progress – of a “safe space” as a driver for empowerment. In this case, inclusion takes the form of cooperation between supported persons, trainers and management, with the intention that sexism should cease to be routine.

Sarahi Gutierrez describes the learning process of the NGO Batik International for the integration of gender in its initiatives. She warns against the blind spots associated with gender inclusion based upon the individual promotion of women, and describes the necessity for the consideration of their environment. This article traces the path followed by Batik and its network of partners for the collective conception of a new and more systemic vision for the inclusion of women, in which change is synonymous with collective empowerment.

In *Transformative Evaluation for Lasting and Just Social Change*, Tamarah Moss and Donna Mertens invite evaluators to consider themselves as agents of change, working for the promotion of social and ecological justice. They propose an intersectional analysis of power relationships, particularly with respect to racism. The authors identify the inclusion of marginalized persons as an indispensable condition for an evaluation which, in itself, is transformative. Far removed from the symbolic representation of marginalized persons, this article advocates a process of evaluation which is inspired by community initiatives for the promotion of social justice.

To round off this work, the editorial committee has produced a post-script. This sets out recommendations, together with five key factors which are conducive to the adoption of inclusive and transformative processes. The postscript thus describes prospects for the enrichment and expansion of inclusive approaches and methodologies, in the interests of social and ecological change.

# 01

## WHO TO INCLUDE?

The first part of this book brings together articles that answer the question: Who to include? Inclusion is described as an invitation to change one's perspective and to question one's own posture. It includes a discussion of the challenges of participation, reciprocal partnership relations, and an invitation to reconsider the place of all stakeholders in support missions.

# MEASURING STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT : A PRACTICAL APPROACH

ANH THU HOANG AND WILLIAM PATE

**Stakeholder engagement, on the surface, is a deceptively simple concept – the degree to which stakeholders are engaged in a project, be it a domestic project, an international development intervention, a patient – centered research project, or product marketing in business. Donors, funders, non-profits, and businesses understand the need for stakeholder engagement<sup>1</sup>. After all, those who have a stake in these engagement activities have a vested interest (by definition) in the outcome.**

Interestingly, beneficiaries, “the target groups whose well-being the intervention intends to improve,” have often been excluded from consultations with other key stakeholders to design and implement these interventions<sup>2</sup>. Logic models and theories of change almost always give at least nominal acknowledgement to the existence of stakeholders. How many of us practitioners (e.g., evaluators, civil society and public policy makers) have been in a project kickoff meeting where the hired consultant informs “key stakeholders” of the scheduled logic model activities built upon the funders’ requirements? Is stakeholder engagement merely informing a select group of representatives of a plan that was developed without their input, and at a single meeting? Can it be more than this? Should it be more than this?

How stakeholder engagement is conceptualized affects the spectrum of stakeholder engagement itself. So being clear on the purpose of stakeholder engagement is

1. From our perspective community participation is a form of stakeholder engagement.

2. John Mayne’s definition of beneficiaries (2015); since the term has a negative connotation as being submissive, powerless, etc., in this chapter we use the term stakeholders to also include beneficiaries

helpful to its operationalization. Just like the existence of varied definitions of stakeholder engagement there are also different levels of engagement from tokenism to intentional, planned stakeholder engagement that is empowering to beneficiaries or non-traditional stakeholders. Purpose drives how engagement is operationalized; in Yemen a project developed a stakeholder engagement plan (SEP) setting aside a budget for efforts to facilitate non-traditional stakeholders; for example, vulnerable women and youth to participate in the project (UNICEF *et al.* 2020).

We, like many before us, believe there is a better way. Researchers have demonstrated the importance of quality stakeholder engagement in achieving better outcomes in a variety of fields (Rifkin *et al.*, 2000; Brownlee *et al.*, 2017). Practitioners in these diverse settings (e.g., monitoring and evaluation, domestic program evaluation, health care, business) intuitively understand the value of active participation of end-users as well.

**If end-users or beneficiaries have true buy-in and actively participate in the program, they become empowered change makers; a worthy focus of this book.**

The goal of this chapter is to illustrate practical ways of measuring meaningful stakeholder engagement. By deliberately working through this process, we believe that meaningful stakeholder engagement is both possible and achievable, leading to better outcomes and to empowerment of those stakeholders previously thought of as just beneficiaries.

## Stakeholder engagement leads to outcomes and empowerment

It is somewhat intuitive to understand that better stakeholder engagement leads to better outcomes. As obvious as this statement may be, it is less clear what constitutes “better” stakeholder engagement, especially when the specific context can be so incredibly varied: domestic program evaluation, monitoring and evaluation of international programs, patient research, and business. When people talk about stakeholder engagement they usually mean inclusion of stakeholders other than those who are directly impacted by interventions. Just because programs are human-centered, and have aims to improve beneficiary populations’ social conditions, they do not necessarily translate to mutual respect, learning, and empowerment.

In our professional experiences as evaluators, we have learned that stakeholder engagement, when utilized, is an important process that can lead to both better intervention design, results, and empowerment. That is, among the various

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purposes and uses of stakeholder engagement, the focus of this chapter is the pathway from stakeholder engagement to outcomes to empowerment. The examples we discuss here include contribution analysis; diversity, equity, and inclusion training (DEI; e.g., Zugelder & Champagne, 2018); and systems perspective. As described elsewhere in the literature (e.g., Weiss, 1998), the latter two examples come to us from other disciplines.

## Contribution analysis.

The aim of contribution analysis or contribution mapping (Kok *et al.*, 2016; Mayne, 2017) is to determine how project or research processes unfold and how these program elements (e.g., stakeholders, activities) contribute to program action and outcomes. This is often done after the fact with targeted interviews of funders, those who actively participated in the program implementation, evaluators; and review/analysis of program documentation. The identification of key individuals or situations give rise to understanding what specific individuals or actions lead to greater outcomes. Analyses like this help to connect the dots between what was planned and the actual outcomes. In a study conducted by Kok and others (2016), **key factors that contributed to the use of research were, among other things, stakeholders that initiated and led the projects; that is, involvement of stakeholders in a significant capacity from the start.**

## Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training.

The primary goal of DEI training initiatives is equitable representation at all levels in the workplace along the lines of race/ethnicity, gender, and other characteristics. These efforts are designed to identify and remove barriers to employment opportunities and ensure equal treatment of employees by the organization.

**Stakeholder engagement in this environment means ensuring that employees at all levels of the organization and from any background have a voice in decision making.**

True inclusion means much more than token representation. This training is not a routine activity or tool used by evaluators. In the United States at least, this training is conducted by consultants or trainers in the corporate world.

## Systems perspective.

A systems perspective addresses the concept of stakeholder engagement in at least two ways. First, systems thinking gets us away from a strictly linear process suggested by traditional logic models; namely, where stakeholder engagement is represented as an input that occurs only at the very beginning of the process. This static view is limiting in that most activities are almost never this simple or linear; monitoring and evaluation activities, community interventions, patient-centered research, and product marketing efforts often include iterative and sometimes competing processes (Senge, 2006). In the real world, stakeholder engagement is a multi-dimensional effort occurring throughout the project lifecycle.

**Second, systems thinking intimately involves shared vision and team learning, activities which leverage the insights and capacities of all team members.**

In this view, individuals on the lower hierarchy have an important contribution to the organization as a whole. By engaging their perspectives and abilities, the organization can achieve greater outcomes.

## Meaningful stakeholder engagement can be measured

There is a gulf between academic and practitioner communities in terms of stakeholder engagement interventions. An over-emphasis on internal validity by academics results in a trade-off of reduced utility of the evaluation for the practitioner. This approach, the practitioner perspective, better reflects stakeholders' evaluation views and concerns, makes external validity workable, and becomes therefore a preferable alternative for evaluation of health promotion/social betterment programs. The integrative validity model and the bottom-up approach enable evaluators to meet scientific and practical requirements, facilitate in advancing external validity, and gain a new perspective on methods. The new perspective also furnishes a balanced view of credible evidence, and offers an alternative perspective for funding.

The need for measuring stakeholder engagement has been voiced previously. Ray and Miller (2017), physician researchers at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, recently articulated a framework for planning, evaluating, and reporting stakeholder engagement with the goal of improving both the quality of research outcomes and our understanding of this engagement. That is, both our understanding of the process and the fruits of these projects are improved. This

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approach has been successfully implemented in public health efforts by others (e.g., Archana *et al.*, 2019).

We propose an approach that is neither grass-roots nor top-down. Working from either perspective forces a false dichotomy. It's not either-or, especially if we consider beneficiaries on the same level as other stakeholders. Rather, inclusiveness in this case means also; greater/more meaningful contributions to one or more elements of a program cycle. To this end, we propose measuring stakeholder engagement along two dimensions: principles and phases.

## Deliberate Stakeholder Engagement Principles - One Dimension of Measurement

We will discuss our approach by starting with a set of seven principles governing all components of planning for and operationalizing stakeholder engagement (Schrandt, 2014). Our hope is that funders/donors weave these principles into future Request For Proposals (RFPs) to facilitate deliberate stakeholder engagement and the principles as proxies for Deliberate Stakeholder Engagement (DSE) are monitored and evaluated. That is, this information is assessed for the improvement of processes (evaluation utilization; Weiss, 1967, 1998) or its relative contribution to outcomes (contribution analysis). This dimension of measurement forces an examination of stakeholder engagement quality in each of the four program phases covered in this chapter.

**1. Inclusion/Respect.** In recognition of different roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder, it follows that the respective contributions are appreciated. Inclusiveness of beneficiary stakeholders may represent unique cultural diversity and/or disabilities requiring accommodations for their participation.

**2. Transparency.** Practitioners need to define roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder prior to engagement; their refinement should also be agreed upon as a group. There is an apparent recognition that each provides unique and valuable contributions to planning, implementation, evaluation, and decision-making processes.

**3. Co-learning.** Likewise, practitioners need to develop plans to ensure beneficiary-partners understand the engagement process and that all stakeholders understand and apply engagement principles.

**4. Alignment.** Alignment occurs when the activities or efforts of two or more individuals are complementary and working together harmoniously (Senge, 2006). This “getting on the same page” allows the efforts of individuals to transform into higher order outcomes of the group or team.

**5. Equity.** This principle refers to fairness in treatment or participation. In the context of stakeholder engagement, this means treating all participants as equals even though they may have varying levels of status, resources, or opportunities.

**6. Do no harm.** Similar to DNH principles in the humanitarian field and with the Hippocratic oath in the medical field, this principle is designed to safeguard the beneficiaries, clients, or end-users of a particular intervention.

**7. Deliberative stakeholder engagement as an outcome.** Deliberative stakeholder engagement ideally is not limited to the beginning of a project or program. When included as an outcome, stakeholder engagement is transformed into an interactive process that occurs at multiple timepoints (or continuously) throughout the lifecycle of the project or program. By explicitly defining it as an outcome, activities and their consequential outputs are assessed throughout the project so that improvements can be made in the subsequent iterations, so that the causal influence of degree of engagement on other outcomes can be illuminated, etc.

To better illustrate these principles, the following example considers and incorporates beneficiary inputs into the program design and implementation for a typical Request for Proposal (RFP).

**AN EXAMPLE.** In Phase 1, developing the program design, deliberative stakeholder engagement would include direct dialogue with beneficiaries in identifying priorities/needs and potential solutions. The use of *dialogue* is intentional as it is a two-way, inclusive activity (Senge, 2006) that fulfils principles of *inclusion/respect* and *equity* rather than the usual description of *informing*, or *notifying*; lesser, one-way activities.

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In Phase 2, conceptualizing the Theories of Change and results framework (e.g., using the Monitoring Evaluation Learning Plan Development process), beneficiaries' perceptions of development needs and problems and positive results may or may not be the same as donors. Involving beneficiaries in defining and refining the scope of the project is a practical initial co-creation process whereby subsequent strategies are developed. This is an important step to support building towards shared commitment and thus *alignment* before developing indices and metrics for monitoring and evaluation.

In Phase 3, monitoring the program (i.e., during implementation), stakeholders share progress/inputs/feedback concerning implementation thus far. Deliberative stakeholder engagement during implementation allows for *co-learning*, adaptations to changes in context or other factors, as a function of reality.

In Phase 4, evaluation, deliberative stakeholder engagement could be achieved through dialogue with all stakeholders, to include beneficiaries with the goal of understanding perceived benefits (which ones, and to what degree) of program outcomes were to various stakeholder groups, lessons learned, and suggestions for improvements in the next iteration.

## Deliberate Stakeholder Engagement (DSE) Indices/Examples

We recognize that deliberate stakeholder engagement implementation may not be possible equally for all programs/projects. However, we also know that it is easier to not change the ways things are done, in other words, do what we always do because program evaluations almost always tell us that there are positive results. Many of us also know that more can be accomplished with deliberate stakeholder engagement in some form or shape. One example of what deliberate stakeholder engagement may look like has already been given above. We propose the following as additional indices of measurements for DSE.

PHASE 1



Principle 1 : inclusion and respect

PHASE 2



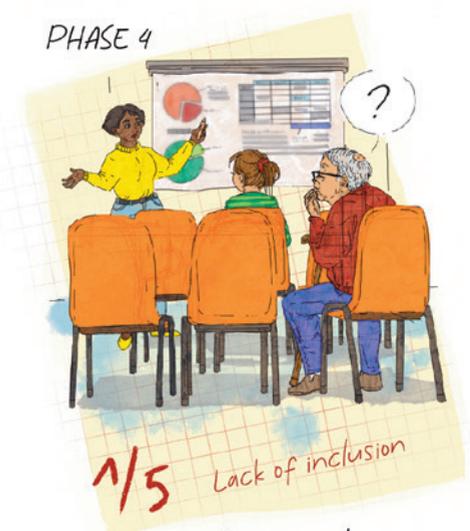
Principle 3 : co-learning

PHASE 3



Principle 4 : alignment

PHASE 4



Principle 5 : equity

Inclusion of stakeholders : 7 principles to evaluate at each phase of the project

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## Equity in representation of beneficiary groups

**Rationale.** The purpose here is intentional, deliberate, and *transparent* engagement regarding processes.

**EXAMPLE 2.** As part of developing program design (Phase 1), descriptions (criteria of selection) of desired beneficiary group representatives prior to inviting them for deliberate stakeholder engagement; also include how they were “selected” and who actually showed up. Attention to how beneficiary representatives are selected and who ultimately gets to participate in deliberate stakeholder engagement is obviously important. Often youth, women, girls, especially those in the most inaccessible places are left out. In the evaluation process (Phase 4), the degree to which beneficiary groups are included in earlier phases can be evaluated as an outcome. That is, did these groups have decision making power similar to funders or evaluators? Did they experience *co-learning* throughout the project lifecycle?

## Accommodation of different capacities and disabilities in deliberate stakeholder engagement

**Rationale.** Consideration of approaches necessary to accommodate unique capacities and disabilities of individuals/groups in deliberate stakeholder engagement activities. The purpose is deliberate *inclusion/respect* and *equity*.

**EXAMPLE 3.** With regard to **conceptualizing the Theories Of Change and the Results Framework** (Phase 2), intentional inclusion of representatives from underserved groups for the conceptualization is a rare event. Although this inclusion of more individuals is expected to slow down the process, doing so has long been regarded as perhaps resulting in more relevant and better outcomes (Weiss, 1995).

## Do No Harm is operationalized throughout the program/project cycle

**Rationale.** The purpose is to avoid unintentionally further perpetuating discriminatory and stigmatizing practices that marginalize any groups or population based on gender, disability, race, or other characteristics.

**EXAMPLE 4.** Engagement with non-traditional stakeholders like urban at-risk youths or indigenous women at intervals such as design (Phase 2), implementation/monitoring (Phase 3), and evaluation (Phase 4) can only support principles of do no harm since their unique perspectives are represented and shared with program stakeholders. Their continued involvement ensures that this principle of *do no harm* is active, collaborative, and ultimately transformational.

These are but four brief examples of how Deliberative Stakeholder Engagement can be identified and measured. The proposed matrix, as a planning tool, can help the practitioner identify where Deliberative Stakeholder Engagement has been enacted but, more importantly, where Deliberative Stakeholder Engagement has yet to be articulated. Completely filling the matrix may not be possible or even desirable for any one specific project or implemented program. However, this basic system of measurement does give clarity on how well we may have done at the conclusion of a project. Used in earlier stages, even greater levels of engagement are possible.

## Levels of Engagement within a Program Cycle - Another Dimension of Measurement

There are many ways to measure stakeholder engagement. We propose a basic method that is useful to practitioners. This is not an attempt to develop a lab-tested instrument with a scientifically acceptable reliability index. Rather, this chapter is meant to be a starting point in considering the various and wide-ranging dimensions of stakeholder engagement that are possible so that the practitioner can consider their application to the project at hand. Ideally, these considerations are made well before the initiation of the project or program. But, experienced practitioners recognize this is not the usual case. Even if the project is well underway and many options are beyond change, there is still hope for strategically targeted adjustments.

At each phase of the program cycle are occasions where stakeholder engagements can occur. And at each phase, the seven principles of *Inclusion/Respect, Transparency, Co-learning, Alignment, Equity, Do no harm*, and DSE as an outcome can be assessed to gauge deliberate engagement. The following are a few key questions to ask ourselves through the program cycle. They are neither complete, nor exhaustive; rather, they are designed to get us thinking about how the principles may be applied.

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Beyond inclusion and representation, how were members of beneficiary populations selected in the activity?

What were the efforts to facilitate the inclusion of the most marginalized/underrepresented stakeholders in the engagement activities?

Are engagement approaches to obtain inputs and discuss priorities, solutions etc.. accommodating to different communication styles and capacities?

Are program components an integration of all stakeholder priorities and needs and aligned with those who are most affected by the program?

**Phase 1: Developing Program Design.** If beneficiaries are not consulted during the conceptual stage of the program, then already the key design elements, and assumptions may be misguided. Thus, donors and others interested in doing “good” need to understand the priorities in the communities and common interests and goals to address (some of) the issues. Without direct dialogues/consultations, funders and other stakeholders miss opportunities to listen first before taking action (develop the requests for proposals).

**Phase 2: Conceptualizing the Theories of change and the Results Framework.** In developing a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (MELP), inclusion of beneficiaries inputs in development of metrics and indicators is foundational to measuring what matters and may contribute to program sustainability. How different stakeholders view the problem and how it can be resolved may be different from the perspectives of other stakeholders, including funders. It is obvious that getting beneficiaries’ inputs in intervention design can make program activities more appropriate and perhaps more effective in the long term, or even sustainable. Defining the problem, anticipated changes, and metrics of progress/success can be tasks where beneficiaries can add depth and unanticipated dimensions to such measurements.

**Phase 3: Monitoring Program.** It makes sense to include representatives of target communities in tracking implementation as they live in the locality of the program. They play invaluable roles in interpreting outcomes **embedded in the socio-cultural milieu**; so, for both performance and context monitoring. Dialogue with all stakeholders including beneficiaries makes sense in that it provides on-going opportunities to exchange implementation results, challenges, and make necessary changes along the way. This is practical; to adapt to anticipated and unanticipated complexities in the context.

**Phase 4: Evaluation.** Undertaking any kind of evaluation is an investment regardless of resources spent on the activity. Evaluation utilization is no longer a novelty. That is, with ever increasing competition for limited resources available for programs, evaluation utilization is rapidly becoming necessary. However, we argue that there is still more investment in getting the “numbers” or quantification of problems for legitimacy; we mentioned previously the preoccupation with external validity in evaluation compared to internal validity.

We strongly suggest stakeholder engagement processes throughout the program cycle as opportunities to document and strengthen internal validity as well as make evaluation results more usable. We caution in considering evaluation *utilization* as program *replicability*; that is taking the program out of its context and expanding to other contexts.

## *Bringing Principles and Phases Together*

The table below brings our two dimensions of measurement together to create a matrix. This gives us a mechanism by which a practitioner can walk through the design/logic of their program/project for indicators of meaningful stakeholder engagement. Each cell in the table represents an opportunity for deliberative stakeholder engagement. However, not every combination of principles and phases will work for every program/project. Further, additional or different principles or even project phases may be necessary to customize this approach for the program/project at hand. It is up to the individual practitioner to use their best judgement in the application of this approach for their particular situation.

The table can be used in a number of ways. It may be sufficient to use the intersection of principles and phases to qualitatively identify opportunities for deliberative stakeholder engagement. That is, if the principle of equity in representation of beneficiary groups is an important goal for your project, the table can be used to help identify for which of the four phases this principle is addressed. In our Example 2, this principle is described for Phases 1 and 4. It may be worthwhile during the design phase of the project to identify opportunities for this principle in Phases 2 and 3.

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Another way to use the table goes a little further. Rather than qualitatively identifying which intersections of principles and phases exist for the project at hand, one might insert a rating of some kind (e.g., on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being highest) for how well that particular intersection of principle and phase is addressed. For Example 3, we described the intentional inclusion of representatives from underserved groups in the conceptualization of Theories of Change and the Results Framework. If this inclusion is nominal and these representatives have little say in the design, then we might give a rating of “1” for the intersection of *inclusion* (principle) and Phase 2. However, if these representatives fully participate in the design of the project and are treated as equals on input, then we might give a rating of “5” for both principles of *inclusion* and *equity* under Phase 2. In this way, we capture a quantitative measure of deliberative stakeholder engagement that can be used as a benchmark for subsequent iterations of the project or for future projects down the road. In this sense, the rating is akin to a measure of implementation fidelity.

PRINCIPLES	PROJECT PHASE			
	1	2	3	4
INCLUSION/RESPECT				
TRANSPARENCY				
CO-LEARNING				
ALIGNMENT				
EQUITY				
DO NO HARM				
DSE AS AN OUTCOME				

## The pursuit of meaningful stakeholder engagement is possible

Numerous examples exist in both the academic and grey literature of meaningful stakeholder engagement.

**Rather than bemoaning the impossibility of achieving perfect implementation as justification for the mundane, we urge practitioners everywhere to consider the many opportunities for true impact (both in terms of outcomes and empowerment) that result from stakeholder engagement not only throughout the lifecycle of a single project, but also over the course of many projects in a given context (Greenhalgh & Fahy, 2015).**

Further, funders and donors in particular should put in the Requests for Proposal stakeholder engagement as a necessary pillar of program design and organizations can plan for its inclusion at multiple points throughout a project lifecycle by developing a Stakeholder Engagement plan. The incorporation of stakeholder engagement is not only a useful activity but yields positive outcomes and can address social inequities.

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HANDI'CAPABLE: "CROSSED VIEWS"

# TO DEVELOP THE EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

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The inclusion of persons living with disabilities is an issue which is common to all societies. In order to address this question in depth, the Departments of Savoie and Bignona, since 2015, have developed an intercultural exchange scheme between France and Senegal, which encourages the adoption of a fresh perspective on everyday practices. A methodology of *crossed views* provides the opportunity to escape from social enclaves and address sensitive issues, in order to co-construct shared responses which are appropriate to the context of each individual. The result is an international combination of visions, which can be processed equally well on the scale of individuals, professionals and institutions. The objective is the delivery of an overall change to social policies, which be translated immediately into practical embodiments in both territories. This article includes a sharing of experience which is rich in instruction, in the interests of developing increasingly inclusive processes.

15th July 2018. France are world football champions for the second time in their history. This is a time of celebration for the residents of the Maurienne ESAT1 who, on that day, have organized an African fashion parade and a Senegalese banquet. The Senegalese flag flies amidst its tricolour counterparts, certainly in celebration of a sporting victory, but also to mark the end of the one-month stay of Agnès and Mariama, two Senegalese workshop leaders, who have come to share their experience in needlepoint and cooking with seventy-four workers living with disabilities. Two years later, in Bignona, the atmosphere is equally joyful in the Tobor psychiatric reception centre, on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. For the first time, this previously unsung centre was hosting this Departmental event, further to an immersive visit by two professionals from Savoie, which highlighted the activities of this unique facility.

1. "Etablissement et Service d'Aide par le Travail", an agency for the provision of work-based aid, specializing in the support of disabled persons.

From Casamance :  
questioning the place and  
social value of people with  
disabilities in Savoy



From Savoy : interrogate caring  
of mental disabilities  
in Casamance

Intersecting views to develop  
new ways of  
thinking and doing

# TO DEVELOP THE EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

## Crossed views of disability

These occasions form an integral element of a methodology of *crossed views*, developed over a period of some years under the Savoie-Bignona cooperative scheme. What is this all about? Taking, as a starting point, an issue which is common to both partner territories, such as the inclusion of persons living with disabilities, for example, international partners agree to compare their experiences and their cultural approaches, with a focus on the context and the actual conditions experienced in the other territory. *"In many cases, we need to start by reassigning the meaning of words. Why does the term "disabled" assume such importance in France? What do the Senegalese understand by the term "differently-abled persons"?"*<sup>2</sup> observes Malaïny Sonko, one of the key facilitators of these exchanges. *"This obliges us to shift our focus, and to get back to the core meaning of "hand-in-cap"."*<sup>3</sup>

Once interest is raised and curiosity stimulated, it is then necessary to go much further, and to consider the culture of the other party in depth by conducting an analysis of their territorial context, highlighting difficulties and successes and casting a fresh perspective on obstacles in place which prevent change. *"Given the difference in viewpoint, which originates from third parties who have no direct involvement in the existing system, any comments are generally better accepted, and opinions are more relevant. Querying then becomes possible"*, according to Anne Troadec, Director of the Social Hub of the Department of Savoie.

2. An expression employed in Senegal, but also in Italy and Quebec.

3. The term "handicap" (used as an equivalent for "disability") is derived from the expression "hand-in-cap". This term originates from a trading game which was played in Great Britain in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. "Handicap" was used to describe the negative and unfavourable position of a person who had fared badly in the drawing of lots. Nowadays, the term "disability" is used to describe the interaction between the social environment of a person and their physical or mental integrity.

**The viewpoint of another party reveals who we are, and thus restores agency. This otherness confronts us with unprecedented points of view, which encourage us to review our own certainties.**

Cultural difference thus becomes a means of refocusing and envisaging new solutions, whether for ourselves or for our territory. By allowing ourselves to move outside our customary cultural framework, and assigning direct responsibility to stakeholders for the identification of alternatives, it becomes possible to undertake the collective construction of responses which are appropriate to the particular context of each individual.

In the field of disability, residents of Bignona have thus been able to question residents of Savoie on the position and the social utility of persons living with disabilities within social structures. Social utility is not to be understood here as the concept of performance, the provision of a service to other parties or to society, or a duty owed in return for aid received, as we might envisage in France. For social stakeholders in Senegal, this concept simply signifies that the personal resources of each individual should be properly employed, that no persons should be left on the margins of society, that mutual assistance networks between vulnerable persons should be preferred, and that the relationship between the aid-giver and the dependent person implies genuine reciprocity. This approach is summarized by Boubou Gueye, manager of social projects in the Department of Bignona, in the proverb: *"We always need someone smaller than ourselves."* According to Daniel Chourlin, Director of a social establishment in Savoie: *"This touches the very foundations of the social approach adopted in France, and represents a departure from issues of "disability compensation". The individual resumes their place at the heart of the support process, with a focus of concern, above and beyond their rights, on their social role and the manner in which they can be fully included in society. This is what social professionals in France now describe as a supportive response for all."* This comparative analysis has thus given rise to a one-year practical trial in Savoie, involving fifty volunteers who have worked with their social support workers on a "life plan and social utility project". Partners from Senegal have proposed a series of further inquiries. In addition to the evaluation of rights undertaken by the Departmental Centre for Disabled Persons ("Maison Départementale des Personnes Handicapées" or "MDPH"), concepts of quality of life, civic involvement and participation in mutual assistance groups have been addressed. As Nicolas Soubin, social assistant at the MDPH of Savoie, observes: *"This dynamic has been conducive to a change in the professional stance of the worker, thereby transforming relations with supported persons and providing new margins for manoeuvre, for the identification of more appropriate solutions"*. Thereafter, this trial contributed substantially to the drafting of a Departmental policy for social initiatives in Savoie, which classifies the everyday experience of supported persons as a source of expertise which entirely complements the professional knowledge of local authority employees.

# TO DEVELOP THE EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

In Senegal, the community-based social approach is intended to ensure the inclusion of all parties. *"In Bignona, workers with a physical disability are actively involved in the life of society. They are present in businesses, and generally receive a considerate welcome in both schools and families"*, according to Christine Durieux, Director of the Maurienne ESAT, who has visited Casamance on three occasions. However, when residents of Savoie cast an eye over this African social context, they had occasion to query the treatment of mental disability, which is unfortunately neglected. Awareness of mental illness and mental impairment is still insufficient, and is the source of severe social stigma. A more detailed territorial analysis permitted the identification of a psychiatric reception centre which serves over sixty persons with a mental disability. This individual initiative of one Mouride marabout<sup>4</sup>, ignored by the local authorities and treated negatively by local medical circles, has proved to be *"a high-quality living space for the relief of the mental suffering and distress of persons who have been rejected by their families and those around them"*, according to Marie-Laure Chantalou, coordinating practitioner at a medico-social psychiatric establishment, who undertook an immersive visit to this centre over a number of days, in the interests of completing a detailed diagnostic analysis. By means of this comparative analysis undertaken with professionals from Savoie, Senegalese partners changed their own perception of the support provided by the marabout and their three specialized educators. Training in mental disability has been organized, followed by a programme for raising awareness, which was intended to deconstruct certain local beliefs concerning dementia (in the medical sense of the term) or psychiatric disturbances. Specifically, as Mapathé Samb, Departmental Director of social initiatives in Bignona celebrates: *"these Franco-Senegalese exchanges have allowed us to eliminate the perception of disability exclusively as an incapacity, or the consideration of mental deficiency as something uncontrollable. Ultimately, disability simply needs to be perceived in terms of the*

4. In Africa, a marabout is a Muslim sage, reputed for their healing powers. The Mourides are one of the religious brotherhoods established in Senegal, whose key principles are charity and labour. Notwithstanding a minority following within the country, Mouridism was popularized by former President of the Republic Abdoulaye Wade, who made extensive use of the services of marabouts in the holy city of Touba, as a means of promoting social peace throughout the country.

*acceptance of widely differing capacities. Hence the term "handi-capable", which now punctuates our exchange of experiences"*.

Funding has recently been secured to support improved care for mental disability in Bignona. As Mamina Kamara, Departmental President of Bignona emphasizes: *"It is important that exchanges of experience should subsequently be embodied in initiatives which will genuinely transform the lives of the most under privileged persons"*. Within the next three years, a territorial social hub will be constructed in Bignona, comprised of an inclusion centre, a drop-in centre for the protection of abused women and children, a psychiatric reception centre, an orthopaedic workshop and a social re-inclusion centre.

## A methodology based upon interculturalism

If this intercultural approach to *crossed views* is to function correctly, it is important that it should be based upon strong methodological principles (c.f. *text box 1 on the methodology of crossed views*), with the provision of consistent support in the process for the cross-referencing of knowledge<sup>5</sup>. Firstly, it is necessary to accept a change in conventional approaches to cooperation. According to Mireille Montagne, Chair of the "Pays de Savoie Solidaires", a solidarity association in the Department of Savoie: *"Not only is it necessary for the French partner to refrain from adopting the stance of "savant", in favour of a receptiveness to external viewpoints and criticism, but the overseas partner must no longer position themselves exclusively as a recipient of aid, in favour of an integrated policy for reciprocal input"*. Sometimes it is necessary to start with simple *crossed views* of issues which may appear obvious, such as the position of young people in society, relations with culture or with the environment. The intention is to encourage all parties to progress towards changes which involve an increasingly high degree of commitment. *"When a delegation is being put together, we are looking for persons with a particular profile. Life skills are of equal importance to the technical skills which it is intended to share. Certain persons are spontaneously attracted by this type of project - others not at all. Time may be required, if they are to be convinced to get on board. Preparation for intercultural encounters is therefore essential, and will differ from one person to the next. This process involves working on prejudices and conventional mental representations, as a means of drawing each individual out of their comfort zone"*, explains Magali Agosti, Director of the association.

5. The methodology of *crossed views* is strongly inspired by the scheme for the Merging of Knowledge and Practices© developed by the ATD Fourth World movement, in order to permit knowledge derived from the life experience of persons who are familiar with poverty to interact with scientific and professional knowledge.

# TO DEVELOP THE EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

Good organization of an exchange visit is another key to success, which is critical to this process. Appropriation of cultural context needs to proceed in as progressive a manner as possible, through an experience which is preferably based upon strong human contact. For example, no-one will visit a psychiatric centre straight after getting off the plane. However, there is no reason why an immersive visit of several days' duration should not be planned, provided that social stakeholders, on either side, are well prepared. For a first international experience, it is generally preferable that the delegation should be accompanied throughout by a facilitator who is capable of assuming the role of "intercultural translator", in order to prevent any misinterpretations or misrepresentations. Likewise, a daily process for the compounding of findings and instruction is essential to the achievement of a genuine perspective. The "Pays de Savoie Solidaires" association also organizes a review session for the experience, after each international visit. This provides the opportunity to interpret emotions felt (joy, sadness, surprise), to analyze both professional and personal impacts, and to consider the manner in which empowerment can be enhanced in the wake of this new experience.

The analytical process invariably commences from observations made, the perception of which is affected by cultural differences.

**The identification of these intercultural dissonances thus causes issues to be perceived from a fresh perspective, permitting innovative solutions to be envisaged which are far removed from a simple "copy and paste" option.**

The necessary daring is then required for the formal definition of these solutions in the form of proposals for improvement, either for ourselves or for the attention of others, ensuring that their formulation is comprehensible to the greatest possible number of persons. This delicate exercise has caused Seynabou Tamba, Vice-chairman of the Departmental Council of Bignona responsible for social issues, to declare that: "*we act better in sympathy than in empathy*" in the sense that putting yourself in another's place as a means of understanding them is not enough – it is necessary to travel together if quality of life is to be improved (c.f. text box 2 for further details).

## A procedure based upon change-oriented approaches

If the empowerment of persons living with disabilities is to progress, changes proposed upon the conclusion of each exchange of experiences must be fully incorporated into public policies which are delivered by each of the institutions concerned. In other words, intercultural experiences provided by the Bignona-Savoie cooperative scheme are not required to serve the interests of those who have experienced them, but to form part of a more general change on the scale of both territories. To this end the "Pays de Savoie Solidaires" employs a methodology of change-oriented approaches (COA)<sup>6</sup>. This methodology is intended to involve all territorial stakeholders in a shared vision which is progressively achieved through the implementation of various pathways for change. In the context of the Bignona-Savoie cooperative scheme, the intention is to encourage social stakeholders, professionals and local elected representatives to work together on the development of social policies which are more participative, more inclusive and more territorially focused. The COA methodology provides the advantage of a long-term perspective, unshackled, to some extent, from the rigid framework of targets for the achievement of immediate results, and encouraging all territorial stakeholders to grasp the complexity of a situation. As explained above, we conduct a systemic analysis of the territorial context of the cooperative partner concerned. With a focus on cultural difference, our point of departure tends to be positive aspects rather than problems, thus encouraging each party to envisage innovative solutions.

The organization of a comparative analysis may raise uncomfortable issues, which query the institution concerned and which may place elected representatives in a difficult position. In order to prevent any awkwardness, and to create a sense of legitimacy for the delivery of change, it is therefore necessary to act collectively. A participative process, directed by a multi-party committee, is essential to success. "*These methods may appear somewhat at odds with our current age, as they require time and facilitation, and involve taking a gamble on collective intelligence. A strong element of teaching is required, if we are to carry elected representatives and financial backers along with us*", according to Christiane Brunet, Vice-president of the Department of Savoie responsible for social initiatives and international cooperation. "*Through the progressive demonstration of the benefits of this method, and a primary focus on the issue of purpose, the involvement*

6. **Change-oriented approaches** are a series of tools and methods developed by F3E for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives, the object of which is the support of processes for change. Above and beyond the methodology employed, COAs invite the stakeholders involved to query their vision of a shared future, and their respective positions.

## METHODOLOGY OF CROSSED VIEWS

### BEFOREHAND:

- Sustained cooperation between territories
- Participative development process
- Strong commitment to reciprocal action
- Good knowledge of intercultural issues

### IN ADVANCE OF EXCHANGES:

- Selection of persons involved
- Preparation for intercultural meeting
- Adaptation of issues to the experience of participants

### FOR THE SUCCESSFUL CONDUCT OF EXCHANGE EXPERIENCES:

- A visiting schedule which incorporates progressive cultural appropriation
- Intercultural immersion on an intense human scale
- Constant facilitation of intercultural exchanges
- Compounding of daily experience

### PROCESS FOR THE COMPARISON OF KNOWLEDGE:

- Observation of cultural gaps
- Identification of intercultural clashes
- Provision of a fresh viewpoint on issues
- Identification of innovative solutions
- Formulation of proposed improvements
- Feedback of learning experiences in both territories

### AFTER EXCHANGES:

- Collective appropriation of learning experiences in each territory
- Adoption of the most relevant proposals in the form of action plans
- Collective delivery of action plans within each territory

*of all stakeholders has been achieved. A connection has been made with their deepest convictions – this is what speaks to them.”*

**Year on year, this system of crossed views between Savoie and Bignona is changing social policies in these two Departments, providing social stakeholders with direct scope for the reappropriation of their own capacities for the initiation of change.**

In Bignona, a Departmental Committee for Social Initiatives (“Comité Départemental d’Action Sociale” or “CDAS”) now provides a framework for the consultation and coordination of all operators in the social sector. This body is structured in the form of Local Social Initiative Committees (“Comités Locaux d’Action Sociale” or “CLAS”), established in six population centres. Six persons appointed as social liaison officers provide the link between their own locality and central social services in the interests of the consideration of local issues, taking account of the culture, resources and everyday realities of each location. In Savoie, this exchange of experience with Senegal is now included in the preamble to the Departmental policy for solidarity initiatives as *“a source of innovation and dynamism, which is conducive to the consideration of the of opinion of users in the development of social schemes”*. This is embodied by the establishment of focus groups throughout the Departmental territory and the organization of a “social university”, which is responsible for the referral of proposals for the improvement of social schemes which are formulated directly by citizens. The process for the reciprocal enhancement of our social policies will continue over the years ahead, with the challenge of including an increasing number of persons in these participative initiatives.

## BEYOND INCLUSION

### AN APPROACH BASED UPON QUALITY OF LIFE

In the context of our Franco-Senegalese exchanges of experience, social professionals in Bignona and Savoie have had occasion to question what constitutes the essence of disability itself. Why are certain people, who are well-integrated and strongly supported, ill at ease with their disability, whereas others, who are far more disadvantaged, succeed in viewing their situation with a positive slant?

In order to resolve this issue, we have addressed the “five drivers of poverty” (drawn from the Strategy Document for the Reduction of Poverty in Senegal - Phase 2), which permit the identification of the difficulties of a person in their totality.

In France, social schemes for the care of disability are primarily focused on the first three of these drivers:

- 1- the monetarist approach, which defines a minimum income threshold;
- 2- the nutritional approach, which sets a target for the daily intake of kilocalories;
- 3- the infrastructural approach, which involves a count of all the basic social services which are available to the person concerned.

These three basic drivers constitute an essential foundation for the dignity of persons, but do not address the issue of personal fulfilment, hence the importance of the consideration of two further complementary approaches:

- 4- the social approach, which addresses the relational network of the person concerned;
- 5- the environmentalist approach, which observes the number of daily difficulties encountered by a person.

According to these last two approaches, a disabled person may experience a wide variety of living conditions. They may find themselves in a situation described as “segregationist”, in which their value, their skills or even their existence are ignored by the remainder of society, on the grounds of their disability. This may apply, for example, to numerous mental conditions in Senegal. A disabled person may find themselves in a “discriminatory” situation, i.e. their disability is acknowledged, but they find themselves inexorably plunged into a life which is separated from the remainder of society, as is frequently the case, for example, where the services of specialized care establishments are employed. An “integrationist”

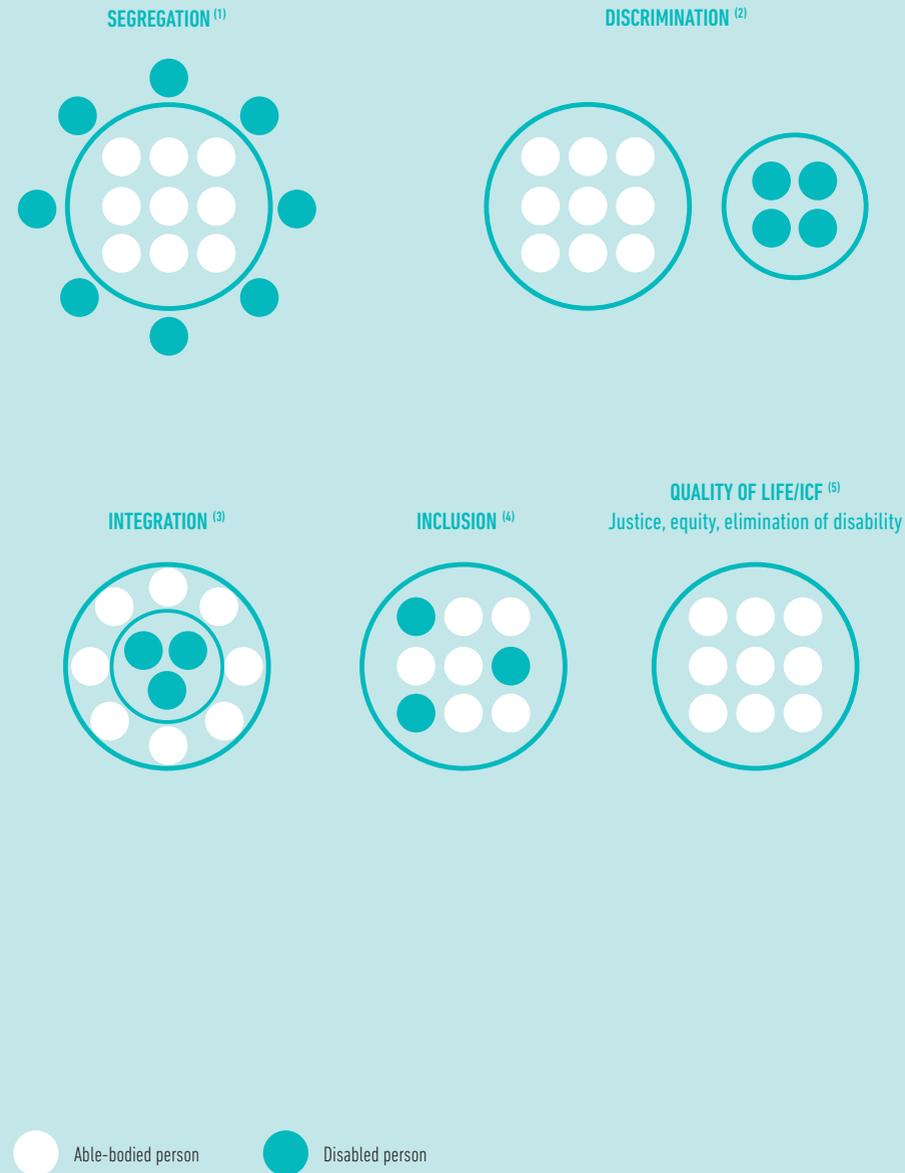
situation, in which the disabled person is integrated, but not assisted, does not result in the full expression of their personal potential. Finally, there are “inclusive situations”, in which all parties are involved, but in which the “disabled” tag continues to encumber persons with a disability. Depending upon the more or less inclusive social living conditions experienced by a disabled person, it will easily be understood that their perception of their role and their social utility will be affected – this will impact substantially upon their opinion of their personal capacities.

Consequently, there is an objective dimension and a subjective dimension to disability – this is fully acknowledged by the WHO in the context of the International Classification of Functioning (ICF). The ICF does not classify individuals, but the functioning of individuals – this permits the more accurate description of deficiencies, restrictions on activity, limitations to participation, obstacles or facilitating environmental factors observed for each individual. This system has the merit of being more universal and all-encompassing, as the ICF defines disability as the product of interactions between environmental factors and the integrity of the individual – accordingly, anyone can find themselves in a situation of disability. This is longer a matter of classifying disability in terms of incapacity, but of accepting people as differently-abled, as persons who aspire, in the same way as anyone else, to the achievement of a certain quality of life. Social support is thus no longer concerned exclusively with living conditions and any resulting social inclusion, but also with the overall quality of life of individuals, which is defined as “the perception by an individual of their place in life, within a system of values associated with the cultural context in which they live, in relation to their objectives, their expectations, their values and their concerns. Quality of life includes the physical health of the individual, their psychological state, their level of independence, their social relations, their personal beliefs and their relations with events and their environment” Quality of Life Assessment. The WHOQOL Group, 1994, What Quality of Life? The WHOQOL Group. In: World Health Forum. WHO, Geneva).

Over and above inclusion, an approach based upon quality of life incorporates concepts of justice, equity and social well-being, potentially resulting in the elimination of the term “disabled” altogether, in favour of “differently-abled”.

**Sérigne Mapathé Samb**

Illustration of the different drivers involved  
(SAMB, PhD student at the International University of Mexico)



CHANGE-ORIENTED APPROACHES

# FROM THE INCLUSION OF SUPPORTED ACTORS TO THE INCLUSION OF SUPPORT STAFF

CHARLEMAGNE BIO, AIDE ET ACTION

## Understanding the stance of the support staff in projects

A support staff of processes for the deployment of change-oriented approaches - COAs - (*c.f. glossary*) will frequently be surprised when they find themselves obliged to review their tools and procedures in response to the unforeseeable nature of the inclinations, background and aspirations of reinforced stakeholders. Thus, in practice, any scheme for the inclusion of stakeholders (incorporated in COAs) in processes which concern them will invariably involve a change for the support staff too. This change is rarely subject to monitoring by means of markers or indicators of change of the type applied to persons strengthened, even though, in practice, all parties are engaged in the same process. In other words, in most cases, the monitoring of changes is focused upon strengthened stakeholders, with no realization that the support staffs themselves also undergo changes, and should be considered and included in the type classification of stakeholders affected by projects. The scope of inclusion might thus be extended, from unilateral inclusion (i.e. the inclusion of local stakeholders, residents, etc.) to a form of inclusion from which no stakeholders are excluded (including, more particularly, persons working in NGOs) in the planning and monitoring of changes.

In our view, it is relevant to query and highlight the impacts of COAs upon NGOs, in the light of their status as support staffs, and to envisage a shift towards a situation in which they are also placed in the position of observed parties, and are thus subject to the monitoring of changes at their level: changes in relations with reinforced stakeholders, changes in their position, changes in the competencies deployed in initiatives, etc.. The empowerment of reinforced stakeholders, as a purpose of COAs, might thus apply to all stakeholders, and particularly to support staffs.



*The pedagogy of reciprocity :  
when the accompanying person also changes*

The following three premises may be considered as a starting point – these underpin the necessity for the extension of the scope of inclusion in pursuit of a change in the position of the support staff in the deployment of projects, by resolving the *supported person/support staff* dichotomy:

The process for the delivery of support through projects involves two key categories of stakeholders: supported persons at whom, by definition, initiatives are directed, and support staffs, who are presumed to influence the latter in the expectation of inducing changes at their level.

Inclusion, as a strategy for the empowerment of supported persons, also contributes to the empowerment of the support staff (with respect to methods, tools, processes, content, etc.). A support staff, insofar as they adapt their tools and processes according to the situation and background of the supported person, is enriched by these new experiences. Above and beyond this adaptation of their tools and processes, the support staff is also enriched by new knowledge, from which they generally profit in the interests of their own development. Moreover, it is no longer rare to describe, for example, “Aide et Action” as a learning association.

**The stance of a support staff is perceived as that of an external expert vis-à-vis the strengthened person: this perception will need to be deconstructed if a successful inclusion policy is to be ensured.**

In the first instance, this article is intended to appraise, by reference to the SOLIDE project (a French acronym representing “**Local and International Solidarity for Development through Education**”) conducted by the aid agency “Aide et Action”, how COAs have simultaneously encouraged the inclusion of reinforced stakeholders and, in a manner which, by definition, is imperceptible, that of support staff stakeholders in processes of change. Thereafter, consideration is given to a change in the position of support staff stakeholders, and in their support tools and processes.

At this point, we should clarify the meaning assigned to a number of the terms employed in this article. These terms are “inclusion”, “support staff” and “reinforced or supported person”.

**Inclusion**

Any process by means of which all stakeholders, in an unconstrained and conscious manner, and without discrimination, become engaged and involved as sponsors of a project, from its conception through to its deployment, and after its completion. This term differs from the association of a stakeholder with a process, which generally occurs on a one-off and non-sustainable basis. In this case, a

# FROM THE INCLUSION OF SUPPORTED ACTORS TO THE INCLUSION OF SUPPORT STAFF

stakeholder involved in inclusion is the co-creator, together with other parties, of the achievements and failures of a project, for which they assume full responsibility. This inclusion is frequently dependent upon the structure of a project, but also upon the tools and policies deployed by a support staff.

## Support staff:

A **stakeholder** in the project process, who is required to assist other stakeholders, both in the conduct of project activities and in the generation and dissemination of knowledge resulting from the operation. The support staff is frequently perceived, in their expert capacity, as a purveyor of technical and/or financial resources delivered in favour of the supported person. The support staff is also the creator of spaces for collective reflection, associated with a change of stance.

## Supported person:

A **stakeholder** in the project process, for the benefit of whom, by definition, all activities are conducted and towards whom changes are directed, with respect to knowledge, attitudes and practices. The strengthened person is sometimes inexpertly described as a “beneficiary”, in a position to receive a *handout*, a term which is happily in decline in the vocabulary of stakeholders in international solidarity.

## Inclusion of stakeholders as a common thread in the intervention of “Aide et Action”

The intervention strategy of “Aide et Action” is essentially based upon a policy for the support of stakeholders, with a view to involving them in the heart of projects, as sponsors for educational issues in their various contexts. In Africa, since 2016,

COAs have been trialed and deployed in the majority of projects which assume an inclusive intent, and through which reinforced stakeholders engage in collective reflection for the achievement of solutions to problems which they have identified together. They then deploy an arrangement for the monitoring and evaluation of projected changes over a given time scale. “Aide et Action” support this process in the capacity of coaches, who encourage and observe these projected changes in the stakeholders concerned. This corresponds to the fourth principle of the “Aide et Action” intervention policy, as set out in their strategic plan for 2020-2024: *“A participatory and community-based approach, which transforms those who are the primary target of projects into stakeholders in their own development. Development projects can only be relevant and sustainable if they involve the former parties concerned, together with all stakeholders, in the various stages of the project cycle. “Aide et Action” develops its projects according to a community-based approach, which both considers and is based upon the world view, values, ideals, organization, mutual interests, desires, strategies and resources of communities.”* Accordingly, the self-appointed challenge of “Aide et Action”, in its strategic policies, is the adoption of a key focus, in its interventions, upon the concerns of the stakeholders for whom they intend to contribute to an improvement in access to high-quality education. In this process, its key targets are underprivileged and marginalized groups. This targeting of socially underprivileged and culturally marginalized groups is a key policy of “Aide et Action” in the deployment of its projects, and COAs have been one of the tools employed for this purpose.

## COAs as a vehicle for the inclusion of stakeholders through the SOLIDE project

The analyses presented here are derived from experience in the participation and conduct of training workshops and monitoring workshops for “Aide et Action” projects which have incorporated COAs as a tool for planning, monitoring and evaluation in Africa. More specifically, we have drawn inspiration from the SOLIDE project, which was deployed in Benin, Togo and Senegal from 2016 to 2019. The central focus of the SOLIDE project was citizenship and solidarity pursued in the interests of communal living. Our intention here is to report our appraisal of the manner in which COAs have been conducive to the inclusion of marginalized groups in the deployment of the SOLIDE project.

1. AEA, Orientations stratégiques 2030

# FROM THE INCLUSION OF SUPPORTED ACTORS TO THE INCLUSION OF SUPPORT STAFF

## SOLIDE in brief

In this article, SOLIDE is considered as an illustrative example of how, from the policy outline of a project through to its deployment, monitoring and evaluation, no measurable target for changes affecting support staffs has been formulated.

The purpose of the SOLIDE project is to support educational stakeholders from various fields of intervention in the development of new approaches to education, citizenship and international solidarity (ECIS), based upon cooperation and the constitution of collective knowledge. A number of schemes have been set up in order to facilitate exchanges between groups of children and young people from locations in France, Benin, Senegal and Togo. These schemes have permitted a cross-referencing of factors which are specific to each territory (sustainable development, intercultural issues, citizenship and solidarity) with issues encountered in other contexts but which, in many cases, involve similar preoccupations.

The project is thus intended to create cooperative forums, described as “learning communities”, for the joint consideration of the origins of problems, arrival at an understanding of the relevant issues, and the conception of avenues for involvement which will be vectors for change, both locally and on a more global scale. By the deployment of a specific monitoring and evaluation scheme, it is also intended to gauge the contribution of these cooperative ECIS initiatives to changes observed in the representations and behaviours of the various stakeholders in the project (educational stakeholders, and the children and young people involved).

For the deployment of this project, which ended in 2020, “Aide et Action” **developed a methodological framework and a supportive process** for the assistance of member associations of the project, described as “referral associations”, in their capabilities for the initiation and establishment of learning communities within their territory or territories, involving different memberships: teachers, sociocultural facilitators, educationalists, children and young people attending the partner educational establishments concerned.

Dedicated project personnel from “Aide et Action” have thus moderated and facilitated workshops or collective discussion meetings for the analysis of the various contexts concerned, the identification of issues, the conception of changes and planning of the deployment of activities, in order to effect changes for the above-mentioned stakeholders. It was in the course of these meetings and discussions, in accordance with the steps recommended by COAs, that specific strategies were conceived and monitored over the full duration of the project, particularly in conjunction with the following:

Contextual analysis, during which participants were encouraged to identify the stakeholders to be considered in the deployment of the project. At a workshop for the SOLIDE project, the section facilitator for contextual analysis allowed participants to include pupils as stakeholders in the deployment of the project, not just as performers, but as contributors to discussions; this represents a major first for the majority of participants, leading the head teacher of the CEG (college of secondary education) in Pana Bagou (Togo) to declare: *“This is the first time that I have understood that pupils also need to have their say in the life of the school.”*<sup>2</sup>

The monitoring of project activities, which permits all stakeholders, according to their responsibilities, to participate therein and to contribute, whether directly or indirectly, to the improvement of their living conditions or the enhancement of their knowledge. This has been achieved through visits to schools and meetings of learning committees. At these meetings, an action plan review is presented, in which each participant reports and presents evidence, on the basis of qualitative data (testimonies) or quantitative data, on the changes which they have observed over the period concerned. Participants are simultaneously agents (for the independent conduct of an activity) and beneficiaries (in that they enjoy the benefit of that activity, whether directly or indirectly, which is the source of their motivation).

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2. Interviewed during a training workshop on WCAs in 2018 in Dapaong.

# FROM THE INCLUSION OF SUPPORTED ACTORS TO THE INCLUSION OF SUPPORT STAFF

## Necessity for the integration of measurable objectives for changes experienced by support staffs

An examination of the strategic policy of “Aide et Action” deployed through the SOLIDE project gives rise to one and the same observation: inclusion applies almost exclusively to supported persons. Tools and schemes for the monitoring of changes rarely take account of the support staff. The coaching process described above, from which the support staff is excluded, is also reflected in the context of project results. Based upon an analysis of project policy, no anticipated result is aimed at support staffs. All anticipated results are focused on supported persons.

The achievement of all these results is strongly dependent upon other activities, which impact directly upon “Aide et Action” as a supporting organization. No facility is anticipated for the appraisal of the level and quality of training tools deployed by the latter throughout the project to ensure the achievement of targeted results for supported persons. For example, in order to achieve **the following result: “local socio-educational stakeholders are equipped and trained in the key issues and cooperative procedures promoted by the project”**, “Aide et Action” has facilitated the preliminary development of a training module involving institutional stakeholders. Although this module is directed at teachers, pupils and communities, “Aide et Action” has also observed an enhancement of its own capabilities, and has shared the learning experience with other stakeholders. These aspects of change and learning for the support staff should be more effectively highlighted in the context of the evaluation of project results, and shared with all stakeholders in a fully transparent manner. This is what participants in the SOLIDE capitalization workshop, held in Dakar in December 2017, described as **“reciprocal instruction”, which they endeavoured to define as follows:**

**Reciprocal instruction involves drawing upon the input of the other party, and contributing to that input.**

For this reason, we consider it important to opt for a change of paradigm based upon a change of stance in the process for the coaching and inclusion of strengthened stakeholders.

## The necessity for a change of stance

In our view, a change of stance and a change in the paradigm assumed by all stakeholders involved in the support of communities is backed by two fundamental reasons:

### **Involvement of support staffs and supported persons in a single process**

Regardless of the socio-cultural profile of stakeholders (supported persons and support staffs), during the deployment of a project, they share the same aspirations for the achievement of consensually projected results. Accordingly, they are all involved in the same process, and are affected by the impact of the latter. Moreover, as specified by a F3E publication<sup>3</sup>, contributory stakeholders are not extraneous to the process of change. They are stakeholders in this process, to the extent that they contribute thereto and may themselves experience change as a result – this includes supporting stakeholders (see page 157, “Self-change for the support of change”). Consequently, throughout the deployment of the project, changes observed in support staffs will also be measured and evaluated.

### **Inclusion of the support staff as a guarantee of transparency**

One of the widespread conceptions in the deployment of projects is the impression that projects for the change and improvement of knowledge, attitudes and practices are only intended to impact upon supported persons. The key issue here is that the supported person should also be notified of changes which are directed at support staffs, in order to achieve the overall success of the project.

3. *Action for change – Methodological guide for the support of “complex” change processes: analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation, 2014.*

# FROM THE INCLUSION OF SUPPORTED ACTORS TO THE INCLUSION OF SUPPORT STAFF

## Avenues for the adoption of stances by a support staff which are conducive to the inclusion of the supported person

### **Transition from the stance of expert as provider to that of the support staff as receiver**

While it is true that, in general, the support staff acts as a provider of technical, and even financial resources, they do not, in practice, exercise an exclusively contributory function throughout the project process. In return, the support staff is enriched by the particular experiences of the strengthened person, which stem from the specific character of the latter, and is encouraged to improve their own tools and internal procedures. In our view, it is therefore important that the support staff and the strengthened person should both feel that they have benefited from the deployment of projects. By adopting this stance, the support staff sheds the guise of a benefactor of the supported person, and also becomes involved as a stakeholder who benefits from the project ecosystem. All this is achieved through an (implicit or explicit) process which steers the supported person towards self-reliance, and is aimed at the improvement of tools and procedures adopted by the support staff.

### **A change in the stance of the supported person**

This proposal is associated with the change of stance described above. In this case, however,

**the support staff is now required to exclude, from its model for the perception of the supported person, the concept of beneficiary, in favour of the concept of stakeholder.**

This concept has now assumed its full perspective in the principles for action adopted by "Aide et Action", and has been incorporated in its quality policy, which is based upon the standard for quality and accountability developed by the CHS Alliance<sup>4</sup>, an NGO network for emergency aid and development. This quality and accountability standard are based upon nine commitments and criteria, which encourage a policy of inclusion in the management of interventions throughout a project lifecycle, engaging stakeholders (both supported persons and support staffs) in the achievement of anticipated changes. Although the COA deployed is thus fully integrated in the project management cycle, we would consider it important here to highlight the necessity for a change in perception on the part of stakeholders involved in any project process. The perspective assumed should be that of CEFRIO (the French language centre for the computerization of organizations), which identifies practical communities as an ideal framework for the inclusion of all stakeholders in any decision-making process which affects them. The paper by CEFRIO<sup>5</sup> explains that "*practical communities or learning communities are not in pursuit of any power associated with position and all that this entails – control of resources and accounting for investments – tasks for which these communities are ill-suited. They are nevertheless in pursuit of power of expression: the capacity to be heard, to make a difference, and to ensure that their practically-based perspective is considered. In the knowledge-based economy, power of expression is equally as important as positional power.*" The SOLIDE project, through the establishment of learning committees, was also guided by this objective for the inclusion of all stakeholders, in both the conception and the deployment of the project. Organizations functioning as support staffs have thus been able to share technical resources, and therefore knowledge, with all stakeholders, with no associated apprehension of any disturbance to their organizational hierarchy.

### **Consideration of indicators of change for support staffs in the policy framework of projects**

In the traditional conception of projects, particularly in their policy framework, monitored indicators relate exclusively to supported persons, and rarely to support staffs.

**We are of the view that COAs, in the process of their execution, represent an opportunity for the inclusion, in indicators of change, of those relating to a support staff in their capacity as a stakeholder in the project, involved in the formulation of the overall vision delivered by all stakeholders.**

4. The CHS Alliance is a network of non-governmental organisations working in the field of humanitarian aid and development. It has defined a standard of quality and accountability based on 9 commitments and 9 quality criteria that allow for the implementation of policies and procedures for continuous improvement of the quality of interventions. Aide et Action has been a member since June 2020.  
5. Cefrio, Working, learning and collaborating in a network, guide to setting up and running intentional communities of practice, Quebec 2005.

# FROM THE INCLUSION OF SUPPORTED ACTORS TO THE INCLUSION OF SUPPORT STAFF

In practical terms, this will involve the organization, as for other stakeholders, of workshops for the establishment of pathways for change for support staffs, together with progress indicators which will be monitored throughout the deployment of the project.

## Conclusion

For “Aide et Action”, COAs have provided the opportunity to place stakeholders at the heart of projects, in accordance with its strategic policies. This option for the inclusion of stakeholders in processes which concern them is clearly reflected in projects, in terms of anticipated results and procedure. This article is intended to contribute to the process of reflection such that, from here on in, stakeholders in ECIS will change their position to become, in the same way as supported persons, objects of the monitoring of changes, in their capacity as project stakeholders. This change should be incorporated in the framework of results and initial objectives of a project. This will also involve a change in how the supported person is viewed, and an awareness by the supported person of the impact of changes associated with the project upon the support staff.

### DOCUMENTS OR WEBSITES CONSULTED

- “Aide et Action”, summary record of the capitalization workshop for the SOLIDE project, December 2017
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- <http://f3e.asso.fr/article/1584>
- [https://f3e.asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/guide\\_chgmt\\_f3e\\_cota.pdf](https://f3e.asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/guide_chgmt_f3e_cota.pdf)
- CEFRIOD, *Working, learning and collaborating in a network - Guide for the establishment and facilitation of pro-active practical communities*, 2005

# 02

## TOWARDS A COMMUNITY APPROACH

The second part of the book is dedicated to the place of communities in inclusion processes. It describes how communities have been invited to participate in action research processes and to follow the experience of a community-based approach to the reality on the ground.

EMPOWERMENT OF LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

# BY A METHODOLOGY FOR THE INCORPORATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

VINCENT HENIN AND PAULA UGLIONE (LOUVAIN COOPÉRATION)



*Bring together  
scientific and popular knowledge*

This chapter is intended to explore the manner in which the Environmental Integration Tool Approach (EIT), a methodology created by the NGO Louvain Coopération<sup>1</sup>, associated to the Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium, is conducive to the empowerment of stakeholders in local development, thanks to the dimension of dialogue which features in both its structural and its application dynamics. This approach was created in order to meet the need for a structured, structuring and pragmatic methodology, which serves as a basis for the consideration of the environment in economic development programmes. Experience has shown that this approach changes the manner in which stakeholders observe and consider their relationship with the environments in which they are involved, and also raises awareness and generates advocacy in favour of the environment, together with the reinforcement of monitoring and evaluation.

We will start by describing certain conceptual and methodological elements of the EIT Approach. We will illustrate the interactive and multi-party dimension

1. NGO associated with the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium.

## BY A METHODOLOGY FOR THE INCORPORATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

which forms the basis of the process for the construction and application of the EIT Approach. This will allow us to demonstrate that:

- the theoretical and methodological corpus of the EIT Approach encourages collective and multi-dimensional reflections on the part of local development practitioners, inviting them to challenge and change local conditions which exist in reality;
- the EIT Approach has been conceived on the basis of social practices involving a combination of different areas of expertise, which have traditionally been separated by hegemonic modes of thinking in contemporary society.

### The Environmental Integration Tool Approach

In the context of its Food and Economic Security programme (“Sécurité Alimentaire et Économique” or “SAE<sup>2</sup>”), implemented in Africa (Benin, Burundi, Madagascar, DR Congo and Togo), Andean America (Bolivia and Peru) and Asia (Cambodia), Louvain Coopération supports entrepreneurs (whether individual or collective, agricultural or otherwise) for the improvement of their production and commercialize. For many years, the question has arisen of how to fulfil this brief whilst simultaneously accommodating, in a systemic and pragmatic manner, constraints associated with profitability, competitiveness and respect for the environment. In response to these concerns, Louvain Coopération has developed a specific approach, which is embodied in two tools/variants: the EIT-Programme and EIT-Producer.

EIT tools deliver a structured focus on bilateral relations between the environment and, respectively, a cooperative development programme (the SAE Programme, or other programmes, given the adaptability of the EIT Approach<sup>3</sup>) or a productive activity, whether agricultural or otherwise.

2. Carried out in Africa (Benin, Burundi, Madagascar, DRC and Togo), Andean America (Bolivia and Peru) and Asia (Cambodia).

3. Between 2016 and 2020, 1,026 IOEs (11 IOEs-Programme and 1,015 IOEs-Producer) were carried out in the SAE Programme of Leuven Coopération, and about ten by other institutions, within their programmes.

## THE EIT-PROGRAMME

It will apply at the macro level of a project/programme. This involves an analysis by the management team, in four stages:

1. environmental diagnosis,
2. environmental check-up,
3. environmental monitoring,
4. environmental memory.

Each stage will involve the analysis, in two or three questions, of five themes:

1. The environmental context of the programme;
2. The environmental coherence of the programme;
3. Effects of the environment on the programme;
4. Effects of the environment on the environment;
5. Capacities for environmental management and adaptation to environmental issues. The objective is to identify potential reciprocal relations between a project/programme and its environment, in the interests of the more effective consideration of the latter.

**EIT-Producer** is designed for the structuring of a dialogue, as a process of reflection at the environmental level, between an economic agent who is responsible for a productive activity which is supported by a project/programme (the SAE Programme, or others) and the technical team of said project (however, this tool may also be employed by an unsupported economic agent, as an exercise in self-analysis). This may be an individual, a family, a group, an association, a cooperative, a local authority, etc.. This tool is deployed in three stages:

1. an environmental diagnosis of the activity of the producer is completed, highlighting the reciprocal influences between their activity and the environment, their willingness to the more effective consideration of the environment in their activity, and the capacities and requirements associated with their involvement;

2. based on this diagnosis, the objective is the assumption of self-determined commitments on the part of the producer, together with a number of support initiatives to be deployed under the terms of the project/programme which supports them;
3. progress of the implementation of the commitments is evaluated, in accordance with agreed terms<sup>4</sup>.

4. For a comprehensive look at both tools, please visit <https://www.louvaincooperation.org/fr/environnement> where they are available for download in English, French and Spanish.

## Construction and application of the approach

### Dialogue, reflection and action

**A dialogue guide. This summarizes the methodological dynamic of the EIT Approach, embodied by tools which primarily generate a situation of close relations between the stakeholders in a cooperative development programme, based upon work for the analysis of their actual relationship with the environment, in a collective manner.**

**“If possible, this tool should be completed as a team (ideally, with the consultation of third parties, particularly the potential beneficiaries of the programme [...]), in the interests of the diversification of viewpoints. The result will be both richer and more relevant” (EIT-PROGRAMME, P 2).**

This recommendation, which is included in the introductory section to the EIT-Programme, clearly reflects the common thread of the EIT Approach: an invitation to dialogue. The introductory section to EIT-Producer also emphasizes the various options for its application, which may be written or oral, depending upon the profiles and preferences of participants. This open approach – a further methodological principle of the EIT Approach, and embodied by the spirit of inclusion – is justified as a recognition and encouragement of the autonomy of stakeholders, which is respectful of their choices.

In the first stage of EIT-Producer,

**“the idea is to identify the knowledge and perceptions of the producer in relation to the environment” (EIT-PRODUCER, P 3).**

It is the world of local producers which it is intended to highlight here, using a method – an environmental diagnosis in the form of a semi-structured questionnaire which constitutes an invitation to an intuitive analysis, rooted in what is meaningful for local producers, and as a function of their viewpoints and their sensitivity to the actual situation. In the following stage of this same variant, the stage for the assumption of self-determined commitments:

**their autonomy is further enhanced, as they are invited to define, on their own initiative, what it is important to achieve, together with the scope and the time schedule for this achievement.**

## SAE PROGRAMM

Under the SAE Programme, the application of EIT-Producer between 2016 and 2020 has resulted in 1,466 commitments in favour of the environment assumed by local entrepreneurs, for example in Benin, including initiatives for the following:

- crop rotation/fallowing;
- composting and the use of organic inputs and pesticides;
- integrated management of pests and diseases in cultivated crops;
- straw spreading, reforestation and the use of living hedges.

(data from the 2021 Internal Report of the Uni4Coop Programme, Louvain Coopération)

**The key issue in inviting these actors to go through the steps of the OIE tools is not the impact of the content of their responses on the environmental reality, but rather the emergence of their willingness to question and change this reality.**

This is the “movement” through which the Approach proposes an environmental integration that legitimizes the empowerment of local stakeholders. This is a

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methodological perspective on action-research, the key concern of which is the simultaneous generation of knowledge, the transformation of social realities, and the enhancement of individual and collective skills (Faure, 2010).

To the question: *Which groups, whether internally or externally to the programme, do you believe to be most vulnerable to environmental problems? For what reasons? What initiatives would assist them?*, the response of the local SAE Programme team in the DR Congo is particularly illustrative of the reflexive dynamic which informs this approach:

“ *In the context of South Kivu, women and children constitute strata who are particularly vulnerable to environmental risks. They are most susceptible to the diseases and epidemics which develop in their environments. Indigenous populations, minorities or underprivileged groups (the disabled, girls who are ostracized as “single mothers”, children from broken homes, widows and widowers, etc.), together with inhabitants in physically remote locations, do not enjoy the same level of access to support facilities under the programme, and thus remain unaware of the latter. The primary initiative for their assistance will be their integration in the programme, so that they can benefit, in the same way as other groups, from the enhancement of capacities in various fields. At the same time, the conservation and protection of protected areas are highly important, as is human life. Initiatives for the instruction of neighbouring populations to protected areas in alternative mechanisms for survival (the resettlement in new sites of communities displaced from protected areas, income-generating activities, etc.) are beneficial forms of support.*” (EIT-PROGRAMME, SAE PROGRAMME DR CONGO, MARCH 2021).

This extract reflects the reflexive dynamic which can be mobilized by the conceptual and methodological elements of this approach, through the application of its tools.

Evidently, this question constitutes a direct invitation to reflect upon the inclusive nature of environmental integration in a cooperative development programme. And the response illustrates the power of this question to encourage the consideration by local stakeholders of multiple systems (gender, age, family, health) and multiple factors (educational, legal), together with the levels of action (individual, collective, territorial) involved and required in a scheme for the integration of environmental factors in a cooperative development programme.

Through dialogue, reflection and action, these tools constitute a resource for the anticipation of risks and the adaptation of strategies to address these risks, for example, the provision of community support for the introduction of a tax to regulate the illicit cutting of timber in community forests in Madagascar.

**These tools provide local partners with the means of addressing environmental impact, reflecting upon the latter and engaging in this reflection.**

In Benin, for example, the local economy office, or “Guichet d’Économie Locale” of South Benin (GEL-SB), as a partner, has developed a database for EIT-Producer operations completed, in the interests of more highly-structured monitoring.

The EIT-Programme encourages the joint consideration by project teams of the environmental dimension in their intervention strategy, and also generates an analysis which gives rise to a more objective debate, initiatives for advocacy, in tandem with other partners and/or public or community authorities.

**EIT-Producer encourages an awareness by entrepreneurs of certain environmental dimensions which need to be considered in their activities, for example the necessity to consider the waste management or sewage.**

This stage for the assumption of awareness is an essential preliminary to any action.

The EIT-Producer consortium, as proposed by the GEL-SB, permits an industry-by-industry analysis which allows the identification of difficulties or the consideration of sectoral interventions such as, for example, the issue of the accumulation of waste manioc peelings in Benin, and the processing thereof into compost or animal feed.

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### Exchanges between multiple stakeholders

**The process for the construction of the EIT Approach is dependent upon the commitment and the potential participation of local stakeholders, and has been conducted in forums for exchange and mutual support which are conducive to their empowerment.**

The construction of various versions of the EIT Approach<sup>5</sup> has involved and incorporated multiple stakeholders, in both the north and south: members of Louvain Coopération teams at different levels of the institutional hierarchy, local partners (community associations, NGOs, etc.), representatives of local government or local public and community authorities, academics and students, local entrepreneurs involved in the SAE Programme for economic and food security, and various development practitioners.

Interaction between these stakeholders is the foundation of the process whereby the construction, dissemination and appropriation of the EIT Approach has been rolled out in an integrated and organic manner, rather than sequentially, in distinct and temporally separate stages. In this process, individuals and groups with cultural, educational and experiential differences have participated, in an effective manner, in the emergence of the EIT Approach, and in its consolidation and appropriation.

According to Edgar Morin (2014), modernity has radically changed modes of thinking; in particular, it has introduced a substantial separation between scientific knowledge and popular knowledge. The “silence” of certain social groups is one of the resulting effects, to the extent that more conventional scientific narratives and rationalities consider these persons to be incapable of holding or communicating

5. From 2012 to 2019, in a continuous process of definitions and improvements, five consecutive versions of the IOE Approach have been constructed (see [www.louvaincooperation.org/fr/environnement](http://www.louvaincooperation.org/fr/environnement)).

any significant knowledge. Modernity has produced a disalliance – or separation – between socially and culturally different groups, between experience and experimentation, and between reason and intuition, inter alia [Bolle de Bal, 2003]. In the process for the construction of the EIT Approach, a shift has occurred from this hegemonic trend towards a horizontal process, which includes a variety of knowledge and experiences in a genuinely participative approach<sup>6</sup>:

“*Finally, the floor was opened to participants, who were invited to present their comments, questions, thoughts and criticisms, with a view to highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the institutional EIT<sup>7</sup>, together with suggestions for improvement and adaptation. [...] Practical exercises have allowed them to appropriate this tool, and to handle it with greater ease.*”

While this approach, for local facilitators, undoubtedly needs to be participative, it also needs to become meaningful, i.e. it must be capable of affecting the modes of thought and action of participants in a significant manner [Vygotski<sup>8</sup>, 1985]:

“*During the final gathering of views around the table, participants expressed both satisfaction and joy. They rated the experience as extremely fruitful, and considered the workshop to have been conducted in an atmosphere of conviviality, dynamism, attentiveness and patience. [...] In their opinion, the workshop had provided a forum for the exchange of experiences and views between organizers and participants. Discussions – occasionally full-blooded – have been constructive. This permitted a huge amount of work to be completed over the week, resulting in the development of a new and beneficial EIT tool<sup>9</sup>, slimline and adaptable, which will facilitate the work of teams in the field.*”

6. The following three extracts are part of a report from a mission to Benin in 2016. It was written by the mission leader, a Junior Assistant (JA) of the Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC), working at the time with Louvain Cooperation. They exemplify the workshops that have been carried out since 2012 in all the countries where the NGO operates, with the aim of disseminating the IOE Approach. In parallel to these workshops, a broad process of exchange and dialogue has taken place with the academic community – in particular the Belgian, but also the African and Andean and the development cooperation sector in Belgium.

7. The IOE-Institutional corresponds to the 3rd version of the IOE-Programme published in 2017.

8. Lev Vygotski (1896-1934) was a psychologist, known for his ideas and theories on the importance of the social and cultural dimension for human development.

9. The IOE-Beneficiary was created in 2017 and subsequently became the IOE-Producer. Its gestation as a result of these participatory sessions in Benin is one of the most emblematic examples of the power of action on which the IOE Approach has been built.

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The intentions and efforts deployed through the participation of each party have been directed at the active involvement of local stakeholders in the construction of this approach, taking genuine account of their opinions in decisions – this has been made possible by non-authoritarian relations – according to Jürgen Habermas (1987), this constitutes a crucial principle for communicative action:

“[...] From the very first day, we realized the necessity for the reorientation of the workshop. We have endeavoured to adapt, both as organizers and as participants. [...] From a facility for “formal” training, the workshop has evolved into a more liberated forum for constructive debate and exchanges. In response to the limitations of previous tools, we have been able to rework these tools together, a major factor in the appropriation and validation of these tools by all participants.”

The principle which has always informed these social forums (workshops, meetings), in which different viewpoints and differences of opinion co-exist, has been respect and mutual trust. This is a key principle, if tensions and critiques are to be permitted to surface in interpersonal relations (divergent opinions, frustrations), not as argumentative factors, but as a force for negotiation “to the greater good of all”.

### Conclusion

Louvain Coopération is committed to the practical integration of the environmental dimension. It has achieved this through the creation of an approach which is based upon principles of dialogue, fairness, autonomy and inclusion, and thus falls within the broader sectoral context of pro-active development, in response to global issues.

From its original conception in 2011 through to the present day, the EIT Approach has expanded, particularly as the result of the participation of multiple stakeholders.

An extensive local community has been formed, involved in the creation and the assignment of purpose and importance to the environmental integration envisaged by Louvain Coopération. By this, we mean a local community, not only in the sense of a group in close geographical proximity, but specifically sharing convergent objectives: small-scale producers, students, practitioners, researchers, and ultimately men and women, whether from the north or south. This is the community which has been involved in the construction of this approach, through a collective process which, albeit laborious and laden with obstacles, is unquestionably legitimate.

**These are persons, individually and collectively, who have devoted their efforts to the consideration of alternative modes of thought and action in the world, in relation to the environment.**

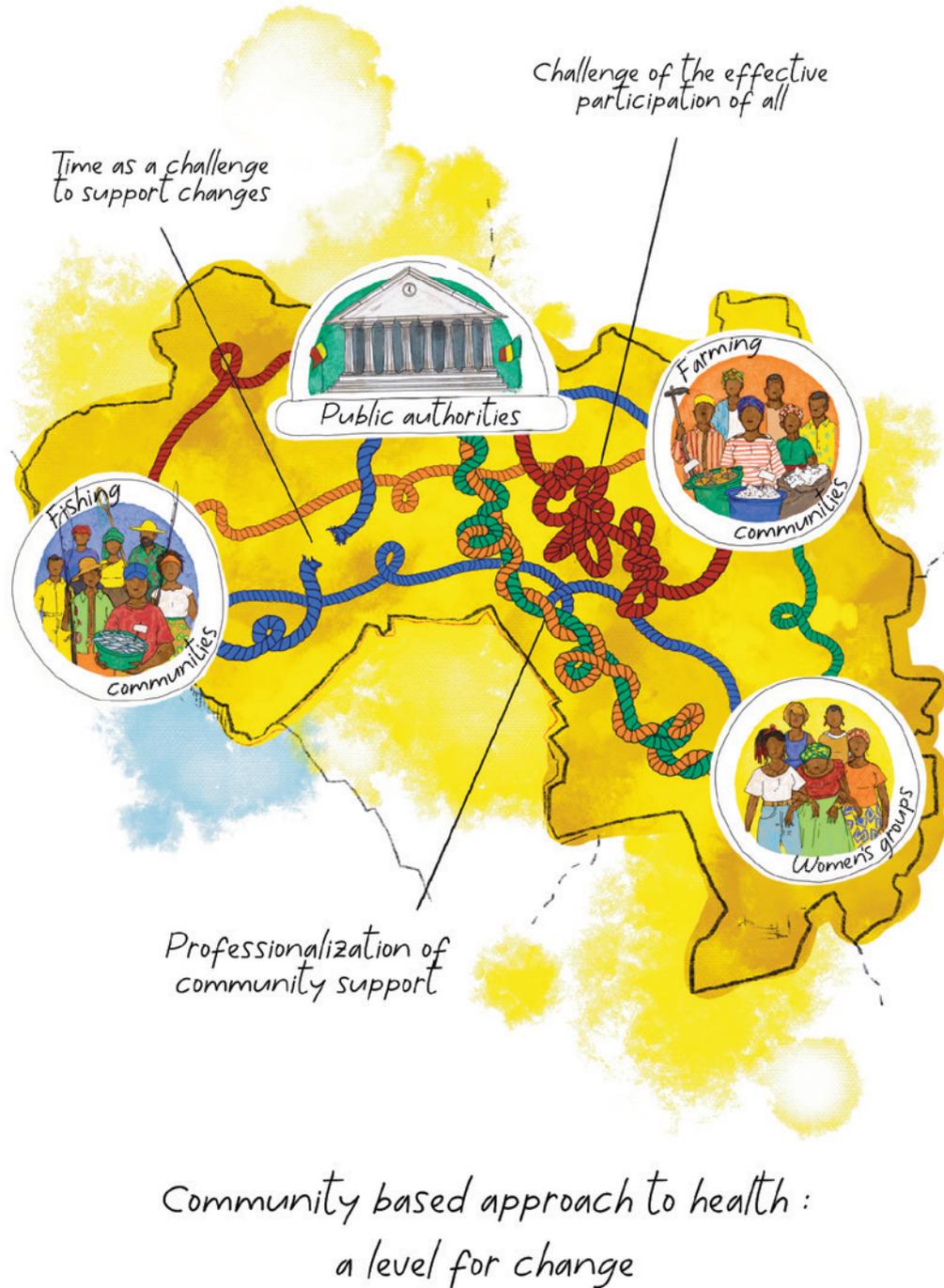
This is where, in our opinion, the EIT Approach has delivered its – modest – contribution to the empowerment of stakeholders, as agents of change.

The open dimension of the EIT Approach accounts for its status as a methodology for ongoing improvement, always susceptible to adaptation, transformation and reinvention. Moreover, this approach has sometimes been employed in a distinct manner, according to the profiles, objectives and working rhythms of each party involved. This occurs particularly in the event of the intersection of this approach with other subject fields, such as education, involving institutions other than Louvain Coopération<sup>10</sup>. For this reason, tools are registered under the terms of a Creative Commons licence. It is thus our hope that the EIT approach will be a source of inspiration for other practitioners, in their pursuit of processes which are more sustainable and, in particular, are more dialogue-based and inclusive.

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10. See <https://www.educaid.be/fr/actualites/fiche-methodologique-environnement>.



# THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO HEALTH, A LEVER FOR CHANGE AND LIMITATIONS TO INITIATIVES

FLORIAN PERRUDIN (ESSENTIEL)

ESSENTIEL, in conjunction with local stakeholders, organized the “Santé Pour Tous” (“Health for All”) project between 2002 and 2019 in the Republic of Guinea, with the object of contributing to the development of Universal Health Coverage. This project has thus contributed to the expansion of mutual societies, and to the empowerment of stakeholders involved in this dynamic trend. It has also fostered, at national level and in collaboration with other stakeholders from civil society, a process of consultation, dialogue and advocacy in approaches to the authorities, in the interests of promoting a regulatory framework, public policies and a context of partnership which are conducive to the emergence of Universal Health Coverage which permits the involvement of citizens.

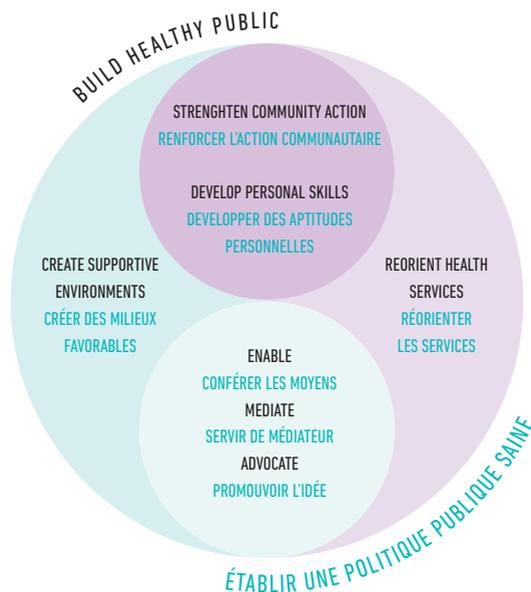
The involvement of partners and citizens in the conduct of projects is an obvious consideration. However, when it comes to supporting fair and sustainable social trends, matters start to become rather more complex. Involvement, by all means, but of whom, and how? What are the limits on involvement? And what factors define the legitimacy of participants?

For ESSENTIEL, this project, which has been conducted using an iterative, rather than a linear approach, in which collective learning has constituted the basis for the development of intervention strategies, has been a key point of entry for the review of the supporting principles of its operations, with reference to a partnership scheme. It also provides a mean to better understand a project intended to make citizens actor of change of a project which is intended to make citizens stakeholders in change, by identifying obstacles and levers for an approach which is co-constructed and co-managed in collaboration with local partners.

# THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO HEALTH, A LEVER FOR CHANGE AND LIMITATIONS TO INITIATIVES

## A holistic approach to health, adopted with, and on behalf of the populations

The first International Conference on Health Promotion, held in Ottawa in 1986, emphasized that community development is a key lever for the encouragement of self-assistance and social support, and for the introduction of flexible systems capable of enhancing public participation and control of health issues. An associated requirement is *“full and continuous access to information and options for the acquisition of knowledge on health, together with financial support”* for this purpose (Ottawa Charter, 1986)



In accordance with this policy, the Bamako initiative (1987) placed these principles at the heart of strategies deployed on the African continent for the enhancement of access to primary health, the cornerstone of which is accountability of communities for the management of health provision.

Thirty years later, we can see substantial inequalities in the field, in terms of access to health services, together with the low quality and availability of these services, in many cases. **Numerous flaws in governance, quality of health provided to the general public, and funding of health provision have been responsible for this failure and, at present, there is an absence of genuine community involvement.**

**For ESSENTIEL, the community-based approach to health is a source of obvious benefits, providing that care is taken to avoid certain pitfalls. This approach is conceived as a process for the active involvement of the persons concerned at every stage of a project. This requires the devotion of particular attention to the establishment of a climate of confidence, and to the transparent definition of rules for collaboration and participation.**

The “Santé Pour Tous” project initiative has been conducted in a context in which access to health is a key issue for the Guinean population. There are numerous financial obstacles to public access to health. Accordingly, over 62% of health funding originates from households, in the form of direct payments. Welfare protection schemes for the greater part of the population – in a substantially informal economic context – are virtually non-existent. Moreover, the inadequacies of the health system, in terms of human resources, availability of medicines and financial transparency, contribute to public mistrust of health services.

In this context, mutual societies – based upon public policies for health and welfare protection – all have their place, and provide different benefits. In practice, in terms of the general deployment of welfare protection policies on a national scale, in the interests of achieving a viable supply and demand of health services, these societies improve access to high-quality care, whilst reducing factors of exclusion. By means of prepayment schemes and preventative approaches, these societies provide “in-time” care (thereby obviating catastrophic levels of health expenditure), improve the quality of care, and contribute to factors associated with public health (prevention, involvement of users, local governance of health provision, etc.).

Through a partnership approach – agreements are concluded between mutual societies and health providers – these societies also contribute to the enhancement of the health system through the improved coverage of costs, the provision of secure income for health structures and the financial transparency of the latter. Experience in the development of mutual societies has shown that amounts spent by non-mutual

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members (between 65,000 and 700,000 Guinean Francs, equivalent to between 5.50 and 60 euros) in the event of health problems<sup>1</sup> substantially exceed, not only the cost of contributions, but also the average cost for treatment paid by mutual members (29,000 Guinean Francs in 2019, equivalent to 2.50 euros). According to one former member: *“As soon as I showed my card, the doctor prescribed me medicines, but the people without cards received even more medicines”*. Whether one is a member of mutual society or otherwise, medical prescriptions and their associated charges do not always appear to be entirely rationalized. This reality calls into question the quality of services delivered to the general public, and the relevance of these services (provided on or under prescription).

In an environment where the general public emphasizes the commercial reality and insufficient quality of health services, we support citizens in the enforcement of their rights, by contributing to the funding, the transparency, and the improvement of the quality of public health services and policies. In this regard, mutual societies constitute a major contributory lever for the global dynamic adopted in pursuit of universal health provision. If this goal is to be achieved, these social dynamics will need to be supported, and the framework for the governance and funding of health systems will need to be clarified, if participation is to be effective.

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1. Étude des effets du projet Santé Pour Tous – 2019

## THE LOMÉ PLATFORM – A SHARED VISION OF THE MUTUAL SOCIETY<sup>2</sup>

The mutualist movement advocates collective responsibility in a mutually supportive and inclusive society, an essential condition of which is a political commitment to the provision of basic welfare protection for all, in the interests of sustainable development.

In order to achieve a genuinely supportive and inclusive society, the mutualist model of governance makes a difference. The objective of the mutualist movement is the promotion of universal welfare protection, with a particular commitment to the achievement of universal health provision by the improvement of access to high-quality and affordable health services. Mutualism is needed as a vehicle for “social change” and collective emancipation, associated with a pro-active approach to solidarity, combining the individual and the collective.

Now, as in the past, people join together for the collective protection of the following values:

- solidarity and health for all, whether poor or rich, young or old, sick or well;
- a preference for the general interest over individual interests;
- a specific form of organization based upon a participative approach. Reference is frequently made to a mutualist democracy;
- consideration of public opinion in political debates on health, particularly with respect to the quality of care;
- the promotion of social cohesion;
- preventative health and health promotion, over and above the curative aspect.

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2. Plateforme de Lomé - Le pari de la Mutualité pour le XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle

# THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO HEALTH, A LEVER FOR CHANGE AND LIMITATIONS TO INITIATIVES

## The challenge of effective public participation in decision-making

**Mutual societies, which originate from the community, are a guarantee of the commitment assumed by the latter, and of the appropriateness of responses provided.** It can be seen, however, that the conditions under which mutual societies execute their brief – particularly in terms of collaboration with the health system and public authorities – frequently constitute obstacles to the transition of these societies to a larger scale. The absence of a regulatory framework provided by public policies and the underfunding of the public health system contribute to a lack of transparency in health structures, which results particularly in informal payments<sup>3</sup>. This reality also contributes to a damaged carer/patient relationship, in which the rights of patients are not sufficiently recognized.

The vision of a “win-win” partnership between mutual societies and the health system, involving an improvement in the quality of services, increased access to care and a contribution to the coverage of costs, is undermined accordingly. An analysis of the impacts of the “Santé Pour Tous” project has highlighted the fact, for example, that availability of medicines and the attitude of practitioners also falls within the remit of mutual societies. According to mutual society members: *“With practitioners as they are at present, it will be extremely difficult for mutual societies to develop”*; *“The hostile welcome and the failed delivery of medicines at a health centre are discouraging to members”*.

In the light of this reality, it is necessary to strike an effective balance between policies for reinforcement (support, guidance and orientation), dynamics for the enhancement of independence (processes for learning, adaptation and the generation of home-grown solutions), and procedures for advocacy with a long-term focus.

3. Paiements informels et autres défaillances de l'offre de soin dans les structures sanitaires publiques en Afrique: plus qu'une simple association? - Hyacinthe Kankeu - Health Financig in Africa - Blog

**We remain convinced that the community-based participatory approach, in which the operation of mutual societies is rooted, constitutes a major vehicle for the mobilization of human, intellectual and financial resources which are appropriate appropriate to drive change on a territorial scale. This approach is also a powerful lever of advocacy for the development of public policies.**

Over and above constraints which are specific to the quality of health services, and factors associated with the relationships forged between mutual societies, the latter are required to ensure that their operation (involvement in the governance of mutual societies) and the services which they deliver correspond to the expectations of the community and to their capacity to contribute thereto – by the matching of services provided with a level of contributions which is consistent with the financial capacity of households. In the operating context of mutual societies, in which men, frequently of a relatively advanced age, traditionally occupy the majority of seats on the governing bodies of community-based organizations, the question arises of how the representativeness of persons responsible for decisions reached is to be ensured, and how our support can contribute to this process.

**The challenge associated with the involvement of citizens in decisions which concern them requires that particular attention be paid to issues of inclusion and the representation of all strata of society. All voices must be allowed to express themselves, and must be heard. The same applies to inequalities between women and men, the involvement of young people in the governance of organizations, and conditions for the participation of persons living with disabilities.**

In an attempt to understand the difficulties encountered by mutual societies in their promotion of the effective participation of women in governance and decision-making, and to identify levers for overcoming these obstacles, a concerted diagnostic analysis of a number of mutual societies was undertaken in 2013. This concerted process of analysis resulted in numerous recommendations for initiatives associated with the development of female leadership, in conjunction with the improvement of the internal operation of mutual organizations. Access to preventative services, an understanding of mechanisms for the acceptance of claims, the operation of a mutual society and, in some cases, its very existence, emerged from this analysis as key factors for participation, which had been underestimated on our part. Mutual societies have also identified a need for the adoption of specific initiatives which will contribute to social change by influencing their social, economic and political environments.

We have promoted measures for the support of the proactive appropriation of these different recommendations in the six prefectural mutual societies with

# THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO HEALTH, A LEVER FOR CHANGE AND LIMITATIONS TO INITIATIVES

which we collaborate. Some six years on, notwithstanding major disparities between organizations, and although not all the pathways for action explored in the course of the diagnostic analysis have been deployed, progress can be seen. Conditions for commitment to change require a genuine understanding of the challenges involved by the persons concerned.

Though its holistic approach to health, acting with and on behalf of the public, ESSENTIEL places the community-based approach at the heart of its operations, in the interests of the effective realization of conditions and possibilities for access (to information, preventative care, health rights, screening, health structures, etc.). The term “community” is understood here as a foundation for communal membership based upon a territory, a socio-occupational sector, shared interests or common issues.

Initiatives for preventative health and the promotion of health conducted for the community by members of the latter, under the supervision of health professionals, illustrate the relevance of community-based health practice in the achievement of behavioural, or even social change.

**Messages conveyed by peer-to-peer trainers are more audible, more comprehensible and more contextually relevant, as they employ the same basic language, and observe the same social codes and community-related constraints.**

The Ebola epidemic, which severely affected Guinea between 2013 and 2016, highlighted the necessity for the consideration of the social and community dimensions of health, in order to ensure the acceptance of health measures recommended by the medical profession. During the epidemic, the take-up of medical services by the general public diminished substantially, in response to the circulation of false information and the fear of contamination. During this period, however, the take-up of care by members of mutual societies was sustained, to some degree. The mutual societies with whom we collaborate were able to

conduct programmes of communication and prevention. These local initiatives, conducted by mutual society representatives, demonstrated the capacity of the community-based approach for the dissemination of preventative messages. This represents one means of offsetting the limited availability of resources for preventative health programmes, and of overcoming the difficulties of mobilizing health professionals in sufficient numbers to undertake this work.

## **BENCHMARKS FOR A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO HEALTH<sup>4</sup>**

According to the observatory established by the European Secretariat for Community Health Practices (SEPSAC) (2005-2009), the community-based approach to health is characterized by a series of interdependent and complementary benchmarks:

### **BENCHMARKS RELATING TO AN APPROACH FOR THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH**

1. Adoption of a global and positive approach to health
2. Action involving critical factors for health
3. Interdisciplinary operations for the promotion of health

### **SPECIFIC BENCHMARKS FOR A COMMUNITY-BASED STRATEGY**

4. Community involvement
5. Promotion of the involvement of all stakeholders in a process of co-construction and individual and collective empowerment
6. Promotion of a context for the sharing of power and knowledge
7. Effective exploitation and pooling of community resources

### **METHODOLOGICAL BENCHMARK**

8. Adoption of a planning process based upon shared, progressive and ongoing evaluation

<sup>4</sup> European Secretariat for Community Health Practices - Benchmarks for community-based approaches

## Summary of pathways for action identified by mutual societies

DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE
Enhancement of the capacities of women with respect to the operation of the mutual society, management tools, speaking in public/coaching
Specific coaching/training for speaking in public
Support of women as resources/leaders and establishment of male/female pairings
IMPROVING THE OPERATION OF
Switch from a family membership card to an individual membership card, providing women and children with simplified access to health structures
Reinforcement of links between mutual societies and their environment (particularly groups of women)
Raising awareness of mutual society governing bodies of issues associated with the representation of women, and the amendment of articles of association to include reference to the importance of male and female equality and the representation of women on the decision-making bodies of health mutuals
Introduction of a quota system in the governing bodies of health mutuals, and consideration of the distribution of strategic posts
CONTRIBUTING TO CHANGE AND (social, religious, economic
Initiatives for the promotion/highlighting of the role of women at general meetings and special events for the promotion of the role of women in health mutuals (and in society in general)
Highlighting of female mutual society members at public events
Initiatives for the sponsorship of health mutuals by women's groups

LEADERSHIP
Mutual support of male and female elected representatives for the completion of long journeys (co-driving or car sharing)
Groups of women/networks of women within mutual societies or beyond
Alerting/raising the awareness of women of their potential role
HEALTH MUTUALS
Analyses for the adaptation of the health services package in the interests of the improved fulfilment of requirements expressed by women
Adaptation of communication strategies (with an additional focus on the female population, leaflets highlighting the role of women, radio broadcasts, etc.)
More effective consideration of the representativeness of women at institutional meetings
INFLUENCING THE ENVIRONMENT and political)
Commendation, at general meetings, of elected representatives who contribute to the promotion of gender issues in mutual societies
Highlighting of female leaders in forums or initiatives

# THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO HEALTH, A LEVER FOR CHANGE AND LIMITATIONS TO INITIATIVES

## **Supporting the empowerment of stakeholders - a delicate balance between adaptation and affirmation**

Established in 1992, ESSENTIEL (known at the time as “Nantes-Guinea”) has developed on the basis of the following founding principles: solidarity and democracy, respect for the independence of the individual, responsibility, reciprocity and the balance of partnerships. Hence the commitment of ESSENTIEL to support the establishment of professional organizations which promote home-grown initiatives for the development of access to health.

In the mid-90s, an initial collaboration involved the establishment of a local association in Kindia (Guinea), with a view to supporting the emergence of mutual societies. The fruit of face-to-face meetings conducted in the context of early initiatives sponsored by ESSENTIEL, this collaboration ran into some unfortunate snags some years later as result of disagreements, particularly with regard to the role to be assumed by mutualist organizations, and consequently communities, in strategic guidelines and policies concerning them. This involved a questioning of the role of communities in the governance of the structure which is intended to support the latter.

“Do nothing for us without our consent” – this is probably one of the most familiar dictums for the expression of the community-based health philosophy in different terms. It explicitly reflects the dictates associated with the involvement and representation of the persons concerned in the definition of political initiatives. In theory, this active participation both constitutes and cements the relevance of processes of change, and multiplies their effects.

Community involvement as a lever for social change requires a substantial investment in supporting measures.

**The existence of mutual societies is substantially dependent upon the voluntary involvement of community representatives, and options for support are restricted by the availability of the latter. This compels us, in our intervention strategies, to promote the professional development of local stakeholders for the support of the community. Accordingly, by sharing our role for the support and enhancement of capabilities, we promote the assumption of local responsibility for health projects.**

This requires the deployment of a range of resources, tools and policies which will permit the reconciliation of partnership functions (reciprocal undertakings and mutual responsibility) and support functions (responsiveness, dialogue, joint adjustment of strategies, enhancement of capabilities, etc.) in a context which is constrained by resources (of time and funding) and commitments made to backers. The collective management of projects and the process of independence are neither natural nor easy to achieve.

Moreover, this collaborative process is frequently baulked by the constraints of project policy. Between our commitment to the empowerment of our partners, the constraints and weaknesses of both the latter and ourselves, the imperfect rules which currently govern funding mechanisms for international solidarity schemes, we perform a balancing act on a daily basis, as practitioners who are called upon to manage multiple, and sometimes conflicting priorities.

In practice, there are many tensions involved in the reconciliation of complex administrative and economic dictates with a commitment to supporting the independence of communities through the empowerment of the latter. These tensions underpin the necessity for the delegation of budgets and the support of the assumption of responsibility by communities. It is also necessary to overcome inherently project-related time pressure which, in many cases, is at odds with social dynamics which, by definition, are of a long-term nature.

In the context of the “Santé Pour Tous” project, our support policy has changed over time, and continues to change. There have been regular about-turns in our operational and organizational guidelines, in the interests of optimum adaptation to the contexts in which initiatives are deployed and the partners with whom we collaborate.

The mobilization of local professional organizations who are capable of supporting community dynamics has required a process of structural support which simultaneously involves personal skills, internal governance and the strategic dimensions of ESSENTIEL and its partners.

# THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO HEALTH, A LEVER FOR CHANGE AND LIMITATIONS TO INITIATIVES

**Collective governance practices which, in many cases, are insecurely rooted, lead us to question the manner in which we can move beyond individual interests for the conduct of common strategies.**

The structuring of a network of mutual societies based upon community foundations, whether socio-occupational or territorial, has primarily involved the provision of support for the development of capacities on an individual level. Accordingly, we have trained various persons (technical assistants, executives, public servants and health professionals) in the mechanisms of health insurance, welfare protection and mutual schemes.

From the early 2000s onwards, consortia of potato producers were again requesting support for the development of a mutualist initiative in the Fouta-Djalón region (Guinea). In response, ESSENTIEL formed a local support team, thereby deploying its first employees in Guinea. From 2007 onwards, the skills base of the team and the foundations forged through local partnerships made it possible to envisage the progressive independence of technical support – and consequently of the local technical team. This issue was the object of a support scheme spanning a number of years, which then gave rise to a new organization for the support of mutual societies in Guinea. At the same time, ESSENTIEL decided to expand the scope of its operations beyond Guinea, with the simultaneous intent of putting its wealth of experience and expertise into practice in response to the requests of new partners, and supporting this process of independence.

**This partnership policy calls upon ESSENTIEL to accept a sharing of power which, in part, involves a loss of exclusive control over project management and the acceptance of progress at the collective pace which is dictated by the partnership process.**

Some of our local partners are in the habit of saying “*it is the locality which will decide*”, as a means of accounting for the numerous difficulties, contingencies and uncertainties which they face on an everyday basis. This is also a more or less

direct means of stating that the process of change requires a genuine commitment on the part of the primary parties involved, and on the part of those responsible for the support of these dynamic processes.

## **Developing an ecosystem for the construction of collective change**

As an integral element of the philosophy of ESSENTIEL since its establishment, with reference to the Ottawa Charter, the consideration of critical factors for health dictates a multi-form approach which is difficult to manage. This contextual complexity of the projects and partners of ESSENTIEL, with their political, institutional and socio-cultural ecosystems, together with the relationships of power, dominance and influence which govern interactions between individuals and organizations, incorporate both favourable and unfavourable factors for empowerment with respect to health and the fight against structural inequalities.

In its operations, ESSENTIEL tends to encourage logical structures for the networking of stakeholders with a focus on health issues within a given territory. Today, we collaborate with community-based organizations, socio-occupational organizations (a federation of stakeholders in the fishery sector, consortia of small farmers, consortia for the promotion of women), civil society organizations (trade unions, mutual societies, associations for the promotion of rights) and professional organizations in the social and health sector (involving young people and sport, small children, reproductive health, mental health, disability, etc.), but also with a range of stakeholders in the public sector.

Whilst, in our view, it is essential that communities should be fully involved in health initiatives which concern them, we are bound, on the basis of our experience, to emphasize the fundamental role which also needs to be assumed by public authorities, in order to deliver the scaling-up of community-driven initiatives and ensure the permanence of the latter.

Promotion of equal access to health for all requires us to think our interventions through a human rights-based approach. Fighting the source of inequalities requires a public policy commitment to address health from a perspective of proportionate universalism.<sup>5</sup>

5. Actions with a scale and intensity proportionate to the level of social disadvantage – Origin of the concept: Fair society, healthy lives: a strategic review of health inequalities in England Post-2010. Marmot Michael. London: University College London, 2010, 242 p <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/fair-society-healthy-lives-full-report.pdf>

# THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO HEALTH, A LEVER FOR CHANGE AND LIMITATIONS TO INITIATIVES

Access to citizens' rights cannot be left to communities alone, especially in the field of health and welfare protection. In this regard, the pathway of dialogue and consultation pursued between the mutualist movement and public authorities for the promotion of a regulatory framework, public policies and an environment which are conducive to the development of universal health coverage is essential.

## HEALTH – AN ECOSYSTEM WHICH PLACES INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETIES AT THE HEART OF THE MATTER

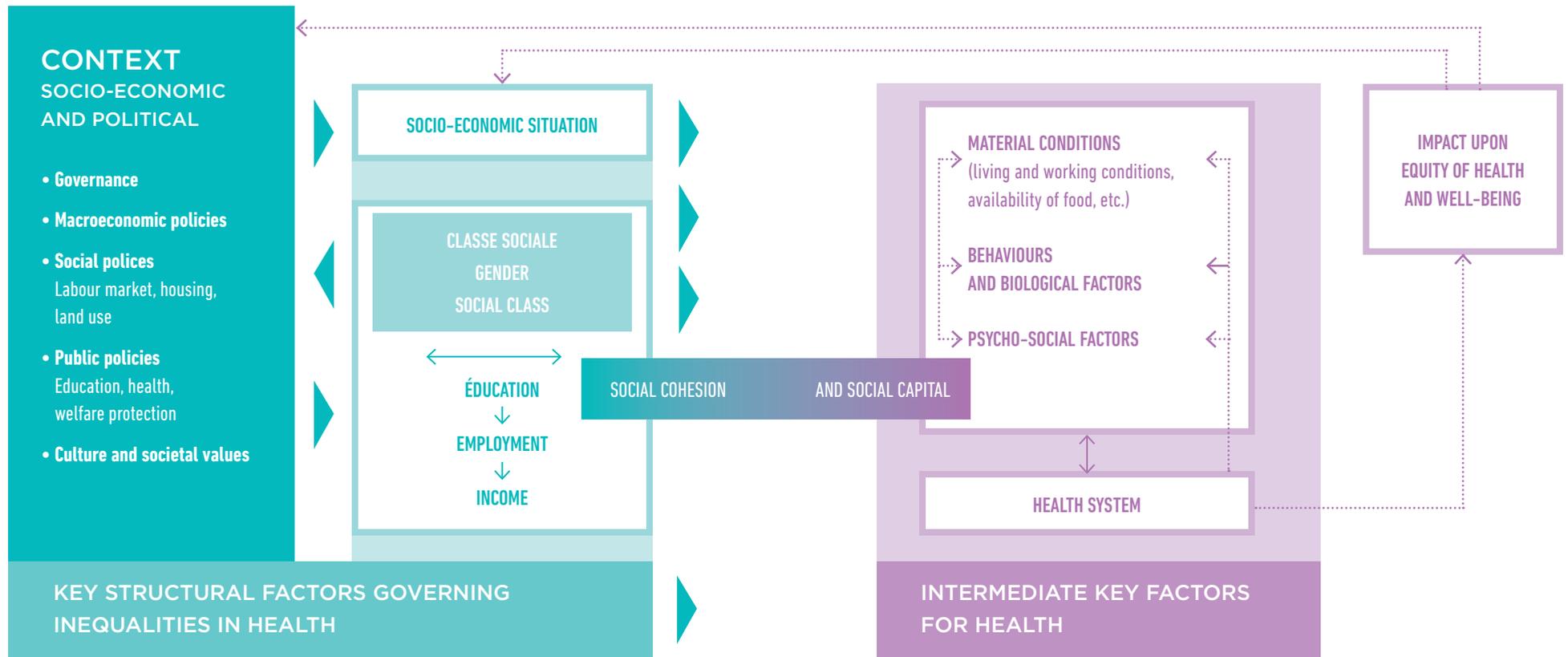
The promotion of health constitutes a social process and an overall policy, which not only includes initiatives for the enhancement of the skills and capabilities of individuals, but also measures which are intended to change social, environmental and economic situations, with a view to reducing negative impacts upon public health and the health of individuals<sup>6</sup>.

In terms of health, the provision to individuals and communities of means for action may assume numerous forms – from access to information to involvement in the development and deployment of policies and initiatives which will impact upon health, including the evaluation thereof.

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6. Secrétariat Européen des Pratiques de Santé Communautaire - Les repères des démarches communautaires

# THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO HEALTH, A LEVER FOR CHANGE AND LIMITATIONS TO INITIATIVES



Conceptual framework of key social factors in health - Source: Solar & Irwin, 2010<sup>7</sup>

7. Solar O, Irwin A. A conceptual framework for action on the social determinants of health. Social determinants of health discussion paper 2 (policy and practice). Genève, OMS, 2010. [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241500852\\_eng.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241500852_eng.pdf) -[https://www.who.int/sdhconference/discussion\\_paper/Discussion-Paper-FR.pdf](https://www.who.int/sdhconference/discussion_paper/Discussion-Paper-FR.pdf)

# CO-CONSTRUCTION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF AN INCLUSION SCHEME: LEVERS AND CONSTRAINTS

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Many territorial development projects emphasize the involvement of local stakeholders as a lever for change. The idea is that, through their involvement in the definition of desired and desirable changes in their local area, they will become active stakeholders in the deployment of the project concerned. When participatory initiatives of this type are implemented, they are frequently evaluated from an external viewpoint, according to predefined measurement criteria: the percentage of women involved in the scheme, the representativeness of participants in relation to the local population, or the transparency of the process. The results of these evaluations are primarily intended to constitute feedback for backers, public authorities or international organizations, in the same way as targets for sustainable development. However, these evaluations do not deliver sufficient feedback on agency, nor on the capacity of groups to influence changes in their local area.

In this chapter, we argue in favour of an evaluation of participatory schemes which incorporates quantitative and qualitative factors, and which involves stakeholders in the evaluation of the scheme in which they are participating.



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Evaluation is not envisaged here as an isolated activity conducted before, during and after the scheme concerned (described by evaluators as *ex ante*, mid-term and *ex post*), but as a process of reflection which guides the structuring and management of the participatory scheme. This involves the conception of a territorial project, changes to be implemented, the various participants to be involved, obstacles to be overcome and strategies to be adopted for this purpose. At the same time, stakeholders consider means for the evaluation of anticipated changes throughout the participatory scheme, and of adaptations to be applied to the same scheme, should it fail to generate the desired effects. The approach described in this chapter follows the pathway of change-oriented strategies. It originates from the COOPLAGE [Ferrand, Hassenforder & Aquae-Gaudi, 2021] and ImpresS schemes [Blundo Canto *et al.*, 2020]. We describe the levers and constraints for the deployment of this approach on various scales, in the context of the Climate Change Adaptation Programme for Rural Territories in Tunisia (or “PACTE”).

**This programme is specifically aimed at the inclusion of women and young people in an initiative for the concerted planning of territorial development in vulnerable areas of Tunisia.**

These areas are located in the governorates of Kef, Siliana, Bizerte, Kairouan and Sidi Bouzid. These have been selected on the grounds that they rank among the most vulnerable areas of the country, in terms of the environment (particularly erosion), the fragility of economic activity (particularly associated with the depletion of natural resources and a lack of public investment in infrastructures) and poverty (according to the selection method described by Iram-Biche, 2015).

## Monitoring and evaluation of a co-constructed inclusion initiative, derived from the ImpresS *ex ante* and COOPLAGE schemes

**ImpresS** (Impact of Research in the South) is a scheme developed by the CIRAD (the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development). ImpresS *ex post* is intended to evaluate the impacts of research operations conducted in tropical and Mediterranean regions [Blundo Canto *et al.*, 2019; Cirad, 2015]. ImpresS *ex ante*, which is deployed in the context of PACTE, specifically involves the engagement of stakeholders in these projects in the collective formulation of a vision of the future and of desirable changes to be achieved through plausible impact pathways. Details of the various stages in the ImpresS *ex ante* process are set out in Annex 1.

ImpresS *ex ante*, as a stakeholder-focused scheme, raises the question: “what is to be done differently, and by whom?”, if the initiative is to contribute to co-constructed impacts which have been assumed *a priori*, ahead of the intervention. This scheme focuses on changes generated. We have elected to combine this with a second approach, which is more focused on the analysis and evaluation of participatory schemes *per se*: COOPLAGE, thus raising the question of the impact of participation upon the achievement of changes sought.

**COOPLAGE** is a French acronym, which equates to the “Co-design of Inclusive Participatory Procedures for the Adaptation of Stakeholders to Environmental Management”. This represents a series of complementary tools which are intended to support stakeholders in the deployment of participatory schemes for the achievement of socio-environmental transitions [Ferrand *et al.*, 2021]. COOPLAGE was developed by the UMR G-EAU in Montpellier, a Joint Research Unit for Water Management, Stakeholders & Applications, to meet the needs of stakeholders at various stages of the decision-making process (described in the loop diagram in Figure 1), from the preparation of a participatory scheme through to its deployment.

This COOPLAGE toolkit includes **ENCORE-MEPPP**, a dedicated tool for the evaluation of participatory schemes. MEPPP (which stands for “Monitoring and Evaluating Participatory Planning Processes”) describes the steps to be followed for devising a monitoring and evaluation protocol, from the definition of objectives for monitoring and evaluation through to the sharing of results [Hassenforder *et al.*, 2016]. This monitoring and evaluation process is intended to permit the mid-stream adaptation of the management of a participatory scheme [Hassenforder & Ferrand, 2021].

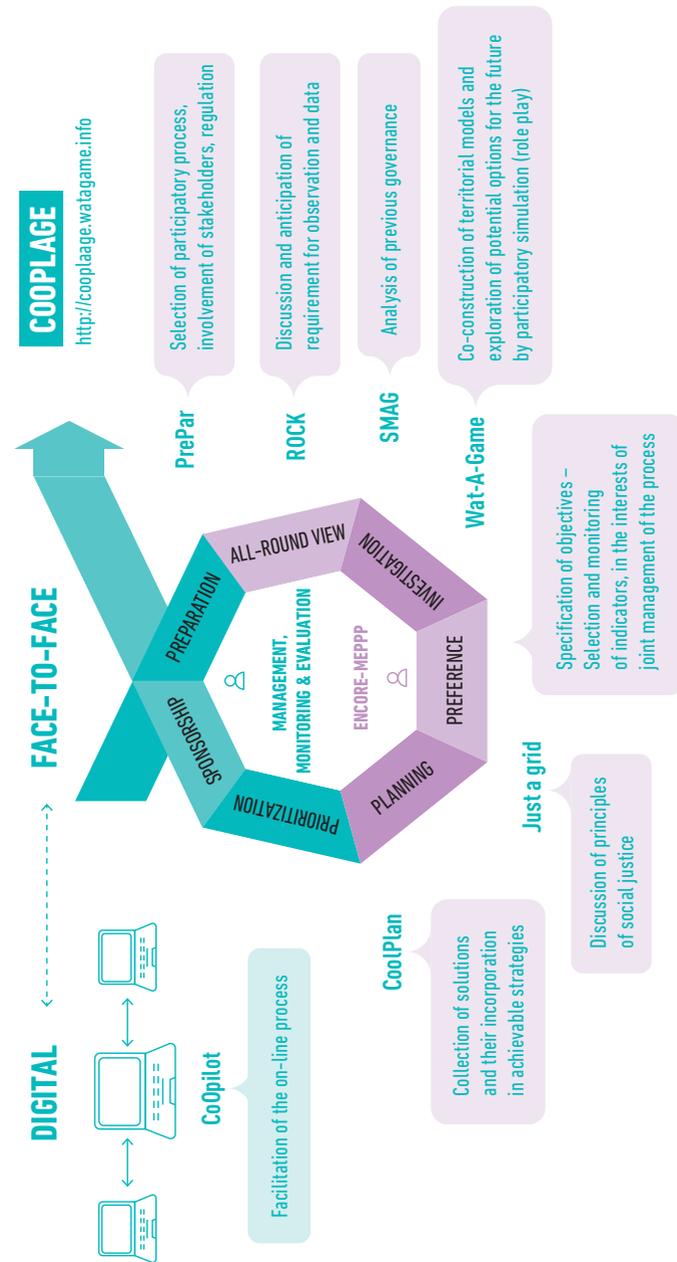


Figure 1. The COOPLAGE toolkit (source: Ferrand *et al.*, 2021)

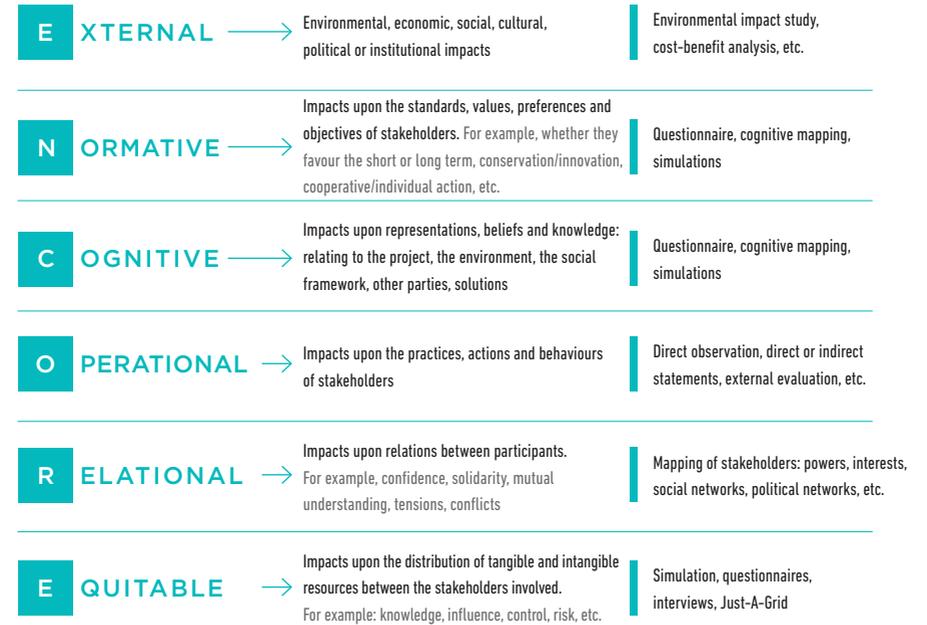


Figure 2. The ENCORE framework for the recording of potential types of impacts of participatory schemes [Ferrand & Daniell, 2006].

This approach is also conducive to a focus on the different types of impacts associated with participatory schemes, summarized by the acronym “ENCORE” (External, Normative, Cognitive, Operational, Relational, Equitable) [Ferrand & Daniell, 2006; Fig. 2].

**Impress ex ante and COOPLAGE** share similar fundamentals:

Collective reflection on desired changes within the territory, and the means for achieving these changes;

The iterative delivery of appropriate data at different stages of the process, in the interests of the mid-stream adaptation of management;

A dialogue between stakeholders on the changes which their territory is undergoing, as a means of permitting them to influence these changes, and transcending the simple “exterior” observation of impacts, in an analytical approach.

In the following section, we described how these two approaches have been combined in the context of the PACTE programme.

# CO-CONSTRUCTION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF AN INCLUSION SCHEME: LEVERS AND CONSTRAINTS

## Deployment of the ImpresS *ex ante* and COOPLAGE approaches in the PACTE programme

The PACTE programme has been implemented since 2018 by the Tunisian Ministry of Agriculture and its DGAFTA (Directorate General of Agricultural Land Development and Conservation). The object of this programme is the planning and funding of initiatives for the sustainable development of natural resources, support facilities for the development of agricultural operations and territorial governance mechanisms in six vulnerable zones located in central and northern Tunisia.

In addition to contributing to the development of the zones concerned, the aims adopted by the sponsors of the PACTE programme are as follows:

1. the successful achievement of large-scale local involvement, including women and young people in underprivileged areas;
2. the delivery of responses to issues which are classified as priorities by local communities, and the co-construction of territorial development plans;
3. the training of a new generation of facilitators who are qualified in participatory processes and the engineering of territorial development;
4. the deployment of reproducible processes for the structuring and evaluation of involvement. These aims are embodied by the creation of multi-stakeholder platforms, led by pairs of facilitators (generally a man and a woman), drawn from regional and local agricultural services. These platforms involve residents from the zones of intervention concerned, elected representatives, civil servants and stakeholders from civil soci-

ety, the private sector and research institutions in the generation of local knowledge, the prioritization of development issues, concerted planning, monitoring and evaluation.

**To date, stages for preparation (2018), diagnostic analysis (2019) and the initiation of planning - i.e. the collection of proposals for initiatives from the local population - (c.f. Fig. 3) have given rise to large-scales participation, with a total of over 100 public events, over 3,000 direct participants and the collection of over 11,000 proposals for initiatives.**

Upon the completion of this process, these proposed initiatives will be discussed, amended and specified (with respect to location, the requisite resources, scheduling of deployment, etc.), and incorporated into territorial development plans for each zone. These plans will be produced and evaluated by territorial committees comprised of representatives of residents, local authorities, civil societies and the private sector.



Figure 3. Key stages in the participatory planning process under the PACTE scheme

## Co-construction

**In the context of PACTE, various stakeholders have contributed to the development of the participatory process, and to the monitoring and evaluation thereof, in three key stages.**

Initially, the ImpresS *ex ante* approach provided project partners with resources for the co-construction of the intervention narrative, the mapping of desired changes and the impact pathway for their achievement, clarifying causal links in the continuum of results-changes-impacts. This stage resulted in the production of a methodological framework document for the creation of multi-stakeholder

# CO-CONSTRUCTION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF AN INCLUSION SCHEME: LEVERS AND CONSTRAINTS

platforms (May 2018). Thereafter, a series of workshops involving regional project partners, facilitators and stakeholders, by the application of the ENCORE-MEPPP approach, were employed, *inter alia*, for the identification of quantitative indicators (for example, the representativeness of participants in a scheme) and qualitative indicators (for example, the capacity of participants for action, and the skills of facilitators) for participation, thus resulting in the analysis of changes generated by the programme. Finally, in a third stage, outcomes from the two preceding stages have been reviewed in a number of workshops involving the parties concerned (bilateral meetings with various divisions of the Ministry of Agriculture and multi-partner workshops, a workshop for the selection of indicators, in consultation with researchers and financial backers, and feedback/finalization meetings with regional teams – facilitators, monitoring and evaluation officers and their line management). An overview of results from the three co-construction stages of the integrated process is presented in Annex 2.

The process developed is the result of both an anticipatory and reflective approach, and of a collective learning dynamic which draws upon opportunities associated with the input of dedicated monitoring and evaluation skills (delivered, for example, by a level 2 masters student, a researcher from CIRAD and a consultant with the DGAFTA). Finally, the participatory process, and the monitoring and evaluation thereof, have been adapted by facilitators to the specific features of the six intervention zones, in the course of training and activity sessions (approximately 80 days between July 2018 and March 2020).

## Deployment

Collection of data on the various co-constructed indicators involves a number of mechanisms and stakeholders. Between October 2019 and March 2020, six young observers living in the vicinity of the intervention zones were recruited for the monitoring of all participatory events, and specifically for the collection of data on social processes and the dialogue between participants. In August 2020, these

observers were replaced by monitoring and evaluation officers recruited from regional agricultural services. Only two have remained in service, for the overall coordination of monitoring and evaluation.

Thus, for each participatory event, input elements of various types have been generated and collected by all stakeholders (*c.f. Fig. 4*). The key IT tools employed are tabular data files, data input templates deployed on digital tablets and linked to KoBo databases (<https://www.kobotoolbox.org>), and a shared directory for the storage, administration and pooling – in various formats – of the various information and outcomes associated with the programme.

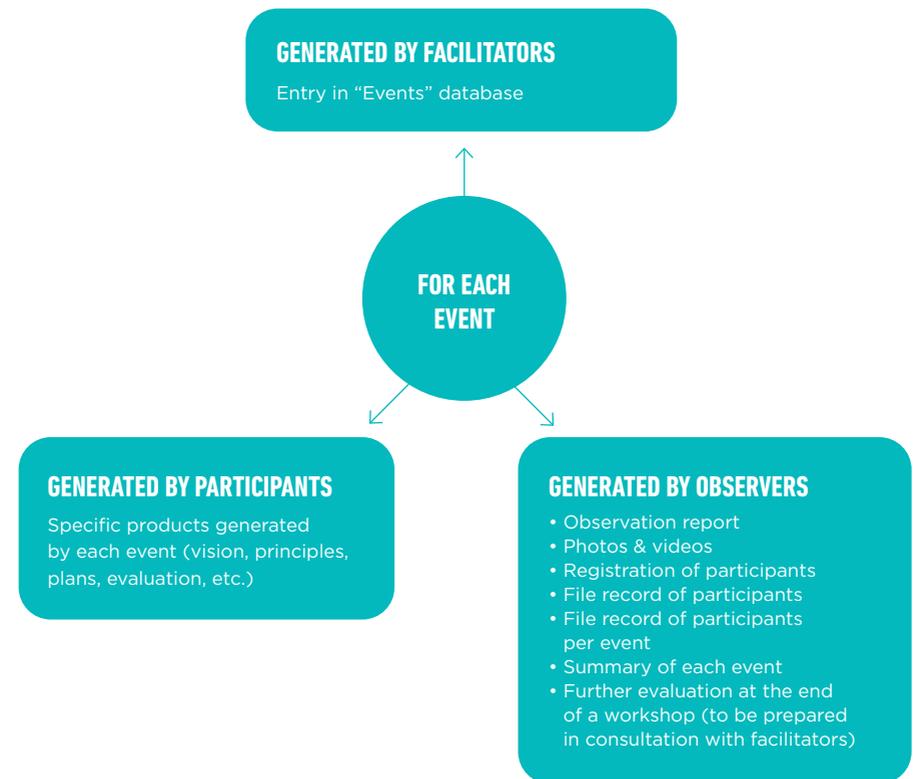


Figure 4. Various products generated by participatory events

# CO-CONSTRUCTION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF AN INCLUSION SCHEME: LEVERS AND CONSTRAINTS

## Results

The approach described above has thus been deployed in the six zones of the PACTE programme. Workshops involving the local population have been conducted since 2018 (c.f. Fig. 3) and have been monitored and evaluated by observers, and by monitoring and evaluation officers. The concern was, *inter alia*, to monitor the inclusion of women and young people in the PACTE programme, and to adapt the scheme in the interests of their optimum empowerment.

### *Obstacles to the involvement of women and young people in rural development in Tunisia*

This approach has been perceived as necessary, on the grounds that obstacles to the involvement of women and young people in rural development in Tunisia are relatively numerous.

#### Sociocultural obstacles

In rural zones of Tunisia, sociocultural traditions associated with a patriarchal society frequently prevail over relatively progressive and inclusive legislative, regulatory and institutional frameworks.

**Certain population groups, including women, young people and the poor<sup>1</sup>, are thus subject to de facto marginalization, and are under-represented in decision-making in the political and public arena [OECD, 2018].**

Although their contribution remains under-estimated by statistics and national reports [Gaillard *et al.*, 2018], women contribute substantially to agricultural work, whether on the family farm or as daily workers on other farms [Fautras, 2016]. They

1. The poor are defined by the OECD as people whose income is below the poverty line, i.e. half of the median household income (OECD, 2021)

are frequently assigned to “light duties” on the farm (harvesting of esparto grass or aromatic plants, pasturing over short distances, milking, etc.), whereas “responsible” tasks (irrigation, labour, etc.) are generally undertaken by men [Fautras, 2016]. In addition, women devote, on average, eight times more of their time to unpaid domestic work than men [according to the Ministry of Business for Women, 2006]. As a result, their financial independence is generally highly limited, and they are less available than men to participate in public and political life.

Moreover, women are “*virtually excluded from ownership of agricultural land, and possess no other genuine collateral which will permit access to bank funding. By area, they own only some 5% of agricultural land in total*” [Boughzala *et al.*, 2020]. This is largely accounted for by traditional rules of inheritance, from which women are frequently excluded in practice [Fautras, 2016]. In addition, women in rural Tunisia continue to suffer discrimination in terms of their civil and family rights and criminal protection, particularly against abuse [CREDIF, 2016]. They enjoy only limited access to health care and education, and are more susceptible to unemployment and discrimination vis-à-vis employment and mobility (World Economic Forum, 2018).

#### Economic obstacles

Above and beyond patriarchal traditions, other factors constitute a more specific obstacle to the involvement of young people.

**Many vulnerable regions, including those targeted by the PACTE programme, fuelled the origins of the 2011 revolution, which was triggered by young people protesting against poverty, unemployment and social inequalities [Boughzala *et al.*, 2020].**

Ten years later, however, these inequalities persist, and young people in rural areas continue to lack professional opportunities and prospects. Many of them are consequently reluctant to get involved in territorial development, either because they are planning to leave their locality, or because they see no future in that locality. In practice, the absence of opportunities for viable family agriculture results in the substantial seasonal, if not permanent migration of young people to urban and industrial centres, in search of jobs [Schwoob & Elloumi, 2018].

Finally, observation work undertaken during the initial stages of the PACTE programme also suggests that traditional masculine power may have been reinforced by the modes of intervention of previous development programmes, during which only the head of the family was consulted. This issue has been highlighted by a number of observers, who report statements such as: “*There is no reason for my wife to get involved, because I am here.*” Male participants have

# CO-CONSTRUCTION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF AN INCLUSION SCHEME: LEVERS AND CONSTRAINTS

also attempted to register their wives and children in the list of persons attending workshops, in the hope of receiving individual grants. Observers have explained to them that the sole purpose of registration was to establish who was taking part in the programme, and to confirm the involvement of all parties, rather than to identify any beneficiaries of direct grants.

Multiple factors therefore combine to baulk the active involvement of women and young people in public and political life, and in discussions on territorial development.

## *Facilitation and evaluation: levers for inclusion and empowerment*

In response to these observations, various initiatives for the facilitation and organization of collective workshops, the establishment of rules of governance and the enhancement of the capacities of residents have been undertaken in the interests of promoting inclusion and the empowerment of women and young people under the PACTE programme.

### **Adaptation of periods, times and days of workshops**

**In the first instance, the systematic registration of participants at the various events, and the observation of speakers and discussions on issues of gender and the involvement of young people, have made it possible to monitor the level of participation of women and young people in the various workshops.**

In certain territories where women and young people have been particularly difficult to motivate, or have been present but somewhat passive (Kairouan, Siliana), these observations have been useful to facilitators in the deployment of particular efforts for the greater inclusion of women and young people. In Kairouan, when women were not in attendance, facilitators asked the men present to go and find

them, and deferred the start of the workshop in order to allow women to attend. In Bizerte, when women were unable to attend a workshop because they were working in the fields, additional dedicated workshops for women were organized, in order to allow their continuing involvement in the scheme. Insofar as possible, periods, times and days of workshops have been organized in the interests of ensuring the attendance of the greatest number of women possible (for example, on days of heavy rain, when agricultural work is not possible).

### **Organization of groups and terms of facilitation**

During workshops, various initiatives have been undertaken to encourage self-expression on the part of women and young people. Feedback from observers, and a sound knowledge of zones of intervention on the part of facilitators, have been used to identify those zones where this was necessary. For example, in Siliana or Sidi Bouzid, during the stage for the proposal of initiatives, facilitators separated participants into gender groups, and a facilitator was designated to assume the role of moderator for groups of women, in the interests of encouraging self-expression by participants. Likewise, in Sidi Bouzid, groups comprised of young people were constituted during workshops, in order to propose initiatives in the field of culture and leisure.

**During the diagnostic analysis stage, facilitators and observers noted that women did not refer to the same development issues and concerns as men. Accordingly, at the voting stage for the definition of priority issues in the zone concerned, it was decided that women's votes should be distinguished from those of men (for example, by the use of toothpicks of different lengths or separate voting stations), in to ensure the consideration of priority issues for women in the further stages of the process.**

All these initiatives have paved the way for improved visibility and the greater sensitivity of the participatory process vis-à-vis gender, and for the consideration of the desired dynamics for change as a function of gender, in a transformational perspective.

In terms of the election of representatives of the local population to the territorial committee, observers and researchers have noted that, in a number of territories, men attempted to influence voting by women and young people. In order to limit this pressure, separate voting booths or ballot boxes were installed. Likewise, a facilitator or observer were present to assist any illiterate persons with voting, in order to limit any external influence. Naturally, these initiatives only partially reduce the influence of men upon the voting of women and young people, as they do not impact upon any pressure exerted in the home. Nevertheless, the practice of visiting homes to collect votes from elderly women, for example, undeniably provided a

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facility for self-expression in a context in which there was otherwise little opportunity to do so. This was borne out by the smiles and happy faces worn after placing their votes in the ballot box, which observers interpreted as signs of pride.

## Governance and decision-making

**Finally, the participatory process itself has been conceived with a view to maximizing the inclusion of women and young people. The territorial committee is comprised of a college of young sponsors of ideas, and is specifically intended to be conducive to the involvement of young women and men in the scheme, and to encourage the assumption of initiatives on their part.**

The recruitment of young people to this college employed an entirely different approach to that applied to other colleges: an invitation was launched in the zone concerned, via social media, for young people to submit their ideas in the form of short videos. Observers supported young people who wished to apply, but who had no recording facilities, by creating videos in collaboration with the latter (in Kef, for example, the observer completed 23 videos out of the 30 applications received in total). In Kef, the majority of young applicants had not participated in any PACTE workshop beforehand – this reflects both the added value delivered by this college and its recruitment mechanism, and the limitations of previous endeavours of the programme to facilitate the inclusion of these young people.

The territorial committee is also comprised of a college of territorial representatives, which is mandatorily comprised of 50% women. In Ain El Jouza in Siliana, for example, facilitators have experienced difficulties in finding a female representative. The facilitator had identified a woman who was comfortable expressing herself in public, but who was reluctant to serve as a representative, on the grounds that she was illiterate. The facilitator encouraged this woman to apply for the position, with a reassurance that forthcoming workshops would involve a minimum of written media, in the interests of promoting the participation of

all parties. This woman ultimately agreed to serve as a representative for her territory, and now takes part in territorial committee meetings. A specific and dedicated preparatory workshop for representatives of local populations has also been organized, with a view to making it easier for them to speak subsequently before the territorial committee, in the company of representatives of other colleges (elected representatives, private companies, civil society), who are more accustomed to speaking in public and arguing a case.

## Conclusion

**The PACTE programme has co-constructed, in tandem with stakeholders for rural development, a scheme for the inclusion of marginalized populations, and for the monitoring and evaluation of this inclusion, based upon both systematic observation and the facilitation and organization of events, and upon strict rules of governance. These rules are protective, and are intended to maintain a context which is conducive to the regulation of relations of power. Co-construction of the inclusion scheme, and the monitoring and evaluation thereof, has provided a possibility for the adaption of the scheme mid-stream, on the basis of reports and records from observers and monitoring and evaluation officers, in the interests of promoting the active involvement of women and young people.**

This approach has initiated an empowerment of women and young people in the intervention zones of the programme. This is borne out, for example, by the fact that some women and young people have sponsored their own dedicated projects, that housewives have been actively and regularly involved in workshops, and that some have agreed to act as representatives of their peers in the territorial development committee.

Empowerment is a multidimensional process, which requires dedicated time and space if stakeholders are to be permitted the necessary time to grasp the socio-cultural, economic and political mechanisms of exclusion, and the manner in which the latter influences relations of power. In this respect, PACTE still has room for improvement. In practice, many of the women who sit on the territorial committee have had to obtain permission to do so beforehand from their husbands or fathers. The disengagement of some young people has also been observed, once they learn that the scheme will not finance their individual projects in the absence of an extended dialogue or validation by territorial committees. This implies that they do not feel capable of acting alone, nor of mobilizing the additional human and financial resources required for the realization of their initiatives.

# CO-CONSTRUCTION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF AN INCLUSION SCHEME: LEVERS AND CONSTRAINTS

**The ambition of the PACTE programme is that the growing involvement of these stakeholders in the co-construction and evaluation of this scheme over the months and years ahead will result in their progressive empowerment, by highlighting the factors involved in their exclusion and conferring the power to make decisions, both on their own behalf and collectively.**

To date, in practice, the involvement of women and young people within intervention zones in the co-construction and evaluation of the scheme has been highly limited, except through the collection of certain data and work undertaken by observers who, themselves, are young women and men from the target regions concerned. Guided by previous experience [Hassenforder *et al.*, 2021], this has been a conscious choice, in the interests of permitting participants to start by constituting a collective for the sharing of their knowledge and expectations, before contributing to the structuring and evaluation of the scheme, which may be perceived by the uninitiated as abstract activities. As this initiation phase of the PACTE programme has now been completed, it is intended, in the forthcoming stages, that territorial committees should concomitantly establish development plans for their respective zones of intervention, and evaluate the extent to which these plans will contribute to the changes sought.

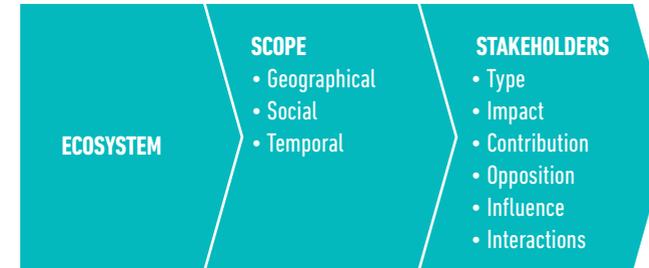
It is our hope that this feedback will be echoed in further testimonies from stakeholders involved in transformative projects and that, together, they will contribute to the more systematic deployment of approaches to the co-construction of the inclusion process and the monitoring and evaluation thereof, in the interests of the increased involvement of women and young people in public and political life in Tunisia, and elsewhere in the world.

# Annex 1. The four stages of the ImpresS ex ante process

(source: Blundo Canto *et al.*, 2020)



## CONSTRUCTION OF AN INTERVENTION NARRATIVE



## MAPPING OF DESIRABLE CHANGES AND...



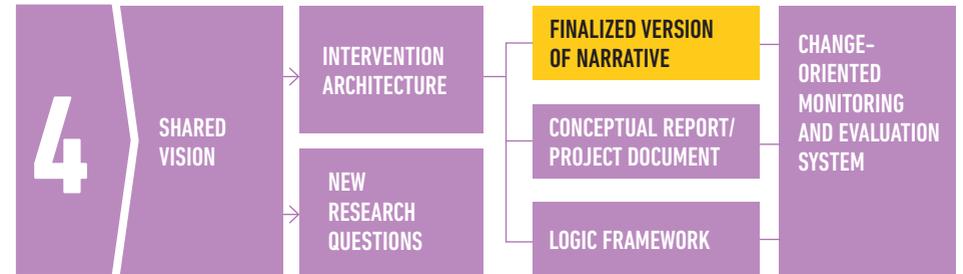
## ... CONSTRUCTION OF INTERVENTION STRATEGY



## CONSOLIDATION OF IMPACT PATHWAY



## CLASSIFICATION OF IMPACT PATHWAY GENERATED IN THE FORM OF VARIOUS PRODUCTS



# CO-CONSTRUCTION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF AN INCLUSION SCHEME: LEVERS AND CONSTRAINTS

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# 03

## EMPOWERMENT THROUGH A GENDER LENS

The third part proposes to observe the existing links between inclusion, gender, intersectionality and empowerment. Beyond questions of representation or “targeting” of women in actions, how can we create spaces that really strengthen empowerment? How can we take into account the specificities of women’s and/or gender minorities’ situations? How does this affect actions? These questions are addressed through field experiences, a model of empowerment processes and a reflection on the role of evaluators in the dynamics of social transformation.



*Empowerment: a path to more choice*

# EMPOWERMENT AS AN APPROACH TO SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

KLARA HELLEBRANDOVA AND ARNAUD LAABAN

On the basis of our personal experience as consultants, it is our intention to describe the pathway which has led us to appropriate the concept of empowerment as a methodological approach which is appropriate to the social changes which we have observed. We start from the basis of a notional project, inspired by numerous working experiences, as a means of illustrating the biases that we, whether as stakeholders in international solidarity, consultants, project managers or sponsors can naturally assume in our actions, and the potential consequences of this assumption. We then describe the manner in which a systemic and multi-dimensional approach, focused on empowerment, can deliver added value to initiatives for international solidarity, together with their definition, deployment and evaluation.

## Occasions when methodological tools can cause us to misinterpret genuine effects

It all started with a project in Central America<sup>1</sup>. This fulfilled all the necessary criteria of suitability from the viewpoint of an evaluator or project sponsors: a preliminary diagnostic analysis, studies, a specific policy framework, an experienced team,

1. As explained in the introduction, this is in fact a "patchwork" of different projects that we have observed. We refer to We speak of a single project, which we have highlighted, to facilitate understanding.

# EMPOWERMENT AS AN APPROACH TO SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

quantitative indicators, a monitoring and evaluation system worthy of the name, fine photographs and unreservedly positive testimonies. Moreover, this project had been developed by the application of a methodology conceived by seasoned consultants.

This project was intended to support the economic independence of women in a coastal region, in the context of a two-year funding programme. According to the diagnostic analysis upon which this project was based, the key obstacle identified to the independence of women in the most underprivileged areas of this region was the absence of economic income, which was regarded as the consequence of a lack of technical and/or academic training for the persons concerned.

Logically, the proposed remedy to this situation under the terms of the project involved the provision of short-term professional training to women in the areas concerned, which is considered as the best means of generating a transformative impact upon their lives within a short time. For the definition of this training, a consultant was appointed to undertake an analysis of the labour market in the region, and to identify those sectors of the formal economy in which employment opportunities existed, requiring no more than a basic technical training. The sectors thus identified were catering (cooks or waitresses), beauty (hairdressers or manicurists), or the hotel trade (housekeeping staff).

Training schemes were set up and offered to all women, through the establishment of partnerships with local training institutes. Training did not proceed without some snags – a number of trainers pointed the finger at the “behaviour” of certain participants, who were lacking in diligence or paid little attention to their instructors. One year later, virtually no women had succeeded in finding a job, notwithstanding numerous applications and the support of the NGO. However, the project team did not fail to respond. Accordingly, the majority of activities scheduled for the second year were redirected towards entrepreneurship. In practice, the development of a small productive business from their own homes also represented a means of contributing to the economic independence of women. Specific short training courses were offered in conventional trades: hairdress-

ing, catering, needlework, etc.. Additionally, a start-up capital resource – in kind – (essential equipment for the productive initiative concerned), of a value in the range of \$US 100 – 200, was distributed to all participants. As participants were several times more numerous than anticipated, it was sometimes necessary for equipment to be divided between two beneficiaries.

Ultimately, the most important indicators were achieved: a number of women equal to, if not exceeding the target figure had achieved “employment status” by the end of the project, primarily through entrepreneurship. These were the results which were presented to partners and backers.

This might have been the customary story of a project which encounters initial difficulties, but which then succeeds, somehow, in achieving its objectives.

**However, individual interviews revealed a different reality: participants were highly dissatisfied with the project, experiencing immense frustration, or even anger, which they had been reluctant to express to the project team for fear of being considered ungrateful.**

Firstly, this training was a source of huge disappointment: previously, women had been able to attribute their failure to find work to a lack of training – a situation which might appear logical, given their social condition. Now, this failure was explained exclusively by “personal failings”, rather than external factors. In other words, it was attributed to an innate absence of capability or talent. This corresponds to a definition of the concept of the “naturalization<sup>2</sup>” of inequalities, originating from a structure of systematic discrimination against a social group (described as an oppressive system). Those few women who had found work were no more satisfied. They had worked under difficult conditions, including night-time working, for example, which had proved to be hazardous as a result of the risk of sexual abuse in the workplace or during night-time journeys through districts controlled by gangs. This also involved substantial transport costs, outside timetabled hours for public transport.

Entrepreneurship has not necessarily fared any more successfully. The capital provided was not sufficient to purchase the minimum equipment required. It was necessary to make a choice: either a dryer or a hair straightener, a mixer or an oven. Sharing between two persons was often a necessity, as insufficient equipment was available, in relation to the number of participants. Moreover, from one day to the next, three or four hairdressers might be found in the same community, competing with one another but not necessarily entirely fulfilling the specific nature of demand. Finally, training was frequently too brief, and incomplete.

2. In the sense of Bourdieu and Passeron in “Les Héritiers”, 1964

# EMPOWERMENT AS AN APPROACH TO SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

**Our attention has been drawn to the fact that neither the diagnostic analysis, nor the market study, nor the project reports refer to an issue which might nevertheless be considered as fundamental. In practice, female participants in the project constituted a specific social group, as they were comprised of women of African descent, to a proportion of 90%.**

This is by no means insignificant, in a region which bears the stamp of colonial industry (palm cultivation, sugar cane, etc.). Women of African descent are indeed affected by a combination of vulnerability factors and forms of discrimination: they are the object of savage structural racism, are particularly vulnerable victims of human trafficking, and are targeted by active armed groups in the region, not to mention intra-familial abuse, lack of access to basic public infrastructures, etc.. Moreover, the majority of women questioned individually reported major traumas: rape, intra-familial abuse, the violent death of close relatives, etc.. However, these traumas were not taken into account during training or support activities, even though they were the source of profound emotional and relational difficulties which might severely impair professional integration. Furthermore, the project failed to draw upon the potential skills of these communities: Collective organization, craft skills, expertise in beauty treatments for women of African descent, and skills in traditional agriculture, which are passed down from mother to daughter. Finally, the structure of the economy continues to be based upon a colonial rationale. Hotels, restaurants and retail businesses are owned by large families whose names reflect their Iberian origins, and whose fortunes, originally derived from slavery, continue to be sustained by activities which date back to that era: sugar plantations or African palm plantations, involving unfit working conditions. Political power (whether locally or nationally), military power (legitimate or illegitimate) and spiritual power are also concentrated in the hands of these same families<sup>3</sup>.

3. For a description of the survival of the feudal and colonial system in Latin America, read Eduardo Galeano "America" by Eduardo Galeano (1971)

**However, failure to take account of this reality, and the silence surrounding colonial relations, might result in irrelevant actions.** For example, the provision of hairdressing training focused exclusively upon hair straightening, or grooming in "Western" styles, whereas the women concerned live in communities of African descent, or the encouragement of women to seek employment in the hotel sector, which is notorious for its failure to recruit persons of African descent.

Through a combination of circumstances, we have had the opportunity to evaluate, in the light of the above, a project<sup>4</sup> which was focused to an equally explicit extent upon the independence of women. This project was constructed in accordance with an inclusive rationale vis-à-vis participants, who were stakeholders in its preliminary analysis and definition. The project was based upon a collective, rather than an individual approach: the intention was to support groups, and the empowerment thereof, in their capacity as a group, and not only as individuals. **A collective not only generates relations of solidarity and trust between its different members – an essential consideration for persons in a situation of disempowerment, who are frequently isolated – but also constitutes a form of action which, in many cultural contexts, makes more sense than individual action.** Moreover, this project assigned a predominant position to cognitive issues (self-confidence, self-esteem, etc.), assuming the role of a long-term and progressive support facility, aimed at a limited number of participants. Through the application of the intersectional gender system, together with tools derived from popular education, the project succeeded in changing the lives of a number of women.

**In practice, this project allowed participants to lay the foundations for the construction of their economic independence: the restoration of self-confidence, recognition of their individual capacities and the capacities of the group, a commitment to act for the transformation of their own situation and that of those around them, and an improved understanding of the economic, social or political levers required for this purpose.**

**We have observed that this approach has been accompanied by a substantial number of positive external factors for participants and, more broadly, for their community: a reduction in intra-familial abuse, improved access to women's and children's rights, etc..** This applies, for example, to a collective of women in a suburban district of the capital city of one West African country, which was constituted on the basis of a small-scale productive initiative. With very limited resources, women in this collective have been able to consolidate this activity, to the point where it generates a certain degree of income. They have thus become leaders in their districts, making their voices heard to the authorities in the interests of

4. Here again, it is a patchwork of projects, built from several experiences, presented as a single project to promote reading.

# EMPOWERMENT AS AN APPROACH TO SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

protecting their rights, and assuming the role of territorial representatives vis-à-vis public institutions in the fight against sexual abuse. Other women have followed in their wake, who have also constituted collectives based upon productive initiatives.

However, indicators for this project entirely excluded any reporting of these effects, which are undoubtedly complex to detect. These indicators focused entirely upon economic or employment issues, rather than upon self-confidence, social relations or local living conditions. In fact, these “conventional” indicators appeared to be entirely at odds with the essential rationale of the project, and completely overlooked the substance of its added value: the pursuit of work on empowerment, in all its dimensions, consideration of the issue of employment and earnings as one lever for empowerment, among others, and not as a short-term end in itself. Based upon the indicators for this project, an external observer might well arrive at opposite conclusions to those suggested by effects observed in the field. We have also had access to a number of less than complimentary mission reports from certain backers, which refer to the specific example of the women’s collective described above.

This two-fold experience has encouraged us to pursue the in-depth questioning of our own role as consultants, whose recommendations can ultimately impact upon projects. How is it possible to arrive at a situation where indicators are so far removed from the reality of effects generated by projects? On the one hand, we have evaluated a project, the results of which match the project indicators, but which has generated significant negative effects for its target public. On the other, we have had occasion to evaluate a project, the effects of which are genuinely transformative and sustainable, but which cannot be perceived using conventional monitoring and evaluation tools.

**We have realized that, as consultants, had we gone no further than a superficial analysis of indicators, we might have contributed to the maintenance of this blind spot. Conversely, our appropriation of resources for the conduct of a detailed evaluation of this project has allowed us to more effectively identify the factors involved in an empowerment process.**

This is the benefit of the approach promoted by F3E: progressing beyond the criteria applied by the DAC (Development Assistance Committee) of the OECD for the in-depth analysis of the relevance of the approach adopted by projects, their added value or the changes which they generate.

## **Empowerment, a transformative process which implies an initial situation of disempowerment**

On the basis of these experiences, we studied the existing literature in order to identify concepts and theoretical arguments which reflected our observations. We progressed rapidly from the concept of independence – which is widely employed in the field of international solidarity – or emancipation – the term preferred by the first wave of feminists – to that of “empowerment”.

Emancipation signifies a release from authority, or from a state of dependence or domination, whereas independence describes the power to define one’s own rules. These concepts presume a separation vis-à-vis another individual or a collective, and thus entail an expression of individuality.

**However, according to our observations, derived from contact with communities in working-class districts, whether indigenous or of African descent, the transformation of living conditions is not necessarily dependent upon release from a group, particularly in societies which are not based upon individualism. Transformation implies, conversely, a capability to influence the decisions of a group, without being overridden by the latter or by a proportion of its members.**

For example, transformation, for an indigenous woman, may involve a transition from a situation of invisibility within the community to the central status of an “apu” (a term describing a tribal chief in various indigenous Amazonian languages). In this case, leaving a group is frequently a default option, which is preferred when it is not possible to improve a personal situation which has now become intolerable, and for which no solution within the context of the group can be envisaged.

Although there is no single definition of empowerment, the latter can be described as a transformative process which permits a transition from a situation of disempowerment to a situation of empowerment. As Naila Kabeer (1999), Professor at the Gender Institute of the London School of Economics and Political Science puts it: “One means of conceiving power is to envisage it in terms of the capac-

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*ity to make choices. To be disempowered is to be deprived of choice, whereas empowerment describes the processes whereby those who have been deprived of the capacity to make choices acquire this capacity. In other words, empowerment implies change. Persons who exercise a large number of choices in their lives may have a great deal of power, but they are not empowered [...] because they were never deprived of power in the first place."*

As Anita Dighe (1993) explains: "*the term empowerment is targeted at marginalized groups – those with no land, no power and no voice*", i.e. those population groups which Agenda 2030 has invited us to focus upon, through the slogan *No-one Left Behind* and indicators which are more strongly targeted at the reduction of inequalities than the achievement of an absolute and quantified objective.

This observation is extremely important, as it highlights a fundamental pitfall of policies for aid and cooperation in development, financing mechanisms and associated reporting facilities.

**Stakeholders in international solidarity are encouraged to focus upon the most vulnerable population groups, i.e. those population groups in a situation of disempowerment. For the majority of funding schemes, however, the term of projects cannot exceed two or three years, which is an extremely short duration. This represents an obstacle to the achievement of visible changes at an individual or collective level, which also requires the conduct of work on structural factors, such as the gender system, for example.**

This paradoxical imperative obliges project sponsors to make choices. They must either accept that empowerment is a long-term process, and identify resources for the maintenance of ongoing support which will be difficult to evaluate, or target a population group which is not genuinely in a situation of disempowerment, and for whom a few months of support will be sufficient to generate a measurable effect on their living conditions. We have seen a good number of

projects which fall into this second category: projects aimed at young graduates, who simply required a helping hand or a little time to find a job, support schemes for social and collective entrepreneurship aimed at members of higher socio-professional categories with a "baccalaureate + 5-year" qualification, projects for the protection of the rights of women who were not at all in a situation of disempowerment (executives at major multinational corporations), etc.. These projects are frequently defined by persons who are members, or who have been members of these same categories.

This pitfall regarding the duration of projects is compounded by a further paradoxical imperative concerning the volume of persons targeted. The greater the number of persons targeted, the more favourably the project concerned is evaluated. As we have seen, however, in order to produce a genuinely transformative change, it is preferable to focus upon small groups who, once engaged in a robust process of empowerment, will then be able to generate a dynamic at local level, whether with external support and cooperation or otherwise. However, a project which, for a given budget, targets a lower number of participants, runs a strong risk of failing to be adopted. Here again, project sponsors are obliged, either to identify solutions which will allow them to concentrate on a limited number of persons without having their application for funding rejected, or to target a greater number of persons from the outset, with an acceptance that the anticipated impact will be less substantial and less sustainable.

Accordingly, many projects fail to meet their target for change, and may even contribute to situations in which the most vulnerable groups are left a little further behind.

## **Empowerment – a multi-dimensional approach**

A further pitfall of projects which are aimed at transforming the lives of young people and/or women in a situation of disempowerment is the devotion of an exclusive focus to economic independence. In most cases, this is gauged on the basis of monetary factors, and conceived from an individual perspective: one person equates to one training course, one job or one individual business. This is suggested by the strategic national frameworks of member countries of the DAC of the OECD. For example, the 2018-2022 international strategy of France for equality between women and men identifies "*the economic independence of women as a key vector for progress and development*". According to this document "*women and girls, generally deprived of access to assets, capital or any form of social insurance, are exposed to chronic economic vulnerability*".

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However, our experience in the evaluation and support of social transformation projects aimed at women and young people has shown that this focus on economic independence is not always the most effective approach, particularly where the most vulnerable groups are targeted.

**How is a business operation to be developed, even on a modest scale, if the subject believes that they have no skills or expertise, is incapable of speaking to others, and considers that their personal situation is simultaneously inescapable and deserved – in short, where oppressive systems such as male chauvinism, class prejudice or racism have become naturalized?**

This description may seem exaggerated, but unfortunately enjoys widespread currency among the most vulnerable groups. Moreover, we have observed situations in which women have been able to earn income, but this income has then been controlled and squandered by their husbands. Finally, if the activity which generates this income is undertaken in addition to domestic work (household tasks and childcare), resulting in situations in which these women are exhausted by a double, or even a triple working day, then the positive effects of economic independence must be called into question.

In consequence, we consider it far more relevant to adopt a multi-dimensional and systemic approach, which is not limited to economic independence, but which encompasses other dimensions at the same time. As Nelly Stromquist (1993), Professor of International Education at the University of Maryland, explains: *“If subordination is multi-faceted, then the same applies to empowerment. Empowerment is a socio-political concept which goes above and beyond “formal political participation” and “awareness”. A complete definition of empowerment needs to include cognitive, psychological, political and economic components.”*

**This definition is entirely consistent with our observations and experiences in the field, working with rural communities, whether indigenous or of African descent,**

or in the suburbs of major towns, with one addition: the relational dimension, i.e. where empowerment begins to influence close social relations, within families, couples or their immediate social circle.

## **No empowerment is possible unless the gender system and other oppressive factors are addressed**

Empowerment is closely linked to the issue of power and its unequal distribution within societies, resulting in disempowerment. Thus, as Naila Kabeer (1999) observes: *“if there is to be genuine choice, certain conditions must be fulfilled: 1) There must be alternatives – the option to choose differently. [...] 2) Alternatives must not only exist, they must also be perceived as such.”*

**It is therefore essential to adopt a gender-oriented approach in any work involving empowerment, as the gender system, once naturalized, prevents any conscious execution of these choices. It is therefore necessary to identify and highlight disempowerment factors associated with the gender system, and to understand how the latter interacts with other systems (for example, racism and class prejudice; this is described as intersectionality).**

Empowerment involves working on the capacities of individuals and groups as a means of addressing a context which is a vehicle for discrimination and obstacles, and of being better-equipped for this purpose, while working at the same time on the context which generates these factors of disempowerment. Without this work, which is undoubtedly exceptionally complex and slow, it will be difficult to achieve long-term and large-scale effects. And this not only applies to initiatives for the empowerment of women. Where young men are unable to pursue their studies because they are required to earn their daily bread immediately they are available to do so, are rejected from the economic and political structures of communities dominated by their “elders”, are unable to embrace their sexual orientation, or even to express their emotions, they also suffer from the gender system, even if they enjoy relative privileges under this system, in comparison with women.

## **Empowerment is both an individual and a collective process**

Our status as consultants or managers of projects originating from societies based upon individualism can also mislead us in our means of analyzing changes in the

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lives of persons targeted by initiatives for international solidarity. As described by Marloes A. Huis, Nina Hansen, Sabine Otten and Robert Lensink (2017): *“interventions are based upon the assumption whereby participation in an intervention will have effects, in terms of empowerment, and will be conducive to growth at an individual level. However, these interventions are frequently deployed in cultures which are traditionally based upon the collective.”* This may result in a cultural offset between the approach envisaged, and the manner in which the effects of initiatives undertaken are gauged. **Hence the importance, once again, of starting from a situated knowledge of the persons supported, and of developing this support structure in collaboration with the latter.**

Moreover, participation in a collective dynamic may, in itself, constitute a vector for empowerment. As Nelly Stromquist (1993) explains: *“the creation of a small and strongly cohesive group, in which members enjoy an identity, is essential. We know this because the limited size and the pro-active nature of these associations are such that many participants are able to gain experience and confidence, both in activities associated with leadership and in activities associated with membership.”* As we have observed, a group can constitute a safe space on the grounds of its stability, and its membership of persons who share a common reality, in which it is possible to forge emotional ties and bonds of solidarity. By addressing the situation of other members of the group, it is possible to become aware of disempowerment factors which might influence the personal situation of an individual member, but also of informal skills and qualities which are identified by the favourable regard of others.

**Acting in a group thus provides the courage to take this first step – often the most important – from awareness to action, or to regain a footing, given that the process of empowerment is not a linear one.**

## A proposed framework for the analysis of empowerment

On the basis of these considerations, we have developed our own framework for the analysis of empowerment in a multi-dimensional perspective, i.e. taking account of all its constituent elements. This is a scalable framework, which is capable of adaptation to different types of projects and contexts. It has been developed in the interests of a more effective grasp of the complexity of an evaluated project, which has generated transformative effects which assume little value under the terms of its own indicators, where the latter are focused on economic aspects.

**This framework is thus based upon four key dimensions:**

- 1. The economic dimension (cross-functional).** The generation of income, or access to social programmes for the coverage of the most basic needs (food, access to water, shelter), constitute preconditions for the process of empowerment. In their absence, it is difficult for a person to commit to a programme, of whatever kind. The generation of income may also be a vector for empowerment, to the extent that it permits the exertion of a greater influence upon household resources, the creation of a power relationship, and thus the acquisition of decision-making authority within the home. However, the generation of income is not sufficient in itself, and may be restricted by various limitations, as we have already seen. This is therefore a cross-functional dimension, which affects and reinforces the remaining dimensions, but which cannot be envisaged in isolation.
- 2. The cognitive dimension,** i.e. awareness, at an individual level, of oppressive factors which handicap capacity for decision-making and action, the role of the stakeholder in this oppressive system, and their capacity to make choices at both an individual and a collective level. This dimension may incorporate psychological elements, including the feeling of self-confidence or self-esteem, which are manifestations of this awareness at an individual level.
- 3. The relational dimension,** which corresponds to the manner in a person involved in a process of empowerment maintains relations with the people around them: in the home, in the family, within their group or their community. Marloes A. Huis, Nina Hansen, Sabine Otten and Robert Lensink (2017) propose a number of indicators for measuring this dimension: domestic abuse, power of negotiation within a couple, freedom of movement (in comparison with their husband or family), membership

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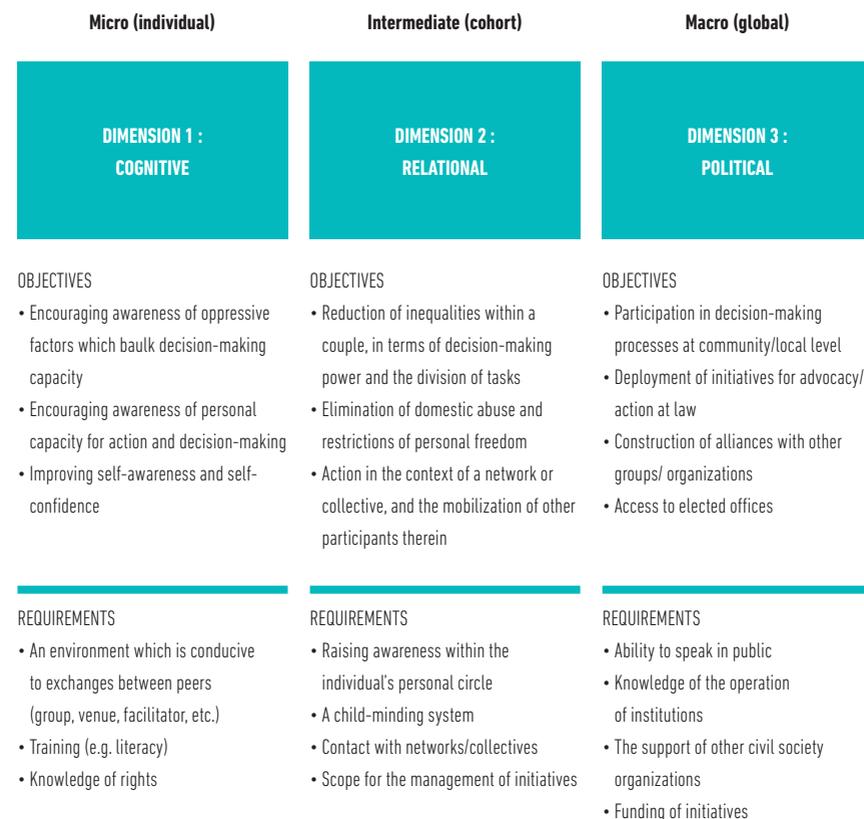
of networks/collectives, capacity to receive assistance from others (social capacity), or the capacity to act in a group.

**4. The political dimension<sup>5</sup> which,** according to Nelly Stromquist (1993) is: *“the capacity to analyse an environment in social and political terms, together with the capacity for organization and mobilization in order to achieve social change. In consequence, a process of empowerment involves the raising of individual awareness, and collective action is fundamental to the achievement of the social change sought.”* This political dimension is also the dimension which permits a change of scale: a person or group involved in a process of empowerment does not only act in the interests of generating individual change, or a change which is restricted to a group, but a global change at a macro level. In this context, the political dimension of empowerment is reflected by the capacity to assume responsibilities (leadership), to conduct initiatives for advocacy and construct alliances. This leadership may be individual or collective.

5. “Politics” should be understood in its etymological sense: the organisation of community life (from the Greek “polis” meaning “city”).

## The empowerment process

Chart developed by Arnaud Laaban and Klara Hellebrandova



### CROSS-FUNCTIONAL DIMENSION: SOCIO-ECONOMIC

- Generation of income from an economic activity, whether formal or otherwise, which is perceived as worthy and permits the coverage of basic needs
- Provision of scope for the primary accumulation of capital (savings or capacity for investment, however minimal)
- Promotion of independent decision-making in the context of entrepreneurship (at individual or collective level, according to the form preferred)
- Achievement of impact at a local level, in terms of jobs or services

- Opportunity or opportunities for activity
- Qualifications/training (technical and administrative, whether formal or otherwise)
- Capital/micro-credit (monetary or in kind)
- Relations/address book

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These dimensions are not set in stone. For example, in the case of a project which focuses on the empowerment of persons suffering from a socially stigmatizing disease, access to high-quality care will constitute a cross-functional dimension, additionally to or in place of the economic dimension. Likewise, within each dimension, the resulting markers and indicators will need to be adapted in accordance with the situated knowledge of the persons involved in a process of empowerment, the approach to the project and its context.

## Conclusion

Although international solidarity initiatives aimed at transforming the lives of women and young people are growing in number, and Agenda 2030 invites us to focus on the most underprivileged groups, many projects miss their target for social change, or may even generate negative effects. By focusing on the economic independence or employability of women and young people, without addressing cognitive aspects and the relations of these persons within their community, or without endeavouring to impact upon those factors which are the cause of their situation, it is difficult to generate transformative and sustainable change.

**In this regard, empowerment constitutes an appropriate systemic approach to social change, which permits the identification of complex social interactions which, in each case, are rooted in specific contexts. The adoption of empowerment implies the systemic consideration of the manner in which an initiative is defined and its results and impacts are gauged, in the light of a number of “reflex” responses: multi-dimensional thinking, collective context, gender, etc..**

This approach is now running up against limitations associated with the actual context for the eligibility of projects: the targeting of the greatest possible number of persons, within a limited time (two or three years). It is also limited by the personal cognitive biases of project sponsors, or of the consultants who analyze these projects.

There is no single correct methodology for this purpose. The framework which we have defined represents a guide for our own analysis, and will require ongoing modification, adaptation, expansion and review in response to the specific factors associated with each initiative and situation.

On the basis of the experiences described, we would suggest a number of recommendations for stakeholders in international solidarity.

### **For project sponsors**

The purpose of initiatives for the independence of young people or women needs to be questioned: what is the ultimate objective? What is the purpose of initiatives for the enhancement of skills and the generation of income? Has proper account been taken of specific factors in the disempowerment of the most vulnerable groups targeted?

A multi-dimensional approach to empowerment needs to be adopted. This is not necessarily the approach which we have described, as any methodological framework will need to take, as its basis, those who are engaged, or who will be engaged in the process of empowerment. The important factor is that this approach should be systemic, is not limited to a single dimension (exclusively economic, or exclusively cognitive) and is based upon the situated knowledge of the persons or groups supported.

Indicators must be defined which are not exclusively focused upon monetary economic aspects, but which can also gauge the impacts of a project upon the following: self-confidence, capability for interaction within and outside a group, the enhancement of informal skills, involvement in a community/local area, etc..

### **For consultants**

Certain “reflex” responses need to be developed in conjunction with the analysis of projects for the support of young people or women, whether from vulnerable groups or otherwise, particularly where these projects are substantial, and incorporate concepts such as *independence, economic inclusion, employability, etc.* What is the vision for social transformation which underlies a project? Is the supportive process systemic or specific? Are the objectives pursued consistent with the principle of *no-one left behind*? Is the approach adopted consistent with this target? Does the policy framework of the project, its theory of change and/or its indicators reflect, firstly, the approach adopted, and secondly the effects generated by the project? Does the definition of the project genuinely form part of the situated knowledge of participants? What are the effects generated, over and above purely economic aspects, or cognitive aspects only? Are there any negative effects associated with the activities conducted?, etc..

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The development of specific tools will allow the analysis of these effects, particularly tools originating from popular education, as these tools, through practical activities, can be employed to address more complex issues than a conventional methodology – a workshop or interviews focused on the self-perception of effects – and to observe interactions within a group, the manner in which decisions are reached within the latter, which formal or informal skills are deployed, etc.

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# WHEN SEXISM CEASES TO BE ROUTINE

Creating a place of work and a secure support space for homeless women

LOUISE LACOSTE AND LAURE TURCHET, CARTON PLEIN

## Introduction

“ We continue to fight the same battles – which can never be won once and for all – but by battling together, as a community, we can learn to identify new possibilities which otherwise would never have been visible to us. At the same time, we expand and enlarge our conception of freedom.”

ANGELA DAVIS, 2016

According to the most recent report of the Abbé Pierre Foundation, over 300,000 people are currently homeless [Abbé Pierre Foundation, 2021]. In 2012, according to the INSEE, the French National Institute of Statistics & Economic Studies, 75% of these people had no regular paid employment. Work, however, is a socially structuring value. Work generates a feeling of usefulness, and permits the sharing of skills and the forging or reforging of social connections, particularly where the latter have been undermined. This observation led to the establishment of the *Carton Plein* (“Full Box”) association in 2012. Each year, the association supports 70 homeless or extremely vulnerable people through a business for the recycling, sale, delivery and collection of cardboard boxes in Paris and Nanterre. These jobs are designed to be accessible and appropriate, and to generate, throughout the process of support, an increase in the skills of waste pickers (employees supported by “First Hours” device (“*Premières heures*”)).

## THE “FIRST HOURS” DEVICE

This device was created by the Emmaüs Défi association and formally institutionalized by the City of Paris authorities in 2011. It provides homeless people living in the capital with a one-year programme of inclusion through work.

Each year, approximately 350 people are supported by this device, which is sponsored by some twenty Parisian associations. These people work for a few hours per week, as a means of readapting to the economic and social world, finding accommodation, taking care of their health and learning to restore their self-confidence.

This device has been trialled in Les Hauts-de-Seine, and is now spreading to a national level, under the management of the “Convergence France” inclusion agency.

At *Carton Plein*, we address those people in greatest difficulty, and offer tailored support, using the most horizontal management structure possible. For the past two years and more, we have been faced with a key issue: the support of women, and their place in our device. Although the proportion of women and families among the homeless has increased continuously since 2012, they remain under-represented in the majority of work-based inclusion devices.

This article is intended to represent, in a collaborative manner, the process of reflection which has been constituted from multiple viewpoints, involving all members of the team. We describe the procedure established by *Carton Plein*, which both queries and advances its practices for the support of women. This procedure can be classified as action-research, as it stems from a fruitful collaboration between trainers within the team, and from a sociological analysis which has been developed in and through action. [Rhéaume, 1982]

Our procedure is described in three stages. Firstly, we relate those instances of gender abuse which have been possible within the device. We then clarify the manner in which staff teams at the association have worked together on their social working attitude, with a view to adapting support practices for the consideration of

women. Finally, we review initiatives which been deployed for the increased inclusion of women in the device.

## Observing the everyday nature of gender abuse

In 2017, the team responsible for the “First Hours” device was comprised of four *Carton Plein* employees: three men and one woman. In 2019, they were still four in number: three women and one man. In 2021, the team is comprised of five women and one man. Between 2017 and 2021, there has thus been a change in the gender configuration of the team, resulting in fundamental alteration in the tenor of social gender relations.

### **Deconstructing the normalization of routine sexism**

Everyday interactions were previously rooted in the normalization of certain sexist relations, originating both from supported persons and support staff, associated with a culture in which sexism was normalized, particularly through humour [Lacoste, 2019]. In 2017, social support staff in the device occasionally employed humour with a sexual connotation as a point of entry to their relations with the persons supported, and as a medium for working interactions with their colleagues. Firstly, this compromised the legitimacy of the role of trainers, and secondly resulted in the tolerance and invisibility of occasionally problematic interactions and instances of gender abuse (misdirected looks, comments on physical appearance, inappropriate actions). Mention should be made here of the type of gender ignorance in social work described by Marc Bessin, who has shown that the absence of gender-related content in social work training restricts the scope for trainers to query the gender-based dimension of their working practices. [Bessin, 2013].

This observation gave rise to the desire to work as a team on the issue of gender in support operations.

**The objective was to consider the everyday risk of the isolation of supported women, and the invisibility of the gender abuse to which they might be subject.**

### **Consideration of the gender abuse experienced by female waste pickers, in the interests of creating a secure space**

According to Marie Loison-Leruste, the gender of women constitutes a “*vulnerability factor*”, to the extent that “*it exposes them to specific forms of abuse*”. The

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histories and life stories of homeless women are frequently shaped by gender abuse, which is regularly responsible for the loss of their homes (battered wives, or women experiencing difficult break-ups). In the case of homeless migrant women, it is generally gender abuse which forces them to flee their country, or which causes them to be removed from it [Loison-Leruste, Perrier, 2019]. Homeless women are particularly vulnerable to abuse in the streets.

**In addition to being vulnerable, homeless women frequently lack visibility in social intervention devices. In 2018, women accounted for barely 10% of the persons supported by *Carton Plein*.**

In that same year, in Paris, homeless women represented 12% of persons registered during the “Night of Solidarity” (“*Nuit de la Solidarité*”). According to INSEE, in 2012<sup>1</sup>, women accounted for 38% of homeless people<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly, homeless women have, by definition, been under-represented in the population of supported persons.

This under-representation is not unusual. The reception, accommodation and integration sector is highly segmented according to gender: women have a limited presence in reception and social integration facilities, except those which are specifically dedicated for this purpose (night shelters reserved for women). Homeless women tend to avoid mixed-gender day centers, as a protective strategy against the gender abuse to which they are exposed in these contexts. In the field of integration through economic activity (IEA), the majority of women are present in facilities where activities are gender-oriented (laundries, collective catering, domestic services). This generates their assignment to a social role

1. The most recent “Homelessness” survey conducted by the INSEE dates back to 2012. Unfortunately, no statistical survey of this issue on a national scale has since been conducted.

2. Persons without shelter are those who have spent the previous night in a location which is not intended for occupation. The category of homeless people includes persons without shelter, and those accommodated by third parties, in collective accommodation centres, welfare hostels and other forms of collective, rescue and inclusion accommodation.

which is gender-oriented by the nature of the jobs which are on offer to them. In *Carton Plein* too, gender segmentation restricts the position of women in the association: structures for the orientation of persons within this device tend to omit the unprompted orientation of women. Jobs at *Carton Plein* are performed in workshops (manual labour) or by bike (physical labour), and are frequently classified as jobs for men, in a stereotypical manner.

**Further to these observations, a collective process of reflection on social relations and gender has been initiated. This initial interaction between sociology and social work was primarily intended to deconstruct mechanisms for the normalization of sexism within the team.**

We believed at the time, and continue to believe that this deconstruction is necessary to a collective conception of the role of women and the specific nature of support for women in the association. Our first objective was to consider the situations and working practices of permanent staff and waste pickers, in order to create a safe place<sup>3</sup>, in other words a secure working space for supported women.

## Initiation of a collective reflection for the consideration of gender in working situations

While *Carton Plein* has always applied the most horizontal and the most supportive forms of management possible, in order to foster confidence among supported persons, its operations have frequently failed to query the gender-oriented dimension of support and personal pathways pursued.

**For the generation of collective action-research on the issue of gender, our starting point was the established basis of our supporting practices. The challenge was then to adapt each of these practices to the specific role of women within our association, in order to allow women to feel at home.**

3. This refers to a concept created by militant queers in the USA during the 1960s. The term describes a place where marginalized persons can exist in a benevolent environment, which is removed from the social relations of dominance which encumber them. We use this term to describe the efforts deployed by *Carton Plein* to ensure that every person is treated equally at their place of work, and perceives it as a place of safety.

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## Constructing an organizational culture based upon gender issues

Working on sexism as a team has not always been an obvious exercise. According to Angela Davis “*feminist methodologies for research and organization oblige us to explore links which are not always obvious, leading us to engage with our contradictions and discover the productive aspects of these contradictions, together with new methods of reflection and action.*” [Davis, 2016]. The dialogue between sociology and social working practice can, in many respects, give rise to contradictions. In practice, it is not simple to generate a dialogue and common thinking from two different perspectives: a reflective and analytical process of sociological research, and work undertaken in the field by training staff responsible for the device, which is rooted in action. These perspectives do not necessarily coalesce with a high degree of fluidity. Nevertheless, a shared process of reflection and progression is essential, if research is to be rooted in action and experimentation is to be rooted in reflection. The constitution of working groups and the production of in-house documents on sexism within the device represent a first step.

**The intention was the combined involvement of the various employees of the association in the drafting of a charter for the attention of permanent staff, concerning attitudes and reactions to be adopted in response to gender abuse: when to intervene, when to alert colleagues, when to involve the law, etc..**

This charter has been supplemented by practical and legislative resources. The key idea behind the constitution of these working groups was that trainers should be provided with the necessary tools to identify and respond to gender abuse experienced by female waste pickers, and by trainers themselves. Discussions and the production of text documents represent highly theoretical tools, which are far removed from the reality of work in the field. These exchanges have nevertheless

permitted the production of an initial reference resource, with a common language for addressing sexism within the device.

A second tool which we have deployed is forum theatre. Forum theatre is an instructional tool, involving aspects of the theatre of the oppressed and popular education. It employs a principle for the collective identification of means for the resolution of individual or structural difficulties and oppression experienced by persons (supported persons or trainers). This tool has proved to be particularly relevant to our action-research initiative, and has secured the commitment of all those employees in the device who have tried it out. This tool has provided a facility for the identification of situations of gender abuse, and for responding to these situations. Forum theatre generates action-research, in a collective manner, as a means of reflecting upon the oppression which can lurk within working situations, and which may persist, notwithstanding the good support practices which are promoted by *Carton Plein*.

### **Incorporating gender in our day-to-day support practices**

Three practices form the basis of our relations with waste pickers. These are participatory practices, which are aimed at the inclusion of waste pickers in the association, in which they then become full stakeholders. This allows us to achieve the organization of work with an entirely horizontal structure. However, if these practices are considered in terms of social gender relations, it becomes evident that, in many cases, the role of women is not highlighted to the same extent as that of men.

**Co-working** involves the division of labour under the terms of a collective organizational structure in the workshop. Each shift team (morning and afternoon) thus employs the services of waste pickers in an active manner, who are thus classified as fully-fledged workers. Volunteers and trainers execute the same tasks, without distinction.

**Learning on the job** involves the direct assumption and execution of a specific task or job: for example, the preparation of an order of boxes. The rooting of this practice in the economic system, and the customer relations aspect, engages the responsibility of the team as a whole. This principle is based upon confidence, and a belief in the practical intelligence of persons. It advocates the pleasures associated with doing, testing, trialling and progressing.

**Peer to peer training** generates team spirit. Former waste pickers train new waste pickers, with no interference by trainers in the sharing of knowledge. Those with knowledge teach this to others. Those who have yet to acquire this knowledge learn at their own pace.

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These management methods generate exchanges, facilitate the forging of links and create a degree of collective confidence. The benefits of these methods are substantial: they are conducive to the adoption of attitudes, oral sharing, connection and collaboration. We believe that these practices enhance personal self-esteem and, by extension, impact positively upon the lives of the persons concerned. We are of the view that the work on positive reinforcement undertaken by all our staff teams restores the strength and confidence of waste pickers. We have nevertheless observed some less positive effects: the workshop is a place of experimentation, and therefore features its share of errors and imperfections.

**Co-working, learning on the job and peer to peer training generate a high degree of freedom and a strong sense of self-confidence on the part of supported persons. However, this working framework, by dint of its flexibility, may also create difficulties for those who are more retiring, less proactive and less assured, particularly certain supported women. For each of these practices, an interpretation which takes account of the gender perspective indicates that supported women tend to be self-critical, and to experiment less.**

They have less self-confidence for the assumption of new tasks. It is thus primarily up to trainers in the association to rethink their working attitudes and practices in the light of gender, in order to create a welcoming support framework within which women can be emancipated in the same way as men, and are protected against inappropriate looks, remarks, actions and prejudices. **This observation proceeds from work undertaken on the constitution of a common reference resource, which has given rise to a common vision.** This has allowed us to pay particular attention to the choice of jobs undertaken by waste pickers, in order to encourage women to try out new things, take more initiatives and assume a more substantial presence.

It is also important to regulate exchanges in the interests of fairness between participants, so that some do not assert themselves to the detriment of others.

We have introduced regulating processes, specifically by the introduction of a flexible quota system for the integration of new waste pickers, with a view to restoring balance in the number of women present. The objective is to achieve gender parity in support operations, but with no time constraints for the achievement of that parity.

## Action for the full inclusion of women in our partnership device

Our initiative was rooted in the difficulties which we have encountered in the integration of highly vulnerable women in *Carton Plein*. They have been an isolated minority group, with insufficient consideration being given to the gender abuse to which they have been exposed, particularly the comments, prejudices and attitudes which are potentially targeted in their direction.

### **Introduction of a gender quota in recruitment and consideration of the constitution of teams**

Our initial policy for the support of women involved a numerical strategy for the recruitment of more women, such that visibility is achieved by strength in numbers and their presence impacts directly upon gender-based social relations. This strategy was conceived late in 2019, and continues to be pursued today.

**The number of women supported has increased substantially and rapidly, rising from 10% in 2018 to 15% in 2019, 30% in 2020 and 40% in 2021.**

To this end, it has been necessary to deploy three initiatives. Firstly, the forging of partnerships of confidence with associations specializing in the support of women. Second, mobilization and raising the awareness of our partners with regard to our initiative, in order to prevent the introduction of any gender-based selection, to the detriment of women, in their policies. Finally, ensuring that the composition of working teams does not place women in a minority position. In other words, the management of recruitment and policies, with a particular focus upon the collective dynamic. The balance of teams is established by an inter-sectional process. Waste pickers are affected by various social and economic vulnerabilities, whether related to gender, addiction, health difficulties, severe social marginalization, a poor grasp of the French language, or any other factor resulting in exclusion or vulnerability. However, each person supported must also be permitted to contribute their particular knowledge and abilities; singularity is considered in the constitution of teams. The vast majority of women find themselves at the intersection of gender dominance and racial dominance.

# WHEN SEXISM CEASES TO BE ROUTINE

## Enhancing the visibility of women and limiting the gender abuse which they experience

For us, it is important that working teams should be constituted in terms of intersectionality, according to the theory, advanced by educationalists, that a diversity of genders, vulnerabilities, strengths cultures and languages<sup>4</sup> generates beneficial effects, permitting each individual to find their place in a group. The results, month after month, are evident.

**The impacts of this greater diversity are unquestionable: women have acquired greater power, and assumed a more prominent presence, and the balance of teams has been improved. Women learn from each other, and communicate their knowledge to their colleagues – some of them have now become role models and benchmarks for new arrivals. The workshop is starting to become a secure space for all parties, a safe place in which boundaries nevertheless apply.**

In practice, working situations and interactions are not yet entirely free from gender abuse. When jobs are allocated, women still have a tendency to prefer discrete and static tasks, whereas men are far more comfortable to opt for jobs involving contact with customers, collections, deliveries and tasks involving a prominent presence. A stream of endearments such as “darling”, “love” and “sweetheart” continues to pour forth, most frequently between waste pickers, and originating from men. Threats or intimidation may sometimes occur. Deep-seated misunderstandings continue to exist with regard to the boundaries defined by the management team: for example, some of the supported men do not understand why it is inappropriate for them to place their hands on a woman’s hips, or to attempt to flirt with them during work. In some cases, two, three or even a dozen reorientations may be required. In this context, it is necessary to strike a balance. The boundaries of one person are not the same as those of another.

4. In 2018, 43% of persons supported were men aged over 40, originating from Eastern Europe. Experience shows that a lack of diversity in the spoken language and culture of persons may have an excluding effect upon those who are in the minority during working hours.

**Not everyone has the same capacity to theorize and assimilate these issues. Waste pickers, in common with trainers, do not embark upon feminist deconstruction from the same starting point, and make progress in this area at their own pace.**

In terms of societal issues, as in the case of gender abuse, any commitment to change, by definition, involves a long-term perspective.

## Full integration of female voices in action-research

Progress has been encouraging.

**However, we still need to move beyond a quota-based approach in order to consider the specific issues raised by the support of women and the practical factors associated with their presence and their recruitment.**

For example, a question on the introduction of quotas has been raised. In the vast majority of cases, the women recruited are women with children who are in receipt of shelter, and consequently homeless, but not strictly speaking without a roof over their heads. Lone women (with neither a spouse nor children) continue to be absent from the “First Hours” device: they find themselves in a blind spot, and work undertaken to date has not allowed them to be reached.

At present, we have two researchers working on these issues in-house, as our doctoral researcher has now been joined by a trainee researcher, who has been tasked with the investigation of gender abuse experienced by women within the device, and with fuelling the debate on initiatives for the further improvement of our practices. This new collaboration provides an opportunity for the establishment of action-research according to a rationale which is simultaneously more collective and more inclusive. Regular and detailed working sessions continue to be organized with the management team, particularly in the form of forum theatre, or feedback from discussions and the interim results of research. Collectively, we are developing resources for the inclusion of women in this process: by the forthcoming introduction of focus groups, by the conduct of biographical interviews with key participants, and the introduction of a joint training device, in partnership with ATD Quart Monde<sup>5</sup>.

**We are thus developing, testing and analysing a variety of methods for the inclusion of the viewpoints of women, who are supported in this process of reflection.**

5. The joint training device conceived by ATD Quart Monde permits the pooling of knowledge from universities, professionals (in this case, from the social work sector) and vulnerable persons. The ATD Quart Monde website can be accessed at: [www.atd-quartmonde.fr/nos-actions/action-pour-laces-a-la-parole/les-co-formations](http://www.atd-quartmonde.fr/nos-actions/action-pour-laces-a-la-parole/les-co-formations). Consulted on 23rd June 2021.

# WHEN SEXISM CEASES TO BE ROUTINE

## Conclusion

At present, our key challenge is the more effective integration of the viewpoints and opinions of supported women in the process of action-research which concerns them. Our original intention was to create a common reference resource on the issue of sexism in the management team. Having conducted interviews and organized focus groups of supported women, and after consultation with the training team, we are now in the process of organizing the workshop and work schedules for the structuring of working times on a non-gender-diverse basis, with a dedicated focus for female members of the team. The task remains of creating forums and sharing opportunities for the full integration of the viewpoints of supported women, and for the consideration of their opinions in the conduct of initiatives.

This subject has now become particularly relevant, as we are about to recruit a transgender woman, thereby highlighting both the currency and the necessity for the consideration of instances of gender abuse which may still occur within our team. A report by the FAS integration agency, published in 2020, reveals that, for members of the LGBTQI community who are homeless and housed in collective accommodation, the avoidance of collective encounters is sometimes a matter of survival [Sauvaire, 2020]. It is still extremely difficult for the majority of transgender people living on the streets to assume their identity and their social transition without suffering terrible abuse.

**Our intention remains to consider and work against abuse as a whole, in an intersectional approach, in order to permit the accommodation, under conditions of goodwill and respect, of all potential users of the device, regardless of their gender.**

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# FROM INDEPENDENCE TO FEMALE EMANCIPATION

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Frequently compared with equality of rights, the gender perspective is sometimes understood as the improvement of the living conditions of women. Our work on female entrepreneurship projects has demonstrated that, in order to achieve genuine equality (and not just equal rights), it is essential to consider the various relations of domination to which women are exposed, and to question the concept of emancipation.

This article is intended to share our experience of the integration of gender perspective in our initiatives. The first part describes the observations of economic gender inequalities which have informed our work, together with the limits encountered in the approaches to intervention originally selected. The second part describes the process of reflection and adjustment which has been applied to our intervention strategies, in order to promote the empowerment of women. Lessons learned and the impacts of this work are shared in the final part of this article, in order to provide useful access to this experience for the widest possible public.

## Economic empowerment: a lever for social change?

### Improving the living conditions of women

Since 2005, BATIK International has been working alongside civil society organizations in North African countries on projects for the socio-economic inclusion of people in vulnerable situations. Generally deprived of access to resources (capital, training, assets, etc.), women find themselves in a position of economic vulnerability. Women account for a substantial proportion of participants in our projects.

The Global Gender Gap<sup>1</sup> report, which evaluates the manner in which resources and opportunities are divided between women and men on a national scale, reflects the deterioration of the situation of women in the countries where we operate. This report analysed four areas of inequality: economic opportunities (earnings, access to paid and qualified occupations, etc.), levels of education, political involvement and representation, and access to health care. According to indices for the economic involvement of women, the countries in which we operate were amongst the lowest ranked in the world:

YEAR-BY-YEAR RANKING OF COUNTRIES (130 COUNTRIES)	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
MOROCCO	129	127	124	125	122
EGYPT	123	125	126	124	120
TUNISIA	108	107	109	103	102

RANKING OF COUNTRIES IN 2011 (OUT OF 130 COUNTRIES)	EGYPT	MOROCCO	TUNISIA
ECONOMIC INVOLVEMENT	122	128	126
ACCESS TO EDUCATION	110	115	94
POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT	126	102	69

1. The Global Gender Gap Report 2011, World Economic Forum

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**On the basis of these observations, we designed programmes to encourage female entrepreneurship in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. These programmes were aimed at women with no income and/or belonging to a household with unstable income (generated by daily paid work or piece work).**

The relevant targets, firstly, were working-class districts, frequently located on the outskirts or in suburban areas of major towns such as Cairo, Fes or Algiers, and secondly rural zones, specifically in Tunisia, where residents enjoy fewer opportunities for access to information and means of production. Economic vulnerability was potentially compounded by conditions of geographical and/or social exclusion. Although the profile of the women involved was variable (young people/adults, married women/single women, etc.), they were, in many cases, women with limited education, without employment and living in the family home. They nevertheless aspired to the acquisition of income, as a means of fulfilling basic needs (better-balanced meals, educational resources), and of acquiring certain consumer goods.

Our initial programmes for the promotion of female entrepreneurship, the Women and Entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean project (2006-2008) and the Gender and Economic Pluralism project (2011-2013), delivered an integrated approach based upon objectives which were particularly aimed at women. These schemes featured a combination of training and strategic consultancy operations for women, together with an element for the enhancement of the capabilities of practitioners, in the interests of the structuring of support initiatives. These programmes were conceived with a view to promoting empowerment. In tandem with support structures, information workshops on the social and economic rights of women have been conducted, and initiatives for liaison with economic operators have been undertaken by the persons responsible for these support structures.

**The results of these projects have been generally encouraging: women have found jobs or established an income-generating activity (IGA), have developed management skills or received professional training (in tailoring, baking/pastry goods, shoemaking, IT, repair of household appliances, electrical works, masonry, etc.). In general, women have enhanced both their income and their purchasing power.**

However, these positive results conceal the difficulties encountered by women, particularly in the management of earnings generated by their business operations.

## Negative impacts of economic empowerment

Evaluation of one of these two programmes has specifically highlighted the fact that the financial empowerment of women has impacted upon their mental state and relationships of power within the home. Instances of economic and domestic abuse have been observed: some husbands have attempted to take money from their wives, while others no longer wished to contribute to general household expenses, on the pretext that their wives were now in receipt of an income.

Moreover, the financial empowerment of women has not necessarily been synonymous with improved living conditions, particularly in terms of any potential relief from domestic duties. Women have been observed to combine family obligations with their small business operations, sometimes assuming a substantial workload which is equivalent to a two-fold working day<sup>2</sup>. This workload, in addition, has potentially baulked the development of the economic performance of their businesses, constraining women to remain within a survival economy.

**These unforeseen impacts have challenged our method of working and contributing to social change. The objective pursued for the emancipation of women – understood as a process for the enhancement of their capabilities and their self-confidence, as a means of driving positive changes in their lives – was limited, in practice, to financial independence.**

While certain strands of feminist thinking take the view that the presence of women in the labour market is an indicator of female emancipation<sup>3</sup>, our schemes have demonstrated the limitations of this theory.

2. Ann Chadeau, Annie Fouquet and Claude Thélot, "Peut-on mesurer le travail domestique?" 136, 1981

3. International institutions, such as the World Bank and the US development agency, began to use the term "women's empowerment" in 1980. The term "women's empowerment" in 1980 to refer to the process of empowerment and freedom from dependence on state services. This idea refers to having an entrepreneurial spirit to move up the social ladder but it does not question the existing structures (capitalist model, inequality, etc.). This idea refers to having an entrepreneurial spirit to move up the social ladder but it does not question the existing structures (capitalist model, unequal distribution of resources, etc.) that can produce inequalities.

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The discrepancy between the commitment to emancipation and the results achieved by our projects have made us aware of the need to review our intervention policy, if we wish to contribute to the genuine empowerment of women.

## **Rethinking our actions from the gender perspective: supporting the emancipation of women**

**On the basis of lessons learned, a joint consultation with local partners has been initiated, with a focus on our contribution to change: is emancipation limited to financial independence? How is emancipation to be implemented on the scale of each operational territory? How is a process of emancipation which takes due account of the specific characteristics of each territory in which we operate to be initiated and facilitated?**

### **Contextual analysis and clarification of vision**

**One of the first stages of this process of reflection involved a particular focus on the situation of women, based upon an intersectional gender perspective<sup>4</sup>: this included the consideration of differences and inequalities between women and men, together with other relations of domination resulting from a hierarchical social construction of societal relations – as a function of gender, skin colour, age, social class, etc.**

As development practitioners, we had a relatively good knowledge of fields of intervention. However, a detailed analysis proved to be necessary, in the interests of a more effective knowledge of inequalities, for the promotion of team awareness of the extent of the issue, and for the identification of potential margins for

4. Intersectionality is a method of analysis that articulates gender with the situation of people who experience other forms of domination because of their age, sex, origins, social class, sexual orientation, etc.

manoeuvre. In addition, a process of capitalization was initiated with each partner, with a view to identifying common features, but also the specific factors associated with the context of support.

This process was a key learning opportunity: BATIK International and its partners were familiarized with new concepts (gender and development, intersectionality, etc.) which contributed to the structuring of their approaches and stances. Thereafter, the pooling stage highlighted the absence of a shared vision: each organization was working and supporting women with its own understanding of the concept of emancipation.

## **A PROCESS OF SHARED REFLECTION**

BATIK International has joined forces with associations on the southern shore of the Mediterranean in order to promote the economic emancipation of women.

Local partners have been actively involved in discussions on the intervention strategy, bringing their experience and knowledge to bear on specific areas:

The Egyptian Association for Comprehensive Development (EACD), in Egypt, is a development association which was established in 1995 and which operates in the working-class suburbs of Cairo. Since 2006, this association has explored the synergy of an economic approach and a social approach to support. The EACD operates in the fields of the environment, health care, education and economic development, on behalf of women, children and young people.

ATTADAMOUNE Micro-Finance, in Morocco, is a micro-credit association established in 1994, which operates in urban and suburban zones in the Fes region. Armed with leading edge expertise in its core business, this association has established multiple partnerships with other social support agencies (in the Civil Space of Fes), in order to provide non-financial support services.

Since 1964, the Tunisian Union of Social Solidarity, in Tunisia, has supported participatory local development initiatives, specifically by the establishment of community centres which provide access to basic (socio-economic) services in extremely isolated rural zones.

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In the course of a collective workshop, each organization was provided with the opportunity to express its vision: as specialists in micro-finance, the Moroccan partner prioritized financial independence, whereas the Egyptian and Tunisian partners placed greater emphasis upon social emancipation, which is understood to constitute the recognition of work undertaken by women; BATIK International advocated a holistic vision, which also takes account of organizational responsibilities for the family. These various points of view were debated, and discussions resulted in the definition of a new vision, which was shared by the partners. According to this vision, the economic emancipation of women was to form part of a policy for their empowerment, including both the improvement of their self-esteem and access to means of production.

## Acquisition of a conceptual framework for strategic rethinking

In order to contribute to the genuine economic emancipation of women, we have been obliged to rethink our intervention policy by taking account of gender power relationships. In support of this debate, partners have drawn upon the research work of Sophie Charlier<sup>5</sup>, together with the work undertaken by the Belgian Commission on Women and Development<sup>6</sup>. This group has analysed the dynamics whereby women extricate themselves from poverty and develop their process of empowerment.

This is not a novel concept<sup>7</sup>. However, the group has formally defined a methodological procedure which plots the process for the appropriation of agency and allows this agency to be gauged.

5. Sophie Charlier, *Empoderamiento des femmes par l'économie populaire solidaire: participation et visibilité des femmes en Bolivie*, in *Women and Development*, 2011; p 154

6. The "Women and Development" commission was set up by Belgian cooperation to deal with gender issues. It is made up of associations and development workers and meets in the form of working groups. At the request of the Directorate for Development Cooperation, this commission has worked on development cooperation, this commission worked in 2005

7. References can be found in the Afro-American movement and the work of Paulo Freire in the 1960s, as well as in the Latin American feminist movements. Latin American feminist movements in the 1980s

**Empowerment is dependent upon the process whereby socially marginalized persons increase their levels of confidence and self-esteem, and their capacity to respond to their own needs. This process incorporates both individual change and collective action, which presumes that individuals will have greater capacity to act and protect their interests if they have a united focus on common objectives. Empowerment is considered as a dynamic process, which involves radical change to the structures and mechanisms which perpetuate the relations of subordination imposed upon others<sup>8</sup> by individuals or institutions in society.**

Using this assumption as a starting point, the process of empowerment can be understood in various ways:

- **"Power within"**: this concept of power is based upon self-image, self-esteem, identity and psychological strength (self-knowledge). This concept refers to the individual and how, by self-analysis (the power within), the individual is capable of influencing their life and effecting change. This involves an awareness of the role of the individual and their capacities;
- **"Power over"**: this comprises the capacity to take decisions, assume authority, resolve problems and develop a degree of creativity which generates the ability to get things done. This concept is therefore based upon intellectual capacities (knowledge and expertise), together with material requirements and economic resources (assets);
- **"Power with"**: this is social and political power, which reflects the concept of solidarity, the capacity for organization in order to negotiate, and for the protection of a common objective (individual and collective entitlements, or political ideas). Collectively, people perceive a sense of power if they are organized and united in pursuit of a common objective, or where they share a common vision.

Each of these powers can be broken down into interdependent dimensions, which are mutually supportive in the emancipation process. These dimensions can be understood as resources, the acquisition of which is necessary for empowerment.

This conceptual framework reflects the commitment of the partners involved to pursue systemic support practices. It also highlights those factors which will require greater attention, if the transition for women from access to the economic

8. Lisette Caubergs, Sophie Charlier (coord.) Publisher(s): DGDC, Women and Development Commission; *The Women's Empowerment Approach: A Methodological Guide*, June 2007 approach: a methodological guide, June 2007



*Three dimensions to enable empowerment*

market to the control of resources is to be achieved (reinforcement of female leadership and the greater appreciation of women, etc.).

These three concepts of power have been incorporated in the support policy for vulnerable groups adopted by BATIK International and its partners. This policy is now based upon a process for the consideration of the individual situations of women, and the enhancement of their individual and collective capacities, in the interests of their participation in decision-making (specifically with respect to the control of their resources).

#### Enhanced capacity for action

**Discussions have also been accompanied by a training process for the staff teams of BATIK International and its partners, in the interests of consistency in their level of understanding of the concept of agency. In the course of seminars for the exchange of practices, involving both management and employees of associations, each organization has been able to adapt its intervention policy to the relevant context and available resources, whilst keeping the objective set by their common vision in view.**

These opportunities for exchange have become genuine forums for empowering participants, who have experienced a shared sense of increased knowledge and improved self-esteem associated with the assignment of greater value to their work. This provided an effective and enjoyable means of securing commitment to the process, and an opportunity to propose resources for the conception of activities which might strengthen the communities involved in projects. Support for empowerment implies a change in the stance of agents for development. In practice, this is reflected by supporting individuals to make their own choices, helping them to understand their environment whilst refraining from “acting in their place”.

Thus equipped, organizations have expanded entrepreneurship project activities in a variety of dimensions:

#### Power within

The support of women for the achievement of self-confidence has been enhanced. Information workshops for women on social and economic rights have been supplemented by weekly meetings, with agendas defined by women. Individual interviews for the promotion of professional development have also been conducted. The aim was to investigate the role of women and their place in economic development, delivering enjoyable presentations for the enhancement of their self-confidence. Women have also been directed to other organizations, according to their specific requirements for access to education, health care, housing, etc.. In some territories, collaborations

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with other territorial development associations and public authorities have been established.

## Power over

Representatives of public authorities and economic operators (chambers of trade, training centres, financial institutions, etc.) have been contacted, with a view to facilitating access to their services for women. The opportunity has also been taken to raise awareness of the specific obstacles encountered by women.

## Power with

At the same time, activities for raising the awareness of women's families (mediation services, information meetings, door-to-door visits) have been initiated. The aim was to demonstrate the importance of women's work, and the economic added value which it generates. The latter argument was advanced, in the first instance, as a means of defusing any potential resistance to discussions, thus permitting more complex situations to be addressed thereafter (for example, household budget management, or the division of domestic tasks).

This entire process of reflection has been accompanied by the progressive formalization of the appraisal of gender issues by BATIK International. More specifically, this is reflected by the restatement of the brief of the association, with a focus on the development of empowerment and choice. The work of the association has since been structured by this conceptual framework.

## Impacts of the gender-based approach: from the emancipation of women to changing practices

**Integration of the gender-based approach in the intervention strategy of BATIK International and its partners has empowered women, who have become aware of their rights and their capabilities, and feel valued and appreciated by those around them.**

This change of attitude, as inconsequential as it might seem, contributes to the reshaping of the role of women within their families and their communities, and thus to the creation of new perceptions of gender identities.

In terms of partner-based relations, this has been an instructive experience, from which lessons have been learned for the deployment of our own initiatives.

### Gender integration: a learning process

Work on gender issues may uncover opposition, frequently on the part of persons who disregard or do not advocate this perspective. Throughout this process, we have identified factors which will facilitate the consideration of gender in development initiatives.

#### *Involvement of partners from the start of the process*

Whether through experience capitalization or sessions for the enhancement of the capacities of partners, the process for the co-construction of a new vision has functioned well throughout. Partners have been involved throughout the process, from the conception of the methodology applied through to the pooling of reflections. This involvement has also been facilitated by the application of change-oriented approaches. This methodology has driven discussions, and has overcome opposition to the consideration of gender. Each participant has had the opportunity to express their viewpoint, within the context of a vision which is nevertheless shared. In this process, women themselves have been consulted, in the interests of the optimum identification of their needs; unfortunately, however, our limited resources have not been sufficient to achieve further integration.

#### *Contextualization of data*

The capitalization stage has provided partners with the opportunity for greater familiarization, and for the more effective understanding of constraints and factors in force within each territory. In the subsequent stage for the comparison

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of ideas, reference to a common vision has permitted the management of disagreements and opposition. And, when thoughts turned to operational deployment, each organization tailored this common vision to its particular context and its own specific resources. Contextualization has reduced the potential for polarization which occurs when third parties – in this case, partners – express their point of view on the activities of other partners. This phenomenon of polarization is common in intercultural projects.

## *Training of teams and governance*

Each project start-up has provided BATIK International and its partners with the opportunity to question their intervention policy and to pursue training in the issues associated with this programme. Local partners are the front-line agents for the support of women, and their awareness of gender issues continues to be raised by the conduct of annual seminars.

The methodology of these workshops is based upon popular education tools for the mobilization of the experiences and the life history of participants, and for the encouragement of awareness of the existence of discriminatory situations. The involvement of members of governing bodies in these forums is key to the referral of decision-making within the partnership organization.

## *Involvement of third parties*

In the course of their reflections, BATIK International and its partners have called upon the services of peer organizations:

- to assume the role of external facilitators and provide an alternative focus: the capitalization process has been facilitated by the “Frères des Hommes” association (“Brotherhood of Man”);
- to compare practices and encourage self-questioning in our work: our meeting with the “Quartiers du Monde” association (“Neighbourhoods

of the World”) was inspirational to the operational deployment of our empowerment policy.

This involvement of third parties has also permitted our partners to contribute to the debate, and to be accorded the same degree of attention as BATIK International.

## **In terms of operations in the field, two key elements have emerged from our experience:**

### *The concept of solidarity, as a means of overturning established situations*

We have observed that the promotion of individual entrepreneurship among women is frequently associated with the perpetuation of competitive structures, resulting in the exclusion of those who are least prepared. In our view, it is important that the concept of solidarity and mutual assistance should be promoted through the establishment of economic consortia. Initial trialling of women’s agricultural cooperatives in Tunisia has achieved positive economic results, specifically where the break-even point is exceeded, thus permitting any top-up activity to be discontinued. We have also observed an increase in the leadership capabilities of women and in their involvement in the local rural economy, together with a reduction in their sense of isolation. A further key factor has been the increase in women’s self-confidence, which is then echoed in other contexts: in the home, through involvement in professional associations or organizations, etc.. The confidence generated within these collectives has also encouraged women who are the victims of abuse to speak freely and seek assistance, with the support of other women in the cooperative.

### *The necessity for the establishment of coalitions of operators, in the interests of equality*

Even now, one of the key obstacles to the economic inclusion of women is the mistrust of their capabilities on the part of economic operators. Raising the awareness of these operators with respect to issues of equality and intermediation will be necessary to the deconstruction of received ideas. Meetings with economic operators have facilitated access for women to professional training, the acquisition of funding for women’s cooperatives, the networking of women (through membership of professional organizations), or even involvement in decision-making forums, for example, the election of a woman to the syndicate of self-employed workers. This raising of awareness is also aimed at the people surrounding women, who may also constitute an obstacle: husbands, children, parents, brothers, sisters, etc.. We have employed various techniques for approaching these parties (individual meetings, workshops or conferences, raising awareness door-to-door, etc.), and have observed that their support is essential to the maintenance of women in the labour market.

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*It is also important to raise the awareness of parties involved – including financial operators – of approaches to empowerment, in the interests of the long-term provision of dedicated resources for this purpose.*

Financial mechanisms are not sufficiently adapted to programmes which are intended to achieve processes of social change. International financial backers tend to favour the funding of specific initiatives, with easily quantifiable short-term outcomes. Conversely, the backing of processes for social and economic emancipation represents a long-term commitment, and requires substantial human resources for the close support of women and the consideration of their requirements. The impacts of gender projects will only become perceptible after a period of some years, requiring the consideration of multiple factors (social norms and traditions).

## Conclusion

Empowerment constitutes a central approach to the greater independence of women. Above and beyond the simple consideration of women as economic agents, the primary intention of the approach adopted is that women should become agents in their own development. This therefore implies the support of women in both social and economic issues. As yet, however, funding priorities are too frequently focused upon the economic aspect of female empowerment, particularly on increasing their earnings, and take no account of the control which they may exercise over their resources.

Our experience reflects, firstly, the importance of a holistic approach which is appropriate to the context of intervention, if women are not to be exposed to situations of vulnerability, in this case the risk of intra-familial abuse. Thereafter, lessons learned from our programmes have confirmed that economic emancipation and/or improvement of the living conditions of women implies social change. However, an analysis of the involvement of women's families in their economic activity reveals that the support provided by those around them is frequently

limited to operations which are conducted in the public domain (distribution of orders, procurement of raw materials), whereas women continue to do their work in the private or domestic domain, in the space which is socially assigned to them.

New factors are now becoming apparent, specifically conditions under which women, having enhanced their position and their status, might participate in decision-making beyond the family environment, and exercise an influence upon other persons, within the community or beyond. In practice, exchanges between women and political decision-makers will reinforce sustainable changes in relations between women and men.

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# TRANSFORMATIVE EVALUATION FOR LASTING AND JUST SOCIAL CHANGE

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Increasing disparities in wealth between rich and poor, natural disasters, an increase in immigration, violations of the rights of women and people with disabilities, and a global pandemic demand our attention and leave us with the question, what can we do as a community of evaluators to be part of the solution? The global community has recognized the need for transformative change in order to meet the goals of reduced poverty and hunger, improved health and education, increased equity and access to clean water and energy, employment, worldwide peace, and a clean environment are to be achieved (van den Berg, Magro, & Mulder, 2019). The United Nations and the global community reflected on the lack of achievement of these goals despite having the Millennium Development Goals in place from 2000 to 2015. In an effort to make more progress on these global problems, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 (United Nations, 2015) and were endorsed by the global community. Although the United Nations set a timeframe for achievement of the SDGs by 2030, the problems being addressed are entrenched in a system that is not likely to yield definitive solutions in the time allotted. In this context, development practitioners, including evaluators, have a role to play in supporting the achievement of the SDGs through 2030 and beyond.

The use of a transformative theoretical lens enables evaluators to contribute to the achievement of these SDGs and to provide a platform for future progress toward a more equitable world. This approach to evaluation aligns with the goals of F3E, Agence Française de Développement (AFD), and the organizations they work with in their pursuit of increased understanding of how evaluation can contribute to social change (Aberlen, Bedecarraats, & Boisteau, 2016).

**The goal of transformative evaluation is a change-oriented approach that also incorporates an intersectional gender perspective to support the development of culturally responsive interventions that foster increased respect for human rights and achievement of social, economic, and environmental justice (Mertens, 2020a; 2018; Mertens & Wilson, 2019).**



Four transformative assumptions for evaluation

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In this chapter, we propose to answer the question: If we work from the assumption that evaluations should contribute to increased equity and justice, how does that affect our methodological choices?

**We describe a transformative framework for evaluation that is structured to include the voices of a full range of stakeholders who engage with civil society organizations (CSOs) and to consciously address power issues so that members of vulnerable and marginalized communities are positioned to contribute to the evaluation design, decisions and development of interventions.**

A transformative lens for evaluation is not defined by a specific tool, rather it is a framework that asks evaluators to begin their thinking through a clear understanding of what it means to conduct ethical evaluations. A transformative interpretation of the meaning of ethics informs approaches to developing a contextual analysis, building relationships, and development and assessment of interventions (Mertens, 2018; Mertens & Wilson, 2019). This line of thinking is operationalized through the use of a transformative mixed methods cyclical design that includes strategies for building trust and figuring out working strategies that are acceptable and feasible for stakeholders.

**The transformative approach borrows strategies from social activists, including the rising youth-led initiatives, to inform the development of community-based coalitions that guide evaluation work and provide a mechanism for sustainability by virtue of the community coalition's commitment to improvement.**

A contextual analysis is included as part of the design in order to identify the dimensions of diversity that are used as a basis for discrimination, such as race/ethnicity, religion, gender identity, economic status, and disability. Using a transformative lens lays the groundwork for informing a more nuanced understanding of problems, strengths, and cultural and contextual complexities relevant to the

evaluation by engaging with the actors at the heart of the evaluation process (Bockelie, Boisteau, & Pioch, 2017). The implementation of a transformative evaluation can provide an evidence-base to guide decisions about the development or revision of interventions that are culturally responsive and sustainable in the context of CSOs in responding to SDGs. This framework has an action-orientation; the structure, process and findings of evaluation are designed to support transformative change.

## Transformative Ethical Assumptions

An ethical approach to transformative evaluation is driven by the question: How do I ensure that the evaluation supports transformative change to enhance equity and justice, rather than sustaining an oppressive status quo?

**Answers to this question involve concepts of cultural responsiveness, intersectionality, inclusion, addressing inequities, reciprocity, recognizing the resilience of vulnerable and marginalized communities, and consciously linking the evaluation work to the increase of social, economic, and environmental justice.**

The United Nations promotes ethical practice through the passage of human rights declarations and resolutions. These statements by the UN illustrate the importance of identifying the relevant dimensions of diversity and the intersectionality of characteristics in order to address inequities.

The United Nations (1948) passed a universal declaration of human rights in the 1940s. It would seem that a universal declaration would mean that the rights of people from all walks of life would be protected. However, the United Nations acknowledges that specific groups of people have not had their rights protected and enforced; therefore, they undertook to recognize those constituencies by passing resolutions that recognize the rights of racial minorities (1969), women (1979), children (1990a), migrant workers (1990b), people with disabilities (2006a), and indigenous peoples (2006b). This gives us a partial listing of subgroups whose rights need to be consciously addressed in evaluations that are conducted with an awareness of the diversity within these communities. (cited in Mertens, 2013 Roots, p. 234)

Addressing inequities in a conscious manner means that evaluators need to consult with communities to better understand the dimensions of diversity that are used in a particular context as a basis for discrimination and marginalization.

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**One relevant approach to this end is culturally responsive evaluation (CRE), which is commensurate with the assumptions of transformative evaluation. CRE is positioned “...as a social and cultural practice [that] encourages local ways of knowing and meaning making” (Acree, Chouinard, 2020, p. 201).**

CRE works collaboratively with transformative evaluation to support the inclusion of marginalized perspectives, not as token representatives, but through active participation in the evaluation process. Culture is at the center, and equity is the aim (Frierson, Hood, Hughes, & Thomas, 2010). Transformative evaluation and CRE are further aligned, especially in the focus areas of culture, value attached to lived experiences, sociopolitical and contextual dimensions, and challenging deficit perspectives, and issues related to race and ethnicity (Mertens & Zimmerman 2014).

A transformative ethical stance also includes the importance of reciprocity, recognizing the resilience in the marginalized communities, and linking the process and findings to increased justice. When it comes to structuring transformative evaluation to support social, economic, and environmental justice, CRE enhances the transformative evaluation by determining ways to address cultural complexity.

**As evaluators work towards this objective, it is critical to engage with communities and other stakeholders who are directly impacted at all levels. This assumption of incorporating those directly impacted and centering culture, dismantles the power dynamics that may exist between communities and institutions.**

CRE provides critical insights, particularly when it comes to race and ethnicity and considering the local ways of knowing and meaning making. **For example, government agencies may frame problems in terms of poverty, while people of color may frame the problem in terms of systemic racism. We as evaluators shift from the role of “all knowing” expert that imparts knowledge and power, to one where the evaluators’ stance is one of humility and identifying as a facilitator**

**in the processes towards sustainable change.** This type of sustainable change that aims to be just and long-lasting, supports addressing disparities related to economics, gender inequity, human rights violations, disability discrimination, natural disasters and pandemics.

Many examples in the literature demonstrate the transformative ethical assumption, such as Widianingsih and Mertens work in Bandung Indonesia (2019) that recognizes the importance of the intersection of social, environmental, and economic justice, and Lewis and Reddy’s (2018) consideration of the intersectionality of gender, environment, and marginalized voices. Burke et al.’s (2019) study with young people with disabilities in Senegal provides another example of the inclusion of these concepts in a transformative study.

**Informed by Culturally Responsive Evaluation, they recognized that young people with disabilities had insider knowledge, lived experience, and the right to voice their concerns, and were able to rapport with other young people with disabilities.**

A form of reciprocity was manifest in the training workshops provided for the young people with disabilities and their inclusion throughout the process of the study from adapting data collection instruments, conducting interviews, and transcribing and analyzing data. Informants and peer researchers contributed recommendations for policy changes needed to improve young people with disabilities’ access to SRH services (Sexual and Reproductive Health).

## Transformative Ontological Assumption

A transformative approach also asks evaluators to bring a critical eye to whose version of reality is given privilege and the consequences of accepting one version of reality over another. For example, in the United States, accepting the reality that racism is a systemic problem leads to the consequence that discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity can be systematically studied. In France, an alternative version of reality about race and ethnicity presents a challenge, perhaps a controversial challenge. There are a number of versions of reality about race in France. At the policy level, France has a version of reality that there are universal ideals of equality and citizenship and hence has passed legislation and established policies that prevent the collection of data on the basis of race and ethnicity (Phalnikar, 2020). Anti-racist activists in France have a different version of reality that holds that color blind racism does not prevent bias and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, and skin color (Oltermann & Henley, 2020; Onishi, 2020; Ware, 2015). The evidence they cite is that France’s visible minorities are segregated in public housing complexes (*banlieues*) “*where poverty, substand-*

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ard schools, low educational attainment, crime and unemployment are pervasive” (Ware, 2015). The young residents of banlieues are stereotyped as gang members, criminals, and potential terrorists.

The consequence of accepting these different versions of reality affects methodological decisions and evaluators’ ability to address root causes of inequalities. Simon (2015) described the French alternatives to collection of data on race and ethnicity as follows: “*surname and/or first name; country of birth and individual’s nationality, nationality/ies of his/her parents and possibly his/her grandparents; mother tongue or language spoken at home (p. 166).*” Bleich (2001) added that French evaluators use geographic areas such as school districts with many immigrants and high poverty.

**Without a recognition that racism is a problem, the country is unable to explicitly address racial discrimination. While this is a controversial topic in France, it does illustrate different versions of reality coming from different social positionalities with different consequences.**

## Transformative Epistemological Assumption

The exploration of epistemological assumptions raises questions about whose knowledge is valued and the type of relationships between evaluators and stakeholders (Mertens & Wilson, 2019). The importance of using a transformative lens to inform the epistemological assumption that drives methodological choices is underscored by Aberlen, Bedecarrats and Boisteau’s (2016) recognition that “local populations have not been consulted enough in the process of design and evaluation of actions to promote social change (p. 9)” and the need to critically analyze and address power imbalances between actors in the development process. **The epistemological assumption that relates to how the evaluator and stakeholder groups interact is key to increasing the impact and sustainability of transformative changes.**

**A transformative epistemological assumption calls for thoughtful design that includes the full range of stakeholders in ways that are culturally responsive and that consciously address issues of power. Members of marginalized and vulnerable communities need to be engaged in ways that respect their knowledge and experience and not merely as token representatives.**

Designs that incorporate coalitions and other social activist strategies are positioned to have processes and findings that have increased potential to support transformative change because the coalitions are designed to insure commitment to continuous improvement after the evaluation ends. This might be considered to be a controversial position given that other evaluation frameworks call for a separation between evaluation and advocacy in the name of increased objectivity. **However, continuing to do evaluation in a business-as-usual manner puts the evaluator in the position of potentially being complicit in sustaining oppression.**

**By adopting the role of change agent, evaluators have the opportunity to disrupt that historical legacy and contribute to a transformed world (Hall, 2020).**

Funding agencies in the United States are increasingly requiring evaluators to include the development of community-based coalitions, collaboratives, alliances, or partnerships into their projects (Price, Brown, & Wolfe, 2020). This requirement is based on the rationale that community members understand the culture and context and are in a position to sustain the needed changes. However, community-based groups can be formed with varying sets of criteria and be given varying types of roles in a study. Wolfe, Long and Brown (2020) describe the application of transformative principles for evaluation of a project designed to improve mental health and well-being with an equity and justice goal that included building collaborations inclusive of historically excluded groups. They focused on the development of the coalitions and their willingness to “*explicitly address issues of social and economic injustice and structural racism (p. 61).*” They examined the provision of training for majority population members on racism and cultural humility. They also looked at the structure of the coalition (e.g., by-laws, mission, vision) to determine how equity and justice were included.

**The evaluators supported the use of a community development approach that gave equal power to community stakeholders in setting the agenda and allocating resources.**

The collaboratives were evaluated to determine the extent to which they used community organizing strategies such as leadership training for members of historically excluded populations and building membership ownership. Successful

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collaboratives focused on community engagement to change policies, systems and structures that sustained a racist system.

**Evaluators can learn from the strategies used by social activists and change agents even when the social movements were not inclusive of evaluation.**

Several authors have described the components of social movements that have led to significant changes (Engler & Engler, 2016; Garza, 2020; Han, 2014). **Generally, these include: person-by-person recruitment, leadership development, development of broad-based coalitions, creation of a stable organizational structure, and a means to acquire resources.** McBride and her colleagues (2020) distinguished between advocacy and mobilizing as follows: Advocacy involves building the capacity of community organizations to advocate for change. Mobilizing includes both personnel and grassroots organizations to work toward change. Movements can grow from advocacy building and mobilization.

A specific example of a movement that created significant change is found in the Fight for Fifteen movement to increase the hourly pay for fast food workers in the United States that started with a partnership of a labor union and a grassroots organizing group (Greenwood, 2019). Even though some of their strategies might seem farfetched in the evaluation world, evaluators could benefit from studying how this movement successfully changed legislation in twenty states (out of 50, so far), pushing the wage from \$7.25/hour to \$15/hour. The organizers had a door-to-door strategy to identify fast food workers who wanted to work for change. The workers decided they wanted to go out on a strike for one day in New York City where they picketed fast food restaurants near Madison Square Garden and Times Square. In pre-covid times, these areas are densely populated and so their strike drew the attention of the media in the form of television news coverage and sharing on social media. The workers also protested at shareholder meetings which brought them additional notice. Their coalition grew as politicians, church leaders, the Poor People's Campaign, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People joined them. Many development projects

are designed to address the same goal as the Fight for Fifteen movement, that is, the reduction of poverty. The social activist strategies they used did have a significant impact in raising wages for this group of workers. Typically, evaluators do not employ strategies such as demonstrations at shareholders meetings as a mechanism for contributing to change. Could evaluators broaden their thinking to consider what social activists have found to be successful to bring about significant changes?

## Transformative Methodological Assumptions

The transformative axiological, ontological, and epistemological assumptions guide thinking about methodological assumptions that are commensurate with the use of a transformative lens. Thus, evaluation studies are based on the formation of respectful relationships that might evolve into coalitions to inform the evaluation process and help sustain needed changes.

**An important part of a transformative evaluation is the conduct of a contextual analysis that is in keeping with strategies borrowed from systems thinking, informed by complexity theory. This type of interactive cyclical approach to evaluation supports the formation of partnerships across sectors. These partnerships, if designed to do so, can raise awareness of the importance of equity, environment, and inclusion of marginalized voices.**

Multiple tools and indicators can be used in a transformative evaluation such as the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) created by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This Index is used as an official data source and monitoring tool, connected to SDG 5.1, which emphasizes the enforcement and mentoring of gender equality and women's empowerment. There are four dimensions of the SIGI that present an opportunity to begin the evaluation of programs, interventions and organizations. Inclusivity entails thinking about what effects women's lives including: a) discrimination in the family; b) restricted physical interaction; c) restricted access to financial resources; and d) restriction related to civil liberties (SIGI, np). Other tools that align with transformative evaluation are described in other chapters in this book.

## Examples of Transformative Evaluations

We illustrate the application of a transformative framework through examples that address intersectionality from different countries that are inclusive of a wide range of stakeholders and incorporate strategies to support transformative change. Burke, le May, Kebe, Flink, and van Reeuwijk (2019) provide an

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example, mentioned earlier, in which young people with disabilities were identified as having been excluded from sexual and reproductive health interventions in Senegal. Extant data revealed that young people with physical, hearing, and visual disabilities had the lowest use of contraceptives and sexual and reproductive health services. They wanted to work with young people with disabilities to improve access to these services. Bonnet, Lale, Safi, and Wasmer (2016) provide an example from France based on concerns about discrimination in housing because ethnic minorities are often concentrated in underprivileged neighborhoods. They included two characteristics of relevance: residential location (underprivileged vs. rich suburb), and ethnicity as indicated by surname (North African vs. French). A third example is provided by Rahill, Joshi, and Shodowns (2018) in which gender was the key characteristics in their study of female victims of gender based sexual violence in Haiti.

A fourth, excellent example is provided by Miller, Rutledge, and Ayala's (2021) evaluation work with sexual and gender minorities in five African and two Caribbean countries, where same-sex or gender sexual relations are criminalized. The project was "a human rights advocacy demonstration project to dismantle structural and social barriers to HIV care for gay and bisexual men and transgender women... in five countries in Africa (Burundi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Zimbabwe) and two Caribbean countries (Dominican Republic and Jamaica) (p. 3)". The project included the development of coalitions across LGBTQI+ advocacy groups and health organizations that served this population. The social activist strategies used by the coalition included informing the public, health care workers, and the community through multiple communication platforms about access to HIV care and community members' rights to access that care. They also used community mobilization by organizing community members, developing leadership, and implementing advocacy work. They conducted policy analysis to critique laws from a human rights perspective and engaged with policy makers on policy reform. During the implementation of the project, community members and health organizations developed structures to sustain training and access after the project itself ended. Many evaluation data collection methods

were used, including use of extant data, surveys, interviews, and observations. Evaluators used outcome harvesting (Wilson-Grau, 2019) to document the path of change through the advocacy process.

## Conclusion

Social, economic, and environmental transformation is needed to achieve the SDGs and to make progress towards a more just and equitable society. Evaluators can choose to play a critical role in the support for the structural and systemic changes needed by using a transformative lens to frame their evaluation designs and practice. Consciously acting on the transformative assumptions provides a pathway to critically examine if we have positioned ourselves to contribute to transformative change. This requires a conscious effort to be inclusive in culturally respectful ways of the full range of stakeholders and to integrate community networks or coalitions to inform the evaluation and to sustain change. The basis for discrimination that prevents progress needs to be ascertained in each context, e.g., gender, disability, race/ethnicity, and religion are commonly recognized dimensions of diversity associated with discrimination and oppression.

**Evaluators can structure their evaluations to be inclusive of members of marginalized and vulnerable groups in ways that lead to a better understanding of the nature of the problem and viable solutions. This will call for a cultural shift in the evaluation community. We are at a critical juncture; we can continue with business as usual or make a choice to be supporters of transformative change.**

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## **POSTSCRIPT**

### **BY THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE :**

### **WORKING TOWARDS**

### **TRANSFORMATIVE INCLUSION**

The Editorial Committee of *Inclusion for Transformation* is made up of practitioners from various backgrounds: international or local solidarity organizations, thinktanks, universities and consultants. We have worked throughout 2021 on the production of this book. Our initial exchanges focused on the issues and assumptions involved in the present work. Some of us have assumed the role of keynote speaker at workshop meetings with contributors, before committing ourselves to the structuring of this publication. We have taken this opportunity to share our thoughts and recommendations, born of our individual experiences and the collective journey associated with *Inclusion for Transformation*. Ultimately, **this book is an invitation to stakeholders working for the promotion of social change, both in France and internationally, to grasp the issues involved in transformative inclusion and deploy initiatives for individual and collective empowerment.**

The issue of inclusion raises an initial challenge: the perception and combatting of inequalities. A number of articles in this work refer to the framework of Sustainable Development Goals and the principle of “Leave no-one behind”, to be achieved by the year 2030. Any response to this issue presumes that **inclusion will be conceived from the viewpoint of the persons concerned and their communities, in order to allow their systematic involvement in changes.** Civil society organizations will also need to adopt a keener perspective for the consideration of the role of communities in larger systems of stakeholders (non-governmental organizations, public authorities, economic stakeholders, etc.). In other words, it is essential, in our view, to undertake an interpretation of power relationships between stakeholders, in order to raise awareness and, ultimately, reduce inequalities. Systemic analysis is also required to permit the identification of inequalities which exist within communities themselves. **We thus consider it important to move beyond the scope of conventional tools for counselling or community support, and adopt an**

**intersectional gender lens.** This will allow us to identify inequalities in practice, whether associated with gender, skin colour, social class, age, state of health, etc.

In order to achieve this, it is not sufficient to pay particular attention to the presence and the symbolic representation of different communities. It is up to civil society organizations to query their own role in supporting these communities, and to work for the emergence of “power with”<sup>1</sup>. The situation of these organizations is paradoxical, which places them in a delicate position. Their declared aim is to support communities for the achievement of greater independence, and the promotion of empowerment. However, the persons affected by these changes are frequently considered as beneficiaries, recipients of aid and/or assistance for the enhancement of their capacities.

In many cases, this tension between internal power and external power is difficult to resolve for civil society organizations. They are torn between, on the one hand, the promotion of values and objectives for emancipation and, on the other, the reality of conditions in the field and numerous obstacles, compounded by the concerns associated with the reporting of their results to public authorities and/or donors. In doing so, they regularly forego precious input from the persons concerned and their communities. However, these contributions from the persons concerned are a necessary resource for combatting inequalities and promoting social justice. Communities have a legitimate voice *per se*, which deserves to be heard. This is an ethical stance, which is consistent with the rights-based approach<sup>2</sup> promoted by civil society. Moreover, communities have a wealth of situated knowledge, i.e. knowledge born of the experience and life histories of the persons concerned. As the persons concerned embody an experience of inequalities which we can only imagine, their voices represent an expression of detailed contextual knowledge. Situated knowledge contributes to the ongoing improvement of initiatives, making them more relevant, more effective, more efficient,

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1. Popular education and feminist movements distinguish between “power over”, “power to” and “power with”. The concept of power traditionally refers to dominance and “power over”, which describes the capacity for decision-making, and for the exercise of action “over” persons, sometimes at the expense of their own will. “Power to” acknowledges the capability of each individual to assume the role of stakeholder in change, including marginalized persons. This term highlights capacities for individual emancipation. “Power with” describes involvement in a collective initiative for the promotion of social change.

2. The human rights-based approach refers to international frameworks defined in this field (for human, economic, social and cultural rights, etc.). This approach is intended to combat inequalities, discrimination and, more generally, the power relationships which baulk social change for the persons who live under these relationships.

# POSTSCRIPT BY THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE : WORKING TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIVE INCLUSION

more coherent and more sustainable. Communities are thus endowed with inestimable resources, and it is up to civil society organizations to support and encourage their expression.

Once civil society organizations have reached agreement on the necessity for taking into the consideration of the diverse voices of communities, their position and their approach to support communities will need to change. **If it is to be transformative, inclusion must be accompanied by individual and collective empowerment.** In this regard, we would emphasize the necessity for interaction between individual and collective empowerment. While individual empowerment is a prerequisite for the involvement of persons in collective initiatives, it does not, in itself, constitute a substitute for this involvement. In practice, collective mobilization allows communities to be heard and consulted in multi-stakeholder systems, within which power relationships do not work in their favour. The empowerment of communities, for civil society organizations, specifically involves the foregoing by the latter of their position as experts, and the assumption of a facilitating role. The intention is to move as far away as possible from any prescriptive approach to change, by emphasizing the sharing of knowledge which is present within groups. In our view, collective intelligence is also considerably enhanced where it is associated with care skills, i.e. a series of skills whereby attention is paid to each individual, for the promotion of collective wellbeing.

This use of collective intelligence in favour of a shared vision is a founding principle of theories of change. Any change of stance by civil society organizations in this direction is frequently driven by an intent to construct of reciprocal spaces between the latter and communities. This requires each party to assume a role in shared concerns. In its ideal form, however, reciprocity presumes a situation of equality, which cannot be dictated. The identification of phenomena of

exclusion and inequalities in empowerment call for a change in the stance of civil society organizations vis-à-vis partners and communities. Inspired by numerous academic works and civil society initiatives in the field of gender, **we invite civil society organizations, particularly in the “north”, to assume a collaborative role with communities. Their function will be to echo - and possibly amplify - the voices of the persons concerned.** We would also consider it important that practical consideration should be given to the contribution of civil society organizations to the elimination of obstacles which restrict the empowerment of communities.

We have observed that approaches to deliver transformative inclusion are, as yet, insufficiently reflected in the tools which are employed to support the transition to action. We would recommend, firstly, the adaptation of existing methods; secondly, “pilot” methodological tools should be created, which might be trialled, improved and capitalized upon. We have identified five key factors which constitute levers for empowerment, and which are set out below.

This change in the stance of civil society organizations is no easy matter, neither internationally nor in a number of national contexts. It involves the mobilization of human resources and a commitment to learning processes. Organizations working with communities cannot bear sole responsibility. Solutions must be developed as part of a multi-stakeholder dynamic, through the construction of a shared vision, in which organizations are supported by public authorities and donors. impliquant, à leurs côtés, les pouvoirs publics et les bailleurs.

## The Editorial Committee of Inclusion for transformation

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Anaïs Mesnil, Engagé-e-s et Déterminé-e-s

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Olivier Piazza, Université Paris Cergy,  
Les Maisons de l'Intelligence Collective

Lydie Porée, Planning Familial

## Five key factors for the promotion of transformative inclusion and empowerment

### ANALYSIS OF INEQUALITIES IN EMPOWERMENT ON AN INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE SCALE, BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER INITIATIVES

- Involve the persons concerned and their communities in analysis, as part of an approach of cooperative dialogue.
- Map stakeholders, incorporating dynamics of exclusion, influencing capabilities, contextual knowledge and community resources.
- Clarification of inequalities in empowerment, viewed through an intersectional gender lens.
- Identify obstacles to individual and collective empowerment, and of barriers to be eliminated.

### INTEGRATION OF TRANSFORMATIVE INCLUSION IN THE DEFINITION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CHANGE

- Integrate community empowerment in the vision of change.
- Propose and model monitoring and evaluation indicators for empowerment which can be adapted to changes sought and the contexts concerned.
- Integrate data collected during project implementation with the ongoing improvement of initiatives.

### PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AS A CORE ELEMENT OF INITIATIVES

- Promote a high-quality standard, combining an ethical stance with the ongoing improvement of impacts.
- Consider communities as core stakeholders in change.
- Utilization of the contextual knowledge of persons affected by change.
- Promote individual commitment within communities, mobilization of communities and multi-stakeholder cooperation in change.
- Adoption of measures to rectify power relationships in favour of positive action.
- Allocate dedicated human and financial resources to transformative inclusion.

### CREATION OF INCLUSIVE SPACES FOR DIALOGUE, IN THE INTERESTS OF EQUITABLE AND SHARED GOVERNANCE

- Create spaces for discussion and governance, within which communities have the facility to adopt their own decisions.
- Adopt mechanisms to for the regulation of power relationships in the governance of initiatives
- Promote alliances, collective intelligence and care as operating principles.

### ADAPTATION OF RELEVANT ACTORS' PROFESSIONAL APPROACHES TO PROMOTE TRANSFORMATIVE INCLUSION

- For civil society organizations who support communities : develop a partnership approach , including provision of space for community voices, self-determination of communities, collective intelligence and care.
- For public authorities : integrate transformative inclusion in public policies and schemes to improve the living conditions of communities.
- For experts, facilitators, support workers and/or evaluators : integrate inclusion and empowerment in the generation of knowledge.

# BIOGRAPHIES OF CONTRIBUTORS

## ANH THU HOANG AND WILLIAM PATE:

→ **ANH THU HOANG** is a global health and development expert with field experience in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. Integrating experience and theoretical concepts, she uses design thinking in conceptualization and implementation of research, monitoring, and evaluation activities; these processes are iterative, collaborative, and ultimately more effective.

→ **WILLIAM PATE** co-founded Ad Hoc Analytics, a DC-based statistical consulting firm specializing in quantitative program evaluation. Since 2010, Mr. Pate and his firm has helped nonprofits, federal and state government clients, and other consulting firms on projects related to criminal justice, education, mentoring, and minority issues in higher education.

The mission of F3E and the theme of the book resonated with our recent work on inclusion as it relates to stakeholder engagement

## PAYS DE SAVOIE SOLIDAIRE:

→ **“PAYS DE SAVOIE SOLIDAIRES”** is a Departmental platform for stakeholders in international solidarity, established in 1998 on the initiative of the Departmental Council of Savoie. The association has two complementary strands of work: the facilitation of decentralized cooperative schemes of the Department (in Senegal and Haiti) and the development of international solidarity in Savoie.

→ **SÉRIGNÉ MAPATHÉ SAMB:** A specialized educationalist with a DETS (state diploma in social work), a CAP (certificate of professional qualification in education), a Masters in Human Resources Management and a Masters in Sociology from the Assane Seck University of Ziguinchor, PhD student in project management at the Ibero-American University Foundation (Funiber). A teacher from 1995 to 2008, then head of the Departmental service for social initiatives in Bignona from 2012 to the present day.

Author of “Socio-economic integration of disabled persons (a social perspective)” (2011), published by the ENTSS (Senegal national school for specialized social workers); “Socio-economic integration of disabled persons (a sociological perspective)” (2016), published by the Assane Seck University of Ziguinchor.

→ **YANNICK BILLARD:** Agricultural engineer, specializing in international development, from the Graduate School of Agriculture of Angers. Territorial consultant to the Chamber of Agriculture of Isère from 2002 to 2007. Cooperative project manager at “Pays de Savoie Solidaires” from 2007 to the present day. Author of adventure stories (From Chambéry to the Cape of Good Hope - Edition artisans voyageurs (2012) and In the tracks of the little prince - Editions Transboreal (2021))

It has been our intention to contribute to the demonstration of the benefits of reciprocal cooperation, as a means of encouraging changes of approach, both at home and internationally. The theme of inclusion, which has been addressed for some years in the context of the Bignona-Savoie cooperative scheme, is appropriate to a capitalization operation of this type.

## AIDE ET ACTION:

→ **“AIDE ET ACTION”** is an association, the object of which is the improvement of access to, and the quality of education throughout the world, based upon the conviction that education allows vulnerable people to escape from poverty. “Aide et Action” thus promotes the social and professional integration of the latter, but also raises awareness and mobilizes public opinion in the interests of a fairer and more mutually-supportive world.

→ **CHARLEMAGNE BIO:** A sociologist, Mr Bio has some twenty years of experience in the management of development projects and programmes, and is affiliated to research centres and laboratories in Benin. A specialist in monitoring and evaluation, he has worked on projects with NGOs at a national, regional and international level, on issues associated with education and professional training, health care and agriculture, the key targets of which have been local authorities, decentralized national government structures, and marginalized and vulnerable groups in the form of young people, children, women and girls. In his capacity as monitoring and evaluation manager for “Aide et Action” in Africa, he has supported projects and programmes for the deployment and monitoring of COAs since 2016, and in conjunction with the PRISME programme. Currently responsible for quality within the International Quality Division, he has been involved in the deployment of tools for the self-assessment of quality within the “Aide et Action” network. In the academic field, he has essentially worked on the analysis of stakeholder policies associated with property management in the context of decentralization in Benin.

Having been involved for over two decades in issues associated with the inclusion and empowerment of all stakeholders in all the processes which concern them, this call for contributions has provided me with the opportunity to share with others some of the experiences which I have acquired in the “Aide et Action” network.

## LOUVAIN COOPERATION:

→ **LOUVAIN COOPERATION** ([www.louvaincooperation.org](http://www.louvaincooperation.org)) is the NGO of the UCLouvain (the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium), the object of which is the practical deployment of university expertise

# BIOGRAPHIES OF CONTRIBUTORS

for the fulfilment of development challenges. A member of the NGO Consortium of Francophone Belgian universities, Uni4Coop, Louvain Cooperation alerts the university community to issues associated with North-South relations, and supports its partners in African, Asia and Andean America, in the interests of enhancing local capabilities and improving the sustainability of their operations. Louvain Cooperation adopts an integrated approach, i.e. working in a combination of different subject areas (agro-ecology, entrepreneurship, social protection, non-communicable diseases, gender, etc.), in the interests of the optimum fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goals.

→ **VINCENT HENIN** is an economist and socio-anthropologist. Having gained experience as a researcher at the UCLouvain, he then worked in Andean America on behalf of Louvain Cooperation, before returning to head office in 2009, where he supervises the “SAE” Economic and Food Security Programme (in Benin, Bolivia, Burundi, Cambodia, Madagascar, Peru, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Togo).

→ **PAULA UGLIONE** is a psychologist, with a PhD in architecture and psychology. She is a research partner at Louvain Cooperation. Her interdisciplinary academic and scientific career specifically encompasses the field of Environmental Psychology. She has vast experience in the field, working in suburban regions of Brazil.

*The F3E call for papers “Include to transform” proposed to participate in a work questioning the meaning, the role and the effects of the inclusion of actors in change processes. We have recognized an unmissable opportunity for sharing the Environmental Integration Tool-based approach (EIT), a methodology with a dialogue-based dimension to its dynamics of structure and approach which is conducive to the empowerment of stakeholders in local development. This process of sharing invites us to review the strengths of this approach, but also its weaknesses and its limitations, in response to the collective and critical philosophy which underlies this procedure.*

## ESSENTIEL

→ **ESSENTIEL**, a Nantes-based NGO established in 1992, is comprised of legal and natural persons who work together in the interests of promoting popular access to health care, in compliance with the global vision of health defined by the WHO and the Ottawa Charter, working for a fairer and a more mutually-supportive world by developing the right to health care, on the grounds that it should be classified as an essential right.

Its initiatives for international solidarity and social utility focus on vulnerable population groups and contribute to the fight against exclusion and inequalities in health care, society and the economy, while fostering education, citizenship and the preservation and development of social connections.

→ **FLORIAN PERRUDIN**, currently Director of ESSENTIEL, has been involved as an employee of the association for the last ten years in initiatives conducted by the latter for stakeholders in Africa and France, in support of initiatives for the promotion of universal health care coverage, improved health care provision, the promotion of preventative health care, education, citizenship and international solidarity.

He previously occupied the post of coordinator of a regional cooperative scheme in Madagascar, where he collaborated with institutions and civil society on territorial development issues. In Cameroon, he was also involved in a participative consultation on the dynamics of development for a rural territory and its small farming organizations, and started his international career with an involvement in development issues for an environment-friendly cotton industry in Benin.

## CIRAD

Hassenforder, E., Lestrelin, G., Braiki, H., Arfaoui, R., Jendoubi, M., Ferrand, N., Morardet, S., Monier, C., Harrabi, C., & the PACTE platform team

It seemed essential to us, in addressing the issue of inclusion, that we should ourselves adopt the most inclusive language possible, reflecting the collaborative nature of our everyday operations. The present chapter has thus been co-written by a collective of stakeholders, all of whom are actively involved in the PACTE programme described in this chapter, and each of whom considers the process of inclusion, and its monitoring and evaluation, from a different angle:

→ **EMELINE HASSENFORDER, NILS FERRAND AND SYLVIE MORARDET** are researchers at the Joint Research Unit for “Water Management, Stakeholders & Applications” (UMR G-EAU), working respectively for CIRAD – the French agricultural research and international cooperative organization for the sustainable development of tropical and Mediterranean regions – (Emeline) and for INRAE – the French national research institute for agriculture, food and the environment – (Nils and Sylvie). They are involved in the development of the “CoOPLAGE” approach described in this chapter, and support its deployment in the PACTE programme.

# BIOGRAPHIES OF CONTRIBUTORS

→ **GUILLAUME LESTRELIN** is a researcher at CIRAD in the Joint Research Unit for "Territory, the Environment, Remote Detection and Spatial Information" (UMR TETIS). He coordinates the element of the PACTE programme which is dedicated to the participation of local stakeholders (i.e. multi-stakeholder platforms).

→ **HOUSSEM BRAIKI** is a consultant for multi-stakeholder participation and consultation engineering. He is an associate researcher at the Joint Research Unit for Water Management, Stakeholders and Applications (UMR G-EAU) of CIRAD. He trains and supports facilitators for the PACTE programme.

→ **CHRISTELLE MONIER** is the Manager of the engineering hub for Research and Development projects at CIRAD. She promotes and supports the deployment of the ImpresS ex ante approach described in this chapter.

→ **RABII ARFAOUI AND MERIEM JENDOUBI** are two observers for the PACTE programme – they attend all participative events, and collect data on participants and the content of exchanges.

→ **CHAMSEDDINE HARRABI** coordinated the PACTE programme between 2018 and 2021, within the Directorate General for the Development and Conservation of Agricultural Land (DG-ACTA) of the Tunisian Ministry of Agriculture.

Given that the inclusion of women and young people is one of the central ambitions of the PACTE programme, this chapter is intended to illustrate the difficulties and issues raised by the practical deployment of this ambition in a rural Tunisian context.

## ARNAUD LAABAN AND KLARA HELLEBRANDOVÁ:

→ **ARNAUD LAABAN:** A graduate in sciences from the Paris Institute of Political Studies and the ESCP Europe, Arnaud has over 10 years of experience in the field of consultancy and evaluation, working with public stakeholders and associations in Europe and Latin America.

→ **KLÁRA HELLEBRANDOVÁ:** Doctor of sociology and a member of the Interdisciplinary Gender Studies Group (GIEG) at the School of Gender Studies of the National University of Colombia, Klára combines her experience as a researcher and specialist in the intersectional gender perspective with her experience as a consultant for the evaluation of international solidarity projects.

Why contribute to this work? Having completed a number of studies on employability or empowerment projects – some of which have been supported by F3E – our core concern is to share our experience and provide a means of understanding the empowerment which originates from those who participate in these projects and function as agents of change.

## CARTON PLEIN

Carton Plein is an association established in 2012 with the object of promoting the social and professional inclusion of persons in a highly vulnerable situation: the homeless, those without qualifications or without sufficient income. Carton Plein believes in the power of people, and encourages them to start afresh on the basis of their strengths, their skills and their desires. A number of in-house schemes contribute to this objective:

- An inclusion business which, in Paris, supports people to take up work in pushbike logistics (removals, deliveries and collections).
- A training organization, which trains people in the profession of delivery cyclist.
- An inclusion workshop project, conducted in association with the "Early Days" scheme in Paris and Nanterre, which allows the homeless, or those who have been homeless, to restore their confidence, access their rights and get back into work in a fully-appropriate and tailor-made context. Activities undertaken involve the recycling, sale and preparation of orders of second-hand cardboard boxes.

→ **LAURE TURCHET** has been hub coordinator for the Carton Plein association for over two years. Every year, the hub supports approximately 70 homeless people in two workshops. Following her studies in law and political sciences, with a specialization in project management for Humanitarian Project Operations at the ICP (Catholic University of Paris), she gained extensive experience in network support and facilitation operations for the "Secours Catholique" charitable agency in the field of major exclusion, both in France and abroad. She joined Carton Plein in 2017 as a project officer, and became hub coordinator in 2019.

→ **LOUISE LACOSTE** is a PhD student in sociology at the IDHES in Nanterre (University of Paris institute for institutions and historical dynamics in the economy and society), working under the supervision of Maud Simonet. She is completing her thesis under the terms of a CIFRE contract (an industrial agreement for training through research), in association with Carton Plein. Her research is focused on an analysis of the "Early Days" scheme, particularly viewed through the lens of social relations of gender, class and race. She became involved in the association in 2019, during her end-of-study internship, further to the completion of a Masters in Economic and Social Sciences at the University of Paris Nanterre.

# BIOGRAPHIES OF CONTRIBUTORS

Together, they have coordinated a research initiative which focuses on the issues raised by inclusion in the “Early Days” scheme. There are two key structural points in this action-research initiative. Firstly, the issue of gender and social gender relations within the scheme. Secondly, the methodological process governing the deployment of collective reflection and, more specifically, the importance of the identification of modes of enquiry and action which will permit the full inclusion of the viewpoints and ideas of supported persons. These are two reasons why they wished to contribute to the work coordinated by F3E.

## BATIK

→ **BATIK INTERNATIONAL:** this French organization works for international solidarity in North Africa, Vietnam and France. With the support of its partners, BATIK International aims to develop freedom of choice and action for vulnerable persons and communities, allowing them to become agents of change. Since its establishment, the association has been committed to socio-economic inclusion and the provision of access to their rights for persons in a vulnerable situation. The association enhances the capacities of local organizations, as partners in initiatives, allowing them to support processes for the social and economic empowerment of young people and women, with respect to gender relations, fair working conditions and the fight against all types of abuse.

→ **SARAHÍ GUTIERREZ:** A native of Mexico, Sarahi joined BATIK International in 2011, having completed graduate studies in political sciences and international relations. She has contributed to the development of the activities of the association, and has managed the deployment of programmes both in France and internationally, working on the basis of change-oriented approaches and popular education tools. With a commitment to feminist issues, she has encouraged the incorporation of the gender-based development approach into the projects of the association. She has been director of the association since 2019.

## DONNA MERTENS AND TAMARAH MOSS:

→ **DONNA MERTENS:** Professor Emeritus at Gallaudet University, specializes in research and evaluation methodologies designed to support social transformation. She has authored/co-authored many methodological books related to social, economic and environmental justice and human rights, most recently Program Evaluation Theory and Practice (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.); Mixed Methods Design in Evaluation; Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology: (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). She has consulted with many international agencies, such as F3E, UN Women, Engineers without Borders Canada, and the WK Kellogg Foundation. Mertens served as the editor for the Journal of Mixed Methods Research 2010-2014. She was President of the American Evaluation Association in 1998 and served on the Board from 1997-2002; she was a founding Board member of the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation and the Mixed Methods International Research Association.

My life-long exploration of the ways evaluation methodologies can support an increase in social economic, and environmental justice motivated me to contribute to this book.

→ **TAMARAH MOSS** is an Assistant Professor at the Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research at Bryn Mawr College. She is an instructor for graduate level social work courses in foundation practice, research methods, data analysis and evaluation for clinical and macro practice. She was a 2020 Fellow with the Leaders in Equitable Evaluation and Diversity (LEEAD) program, focused on culturally responsive and equitable evaluation. Donna Mertens served and continues to be, a mentor to her. Since then, Tamarah is currently a member of the advisory team for the LEEAD program. Tamarah's research, teaching and service are trauma informed, social justice and community-based centered. Her current research interests are threefold: 1) evaluation 2) community-based health and social services with vulnerable and marginalized communities; and 3) social work education and pedagogy, across the United States and internationally. Additionally, she has worked in bi-lingual English-French environments for qualitative data-analysis on child-centered health and social services in West African countries, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali.

*I welcomed the opportunity to contribute to this book as a way to support and engage in multidisciplinary learning and sharing, across international borders that enhance perspective and practice in evaluation.*

## BIOGRAPHIES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE EDCOM

→ **ADA BAZAN**, co-founder of Quartiers du Monde, is an expert - practitioner and trainer in the cross-cutting perspective of gender and development. She has field experience in different contexts and territories, including Madagascar, West and North Africa and Latin America. Ada uses participatory methodologies from popular education, develops and capitalizes on pedagogical material to work and/or integrate gender in the different themes of work.

→ **NOMVULA DLAMINI** has worked for the past 28 years as Organisation Development (OD) practitioner, Social Facilitator, Evaluator and Leadership Mentor with civil society organisations, networks and social movements working in social change. She has facilitated writing workshops, stakeholder dialogues and collaborations, evaluations and action research processes, and coached and mentored young leaders. She has contributed also as writer and writeshop facilitator to various Barefoot Guides ([www.barefootguide.org](http://www.barefootguide.org)).

→ **ANGELES ESTRADA** has a background in French and international associations and has been director of the F3E since December 2019. Through her experiences in the field and her management functions, she has consolidated tools for social animation and training on collective action with an emancipatory aim and the development of emancipatory action and the development of the power to act according to the frame of reference developed by Yann Le Bossé. His contributions to the work on the Fonda value chain and the collective impact strategy underline his appetite for putting action into dialogue with reflection and a posture favouring alliance dynamics.

→ **ANNA MAHEU** started her career as a communications officer at Socialter and then at Sparknews. She then went back to school and obtained a Master 2 in Gender Studies. She has since joined Fonda in 2020 as a communications officer, where she coordinated a special edition of the Fonda Tribune magazine entitled "Equality between women and men : a democratic requirement".

→ **ANAÏS MESNIL**, coordinator of the "Place aux Jeunes !" ( Make way for the young) project at Engagé-e-s & Déterminé-e-s, a network of young international solidarity associations and leader of Coordination SUD's Youth and International Solidarity Commission, which works to ensure that young people are better taken into account as actors in international solidarity and in French public development policies.

→ **CÉLINE MIAS**, a committed feminist, has been leading humanitarian and development NGO programmes and advocacy in Europe, Africa and Asia for over 24 years. Currently, Ms. Mias is EU Representative and director of CARE International's office in Belgium. Since 2018 she has also served as Vice President of CONCORD Europe.

→ **OLIVIER PIAZZA** dedicates his time and energy to the deployment of collective intelligence in society and more specifically in social and solidarity organisations, whether through the cooperative Les Maisons de l'Intelligence Collective or through his role as Co-Director of the D.U. Collective Intelligence at Cergy Paris University.

→ **LYDIE PORÉE**, researcher in the history of feminist mobilisations. She is an intersectional feminist activist and a member of the Confederal Board of Family Planning, a popular education association that defends and promotes the rights to sexual and reproductive health for all.



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What do we understand by inclusion? Who is to be included? What are the links between inclusion and empowerment? Under what conditions can inclusion be transformative? How is inclusion to be adopted in practice?

*Inclusion for Transformations* investigates the integration of inclusive practices, as vehicles for equitable and sustainable social change. In this work, F3E has brought together stakeholders from the field of research, consultants and practitioners working for the promotion of social justice, both in France and internationally. A one-year process for the exchange of collective intelligence has resulted in the drafting of a dozen articles, together with a postscript. These texts describe methodologies, inspirational experiences and a number of key factors for the support of practical implementation.

# REPERES SUR



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