

UNIT 2:

Participatory learning leading to action for food security



Introduction

Initiatives to alleviate hunger and poverty that enable people to become part of their own solution result in self-reliance and ongoing actions that can bring about the transformation necessary for food security that leads to their health and well-being. Participation by people in their own development is much discussed in community development articles and books. Evidence from the field highlights the challenges and pitfalls of people participatory practices. Over the years community development field workers together with poor people in rural and urban areas in Africa and other parts of the world have learned what works best. Today we can draw on a rich collection of participatory learning methods and tools that lead to self-reliance and sustainable actions.

“The outsider who comes with ready-made solutions is worse than useless. He must first understand from us what our questions are and help us articulate the questions better, and then help us find solutions. He alone is a friend who helps us think about our own problems on our own.” (Tilakaratna, 1987)

In Unit 2 you will learn to use relevant participatory learning methods and tools in preparation for your work with selected households as set out in Modules 3, 4, 5 and 6. You will learn that a good HFS facilitator respects people, puts them and their needs first, listens to them with an open mind, learns from them what works best, and supports them to carry out the actions they plan to improve their food security.

Unit 2 Sections

2.1 Views on community development

2.2 How does participatory learning and action work?

2.3 How to facilitate participatory learning and action methods and tools

Take Action



This section gives you detailed information about the portfolio activities that are linked to Module 2. They focus on the actions with households and are the main assessment activities.

Learning outcomes

The information in this table is like a good road map for your learning journey. It gives you a clear idea of what you are expected to **know** and **do** at the end of Unit 2. The workbook, portfolio and assignments are all **assessment** activities that are linked to the **learning**



outcomes. By completing these activities you can show what level of knowledge and skill you have achieved.


The time estimate for doing the activities helps you to manage your study time. Some of you will take longer while others may need less time. You can keep a check on how long the activities actually take by filling in the time you spent.

Learning outcomes	Assessment activities	Actual time spent
Workbook activities		
1. Identify the main elements and characteristics of sustainable community development approaches.	2.1 Your ideas about the poor and community development. <i>(20 minutes)</i> 2.2 Is this a community development initiative? <i>(25 minutes)</i>	
2 Describe how participatory learning and action processes work 3 Interrogate reasons for participation and non-participation in community development initiatives.	3.5 Obstacles to participation <i>(25 minutes)</i> 3.6 Explore motives to participate or not participate in initiatives <i>(20 minutes)</i>	
3. Evaluate the use of relevant PLA methods and tools.	2.8 PLA methods and tools used to get started in the community <i>(30 minutes)</i> 2.10 Role play a semi-structured interview <i>(40 minutes)</i> 2.12 Practice activity: draw a transect walk diagram and a resource map of your area <i>(80 minutes)</i> 2.15 Practice activity: plan and facilitate a visualization tool <i>(60 minutes)</i>	
4. Provide evidence of planning and facilitating a PLA tool with a group.	Portfolio Activity 2.2 Plan, facilitate and evaluate a PLA tool <i>(2hours)</i> Log Reflect planning and facilitating a PLA tool. <i>(15 minutes)</i>	
	Assignment 2 You can find information on this assignment in Tutorial Letter 101 <i>(2 hours)</i>	



Keywords

An important goal of this programme is introduce you to the concepts and words in the food security field. To assist you we present a list of key words that are introduced in each unit. The meanings of these words appear in a glossary at the end of the module.

	
Community development Care model Adult learning Facilitation Participation Care learning groups Community development worker Volunteer	Small groups Learning cycle Participatory research approach Participatory methods Household resource management Visualization methods and tools Interview methods and tools Reporting methods

2.1 Views on community development

When you think of poor people what comes into your mind immediately? Do you think of poor people as having power or being powerless? Do you think they need to be helped or that they can help themselves? You may have come across people who want to do things for poor people in the community because there is a perception that they cannot do things for themselves. This perception is highlighted in the extract below.

Prof Anil Gupta (2006) of India's Honeybee Foundation states 'the thinking that poor rural people have hands, mouth and feet but no brains, is highly misleading. 'The concern about viewing the rural poor this way was raised by Professor Gupta after years of frustration at the limited view of people's intellectual ability by outside agencies and development institutions particularly governments. The top-down approaches also called the directive approaches used by some development agencies seem to assume that people cannot think for themselves or determine what is good for them. This thinking informs programmers and projects conceived elsewhere and implemented at local level requiring labour from the locals without consideration of whether they actually want the project or not. Repeatedly rural people have been informed through the actions of officials and or speeches (perhaps unintentionally) that development affairs should be left to learned outside experts.

(Add source?)





Workbook Activity 2.1: Complete this activity in your workbook

Your ideas about the poor and community development

Raise awareness of the need to be sensitive to the potential of poor people in community development activities.

What to do

Reflect on the above extract and answer the questions that follow.

1. 'Poor people cannot do things for themselves.' Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.
2. Do you know of a poor person who has been belittled (made to feel inadequate) in a group? What was the result?
3. Why are top down community development approaches often used?
4. It is suggested in the extract that top down approaches to community development do not work? Think of your own experience and explain why you think top down approaches do not work.
5. Do you know of a successful community development project or initiative? Share information about this project with members of your group. Explain why you think it was successful.



Comments on Activity 2.1

*The extract refers to the **directive** approach where the outsider plays a prominent role. Such an approach is undesirable because it does not involve the people in taking a leading role in determining their own future. Projects based on directive approaches often have short-term results but are unsustainable in the long-term. Experiences from the field show time and time again that the best way to ensure long lasting success in any development venture is to interact with the people concerned and enable them to participate actively: ask them what their wish is for the area and enable and support them to work towards achieving their common goal.*

Ideas about community development are closely linked to assumptions about poor people. If you think that poor people are powerless and cannot do things for themselves your approach will be one of doing things for them. In this approach you are the doer and poor people are the recipients. This is a **top down** approach. However, if you believe that poor people have the ability to solve their own problems you will involve them and support them to find solutions that suit their particular context. In this approach poor people are the doers and you offer relevant support and enable them to take suitable actions. This is a **bottom up** approach.



2.1.1 How did community development approaches evolve?

Community development initiatives and projects have been organized for many years in South Africa, Africa and other parts of the world. Over time the approaches have evolved and changed in order to meet the needs of poor people in sustainable ways. Each of the three time periods or phases can be linked to a particular community development approach: directive, indirective and participatory.

Historical development	Focus of community development approaches used
<p>First phase Pre 1970 <i>Directive approach</i></p>	<p>The outsiders made most of the decisions. They decided what the problems were, how to solve them, designed the project, set the objectives and activities, provided the inputs, managed the implementation of projects, monitor activities and evaluated outcomes.</p> <p>The conception was top down. Development was something governments did for or to people. The language was military: 'objectives', 'targets', 'strategies', 'capability'. This approach is still used in macro-level planning.</p> <p>The results were not very encouraging.</p>
<p>Second phase 1980s – 1990s <i>Indirective approach</i></p>	<p>The outsiders began to realize that the insiders knew a great deal. The outsiders began to ask the insiders more questions about what the problems and needs were. But still the outsiders made most of the decisions.</p> <p>Situation appraisal methods were developed that emphasized the importance and relevance of situational local knowledge. They were used extensively to gather data. Use of these methods highlighted the importance of getting the big issues right.</p>
<p>Third phase Post 1990s <i>Participatory approach including self-help</i></p>	<p>Insiders with support from outsiders became active in decision-making. The results were promising. Locals were responding positively to the outsiders and taking on more of the leadership role. Participatory development arose as a reaction to the realization of failure and resistance by insiders at being 'milked' for information. This was popularized particularly by Gordon Conway and Robert Chambers (1992), and more recently by David Korten (1996).</p>

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Table 2.1 Phases in the development of approaches to community development

The different community development approaches arose mainly in response to the results obtained. Most projects and initiatives that used the direct approach did not have long lasting benefits for the community. When the project closed the actions stopped. In the 1980s and 1990s organizations and funders were concerned about the sustainability of initiatives and realized the need to consult the local people to ensure that planned interventions would meet their needs and thus be more successful. Although people were consulted, they still remained recipients and were not in control of the actions. When the projects ended so often did the actions. The participatory approaches that emerged after the 1990s are based on the realization that people must be enabled to take forward their own actions to ensure that the



forward movement continues. There are many examples of successful and sustainable initiatives that use participatory approaches. There are also many failed attempts. Getting people to participate and take control of the actions to improve their own lives remains a challenge. You will learn how to encourage participation in food security activities later in this unit.

2.1.2 How can you tell that it is community development practice?

What distinguishes a community development project or activities from services provided by community organizations and local government?

Let's look closely at the elements that are part of a community development activity. The table below shows the elements of an integrative approach. You will use this approach for your food security work with people at the household level. In this approach there is close collaboration between all stakeholders: poor people, the facilitator, the community, NGOs and CBO's, local government.

Element	Integrative approach
Main focus	Collective initiative by all participants (community and facilitator).
Target group	A specific community: groups of people who live in the same locality with similar needs and interests and who have collective responsibility for the success of the community.
Objectives	The main objectives for the community are task oriented objectives. Objectives for the participants indicate concrete actions. The main objectives for the facilitator are process oriented objectives. Objectives for the facilitator focus on methods of participatory learning.
Needs identified	Capacity building needs of community to take actions to solve their own problems.
Own initiative	The community must be enabled to take their own initiative with its own content, skills and agents to attain the learning process and in the end the task.
Principles (self directed goals)	The emphasis is on empowerment through active participation by all parties involved. Mutual interaction by all parties involved leads to empowerment. It involves power, freedom of choice, and taking responsibility for own development.
Type of actions	Community and facilitator participate and cooperate in activities in all stages of the learning process. The activities are of a problem solving nature and are referred to as integration activities.
Role of community	The people and the facilitator are united in their efforts. The community is in the foreground and acts in its own activities. The facilitator provides support if and where necessary.
Role of community development worker	The community worker usually works indirectly but at times is directive in order to stimulate the process.
Role of stakeholders	Outside agencies create an environment for development to take place. The community works in cooperation with stakeholders.

Table 2.2 Elements of an integrative community development approach
(Adapted from *The units of analysis as used in the different approaches*)



It is possible to describe community development as a **learning process** that **enables** people to form personal and social **relationships for collective action and cooperation** to bring about a **desired change**. The learning process consists of a sequence of suitable activities informed by the needs identified by the people. Essentially the people determine what they will be learning with the guidance of the facilitator. Through the process of learning that comes from participating in concrete activities the people are able to achieve their own goals. The facilitator makes it easy for learning to take place and stimulates and supports the people to carry out the actions that result in successful attainment of their goals.

The characteristics of community development in practice is informed by and integrated approach:

- people using their own initiative
- human interaction as prerequisite for building relationships towards progress
- goal orientated activities as well as the facilitation of suitable methods
- needs (also human needs) of the community, which are motivating forces for action
- ideas with own content, skills, and agents to attain task objectives
- "reaching out" initiatives of society to act collectively and cooperate to help community
- community dynamics that stimulate and help people to realize that they can do something to help themselves
- ongoing organized action initiated by leaders and used as a source of stimulation, not domination
- ideas and principles based on own values
- process of change that holds promise for progress to improve quality of life.

“Community development is a structured intervention that gives communities greater control over the conditions that affect their lives. This does not solve all the problems faced by a local community, but it does build up confidence to tackle such problems as effectively as any local action can.”
(Community Development Foundation, UK)

As you read the case study below, ask yourself whether this is an example of community development practice.





Case study: Zamukphila Women's Community Project

In 1994 a group of 13 women living in Upsher village, close to the town of Balfour in the Eastern Cape, started a community vegetable-growing project named Zamukphila, which means "trying to survive". The women were motivated by low levels of income and nutrition, particularly among their children, and concern about their husbands squandering the limited household income on alcohol.

The women contacted Ulimicor, a State Agricultural Corporation that had been operating in the area known before 1994 as the Ciskei, to ask for advice and land. Ulimicor advised them to establish a co-operative and assisted them in drawing up a constitution. Although there is a chairlady and a treasurer, there is no formal committee and the group takes decisions co-operatively. Ulimicor allocated the women approximately two hectares of land adjacent to the village and provided irrigation water, whilst a local farmer, Mr Jonase, occasionally assisted with ploughing the soil and the provision of seeds in the first few growing seasons.

The women agree that the project has experienced mixed fortunes, but nonetheless it has provided them with a valuable supplement to household food budgets. Crops grown include cabbage, carrots, beetroot, potatoes, onions and spinach and intercropping is practised. In 1996, for the first time, the women managed to supplement household income from the sale of surplus produce. Crops are mainly grown for sale (two-thirds of the 1998 produce) at the roadside and the rest are used for domestic consumption. Problems experienced in the last year include hail damage which ruined their crops, the absence of a tractor to plough the lands, now that the farmer has withdrawn his support, and the hardness of the soil which has prevented them from hoeing. Additionally, the Ulimicor parastatal has since ceased operation and access to water is no longer guaranteed, as the irrigation infrastructure is not maintained. They have actively sought external help, including from the rural local government of the area, but to date have had to be totally self-reliant. Some tasks are physically demanding and they see that they need help.

Although major difficulties are now being experienced, the women remain optimistic and have acquired a sense of self-achievement from their efforts.

(Adapted from: Rural self-reliance strategies in South Africa: community initiatives and external support in the former black homelands, Nel, E. and Binns, T.)





Workbook Activity 2.2: Complete this activity in your workbook

Is this a community development initiative?

Analyze a case study and identify the main elements of a community initiative.

What to do

Reflect on the above case study and answer the questions that follow.

1. Who initiated Zamukphila Women's Community Project?
2. What was the main goal of the project?
3. Why was the project started?
4. What kind of assistance did the project receive?
5. What are the threats to the group's ability to continue their food security actions?
6. What has the project achieved?
7. What would the project need now to continue to provide food security for the households in the future?
8. Is this an example of a community development project? Explain.



Comments on Activity 2.2

The story of the Zamukphila Women's Community Project illustrates the capacity and strong desire that exists in rural communities to bring about an improvement in their livelihoods and food security. It is an example of a self-help initiative as the women started and directed the project with minimal external help. The limited initial support received from the cooperative and the farmer was vital and helped to get the project off the ground and going for a few years. Unfortunately, the lack of continuity of access to key input resources such as water and technical support has seriously jeopardized the project's future sustainability. Despite the group's high motivation, they are unable to continue their efforts to achieve their food security goals and their future looks bleak.

Change must first happen in household. The case study shows the crucial role of external agencies to support the efforts of local people to succeed. Think of the food security framework that you learned about in Module 1. Food security actions at all levels must be linked to create an enabling environment, which makes it possible for households at the micro level to succeed. Local government, community organizations and business can play a vital role in helping community development initiatives and projects to be sustainable provided there is sensitivity to the needs and aspirations of local people and their involvement does not lead to dependency.



2.1.3 What is necessary for sustainable community development practice?

The challenge in all community development initiatives is to ensure that the participants can and will continue actions to improve their situation in the future, long after the formal intervention. The questions below can be considered sustainability criteria for any community development initiative and project.

1. What are the beliefs and attitudes of the local participants? Do they believe that this initiative is right for them?
2. Are the participants motivated to participate fully? Are they willing and able to be key players in directing, evaluating and improving their own actions?
3. Does the local environment have enough resources to support actions for an indefinite period?
4. Does the socio-political climate support the community development initiative?
5. Are the benefits widespread or do they only affect a few individuals?
6. Does the initiative encourage and nurture interdependence? A strong initiative depends on the interactions between a range of community stakeholders.

The best way to ensure success in any community development venture will be interacting with the people concerned; ask them what they aspire to, what their wish is for their households and community, help people to agree what they want to achieve, and then jointly take actions towards achieving this common goal.

The principles and characteristics of community development practice have evolved over many years. Today you can benefit from the collective insights and knowledge gained by facilitators and people in local communities who have been involved in numerous initiatives in Africa and countries around the world. This body of knowledge, which is based on practice, is referred to as the theory of participatory community development practice.

What is theory?

*Did you know that theory is a Greek word meaning looking at or viewing? We understand the **theory of participatory community practice** to mean the set of principles and practices that inform the participatory learning activities with households.*

In the next sections you will learn about the principles of participatory learning methods and practical tools that encourage and support participation. You will not only learn about them, you will learn to use them in your groups. In this way you will experience what it means to learn by doing. At the same time you will strengthen your ability to facilitate such learning activities with the households.



2.2 Building strong food security households

In their day to day living people are constantly interacting with each other and engaging with the resources in their environment to make a living. They reflect on what works, what not and how to improve things. The family unit or household has always been the unit for learning lifeskills. With the changes in society the household has largely lost its indigenous or traditional capacity to cope with the responsibilities, risks, and vulnerability that are part of the modern complex society.



In designing the Household Food Security Programme, you are studying, we have taken on board seriously the notion that local people must participate in and take ownership of actions to improve their livelihood and household food security. We have integrated relevant theory from disciplines such as community development, sustainable livelihoods, food security and nutrition. The HFS curriculum provides you with a rich learning environment in which you learn about the complex nature of food security and the practical ways to support households and enable them to take food security actions to improve their lives.

THE HFS LEARNING GROUP MODEL

In the HFS Programme you will not just learn about community development practice, you will experience it. From the time you enroll you are part of the HFS learning group. Together with your fellow students you are encouraged to play an active role in your own learning. A trained person called a promoter facilitates the learning in the group. The learning materials in the 6 modules provide a range of practice-focused activities and background information. The materials are designed to guide and support you on your learning journey as an HFS facilitator working with selected households in a particular community. In your groups you will share, discuss and reflect on what you observe and find as you engage with the households. Through critical reflection with your fellow students and the promoter you are



able to identify actions that best support the households you work with. The HFS learning group is a community development learning model. It closely resembles the care learning groups you will organize with the caregivers of food insecure households.

The central role of the care learning group in the HFS Programme

The care learning group model was conceptualized as a central learning method in the HFS programme. As you can see from the diagram below (Figure 2.1) there are four distinct yet interlocking components in the programme:

- The HFS Core Programme
- The HFS learning groups
- Care learning groups at the household level
- Community service providers.

The HFS Core Programme

The modules of the Programme Household Food Security form the core curriculum offered by the education institution. This is an integrated curriculum with a focus on household food security, participatory facilitation, sustainable natural resource use, intensive household food production, food behavior and nutrition, and food resource management. An overview of the HFS Programme is presented in the top left hand corner of the diagram.

The HFS learning groups

The students in this programme are the HFS facilitators who belong to the HFS learning groups. The composition of each group is diverse and includes community development workers who are in the service of community organizations as well as volunteers. The HFS facilitators can decide whether they want the HFS learning group to continue after the group learning sessions to share information and continue the learning process and support of each other. The consolidation and expansion of this type of learning group has huge potential for creating a network of support for households to become more and more independent and self-supportive. The HFS learning group is shown in the bottom left hand corner of the diagram.

Care learning groups at the household level

Community development workers (CDWs) and volunteers organize various micro-projects in a community, e.g. household gardening, provision of potable water, seed nurseries, education in nutrition. Even successful community development workers start from the individual caregivers and households in his/her particular area. As groups who have similar interests and needs work together to solve common problems, clusters are formed and these may grow into larger and stronger groups or organizations. But the central focus for interventions is the care learning group with caregivers and households at the micro-level. The HFS facilitator in this programme will use the same approach to establish food security care learning groups with selected households. The care learning group at household level is shown in the bottom right hand corner.



Community service providers

The HFS programme should be delivered in partnership with community service providers. Most of these community organizations have community development workers, care workers, home-based care workers or care volunteers who are responsible for their own micro-level projects in communities with groups or visit regularly individual households. These organizations can provide valuable support during the programme. For example, agricultural or nutrition expertise can be brought in as part of the household learning sessions. The organizations can play a role in mentoring the HFS facilitators. Probably their most important contribution is to provide ongoing support for households long after the programme as ended.

It is essential for the success of the HFS programme and future household food security interventions to establish robust relationships with relevant community organizations. These cooperative relationships can help to create sustainable community development and volunteer cadres in communities. The link with the community service providers is shown in the top right hand corner of the diagram.

The two-way arrows between the four components indicate the need for ongoing interaction between all the stakeholders in this programme. The education institution has to monitor how well the programme is working and what adjustments need to be made to ensure that the HFS facilitators have the necessary competences to support the caregivers of households to take actions that will improve their food security. The education institution has to forge partnerships with relevant community development organizations and stakeholders to ensure that there is wide support for the programme and to build in long term sustainability of the food security interventions implemented as a result of the programme.

The HFS facilitators have to engage continuously with the caregivers and households to ensure that their needs come first and that the support is actually helping rather hindering the household to achieve their own food security goals. The HFS facilitators and promoters must establish and maintain relationships with the community development organizations and other key stakeholders in the community to gain support for their work with the households.



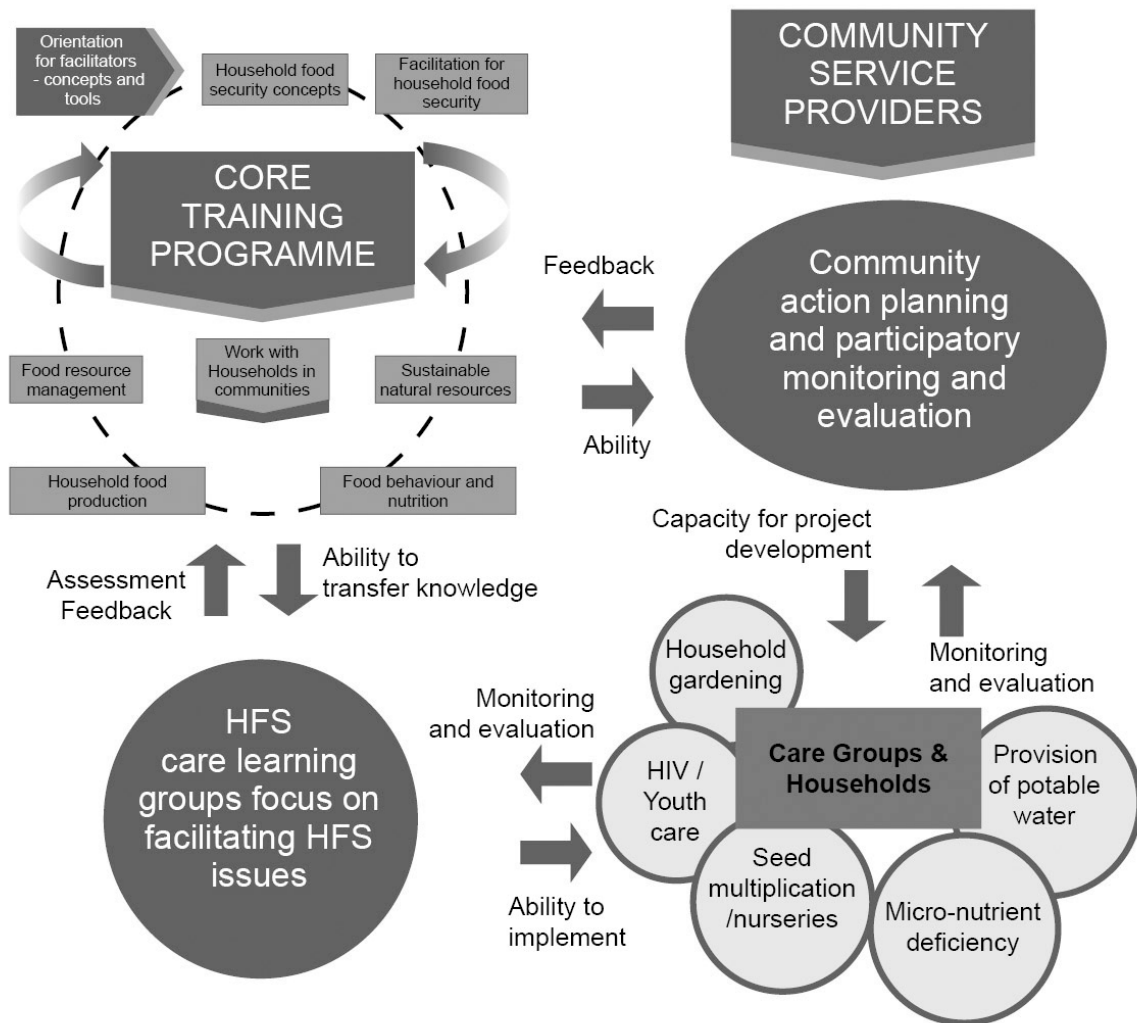


Figure 2.1 The interaction between the components of the Household Food Security Programme

How the HFS learning group is organized

Each HFS learning group comprises 15 – 25 students who are guided and supported by an HFS promoter. A regional coordinator monitors and supports the promoters and ensures that the programme is implemented according to the criteria specified by the education institution. This HFS learning group is linked to the education institution and the community partners or service providers who support the students. Each student is required to establish care learning groups with 5 - 10 households in the community. The diagram illustrates the organization model of the HFS learning group.



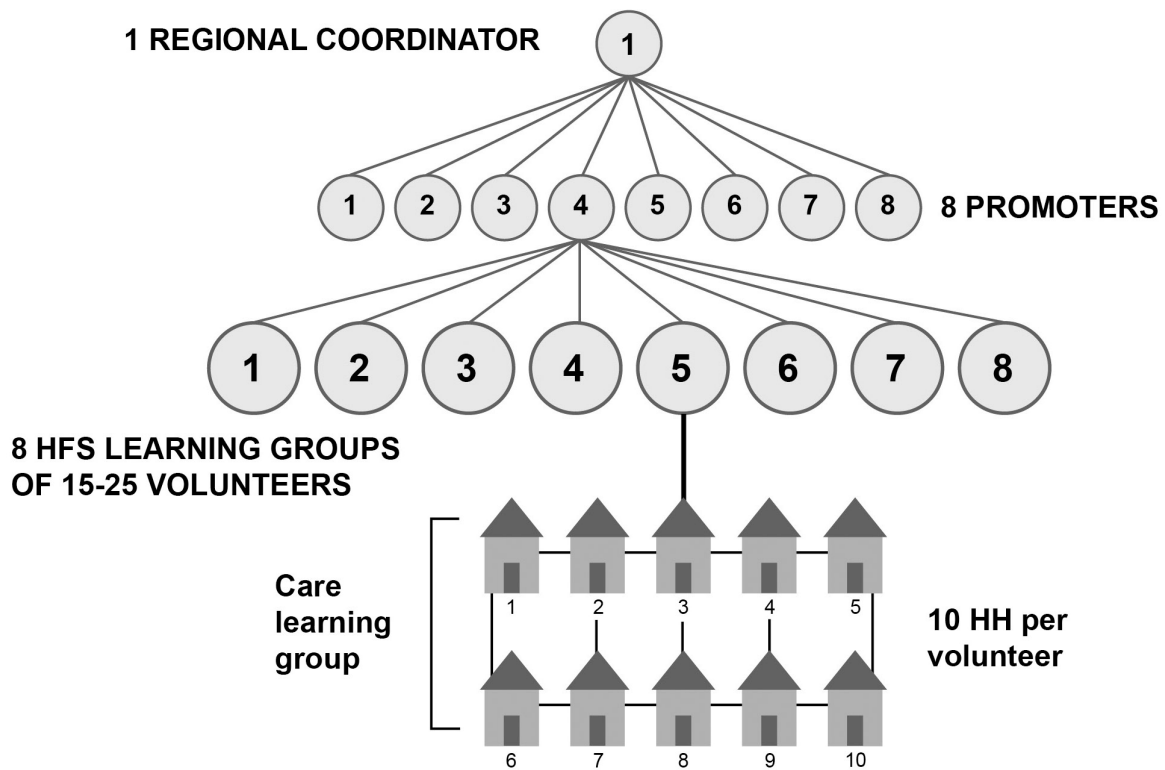


Figure 2.2 The organization model of the HFS care learning group

2.2.1 The HFS group learning approach

Care groups mean different things to different people. What exactly is a care group? What are the benefits of using care learning groups?

What is a care group?

Here is a description from World Relief, which developed the Care Group model in Mozambique for mother to mother care givers in 1995:

World Relief is a Non-Profit Organization, which provides humanitarian aid, disasters and emergency relief, and is involved in community and economic development.

A care group is a group of 10 – 15 volunteer, community-based educators who regularly meet together with project staff for training and supervision. They are different from typical mothers' groups in that each volunteer is responsible for regularly visiting 10-15 neighbours sharing what she has learned and facilitating behaviour change at the household level. Care groups create a multiplying effect to equitably reach every beneficiary household with interpersonal behaviour change communication.

(World Relief website)

The care learning group model used in the HFS programme is closely aligned to this description.



What are the benefits of using care learning groups?

An evaluation of the USAID funded child survival care group project, *Food for the Hungry*, in Mozambique showed some amazing results. The project was able to train and support a group of volunteers who helped to bring about widespread behaviour change in the consumption of different food groups in the community and this resulted in saving the lives of an estimated 6,522 lives of pre-school children. Through participation in the project people were mobilized to help their neighbours voluntarily and interpersonal relationships were improved. (Source: Care group information website).

Improved relationships among household and community members are also the positive effects of the care learning groups established and supported by MaTshepo in South Africa. In Module 1 you were introduced to MaTshepo's care learning group approach. She recognized the need to attend not only to the physical dimensions of poverty and hunger but also to the emotional and psychological aspects. MaTshepo has found that good family and community relationships create a secure base from which individuals can plan and act with confidence.

As far back as the 1940's another person came up with the idea that small learning groups could help people to change their food behaviour and improve food security. Kurt Lewin is a well-known theorist who carried out research with Margaret Mead in the 1940's on food security and why people eat what they eat. The aim of their study was to establish how food shortages experienced by people during the Second World War in America and Europe could be addressed. Lewin found that food behaviour and food security could be improved by using small group activities to change decision-making in small groups and bring about change.

He proposed the Channel Theory of food making decisions. He developed a model that shows the various decisions made by the caregiver of a household to obtain food from outside sources, store the food, and prepare the food for the family to eat. He identifies a number of crucial decision-making points from food source to food consumption that result in good or poor food utilization and consumption practices. These practices affect the levels of nutrition and health positively or negatively. You will learn about his Channel Theory of making food related decisions in Unit 3.

2.3 How does participatory learning and action work?

In the HFS programme you are continuously encouraged to participate actively doing the activities, sharing your experiences and views in your care learning group, and reflecting on what you are learning. Later on you are expected to facilitate participatory learning in the household care learning groups. What is participatory learning? What are the benefits of participatory learning? Is participatory learning the best way to learn in community development initiatives? The answers to these questions will become clearer as you progress in this unit and the programme.



“One of the most significant outcomes of the care learning groups was improved relationships among community members. We may say they managed to ‘say thatha (goodbye) to gossip.’”

(Evaluation of the impact of care learning groups in Potshini, Kwa-Zulu Natal)



Let's start off with your own experience and views of learning.



Activity 2.3: Do this activity in your study guide

How do you learn best?

Think about your own way of learning. What helps and what hinders your learning? Read the statements and tick ✓ those that help you learn best. There are no right or wrong answers, just what works for you. There is space for you to write your own ideas.

My learning preferences	Tick for yes
1. I learn best by doing, seeing and hearing things 2. I learn best by finding new ways of doing things 3. I learn best when I feel I'm in a 'safe' environment 4. I learn best when I'm relaxed and calm 5. I learn best when I can see the 'big' picture 6. I learn best by working it out as I go along 7. I learn best when I have a plan with goals and targets 8. I learn best when I can share and discuss my experiences with others in a small group	



Comments on Activity 2.3

This self-reflection helps you to identify some practical aspects about learning that you can build on when you work with people in the households. Compare your learning preferences with the characteristics of adult learners below.

2.4 How adults learn

Learning is a common human experience. As children we start off as curious beings who use our senses of sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell to learn about our environment. We learn to talk and walk. We observe others closely and learn what acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour are. As we mature we learn to find our way in a complex society and learn to cooperate with others in order to achieve our goals. Learning is a lifelong experience.

In the mid-1960s Malcolm Knowles first articulated some key differences between how adults and children prefer to learn. We can express these preferences in terms of participation in learning.



Adults:

- Need to know why they should participate;
- Need to be self-directing and decide for themselves when they want to participate;
- Have a far greater volume and different quality of experiences than young people and use these past experiences to make participating in the experience more meaningful;
- Become ready to participate and learn when they experience a life situation where they need to be involved;
- Enter into the participation process with a task-centred orientation to learning; and
- Are motivated to participate by both extrinsic (external) and intrinsic (internal) personal factors.

Adults have certain characteristics that affect how they approach learning and how they learn. Below are four of the characteristics identified by Knowles (1990).

The characteristics of adult learners**1. Adults need to know why they should participate**

Adults are less accepting of information given and are more likely to ask questions such as 'How will this help me and my family?' or 'How will it make my life easier?' This means that when you bring ideas to help the community, concentrate on what is beneficial to them.

2. Adults see themselves as self-directed persons

Adults tend to see themselves as being responsible for directing their own lives: deciding what change they want; deciding how to bring up their children; deciding what social activities they wish to follow. At household and family level, people like to set their own goals and choose their own developmental tasks.

3. Adults have a wide range of experience

Adults have varying degrees of life experience: attended school, working, handling money, bringing up children, following religion, politics and so on. They therefore view community engagement as building on those experiences.

4. Adults tend to be motivated by personal factors

Adults tend to have a motivation for everything they engage in: joining a sewing group for social affirmation, seeking spiritual growth through joining a local church, taking a driving course just after coming into some money and wanting to purchase a vehicle and so on.

The participatory learning approach in the HFS care learning groups is supportive of how adults prefer to learn. What are the strategies or methods that promote and support participative learning?

2.5 Practice theories of participative learning

Practice theories could also be referred to as approaches. The participative action learning approach used in the HFS Programme is the **Triple A** approach. You were introduced to this learning method in Module 1.



2.5.1 Triple A cycle

Here is the diagram to remind you of the main phases of the Triple A learning cycle.

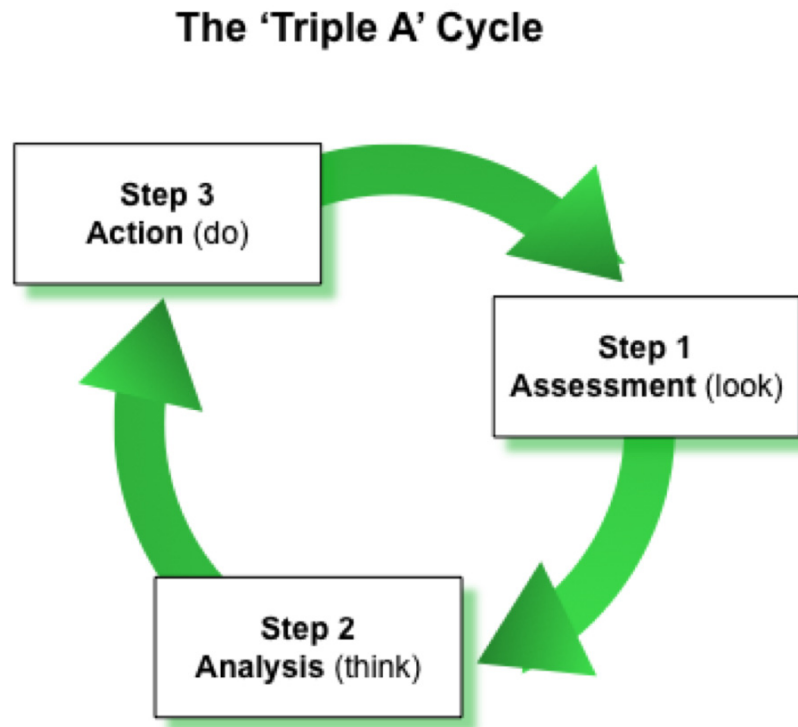


Figure 2.3 The 'Triple A' Cycle

STEP 1: Assessment

This is the look or observation phase. You and the households observe the situation carefully and use a variety of techniques and tools to collect current information on key issues.

STEP 2: Analysis

This is the critical thinking and reflecting phase. You interpret the information, make sense of it, and identify areas of success and areas that need improvement.

STEP 3: Action

This is the informed action phase. You plan workable strategies for action or action plans with households to address identified problems. You support the households to implement the action plans and monitor progress.

The end of step 3 is not the end of the learning and development process as the cycle is ongoing. This systematic approach allows you and the households to increase your understanding of the issues. Households can use this approach to keep refining the actions that have a positive impact on their lives.



2.5.2 Action research process

The Triple A approach is based the action research process pioneered by Lewin. The action research process has these phases:

Look - Build a picture and gather or assess information. We define and describe the problem to be investigated and the context in which it is set. We also describe what all the participants (educators, group members, managers etc.) have been doing.

Think – Analyze, interpret and explain. We reflect on what participants have been doing. We look at areas of success and any deficiencies, issues or problems and why these have occurred.

Plan – What should happen now to guide action?

Act – Take action and resolve issues and problems. (Stringer 1999: 18; 43-44; 160)

The action resource process or action learning process has been endorsed by David Kolb and adapted. A variation is also known as the Kolb's learning cycle.

2.5.3 Kolb's learning cycle

David Kolb is an American Education Theorist who developed a theory of experiential learning known Kolb's learning cycle, which has been used extensively in adult education, informal education and lifelong education programmes. Kolb's learning cycle has four interlinking phases:

- concrete experience (an action or an experience)
- observation of and reflection on that experience (review and reflect on the action or experience)
- formation of new concepts based on the reflection (thinking about the action or experience and draw out lessons)
- actively testing new ideas in practice (try out in actions and identify what you have learned).

The end of one cycle is the beginning of another and continues onward thus providing the participants with ever more experience, insight, knowledge, and improved performance and actions.





Activity 2.4: Do this activity in your study guide

The essential elements of participative learning approaches

Identify the similarities of three participative learning approaches.

What to do

Compare the Triple A cycle, the Action research process, and Kolb's learning cycle and decide which of the following statements are true. **Tick ✓ only the true statements.**

Participative learning approaches:

1. Have a strong focus on improving practice.
2. Involve participants in a learning cycle, where knowledge and skills are continuously improved.
3. Encourage people to reflect critically on their own situation with a view to finding the underlying issues and causes of problems.
4. Directs people and tells them what the best solutions are for their problems.
5. Enables people to look at a variety of options that can solve their problems.
6. Guide people through a reflective process that ends in well-considered actions.
7. Are only suitable for people who have acquired a certain level of formal education.



Comments on Activity 2.4

The three participative learning theories follow a similar approach. Each one shows that learning is a cyclical process that comprises observation, reflection, planning and action. (4) and (7) are false statements. Participative approaches are particularly relevant for all people and are not dependent on any prior formal education. The approaches involve people in their own reflections and actions. They do not support directive top down learning approaches where people are recipients of learning rather than participants.

2.6 The participative learning cycle in the HFS programme

The diagram below shows how the participative learning cycle is integrated in the HFS programme. The learning takes place in the HFS care learning groups and the household care learning groups.



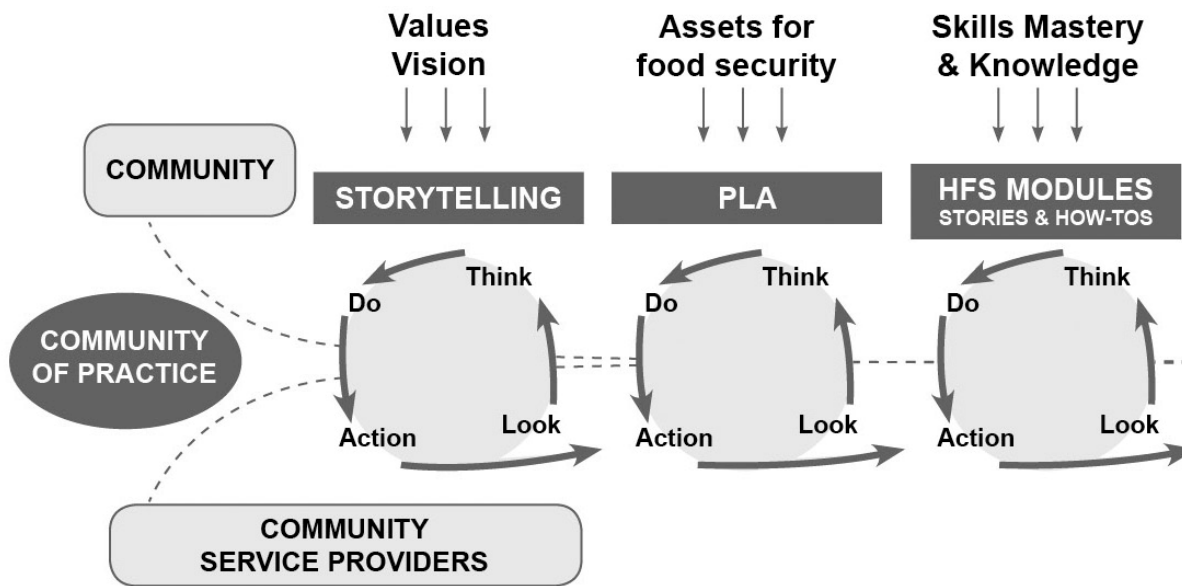


Figure 2.4 The learning process in the HFS care learning groups

The continuous learning cycle

Learning is an ongoing cycle through which you and the households are continuously encouraged to carry out well-considered actions. By reflecting on the actions you are improving your understanding of the issues and are building your competence. Increased ability enables you to keep on refining your actions to achieve the desired outcomes.

Each cycle of learning comprises four interlinking phases: look or observe what is happening; think critically why it is happening and what options you have for improving things; plan and act; monitor the action. Then the cycle starts again with a reflection on the action taken.

Community of practice

As a student in this programme you are part of a group of HFS facilitators also referred to as a community of practice.

You will work with the households in the community and build relationships with the community organizations that provide a range of services. Through these interactions you are continuously improving your own performance and food security practice.

“Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and who interacts regularly to learn how to do it better.”

(Etienne Wenger)



Story telling

HFS facilitator	The stories you collect from households in the community enable you get a sense of what is happening in the community regarding food security issues. Your reflection on these issues should result in a vision and values for your food security intervention with the households in the community.
Household members	The households tell their stories and you assist them to reflect on their food security issues and problems. They come up with a vision of food security for their household.

Assets for food security

HFS facilitator	A reflection on your experience of participatory learning methods and tools enables you to formulate a plan of action with the household. This plan shows what you will do and how you will do it.
Household members	By participating in a range of PLA (participatory learning in action) activities the households are able to identify what resources they have access to and what actions are needed to achieve their vision for improved livelihood and food security.

Skills mastery and knowledge

HFS facilitator	Each module has activities and reflections around specific topics, e.g. household food security, participatory facilitation, sustainable natural resource use, intensive household food production, food behavior and nutrition, and food resource management. As you do the activities and progress in the programme you build up your knowledge and skills as a food security facilitator. The portfolio activities require you to show evidence of what you have done and how well you have done it.
Household members	Participation in the learning sessions facilitated by the HFS facilitator enables the households to improve their food security decision making and build their skills to become self reliant in managing their livelihood and food security issues. Evidence of the households' increased ability is a food garden that has diverse plants managed according to low input practices, well managed food processing and food preparation methods, and nutritious meals.

2.7 How to encourage participation

Learning depends on the active participation of people. What do we mean by participation in the HFS programme? What are the obstacles to participation? How can you make it easy for people to participate?

2.7.1 What do we mean by participation?

If you look at the meaning of the word in various dictionaries you will find that participation is described in different ways:

- the act of sharing in the activities of a group



- action taken by a group of people
- participation by all members of a group
- take part and become involved
- sharing in benefits
- related to a larger whole.

From this list of meanings we can deduce that participation requires a commitment to be actively involved with others in a group. Participation in the group is shown by willingness to share ideas and experiences and to listen to others, to work together to plan and take actions that will benefit all involved.

The World Bank has this description of participation:

Participation is a process through which stakeholder's influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions, and resources that affects them. It can take many different forms ranging from information sharing and consultation methods, to mechanisms for collaboration and empowerment that give people more influence and control.
(World Bank, 2001).

Look at this description of participation.

Participation is a process of communication among local people and development agents, during which local people take the leading role to analyze the current situation and to plan, implement and evaluate development activities.

Both these descriptions favour a developmental process that puts local people first and that builds their capacity to become self reliant in directing actions to improve their situation. This is the **level** of participation that we aim to achieve in the HFS programme.

2.7.2 Levels of participation

From your own experience of participating in group sessions, you know that some people are actively involved and others are more passive. This also applies to the households and communities you will be working with. The following descriptions of participation levels give a good idea of the behaviour linked to different levels of involvement and participation.

1. Level of community participation

Level of participation	Description
Level 1: Nominal participation	Community lends land and labour towards a project
Level 2: Consultative participation	Community's opinions are sought on what is to happen
Level 3: Action oriented participation	Community is involved in implementing some project stages
Level 4: Decision-making participation	Community has a role in deciding what should be done and how it should be done, and also has a role in carrying it out. Decision-making participation can involve several levels: the community may have one representative in a planning body, in which case they have one vote, or the community



	may constitute the majority in a planning body.
Level 5: Collegial participation	Researchers, extension officers, development workers are involved in strengthening the farmer's or household's own initiatives.

2. Type of participation

Another commonly used model for depicting levels of participation is the typology (group type) of participation developed by JN Pretty (1995) and his colleagues from the Institute for Development Studies (IDS).

Type of participation	Description
Passive participation	People have no say in what is going on. They are told what is going to happen, or has already happened. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals. Unilateral announcements are made by administration or project management. People's responses are not listened to.
Participation in information-giving	People participate by answering questions posed by researchers who use questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, as the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.
Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted, and external agents listen to their views. The external agents define both problems and solutions, and may modify these in the light of people's responses. Such a consultative process does not imply any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
Participation for material incentives	People participate by providing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives. Much on-farm research falls into this category, as farmers provide the fields but are not involved in the experimentation or the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end.
Functional participation	People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization. Such involvement usually occurs after major decisions have been made and not at early stages of project cycles or planning. These groups tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but may become self-dependent.
Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis. This leads to action plans and the formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in



	maintaining structures or practices. This type of participation tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systematic and structured learning processes.
Self-Mobilization	People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how the resources are used. Self-initiated mobilization and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distribution of wealth and power.

.....
Table 2.1 Typology of participation in groups

In the HFS programme we expect, students, households and relevant community agents and organizations to participate in the programme and work together to achieve the goal of changing food utilization behaviour in selected households thereby improving their food security. The hope is that the behaviour change in households will have a positive effect on those around them thus contributing to improved food security in the community.

Student participation

We expect students to play an active part in their own learning. You do so by engaging with the study guides, completing the workbook and portfolio activities, participating in the group sessions, and by engaging with selected households and relevant community organizations.

Household participation

We expect households to be committed to work with the HFS facilitators, to engage in the food security related activities they facilitate, to be willing to change their food utilization behaviour and learn to make improved food related decisions, to take ownership and responsibility for managing the actions that lead to improved livelihood and food security.

Community participation

We expect relevant organizations and local government agents to support the programme in various ways. The level of their participation depends on their capacity and willingness to collaborate. Here are some ways in which the community organizations can participate:

- help to identify households who would benefit from participating in the programme;
- help to identify and select potential students;
- enable students who work in their organization to participate in the programme and provide them with suitable mentoring support;
- offer the support of known experts in agriculture and nutrition to support the activities which HFS facilitators plan with households;



- provide ongoing support to the participating households after the programme has ended.

2.7.3 What are the obstacles to participation?

Expecting people to participate fully is a goal that may be difficult to achieve. There are many reasons why people find it difficult to be fully involved. As you work with the households you may find that some of them will be very excited and willing to participate at the beginning but during the process they may lose interest and become less involved and even stop participating. Others may be quite passive from the start. Understanding why people may be reluctant to participate enables you to find ways of motivating and supporting people to take an active part in the activities geared to help them solve their food security problems.



Workbook Activity 2.5: Complete this activity in your workbook

Obstacles to participation

Identify obstacles that prevent people from participating in group activities.

What to do

Carefully study the table below showing obstacles that prevent people from participating in ways that will benefit them.

1. Identify the top three obstacles that prevent **you** from participating in group activities. To get to the top three obstacles:
 - Identify the obstacles that have the highest and lowest influence on your ability to participate. You can use the number **1 for lowest** and **5 for highest**.
 - Allocate a number to each obstacle.
 - Look at the obstacles that have a 5.
 - Select the top three from this group.
2. As a **group** identify the top three obstacles that prevent most of you from participating. Follow the same procedure as for 1.

Things that prevent people from participating in group activities	My choice	The group's choice
Group size		
Feeling excluded		
Dominating individuals		
Fear of failure		
Gender related issues (men v women)		



Using language or terms only a few in the group understand		
Age differences		
Lack of confidence in ability to express ideas/ shyness		
Expectations of self or others/traditional roles		
Avoiding risk		
Being comfortable with silence /lack of participation/reluctance to speak		
Fear of over commitment		
Protective boundaries/don't want to reveal sensitive issues		
Not interested/see no personal benefits		
Other/specify		

3. Discuss briefly how you can overcome these obstacles as a participant and as an HFS facilitator. Write down a few of your ideas.



Comments on Activity 2.5

The reflection on obstacles has uncovered a variety of underlying causes for non-participation in group activities. Your role as an HFS facilitator is to be aware of these obstacles and to do what you can to make it easy for people to participate in the learning activities you facilitate. You will learn how to create a safe, non-threatening and supportive learning environment for households as you progress in the programme.

2.7.4 How can you make it easy for people to participate?

Why are you interested in participating in this programme? A strong motivation could be that you are interested in doing something practical that can improve the lives of the people in your community. A big pull for you may be acquiring a qualification that will increase your chances of having a job that provides you with an income to satisfy your personal and family needs. People who see huge personal benefits are usually highly motivated to participate in a programme that can provide them with opportunities to achieve their personal goals.

WHAT IS IN IT FOR THE HOUSEHOLDS?

What about the households? Why would they be interested in participating in the various learning activities? They are expected to give of their time, to let you into their homes, to share sensitive issues with you? What do they get in return? Do they perceive what they are getting out of the activities as beneficial? The situations of households you will be working with are very different. You have to understand what motivates each household to become involved and to stay involved.



Here is a scenario that has been created to reflect a household context that has elements you may come across.



Case study: ThembidiDiza of Duncan Village

Thembidi Didiza is 62 and a traditional healer. She lives alone with her three teenage grandchildren aged 15, 17 and 18 in Duncan Village, a township near East London. It is a large township where people live in cramped conditions. Thembidi lives in one of the 3,500 formal houses. Her friend who recently moved to Duncan Village lives in one of the 14,000 shacks. They survive on what she receives from her small traditional healing practice and her modest pension.

Duncan Village has the largest unemployment rate in Buffalo City and many young people are involved in crime. Thembidi's eldest grandson became involved in a gang some years ago and he has a problem with drugs and alcohol.

Thembidi's homestead is small and she has very little space for growing vegetables. She tried growing vegetables with a group of women some years ago on a piece of communal land but it was unsuccessful. One of their problems was access to water and they did not know how to manage a food garden because there was no one who could assist them. They also realized that managing a food garden away from their homestead was time consuming and presented all kinds of problems with people stealing the vegetables and wandering animals causing destruction.



Workbook Activity 2.6: Complete this activity in your workbook

Explore motives to participate and not participate in initiatives

Analyze a scenario and identify reasons for participating and not participating in food security learning activities.

What to do

Read and discuss the above scenario and answer the questions that follow.

1. Identify the reasons why Thembidi and her grandchildren might be interested to participate in food security learning activities. Write your ideas in the table below.
2. Identify the reasons why Thembidi and her grandchildren might not be interested to participate in food security activities. Write your ideas in the table below.

Motives for participating	Motives for not participating



3. How does this information help the HFS facilitator?



Comments on Activity 2.6

An analysis of a household context should enable you to identify their needs, opportunities and constraints. In this scenario the biggest need for Thembi is to provide herself and her grandchildren with food security. The fact that she tried to start a food garden shows that she understands the benefits of growing her own vegetables. As a traditional healer a strong incentive for her would be to grow herbs to help her in her practice. Her unsuccessful food garden attempt may make her cautious about participating in food gardening activities. She would need to be convinced that she could find solutions to the old problems she experienced. Getting the grandchildren involved in activities that have income generating potential is a strong incentive for them especially in an economically challenging environment.

HELP PEOPLE TO SEE BENEFITS AND OVERCOME FEARS

Here are some ideas you can use to help people overcome their reservations about and resistance to participating in food security activities such as making a food garden, which can be an important source of nutritious food.

- Help people believe that it is possible to make and maintain a food garden with what they have. Put their mind at ease about problems such as:
 - I don't have money (use low external input production methods)
 - I don't have water (use rainwater harvesting techniques and recycling;
 - I don't know how, I am afraid I won't succeed (we will learn as we go; we will learn together as a Care Learning Group).
- A powerful way of inspiring people is for a person to see an example of someone just like her who has managed to garden successfully.
- Help caregivers who have challenging physical circumstances (time, labour, health constraints, large number of dependants) to plan how to cope with these challenges. For example the Care Learning Group could help to get the food garden started, which puts her in a position to keep the garden going.
- Invite people to participate in group learning events and make it interesting and fun for everyone. Even people who were initially reluctant might be inspired to become involved after attending such events.



ACT AS AN ENABLING FACILITATOR

Did you know that the word facilitate comes from a French word *faciliter*, which means to make easy or less difficult? According to the dictionary meaning facilitate means to help an action or a process forward and to assist in the progress of a person.

In your interactions with the households you are expected to involve them in reflecting on their situation and think of what that they can do to improve their food security situation. This involves motivating them, building on what they know, boosting their confidence, and helping them to make appropriate changes in their food access and utilization behaviour and embrace new practices that result in positive food security outcomes.



Activity 2.7: Do this activity in your study guide

Facilitation behaviours

Identify the behaviours of a facilitator.

What to do

1. Read the following descriptions and select those that you think are the behaviours of a facilitator. Use a tick ✓ to indicate your choice.

(a) Show care and understanding (empathy) for people's situation.	
(b) Be approachable and friendly.	
(c) Create a safe, positive and non-threatening climate in which people feel comfortable to share their stories without fear of ridicule.	
(d) Direct the planned activities rigorously to ensure that people will learn.	
(e) Encourage people to see their mistakes as opportunities for learning	
(f) Stimulate critical thinking by encouraging people to ask probing questions.	
(g) Tell people that their fears are unfounded.	
(h) Allow people to share their experiences and express their views.	
(i) Explain the benefits of the food security activities and allow people to make up their own mind to participate.	
(j) Take on people's problems and come up with solutions.	
(k) Provide positive examples of success to encourage people.	
(l) Be trustworthy and help people to realize that they can rely on your confidentiality.	

2. Which of these behaviours do you find easy?
3. Which of these behaviours do you find difficult?





Comments on Activity 2.7

The behaviours that are not characteristic of a facilitator are (d) (g) and (j).

(d) A facilitator plans well but is flexible and able to adjust planned activities to meet the emerging needs of people in a learning situation.

(g) A facilitator acknowledges the fears people have and helps them to see how they can address their fears and what support they can rely on.

(j) A facilitator enables people to own their own problems and supports them to direct their own efforts to find solutions to overcome their problems.

At this point you may have fears about your ability to be an enabling facilitator. Remember you are part of the HFS care learning group and you can rely on the help and support from your fellow students and the promoter. You will **learn** about facilitating by **doing** a range of activities that have been designed to strengthen your facilitation behaviour and practice.

ENABLE PEOPLE TO CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOUR AND PRACTICE

Your facilitation is aimed primarily at helping people in the households to change their food access and utilization behaviour and practice. A skilled facilitator understands that for most people behavior change occurs gradually over time and is able to provide the right support at each phase of the change cycle as shown in the table below.

Phase	Characteristics	Support strategies
Before change	The person is not considering change. She or he may have tried to change but were unsuccessful. The person is used to the present behaviour and is comfortable.	Help the person to see and understand the implications of the present behaviours and practices. Enable them to see the benefits of changing.
Think change	The person is not sure about changing and weighs benefits versus costs or barriers (e.g., time, expense, bother, fear).	Identify barriers and mistaken beliefs. Address concern and identify support systems.
Prepare to change	The person is prepared to experiment with small changes.	Develop realistic and achievable goals and timeline for change. Provide positive reinforcement.
Act to change	The person takes action to change behaviour that leads to new and positive practices.	Provide positive reinforcement.
Maintain change and prevent relapse (going back)	The person tries to maintain the new behavior over the long term	Provide encouragement and support.

Table 2.3 Stages in the behaviour change cycle

(Adapted from: Zimmerman et al., 2000; Tabor and Lopez, 2004 in Facilitating behaviour change)



The following text sums up how the behaviour change cycle works in practice.

In the long term, people make changes that work for them. These changes, however, will not be straightforward. Different people will think about options, challenge one another, try new things, and move about. They might go through the five stages one after the other or sometimes they might miss a stage. When people make changes they spiral about. They might return to older behaviours, they might circle about working through different stages, or they might make permanent changes. For ongoing behaviour change, they will eventually need to move through all the stages.

(Source: Facilitating sustainable behaviour change, A guidebook for designing HIV programs, 1999)

BUILD SUPPORTIVE CARE LEARNING GROUPS

As you can see from the behaviour change cycle people need ongoing encouragement and support to learn and maintain newly acquired behaviours and practices. From the start help the group to be aware of the long term challenges they face and involve them in their own planning for the way forward. Encourage the households to get into the habit of self evaluation and replanning as a way of working. This enables them to continually renew their focus and actions in the coming years. The only sustainable way in which people continue to use and refine their newly acquired behaviours and practice is to strengthen the capacity of the households and the care learning group.

2.8 How to facilitate participatory learning and action methods and tools

Facilitators favour participatory methods, because this provides an effective way to empower the people they are working with. In fact, this is the only known way to enable people participating in a development programme to come up with their own analysis of their situation, and to develop their own solutions. Through decades of bad experiences, development facilitators now understand that it is unsustainable to force external solutions on to people.

2.8.1 What do different participatory learning methods have in common?

There are many participatory methods and tools described in community development literature and it can become confusing to know which method and tool to use where and how. Participatory methods are usually known by their acronyms:

- **RRA** (Rapid Rural Appraisal)
- **PRA** (Participatory Rural Appraisal)
- **PLA** (Participatory Learning and Action)

They are sets of approaches, methods, and tools for building the capacity of local people and involving them in actions to improve their life in their context.

Since the mid 1970s, there has been an accelerating evolution of participatory methods. In



the late 1980s and early 1990s participatory rural appraisal PRA evolved out of RRA. In PRA the outsiders (researchers, community development workers) convene and facilitate. Local people, especially those who are poor and marginalized, play the main role. It is they, working typically in small groups, who discuss, map, diagram, observe, analyze, and act.

The term Participatory Learning and Action (**PLA**) introduced in 1995 is sometimes used to describe PRA but it is broader and includes other similar or related approaches and methods. PLA is the latest and more inclusive of these approaches. PLA evolved as set of methods and shared practices that lead to behaviour and attitude change. It includes different phases of interacting with local people. PLA embodies participatory ways to empower local people, enabling them to express and improve their knowledge and take actions to bring about positive change. You will learn about a range of PLA approaches and methods that are relevant for your food security work with households.

The common theme in all these approaches is the full participation of people in the processes of learning about their situation (needs and opportunities) and in the actions required to address them. They also promote interactive, shared learning: flexible, yet structured analysis.

“PLA enables rural communities to do their own investigations through modeling (drawing models), diagramming, ranking and quantification; to share their knowledge and teach outsiders or investigators; to do the analysis and presentations; and to plan and ‘own’ their outcomes.”

(Chambers, R. 1993)

2.8.2 What PLA methods and tools can you use?

The PLA methods and tools that are incorporated in the HFS Programme are included in these groups:

Start-up methods and tools

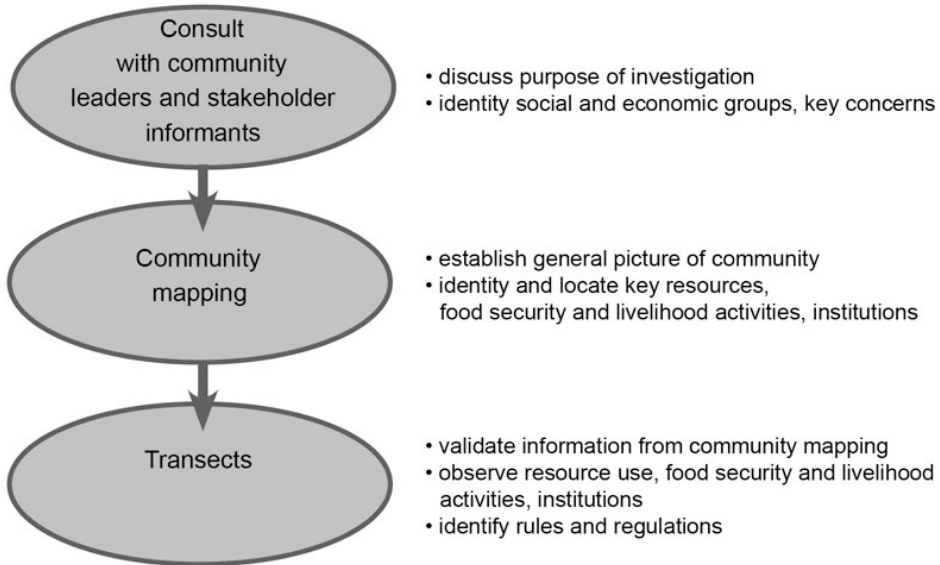
- Interview methods and tools
- Visualization methods and tools
- Reporting methods and tools

You will try out the methods and tools in your HFS Care Learning Group. You can find the **PLA Practice Guide** at the end Module 2. This guide is made up of easy to follow practice guidelines for selected PLA methods and tools that you are expected to use with households in the portfolio activities of Modules 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. In this way you can build your confidence and skill. This is a good preparation for using the tools and methods in a variety of interactions with the households.

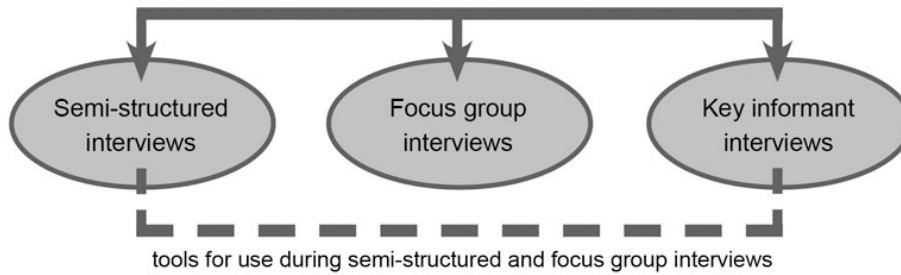
The diagram in Figure 2.5 is a map that gives you a structured view of the PLA methods and tools. You will notice that the methods and tools are linked to the key tasks of the HFS facilitator.



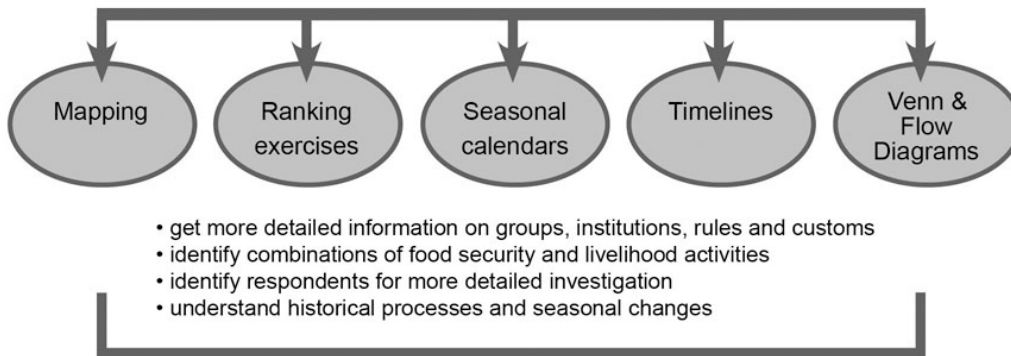
START UP METHODS AND TOOLS



INTERVIEW METHODS AND TOOLS



VISUALIZATION METHODS AND TOOLS



REPORTING METHODS AND TOOLS

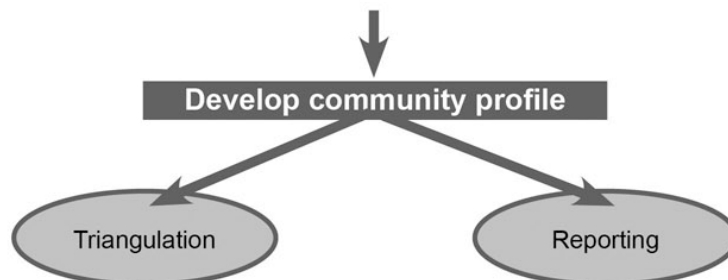


Figure 2.5 Map showing participatory learning methods and tools



2.9 How do you get started in the community?


No matter what path you take in your efforts to improve food security in the community, you will need to develop cooperative and constructive relationships with many different people. The people you engage with may include people in the community, public servants, health professionals, agricultural field workers, researchers, policy makers, and people in other organizations who are concerned about food security. In community development capacity building, learning and mobilization are slow processes and working relationships are built up over time.

Equally important is the need to get approval and support for your work as an HFS facilitator in the community. You have to go through the correct community channels and procedures to get started and to keep working with the households.

2.9.1 Consult with community leaders and stakeholders

In Module 1 you took your first steps into the community. You started with a consultation meeting with a community organization or employer to get consent to participate in the HFS programme.

The list of portfolio activities for Module 1 highlights the specific PLA methods and tools you used.

 <p>Module 1 Portfolio Activities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Consultation with an employer or organization in the community2. Observation checklist and walking through the community3. Venn diagram identifying stakeholders4. Meeting with stakeholders who work in food security5. Report of meeting with stakeholders
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Here are methods and tools you used and the results of your actions:

- You prepared for and held a **consultative meeting** with your chosen organization and negotiated consent and terms of reference for participating in the programme. **Result of your actions:** firm support from the organization for your study and work with households, increased awareness of the HFS Programme and the work you will do as an HFS facilitator, identification of households you can work with.
- You prepared an **observation checklist** and took a **walk** through the community to observe different conditions, people, problems and opportunities in a community that could be linked to the four dimensions of food security. **Result of your actions:** increased awareness of food security issues in the community.



- You prepared a **Venn diagram** that shows graphically who the key stakeholders are in the community involved in food security. They include internal and external organizations, groups, and significant individuals. You gathered information about the different organizations: what services they offer, how they relate to each other, what cooperation and flow of information exists.
Result of your actions: information about key stakeholders in the community who could provide support to you and the households.
- You planned and organized a **meeting with selected community stakeholders** who work in food security.
Result of your actions: Contact and interactions with key stakeholders provided you with an increased awareness of what the organizations are doing and how they might be able to support you and the households. The organizations have increased awareness of what the HFS programme intends to achieve and how they might be able to cooperate.
- **Report** of your meeting with stakeholders.
Result of your actions: Record of your reflections and insights about food security issues in the community.

2.9.2 Community mapping

Community maps are visual illustrations of the major features, resources and infra-structure of a community as perceived by members of the community.

Different maps can be used for different purposes:

- **Social maps** show households according to specific indicators, e.g.
 - Where people live
 - Social differences in status and wealth
 - Community infrastructure of buildings where people live or work.
- **Resource maps** are drawn by people to show the natural resources in their area and how they are using their resources. The maps show:
 - Physical features in the environment: hills, rivers, vegetation.
 - Water: where located and used
 - Different crops grown
 - Types of soil.
- **Topical maps** are drawn to draw attention to a particular topic in the area. It is a variation of the resource map. The maps show:
 - Location of indigenous and cultivated forests
 - Different crops grown
 - Houses and the number of people who live there.

The maps stimulate discussion about issues in the community and they are powerful tools to encourage people to participate in discussions and learning processes. In Module 3 you will facilitate a resource mapping activity with the households. **See PLA Practice Guide for guidelines on resource maps.**



You are not expected to draw a social map, but here is an example to give you an idea of what it looks like.

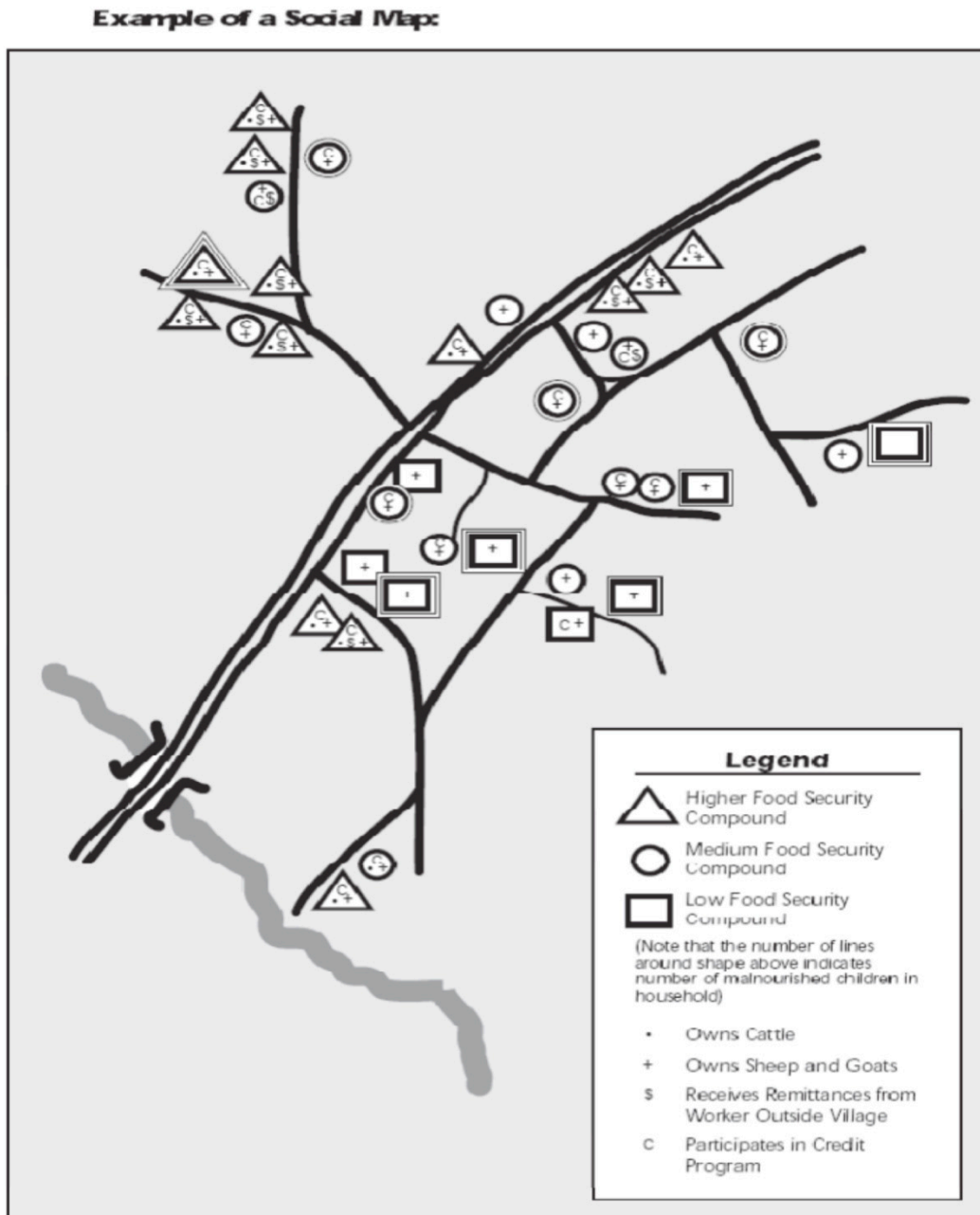


Figure 2.6 A Social map indicating the food security status of households (Add source)

2.9.3 Transect walks

Transect literally means a straight line through an area. On a transect walk you plan a route through a community which enables you to observe local food security conditions and issues. Transect walks are sometimes referred to as observational walks. You can collect an enormous amount of information through observation. Observation means looking very carefully at people, animals, plants and objects in the environment in which they live.



In Portfolio Activity 1.2 you took a walk through the community in order to get a general idea of food security related conditions and issues in the community. You used a number of questions to guide your observation. These are summarized in the **PLA Practice Guide**.



The questions to guide the start-up transect walk in a community is in the **PLA Practice Guide**.

In Module 3 you will facilitate a transect walk through the community with households. See **PLA Practice Guide for guidelines on transect walks**.



Workbook Activity 2.8: Complete this activity in your workbook

PLA methods and tools used to get started in the community

Identify successes and difficulties with PLA methods and tools you have used to help you get started as an HFS facilitator in the community.

What to do

Discuss your experience of using PLA methods and tools in Module 1.

1. What do you think you did well?
2. What difficulties did you experience?
3. How did you overcome your difficulties?
4. What have you learned about using these PLA methods and tools?
5. Complete the PLA self check below. Use a tick ✓ to indicate your choice

My PLA self check	I can do this well	I need more practice
1. Plan a consultative meeting with a community organization.		
2. Use an observation checklist to guide a walk through a community to observe food security related issues.		
3. Draw a Venn diagram to show key stakeholders in a community.		
4. Compile information about stakeholders in a community.		
5. Plan and organize a stakeholder meeting.		
6. Engage with and share ideas with stakeholders in a community.		
7. Write a report of main insights about food security issues in a community.		





Comments on Activity 2.8

The behaviours that are not characteristic of a facilitator are (d) (g) and (j).

(d) A facilitator plans well but is flexible and able to adjust planned activities to meet the emerging needs of people in a learning situation.

(g) A facilitator acknowledges the fears people have and helps them to see how they can address their fears and what support they can rely on.

(j) A facilitator enables people to own their own problems and supports them to direct their own efforts to find solutions to overcome their problems.

2.10 How do you interact with households and collect information?

You are expected to establish care learning groups with selected households in the community and engage with them in different ways. The primary purpose of interacting with the households is to develop supportive relationships. When people feel that you genuinely care and that they can trust you they will be more likely to participate in learning sessions aimed at helping them to become self reliant with regard to food security.

A secondary but equally important purpose is to collect food security related data, analyze the information, and identify how best to support the households. Remember the people who must benefit first and foremost from information about their context are the households who play a central role in information gathering.

Interviewing and storytelling require good listening and talking skills. Good communication skills run like a golden thread through all the participatory methods and tools.

2.10.1 Story telling

In every culture people tell and share stories to entertain, teach, inform, explain. Storytelling is a powerful process that affirms the values of unique personal experiences. It is a tool that can lead to deep insights into the challenges in a community especially if different people tell stories around the same themes.

In the first portfolio activity in Module 2, Unit 1 you collected stories of hardship and success related to food security from people in your community. Your analysis of these stories in your group helped you to identify some common food security problems and issues. This activity has given you some experience of using the story-telling technique to engage with people. You probably discovered that telling and listening to stories can evoke powerful feelings and insights and offer these benefits.



- Simple stories can illustrate deep truths.
- Storytelling and sharing help people to connect with each other.
- Story telling can promote shared understanding about present and future situations.
- The process of telling the story and being listened to can be empowering.
- Stories provide opportunities for many voices to be heard.

Here is a story told by a student who participated in the pilot project of the HFS Programme in the Eastern Cape. Thando Delihlazo lives in the Zozo community and this is a story he shared with his group.



It started with a chance meeting at a taxi rank...

One day I was in East London to attend a group session. After the session I was waiting for a taxi to go home. A lady who is a vendor at the taxi rank saw a study guide that I had in my hands. She was very interested to know what it is about. She paged through the book and was surprised by one of the pictures that showed vegetables planted in plastic bags. She asked 'Is it possible, or is it just a drawing in the book?' I started explaining to the lady from Duncan Village that it is a good way of growing vegetables when you have little space. She was very happy to hear it and said: 'I will try it at home.'

After about a month I decided to speak to the lady at the taxi rank to ask whether she tried growing the vegetables in bags and how things are going. The lady had a smile and said excitedly: 'I've planted spinach and onions in some old buckets, dishes and plastic bags. They are growing very well. Soon we will start eating them. During the day when there is no one at home I put the vegetables inside the house so that no one can destroy or steal them.'

I'm so happy that I helped start 'a fire of enthusiasm' in one person's home. I realize there's a lot of poverty in the urban areas as well and I want to help people in Duncan Village and Spunzana to the small place they have to grow their own vegetables.

What are your reactions to this story? Story telling is not only a technique you can use with the households. Get used to sharing stories of your experiences with the households.



Follow the guidelines on storytelling in the PLA Practice Guide

2.10.2 Semi-structured interviewing

This is a guided conversation in which you predetermine only the topic and are open to new questions and insights that arise as a result of the discussion. This means that you as the facilitator know what information you want and need and have a broad list of the themes (such as income, types of farming, etc) that you need to cover. Instead of having a



questionnaire however, you have a 'conversation'. You make sure you give the persons enough chance to talk freely about the themes in a way that suits them.

This type of interviewing can be used for individual interviews and group discussions.

HOW TO CONDUCT SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

This table gives a good overview of what to pay attention to when conducting semi-structured interviews.

Asking questions

Asking the right questions in the right way is a skill, which you will learn as you progress.

There are different kinds of questions:

- **Open questions** require an explanation or description: Where do you get your water?
- **Closed questions** can only be answered by yes or no. They make probing for details difficult.
- **Leading questions** lead the interviewee to give a specific answer: Is it true....? Don't you think it is
- **Ambiguous questions** are not clear and can be understood in different ways: How do you find the shops in your area? (Must the interviewee give the direction to the school, or do you expect the interviewee to tell you how she likes the shops in the area?)

Here is an example of an **open question** that encourages people to think of actions to move their situation forward.



Open questions encourage reflection

When MaTshepo interviews local organizations during a scoping (assess and analyze) exercise, they always voice the problems they are facing. MaTshepo makes a habit of asking, right at the end of the interview: **'How are you planning to deal with these issues you have mentioned?'** This question stimulates forward thinking, and it is quite amazing how the expression in people's eyes change when they hear it like this. This approach also helps emphasize that the facilitator has not come to the area to solve people's problems for them, but to help them think through how they can solve their own problems.





Activity 2.9: Do this activity in your study guide

What is wrong with these questions?

Identify leading and ambiguous questions and convert them to open ended questions.

What to do

1. Read the list of questions below and indicate whether they are leading or ambiguous questions. Show your choice by writing an **L** (leading) or an **A** (ambiguous).
2. Change the questions to open questions.

Questions	A or L	Open questions
1. Is it true that it is difficult to get your cattle to the veterinary clinic?		
2. How do you get your medicine?		
3. Wouldn't you prefer to grow improved potato varieties?		
4. What do you do as a farmer?		
5. Isn't the new clinic wonderful?		
6. Do you sow seeds in a straight line?		
7. How do you find the school?		
8. Shouldn't you cover your water storage container?		

(Source: Pretty et al. 1995)



Comments on Activity 2.9

Get into the habit of using open questions in your interactions with the households. In this activity it is possible to come up with different open questions. Compare your questions with this list.

1. (L) How do you get your cattle to the veterinary clinic?
2. (A) where do you get your medicine?
3. (L) what is your idea about growing different potato varieties?
4. (A) as a farmer, what actions do you take during the dry season?
5. (L) what are your experiences of the new clinic?
6. (L) how do you sow your seeds?
7. (A) how good is the school?
8. (L) how do you cover your water storage container?



2.10.3 Baseline information

We use baseline information everyday without knowing that we do. For example a mother knows from past experience why her baby cries: he may be hungry, tired, uncomfortable, need his nappy changed, or he may be sick. This informal baseline information is the baby's past behaviour and the mother uses it to determine what actions she needs to take to respond to his crying now.

A formal example of baseline information is the Consumer Price Index, which is released regularly by Statistics South Africa. It is a numerical value that tells us whether the cost of living is going up or down. In community development programmes baseline information is gathered at the start of an intervention. The information provides a useful starting point against which the success of the intervention can be measured.

BENEFITS OF BASELINE INFORMATION

Baseline information can:

- Tell you whether your efforts are working. For example, when you compare what is happening in the household now with how it was before you started, you should be able to establish whether any shift has taken place towards positive nutrition behaviour.
- Help you decide whether it is a good time to start an intervention. For example, if there is a high level of poverty and food insecurity in the area, there is a huge need for a food security intervention.
- Help you decide whether the intervention is appropriate. For example, if most people in the area already are food secure then a food security intervention is not necessary.
- Tell you whether the methods you are using are working. For example, if there is no change you must rethink your method of working.

Keep in mind that your method or intervention may take some time to produce the desired effect. Behavior change does not necessarily show immediately. Wait a while before you conclude that a method or an intervention is not working. It could be that it needs more time.

The baseline information you are expected to collect includes basic details of the household as well as information about livelihoods and food security. You will use a **structured interview** and a **questionnaire**, which has been designed for this purpose, to enable you to collect the information. The baseline questionnaire is included in Portfolio Activity 2.5.

2.10.4 Household visits

Once you have identified the households to work within the community you will conduct regular home visits. You are required to have high moral values and act with integrity and confidentiality, as people will be sharing sensitive information with you. You have to get consent from the household to work with them. This consent may be written or verbal, depending on what is acceptable practice in the area.

Household visits form an important part of your work with the households. Visiting people in their own space gives you an opportunity to:



- Observe people in their own context and their day to day food security practices;
- Build up good interpersonal relationships of trust;
- Monitor how people are progressing: identify actions that people are taking and difficulties they are experiencing;
- Provide individualized support to encourage caregivers in their efforts to improve their food security;
- Discuss possible solutions to specific problems (action planning)



Follow the guidelines on household visits in the PLA Practice Guide when you start visiting the homesteads.



Workbook Activity 2.10: Complete this activity in your workbook

Role plays a semi-structured interview

Identify behaviours that encourage and prevent a good flow of information in a semi-structured interview.

What to do

This is a role-play in which three students participate:

- Person 1 is the interviewer who asks questions
- Person 2 is the interviewee who answers questions
- Person 3 is the observer who observes the interactions and makes notes. The focus is on behaviours that encourage and prevent detailed information sharing.

This activity has three parts:

- A. Plan a semi-structured interview.
- B. Participate in a semi-structured interview.
- C. Reflect on the semi-structured interview activity.



Follow the guidelines on semi-structured interviews in the PLA Practice Guide



1. Use the guidelines in the PLA Practice Guide to prepare for the interview.
2. Allocate the interviewer, interviewee and observer roles. If time permits you can swap these roles.
3. After the interview reflect on how it worked. The observer shares her or his notes to kick start the reflection. The others can contribute their ideas. Here are some questions to guide the reflection:
 - What encouraged the interviewee to share detailed information?
 - What prevented detailed information sharing?
 - What have you learned about semi-structured interviews that can help you when you conduct interviews with the households?



Comments on Activity 2.10

Role plays are good ways of practising communication skills. Getting detailed and appropriate information relies on creating a safe, non-threatening and stimulating environment, asking open questions in the right way, listening with an open mind, probing without overwhelming people, and affirming the person throughout the interview.

2.11 How do you help households to observe, analyze and take action?

The emphasis in participatory learning methods is on visual construction as a way of giving local people a share in creating and analyzing information that affects them. The purpose of this group of methods and tools is to:

- Represent situations (resources, activities and practices) as perceived by local people
- Get clearer insight into situations by probing and sharing ideas
- Stimulate open discussion
- Assist in identifying problems and opportunities for action
- Identify best actions to solve identified problems
- Monitor and evaluate actions
- Pinpoint appropriate support by external agents.

2.11.1 Resource maps

Making a resource map can help people in an area gain a clear picture of the physical features and resources that they consider important. Maps drawn by local people can show



their perspective and reveal much about local knowledge of resources and their use of the land, settlement patterns, and who controls and makes decisions about the use of resources. The primary concern is not to draw an accurate map but to get useful information about local perceptions of the natural resources. Here is an example of a resource map.

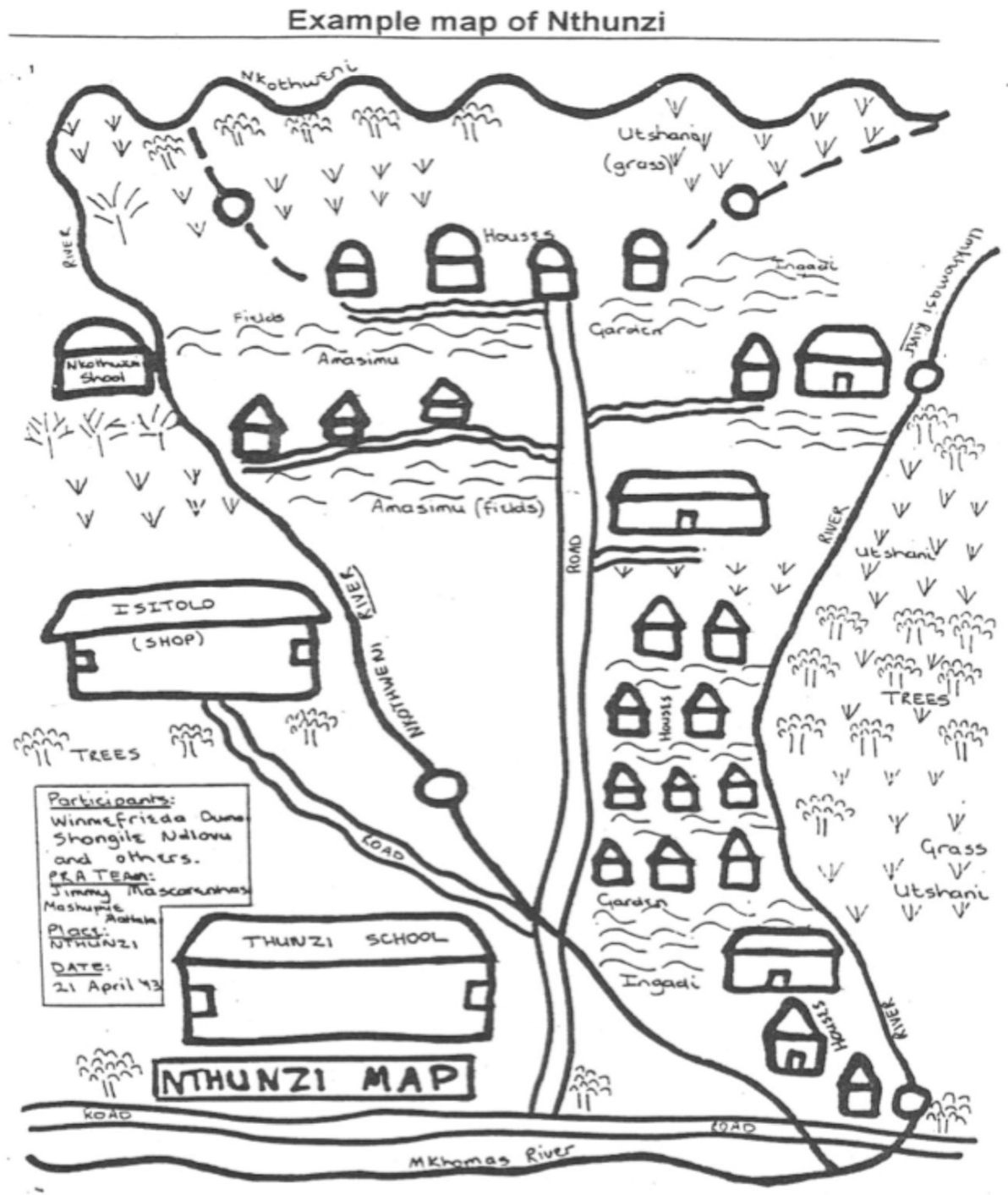


Figure 2.7 Resource map drawn in Nthunzi, Bulwer, 1993

You will notice that the focus is on natural resources, such as trees, forests, crops, land, water, which is most important for household food security. In addition, the map shows physical resources, such as homesteads, schools, shops, roads, bus stops, buildings or



meeting places. Although this is not a map drawn to scale people can get an idea of how far away various resources are from their homestead.

This example shows a group of people involved in making a resource map on the ground using objects such as stones, sticks, leaves.

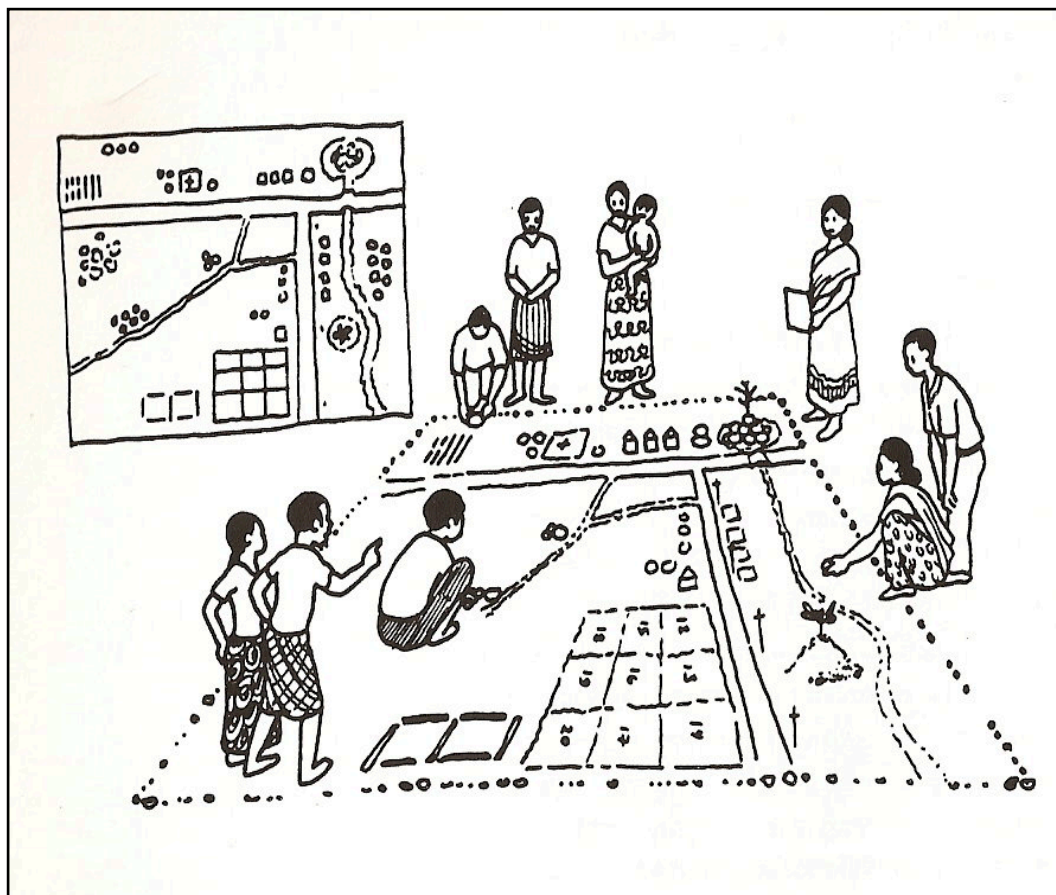


Figure 2.8 A group creating a resources map on the ground
(Pretty, et al. 1995)

In Module 3 you are expected to assist the households to draw a resource map of their community or area immediately surrounding their homestead. We have combined the transect walk with the resource mapping activity. After the transect section below you will get involved in a transect walk and resource mapping activity with a group of your fellow students.

2.11.2 Transect walks

A useful participatory method for collecting information about an area is to take a transect walk. A transect walk consists of walking through an area and paying attention to specific environmental features, resources and human activities, as well as issues such as water scarcity, soil erosion or any other problem. Transect walks are sometimes referred to as observational walks, because they give the people who participate in them an opportunity to observe, discuss and identify issues of concern to the community.



The word *transect*, means a straight line that cuts across a piece of land or area. Transect walks may be taken in a straight line using the compass points, e.g. north, south, east or west; whichever is the most suitable. Walks can also meander and follow a particular feature in the landscape such as dongas, trees, and water points.

The focus in the example transect walk diagram below is on soil, soil erosion and vegetation (soil cover).

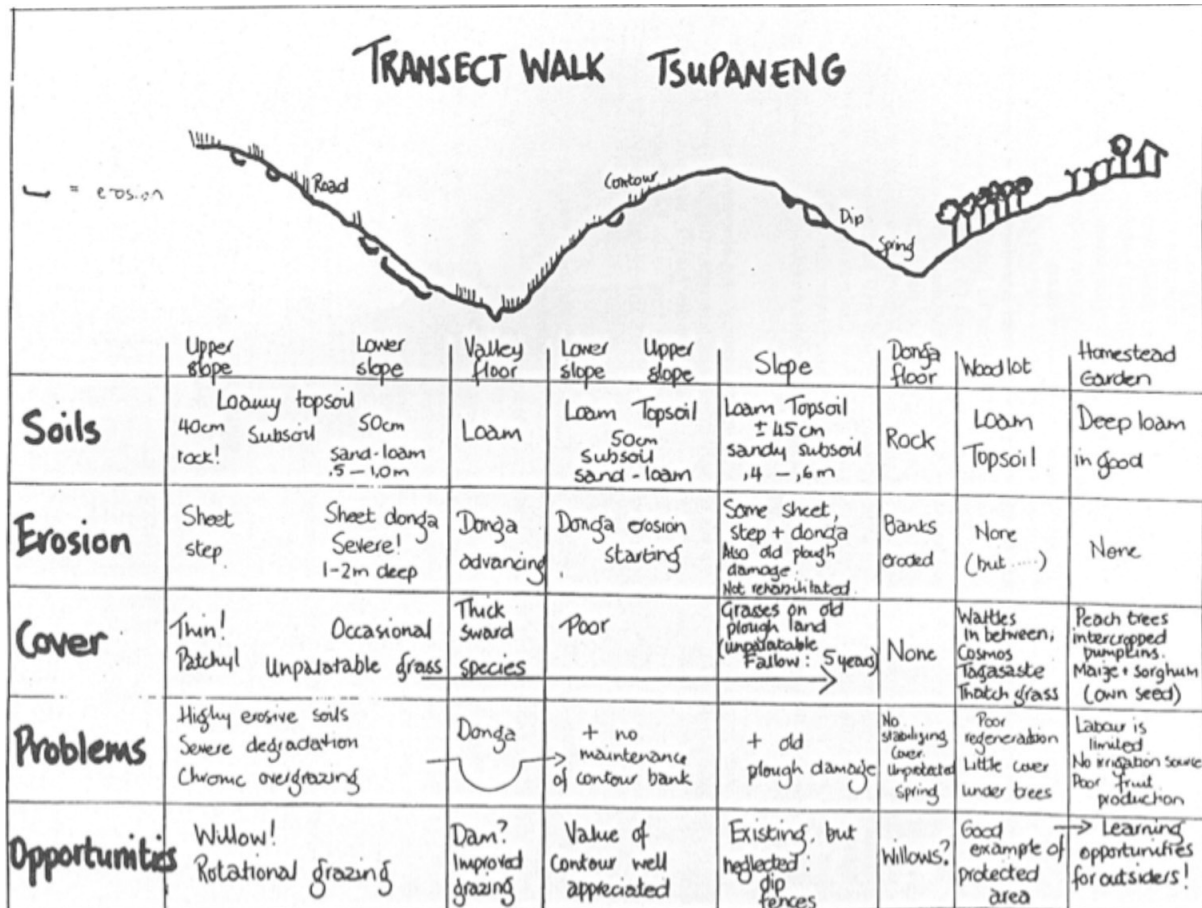


Figure 2.9 An example diagram of a transect walk in Tsupaneng, KwaZulu-Natal 1993



Here is an example of a transect walk that focuses on food security and nutrition issues

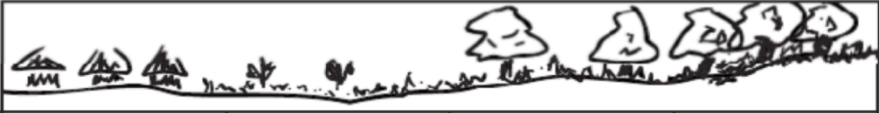
<p style="text-align: center;">Example of a Transect Focused on Food Security and Nutrition Issues</p> 				
Zone	Central Village	Inner Fields	Outer Fields	Forest
Food production / gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household vegetable gardens, chickens, papaya, mango, and orange trees; • Goats fenced in during rainy season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groundnuts, corn, some hibiscus in women's garden; • Some tree products; • Small ruminant grazing during dry season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Millet, sorghum, some rice; • Watering holes for animals; • Karite trees; • Cattle grazing during dry season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit from baobab, wild date, fig and other wild trees, honey; • Cattle grazing during rainy season
Food processing and storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dried vegetables and fruits; • Groundnuts in women's fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family granaries in or near fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil processed from karite nuts 	
Health issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some wells unkempt, not sanitary; • Health unit lacks trained nurse; • No use of mosquito nets 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many medicinal plants harvested from forest area; • River at forest edge is source of XXXXXX
Food security and nutrition observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many mangos rot ...possibility for processing? • Lots of insect damage to groundnuts in storage...possibility for improved storage? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict over goats and gardens leading to reduction in number of goats; • Family and individual granaries managed so as to secure food supply during agricultural season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious striga problem reduces millet harvest significantly; • Water holes dry up before rains...lack of water reduces milk production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts between neighboring villagers over harvest of baobab fruit which is an important hungry season food; • Collection of fruits by young boys adds important nutrients to diet...girls working at home have less access. • Inert or cattle common during rainy season

Figure 2.10 An example diagram of a transect walk indicating food security issues (Add source)





Activity 2.11: Do this activity in your study guide

Interpret transect walk diagrams and resource maps

Identify key features shown on walk diagrams and resource maps.

What to do

Reflect on the transect walk diagrams and resource maps above and answer the following questions.

Questions	My answers
Transect walks	
1. What information did the Tsupaneng group collect?	
2. What did the Tsupaneng group focus their attention on?	
Resource maps	
3. What features did the Nthunzi group show on their resource map?	
4. Why is it a good idea for people to create a resource map on the ground?	



Comments on Activity 2.10

The group in Tsupaneng decided to focus on observing and recording soils and soil erosion, which was a big problem in their area. They also recorded the natural vegetation and cultivated plants that are growing there. The transect walk diagram helped the group to pinpoint problem areas and opportunities for actions to fight soil erosion. .

The Nthunzi group showed the resources that are available in their immediate environment, e.g. river (water), hills, indigenous and cultivated vegetation, and community infra-structure such as roads, houses, shops, community buildings (schools, clinics)

Mapping on the ground makes it easy for everyone to participate and encourages a lot of discussion. A lot of detail can be shown and it is easy to make changes and additions. The disadvantage is that you cannot take the map away for future reference. It is a good idea to start with a map on the ground and then make a copy on a large sheet of paper.



What is the difference between a transect walk diagram and a resource map?

The transect walk diagram shows the environmental features, land and water use, and human activities in a particular area. It is a tool used to reflect on the problems associated with land and water use.

The resource map is a visual map that represents a community or community or the immediate environment of a homestead. It shows different types of resources and how they are used. The focus in a resource map is on resources, their availability, access and use.

2.11.3 Practice resource mapping and the transect walk

The best way to learn about resource mapping and transect walks is to do them. The next activity is a group practice activity.



Workbook Activity 2.12: Complete this activity in your workbook

Draw a transect walk diagram and a resource map of your area

Identify the natural resources, community infra-structure, and human activities linked to food security in your area.

What to do

This practice activity consists of three parts:

- A. Plan the resource mapping activity and transect walk.
- B. Take part in the resource mapping activity and transect walk.
- C. Reflect on the resource mapping activity and transect walk.



Follow the guidelines on transect walks and resource maps in the PLA Practice Guide

After your experience, answer the following questions:

1. What have you discovered about food security issues in your area?
2. What have you learned about the transect walk that can help you when you facilitate this activity with the households?
3. What have you learned about the resource mapping activity that can help you when you facilitate this activity with the households?





Comments on Activity 2.12

Your experience of using the transect walk and resource map tools helps you to understand the benefits of these tools to initiate dialogue in a group. This is particularly important when you facilitate these methods with the households as your interaction with them enables you and those to gain insight into the contextual issues and problems related to food security.

The mapping and transect diagram tools can also be used to indicate some things that they would like to see in their community that are not currently on the resource map – in other words to draw a picture of what they would like the future to look like. This allows for some initial ideas and encourages people to begin contributing their thoughts at an early stage in the participatory process.

2.11.4 Ranking

Ranking tools help people to set priorities and make decisions about their needs, problems, constraints, wishes, solutions, ideas for action. There different ways of using ranking tools and the methods depend on particular purposes.

Preference ranking	People show their preference by placing items in order of importance, e.g. 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th . Each persons votes yes, no, or 1/0 for each item on the list.
Pair-wise ranking	In pair-wise ranking, each item is compared directly against the others with a ranking from highest (best) to lowest (least).
Simple scoring	Simple scoring helps people to prioritize and make decisions. It is suited to large groups of people as it is less time-consuming than other ranking and scoring tools.
Matrix scoring	Certain issues are ranked against a list of criteria that are agreed to by everyone in the group. This tool can help to stimulate probing and more in-depth reflection of the issues.

PREFERENCE RANKING

Here is an example of preference ranking.

A small group of people in a community participated in drawing a resource map and transect walk diagram. In the discussion following the activities they identified the following list of water related issues in the area:

- A number of borehole pumps in the area are broken
- Borehole environments are dirty, muddy and unhygienic
- Spring sources have been trampled and fouled by cattle and people cannot use them
- The wetland is not in a good condition and is eroding
- Flash floods coming down the dongas are washing away the fields
- Water run-off on the roads does a lot of damage.

They decided to prioritize the issues according to urgency for action. For each item, each participant had to select 1 (yes) or 0 (no). They did this by placing a stone or a seed to show their 'yes' vote on a chart listing the items.



The summary table below shows the result of their scoring and voting.

Item to be ranked	No of votes for each item	Rank
A number of borehole pumps in the area are broken	9	1
Borehole environments are dirty, muddy and unhygienic	2	5
Spring sources have been trampled and fouled by cattle and people cannot use them	5	4
The wetland is not in a good condition and is eroding	1	6
Flash floods coming down the dongas are washing away the fields	8	2
Water run-off on the roads do a lot of damage	6	3

Table 2.4 Preference ranking example

PAIR-WISE RANKING

Here is an example of pair-wise ranking.

In a livelihoods project in Niger people were asked what their food source preferences are. They identified these food sources: millet, vegetables, food purchases (excluding the cereal bank), cereal bank, and livestock production (milk and meat). The items were then compared pair by pair. For example, people were asked: 'which food do you prefer: millet or vegetables?' If the preference is millet, then millet is written in the appropriate block. All the pair combinations are dealt with in this way. People also gave reasons for their preference.

(Catley, A. et al. 2007)

The summary table shows the overall preference of food sources. It is easy to see which food source is most and least preferred. It is possible to rank the preferences in order from highest to lowest.

What is a cereal bank?

A community based organization that manages the operations necessary to acquire, price, and supply grain to the community. The purpose is to improve food supply especially during the hungry season.

Food source	Millet	Vegetables	Purchases	Cereal bank	Livestock
Millet	-	Millet	Millet	Millet	Millet
Vegetables		-	Vegetables	Vegetables	Vegetables
Purchases			-	Cereal Bank	Purchases
Cereal bank				-	Cereal Bank
Livestock					-

Table 2.5 Pair-wise ranking showing food source preferences in Niger

(Burns, J. et al. 2007)



MATRIX SCORING

In matrix scoring a number of items are compared with a number of criteria. For example in the pair wise ranking of food sources more reflection can be stimulated by using criteria or values such as availability, income earning, accessibility and nutrition or health values. Look at the results table after people were asked to score the five food sources against each of these four preference indicators.

	Millet	Vegetables	Purchases	Cereal Bank	Livestock
Availability (quantity/volume)	15	12	5	13	5
Access (easy to come by)	22	8	3	12	4
Income earning and savings potential	12	13	0	8	17
Nutritional value	6	17	6	6	15
TOTAL	55	50	14	40	41

Table 2.6 Matrix scoring of different food sources against indicators of preference
(Catley, et al, 2007)

When you compare the first table with the second one, what do you notice? Check your answer in the comments of Activity 2.13.

What is a matrix?

Look at this picture for clues.

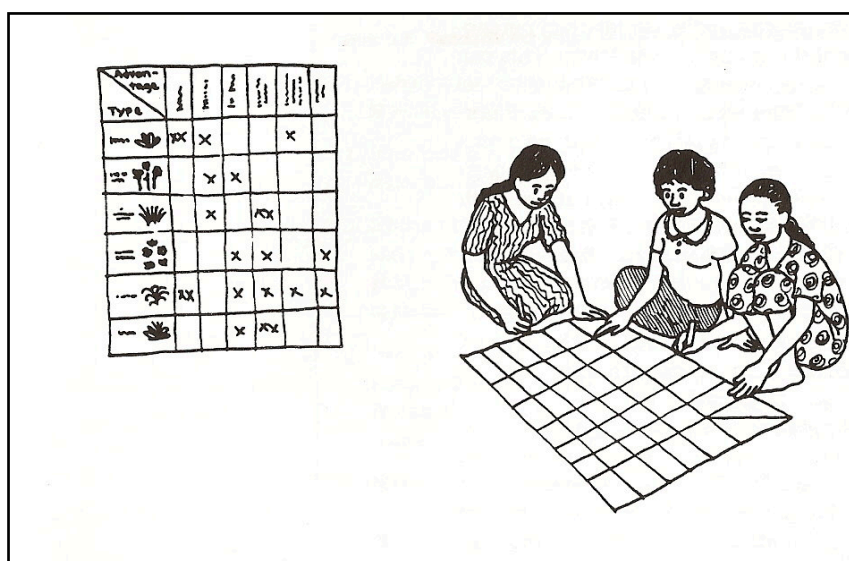


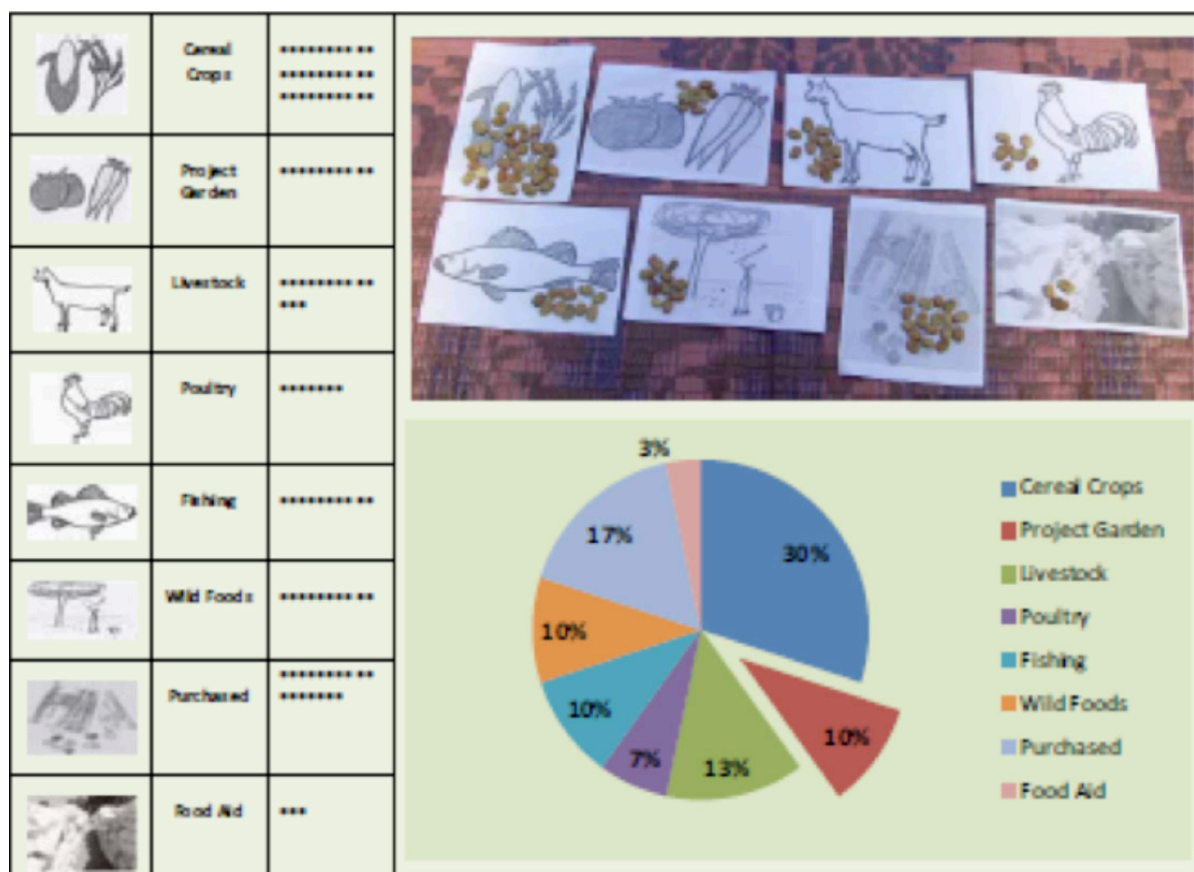
Figure 2.11 An example of a group busy with a matrix ranking exercise
(Pretty, et al. 1995)



Quite simply a matrix is a table that consists of labeled rows and columns. The items are arranged across or horizontally and down or vertically. For example in the food sources table the food sources are shown horizontally and the food preference indicators are shown vertically.

SIMPLE SCORING

Here is an example of simple scoring to get an idea of the different food sources that contribute to the household food basket. The diagram below shows the results of a simple food source scoring activity.



.....
Figure 2.12 An example of scoring food sources
(Catley, et al. 2007)

Pictures of the food sources can help people to identify them quickly. In this scoring activity each person is given a specific number of beans or stones, e.g. 20, 50 or 100. It is quicker to use fewer counters. The participants are asked to place the largest number of counters on the food picture that provides them with most food and the smallest number of counters on the food picture of the food source. When it is completed people can easily see which food sources provide them with food from the most to the least. A discussion takes place and some changes can be made as a result of shared ideas.





Activity 2.13: Do this activity in your study guide

Interpret ranking and scoring examples

Identify information shown on different ranking and scoring tables and diagrams.

What to do

Examine the example tables and diagrams to answer the following questions.

Questions	My answers
Preference ranking	
1. Which are the two most urgent water related issues that the group identified for urgent attention?	
Pair-wise ranking	
2. What food source was given the lowest preference in the first table?	
Matrix scoring	
3. What change of food source preference did you notice in the second table?	
4. Why do you think the group changed their mind on this food source?	
Simple ranking	
5. Which three food sources have the same score?	
6. Does the group consider food gardens to be a big source of food for the household? Give a reason for your answer?	
7. Which food source has the lowest score?	



Comments on Activity 2.13

Compare your answers to the list at the bottom of the page¹. Reflection and discussion form a vital part of the ranking tools as they enable people to refine their ideas.

¹ (1) Fix the number of borehole pumps in the area and prevent flash floods from washing away the fields (2) Livestock (milk and meat) (3) Livestock ranks much higher than some of the other food sources. (4) Thinking about the nutritional value and income savings helped people to see that milk and meat from livestock is a good food source. (5) Project garden, wild foods and fishing. (6) The group thinks that the project garden makes a



Ranking and scoring tools can be combined with other visualization tools. In Module 4 you will use ranking as part of the seasonal calendar activity.



Follow the guidelines on a simple ranking activity in the PLA Practice Guide

2.11.5 Seasonal calendars

Seasonal calendars can help people to explore changes in their livelihood and food security throughout the year. Seasonal calendars are used to gather information about a variety of issues: food availability, rainfall, changes in income, time spent by men and women on tasks.

Here is an example of a simple seasonal calendar in a country with a tropical climate with a wet and dry season. The calendar is divided into 4 sections. Each section covers 3 months. You can explore samples from this source: A step-by-step guide for National Societies in Africa (page 60).

http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/food_security/fs-assessment.pdf

The calendar shows that households have less food security at the end of the dry season.

Here is an example that shows a calendar divided into 12 months.

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Rainfall		••	••			••						
Temperature	20		25	30	30	25		20	15	15	1	20
Plant maize	••	••					••	•				
Weeding				••	••							
Harvesting						••	••				•	••
Maize price		•	•	••	•••							
Household food stocks	Decreasing			None			Increasing					
Disease	Malaria and diarrhea				Respiratory infections							

(Adapted from Nutrition Works, food security training material 2003.)

This calendar shows that the household has no food stocks in January and February, grain is expensive, and people are heavily involved in weeding in the fields. At this time households experience the worst food insecurity.

modest contribution as the results show only a 10% contribution. (7) Food aid has the lowest score. This shows that the group is able to get their own food from a variety of sources.



You will involve the households in compiling a seasonal calendar in Modules 3 and 4.



Follow the guidelines on seasonal calendars in the PLA Practice Guide

2.11.6 Timelines

Timelines show the recent history of an area and help people to identify the main events that have affected their lives. Timelines are an extension of the seasonal calendar and focus on events such as floods due to heavy rainfall and drought due to low or no rainfall with accompanying food insecurity over a longer period, e.g. 10 years. These events can be shown in the form of a table, e.g.

Key events	What happened?
2005 Drought and disease	Very poor, poor year. Food crisis. Large scale need for food aid. Crisis in food stocks
2006 Good rains and farming project started in the community	Abundant crops. Surplus sold at reasonable prices.
2007 Excellent prices for tomatoes and onions	Good income from crops.
2008 Floods	Crops are ruined and shortages of food experienced.

The events can also be shown on a time line, e.g.

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Drought and disease	Good rains Farming project started	Excellent prices for tomatoes and onions	Floods	Very little rain

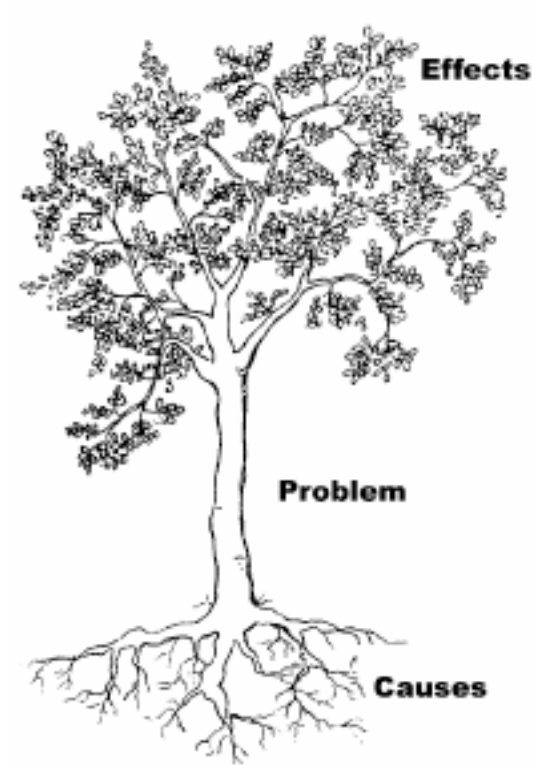
A visual representation of major events can help households see trends. They will realize that some events happen regularly. This insight can stimulate them to plan actions to cope with future cyclic events (occurring at regular intervals).

2.11.7 Problem trees

Problem trees are visual ways in which to show problems, their causes and consequences. A problem tree is a diagram. Diagrams are ways of structuring information clearly and can show links between certain components and factors. They stimulate further analysis of situations and problems. In this programme you are continually engaging with different diagrams and tables. A diagram showed visually the groups of PLA tool you are learning about. Do you remember the food security framework diagram you were introduced to in Module 1?



Here is an example of a problem tree. It is a tool you will use with households in Module 4. The focus is on the following problem statement: *Many children in the community suffer from malnutrition.*



.....
Figure 2.13 Problem tree showing causes and effects

The participants examine the problem critically. They keep asking what causes the nutrition problem and what its effects on children are. Their ideas are collated and placed around the tree as shown in the picture below, which was compiled by the household care learning group in King Williams Town during the pilot phase of the HFS Programmed. As the group analyzes the problem they become aware of the underlying **core problem**. The King Williams Town group discovered that the core cause of child malnutrition is food insecurity. Through this activity the group raised their awareness and motivation level to work together to address the core problem through various actions.





Figure 2.14 Example of a completed problem tree by households in King William's Town, Eastern Cape



Follow the guidelines on problem trees in the PLA Practice Guide

2.11.8 Venn diagrams

You used a Venn diagram in Module 1 to show key stakeholder organizations in the community. This organizational Venn diagram also indicates how the organizations are linked and how close the contact and cooperation is between them. Venn Diagrams are often used to assess a situation and find out what the roles are of the different organizations, how they get on, and how this impacts on what happens in the community. It is often easy to see from this exercise where the gaps are or where there are major stumbling blocks.

Venn diagrams can be used with individuals and small groups. Here is an example of a Venn diagram drawn by a small group to show the important groups in their community.



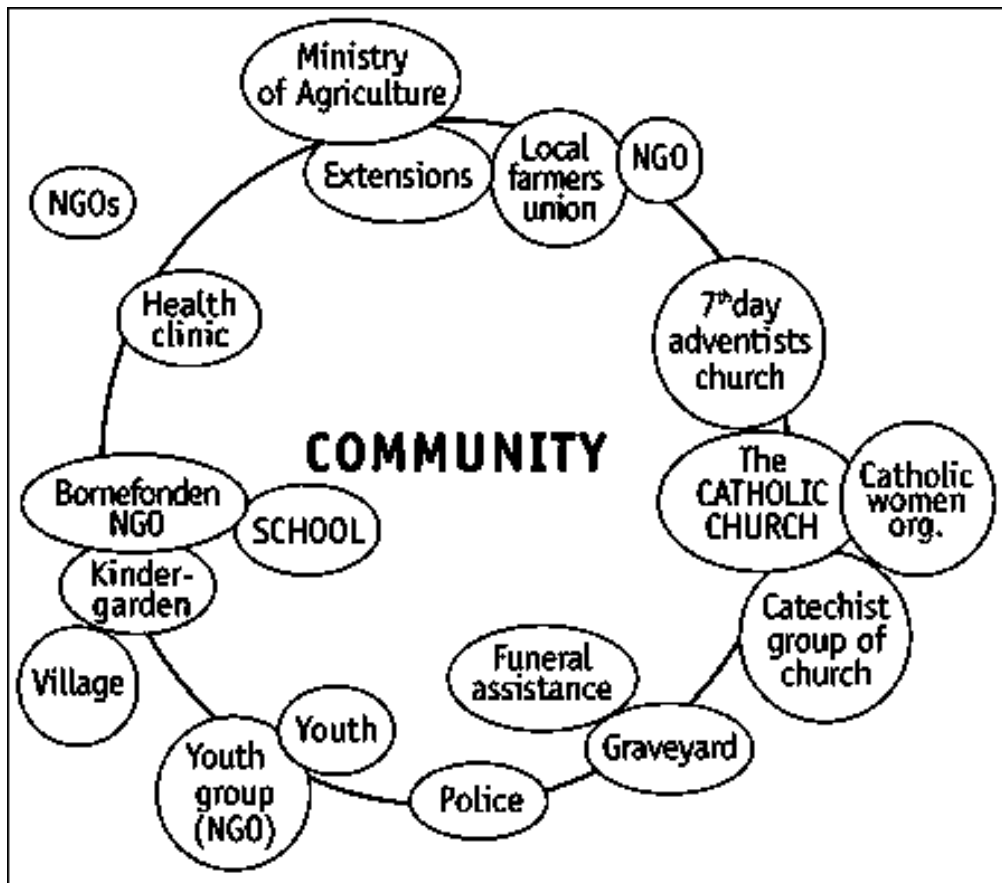



Figure 2.15 Example of a Venn diagram completed by a small group (Add source)

 **Activity 2.14: Do this activity in your study guide**

PLA tools quiz

Distinguish between different PLA tools

What to do

Read the statements below and decide which tool would be best to use to achieve the purposes described in the statements in the table below. If you are unsure, go back to the text and then decide. Write the tool you think is best in the space next to each statement.

Statements	PLA tools
1. Which are the two most urgent water related issues that the group identified for urgent attention?	
2. Men and women give their ideas on how they see their gender roles in the household.	
3. Establish changes in the livelihood and food security over the	



year that is linked directly and indirectly to available resources and a household's access to those resources.	
4. Why do you think the group changed their mind on this food source?	
5. Which three food sources have the same score?	
6. Does the group consider food gardens to be a big source of food for the household? Give a reason for your answer?	
7. Which food source has the lowest score?	



Comments on Activity 2.14

Compare your answers to the list at the bottom of the page². A useful tip in one of the many guides on how to use PLA tools suggests: **Let the tool do the work and don't work for the tool.** As you practice the various PLA methods and tools you will learn when to use what tool.

Read more about participatory assessment in Catley, *et al.* 2007. Participatory impact assessment: A guide for practitioners. Tufts University: Feinstein International Centre.

2.11.9 Practice visualization tools and methods

You have learned how visualization tools and methods can encourage people to participate in creating, analyzing and sharing information that affects them. Now learn to use them in your group.

² (1) Fix the number of borehole pumps in the area and prevent flash floods from washing away the fields (2) Livestock (milk and meat) (3) Livestock ranks much higher than some of the other food sources. (4) Thinking about the nutritional value and income savings helped people to see that milk and meat from livestock is a good food source. (5) Project garden, wild foods and fishing. (6) The group thinks that the project garden makes a modest contribution as the results show only a 10% contribution. (7) Food aid has the lowest score. This shows that the group is able to get their own food from a variety of sources.





Workbook Activity 2.15: Complete this activity in your workbook

Plan and facilitate a visualization tool

Evaluate the visualization tool practice activity.

What to do

This is a small group practice activity. The idea is to give each person in the group a chance to practice facilitating one of the visualization tools. If you work in pairs you can practice a few tools. This practice activity consists of three parts:

- A. Select a visualization tool and plan to facilitate it with your group.
- B. Facilitate and participate in the visualization tool activity.
- C. Reflect on the resource mapping activity and transect walk.



Follow the guidelines on visualization tools in the PLA Practice Guide

After your experience, answer the following questions:

4. What have you discovered about food security issues in your area?
5. What have you learned about using the selected tool or tools?
6. What must you look out for when facilitating such tools with the households?



Comments on Activity 2.15

Visualization tools can be used in combination with each other and they are stimulating ways of inviting participation and encouraging teamwork. With every practice session you will gain confidence in your ability to use these tools with a group. .

2.12 Reporting information

One of your key roles is to gather relevant information about food security issues in the household and the community, to analyze the information and share it with suitable stakeholders. Information gathering and reporting forms an integral part of the participatory learning and action process.



All the PLA tools enable you and the households to collect information from diverse sources and in different ways in order to get a clear picture of the present situation and to monitor the impact of actions to continually improve the situation. Accurate information is the lifeblood of the food security change and transformation process. A method of obtaining accurate information to report on is triangulation.

2.12.1 Triangulation

When you hear the word triangulation what do you think it means? If you don't know, think of a word that starts with tri ---, e.g. triangle, tricycle. You know that a triangle consists of three angles and a tricycle has three wheels. Tri means three.

When we talk about triangulation we refer to a reporting process that looks at diverse sources to create a full picture of a situation. Triangulation is achieved by using different tools to gather information on the same issue (e.g. maps, transects, and trend lines to examine environmental changes); and by listening to different people with different points of view about the same topic (e.g. women/men, young/old, wealthy/poor about food production).

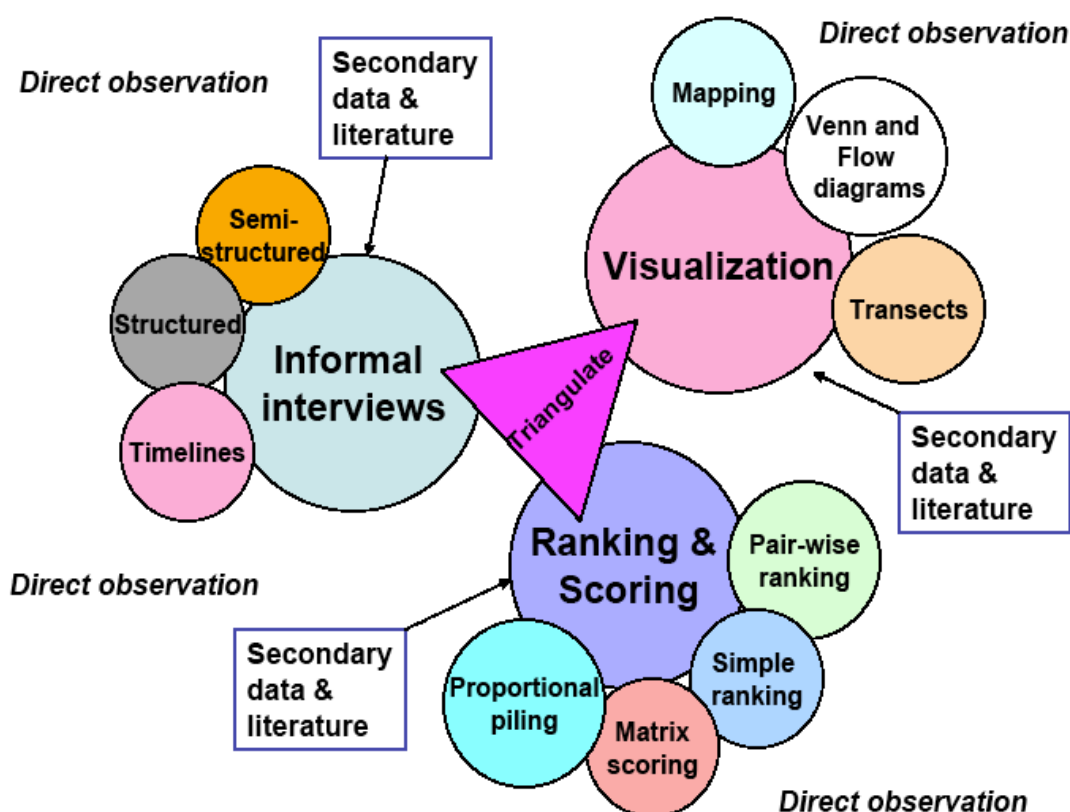


Figure 2.16 Triangulation
Catley, et al. 2007

You obtain information from all the relevant groups and compare the information from one source with that from others. Triangulation also means using a range of methods and types



of information to crosscheck information from various sources. It means looking at any problem from as many perspectives as possible, but at least three. See Figure 2..

For example, to find out about resources in a village, an extension worker might interview a key informant (someone with a lot of knowledge about the village), create village resource maps with men and women, and hold focus group discussions on a particular topic. Involving people from different sectors (nutrition, health, agricultural subsectors) in field visits and comparing and sharing information with them is also a way of triangulation

So far you have used triangulation to gather entry level information about food security issues in the community:

- You took a walk through the community and used an observation tool to identify food security issues (walk and observation tool/own observation);
- You organized a meeting with relevant stakeholder organizations in the community and through discussion with them became aware of some of the key food security issues in the community (focus group discussion with relevant groups);
- You collected stories of food insecurity hardship from selected individuals in the community (story telling by household members).

In Unit 3 you will find out in more detail the kind of reporting you and the households will be involved in. Your task is to ensure that the information about food security at the micro level that you gather and report on is a true and authentic reflection of the situation. This remains a challenging task, as situations are usually complex.

At this point you have some idea of how to use PLA tools and methods. In Portfolio Activity 2.3 you are expected to work with two other students in a **team** to plan and facilitate one of the tools with the rest of the students in your group.



Portfolio Activity 2.2: Do this activity in your portfolio sheets

Plan, facilitate and evaluate a PLA tool

PLA tools and methods stimulate people to take an active part in working together to share experiences and reflect on their situation in new ways. In this activity you have to demonstrate your ability to use one of the PLA tools you have learned about and practiced with your fellow students who are the participants. The purpose of this practical assessment activity is to find out well you can apply what you have learned and to strengthen your confidence and skill in preparation for your work with household caregivers in the coming months.

The evidence for your portfolio consists of written answers to questions on the Portfolio Activity 2.2 Evidence Sheet. (Find details about Portfolio Activity 2.2 in the **Take Action Section**)





Log

Reflect on planning and facilitating a PLA tool

1. What worked well?
2. What new insights have you gained about using this PLA tool?
3. How would you use this tool in future with caregivers?

Complete the answers to these questions in your log section of the Portfolio 2.1 Evidence Sheet.



Concluding Comments

This unit has introduced you to participatory processes and a range of practical tools and methods that stimulate people to participate in a variety of ways to learn about and improve their own food security situation.

Working in community development initiatives is challenging, as situations are complex. At points along your learning journey in this unit you may have experienced high levels of enthusiasm mixed with an equal level of anxiety at the daunting task that lies ahead. The task is both complex and simple. Stories abound of great things that have been achieved by a few people who have kept their eye on achieving small successes.

The works of the HFS facilitator strikes at the heart of change and transformative processes that can help people break the stranglehold of poverty and food insecurity. In Unit 3 you build on what you have learned and find out how you can combine the tools and methods to create stimulating learning sessions and suitable support that enable caregivers to take actions to solve their food insecurity problems.



