

# Indicators of Participation of Community Civic Organizations

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**Abstract**— The study was conducted to develop a multidimensional index of participation of community civic organizations. Specifically, it aimed to: (1) identify the dimensions and corresponding indicators of participation; (2) validate the dimensions and indicators; and (3) determine the appropriate weighting factors for each dimension and indicator. Using the Delphi method. Experts validated consultation, collaboration, and empowerment as dimensions of participation. Statistical analysis revealed collaboration to have the highest optimal weight and consultation the lowest. The empowerment dimension was significantly correlated to extent of participation (location level) and to two socio-demographic factors – occupation and length of organization membership. The researchers hope that this index can be a tool for agencies/institutions (GOs and NGOs) to benchmark and monitor status of participation and use the data to inform relevant policies and procedures, and for researchers to enrich the field of participatory development.

**Keywords**— Civic organizations, dimension, empowerment, indicator, participation.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Discourse and case studies on people’s participation abound but there seems to be a vacuum in terms of participation index in the context of participatory development. This study attempts to construct a composite indicator to measure participation in the context of participatory development. The researches hopes that this can be a tool that can of use to agencies/institutions (GOs and NGOs) to benchmark and monitor status of participation in their areas and use the data to inform relevant policies and procedures, and to researchers who seek to study variables related to participation.

## II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework that guides the selection of dimensions and the corresponding indicators is based common perspectives gleaned from review of literature. Despite the controversies that surrounds the means versus ends and efficiency versus effectiveness, discourses on people’s participation (Oakley, 1995, Gaventa and Valderama, 1999, Mathiason, 2012) reveal central concepts of social action – collective engagement/involvement, responsibility, influence, control, power; the context of these actions –capacity-building, resources, social structures, development processes, institutions, policies and programmes.; and notions of outcome – individual psychosocial, competencies and capacities (life skills), material well-being, social development (integration, cohesion, active citizenship), democratic governance (influence on institutions).

Based on the commonalities and range in the concepts-context-outcome framework, this research asserts the following as dimensions of participation: consultation, collaboration, empowerment and its respective main indicators, as shown in the schematic diagram below.

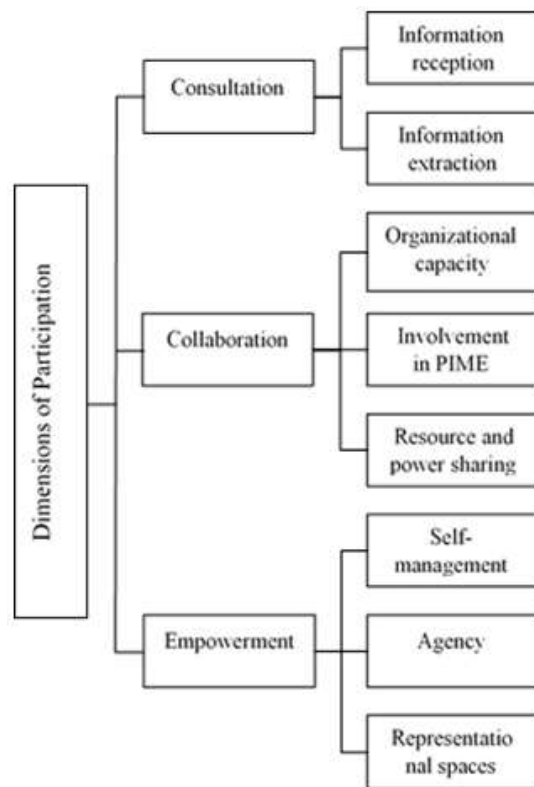


Fig. 1. Schematic diagram of the study.

Consultation is an activity where information is shared. External entities (program managers, extension workers, etc.) who need to engage target participants/beneficiaries usually initiate the process by giving information that the latter need to know. In such information dissemination the community member’s participation involves reception of data which is important as these data are inputs in the construction of their initial understanding and attitude regarding the project/program. Community members may also participate in the engagement of knowledge if they are the source of information which the external agents need to either generate a project/program or fine tune an existing one for better fit and to make it more responsive to the needs, community resources

and social processes. For consultation to be effective, it must adhere to a two-way flow of information. There must be commitment to a balance in the contribution to the ‘data bank’ in that both external agents and community members equally “need to know.” And perhaps, more importantly, a two-flow of communication must be a ‘feedback mechanism – it must have an effect on systems (cognitive and behavioral processes, or the project).

Collaboration in participatory development involves partnership of organizations. The inclusion of beneficiaries comes in the form of organized collective action through people’s organizations. An organization is not mere conglomeration of people but a system in itself whose identity and processes are reflected in statements of mission/vision/objective, organizational structure, and stated policies and rules.

Participation by collaboration involves the inclusion of primary stakeholders in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (PIME) of a project. This scope of the partnership with external agents is the most intensive and the most meaningful form of participation – for both collaborators. This is where beneficiaries put in their stake – their knowledge, experience, preferences, arguments, and means to furthering their own ends – and assume responsibility and ownership in the decision-making process and in the realization of the development intervention project. For the participation as an end advocates, this reflection-in-action process, guided by the external agent facilitator, builds the members’ capacity to collaborate and to become more self-reliant in their problem-solving tasks as they assume roles of the analyst, designer and coaches.

The stake goes further when beneficiaries mobilize their resources which they consider as their ‘counterpart’ in the economic aspect of the project. This resources includes labor, labor time, and material resources (e.g., tools, animals, land). Data in the monitoring and evaluation processes will have a power value if it is used as a feedback – if it can be used as an input to the project design or agency decisions. Participation in power-sharing is also institutionalized through inclusion of some members in the project management board. This representation brings the primary stakeholders ‘closer’ with the project agency itself and therefore have a voice in the higher level of decision-making.

Empowerment dimension of participation goes beyond the externally initiated intervention (e.g. project) context to the social, economic political environment consisting of institutions that provide resources and processes that affect people’s lives. Expansion of assets and capabilities implies strengthening the organization’s ability to be self-reliant/autonomous, to manage problem-solving activities themselves. Moreover, such self-efficacy is imperative if the organization is going to serve as the carrier of the other indicators of this participation dimension – agency and political representation. Agency is about self-initiated actions to pursue their collective interests by linking with and accessing productive resources from various agencies, organizations or institutions. These linkages integrate people’s organization to the enabling environment of society.

Representational spaces are the arena where people “negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions” that affect their welfare. Participation in these political spaces could either be direct (e.g., town meetings, forums, social media) or indirect - through linkage with people or organizations who will advocate or lobby their cause.

*Objectives of the Study*

The main objective of the study was to develop a multidimensional index of participation. Specifically:

1. Identify the dimensions and corresponding indicators of participation;
2. Validate the dimensions and indicators;
3. Determine the appropriate weighting factors for each dimension and indicator;

III. METHODOLOGY

The indicators of these dimensions were identified by collating specific statements related to participation from review of literature and these statements were categorized into dimensions based on nature of participation. The identified indicators of the participation dimensions was validated by a group of experts via focused group discussion using Delphi method with the experts from Non-Government Organizations. The experts were from Non-Government Organizations of KAANIB in Impasugong, Bukidnon and Abag Kalambuan Foundation in Casisang, Malaybalay City. The optimal weight was derived using this formula optimal weights=  $\{(1/SD)/\text{Sum of SDs}\}$  using data from a survey questionnaire accomplished by 1000 respondents in seven municipalities.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE 1. Profile Analysis of Respondent

Variable	Features	Remarks
Sex	Most of them are male (80%)	There are more male respondents
Age	Spread out 28-84	The youngest respondent is 17 and the oldest is 84.
Occupation	Majority have farm-related work (70%)	There are more respondents who have farm-related occupation
Educational Attainment	Some have elementary education level (30%), 30% High School level	There are more respondents who were into formal education
No. of Children	Many have children 5-12 years old (40%)	There are more respondents who have big families
Length of Membership in Organization	Most of the respondents are members of organizations for 7 years.	All of the respondents are members of organizations

Table 2 shows the weight distribution of the three dimensions of participation and their indicators. The collaboration dimension has the highest optimal weight with significant contribution from its three indicators - involvement in PIME, resource and power sharing, and organization capacity. The empowerment dimension obtained second highest optimal weight with the self-management as the driver indicator. The dimension on consultation has the least optimal weight with information extraction contributing more than information reception.

TABLE 2. Weight Distribution of Participation Dimensions and indicators

DIMENSIONS	Optimal Weight	INDICATORS	Weight
Consultation	17%	1. Information Reception	7%
		2. Information Extraction	10%
Collaboration	47%	1. Organizational Capacity Building	14%
		2. Involvement in PIME	18%
		3. Resource and Power- Sharing	15%
Empowerment	36%	1. Self-Management	17%
		2. Agency	10%
		3. Representationa l spaces	9%

TABLE 3. Relationship between Respondent Profile and Responses

Variables	Dimension	F-Value	P-Value	Description
Sex	Consultation	0.01	0.918	Insignificant
	Collaboration	3.05	0.081	Insignificant
	Empowerment	3.48	0.063	Insignificant
Age	Consultation	0.16	0.688	Insignificant
	Collaboration	1.50	0.221	Insignificant
	Empowerment	0.14	0.708	Insignificant
Occupation	Consultation	0.00	0.971	Insignificant
	Collaboration	0.00	0.946	Insignificant
	<b>Empowerment</b>	8.51	<b>0.004</b>	Significant
Educational Attainment	Consultation	0.12	0.728	Insignificant
	Collaboration	0.98	0.323	Insignificant
	Empowerment	0.20	0.652	Insignificant
Number of Children	Consultation	0.17	0.675	Insignificant
	Collaboration	0.03	0.858	Insignificant
	Empowerment	0.15	0.736	Insignificant
Length of Membership in Organization	Consultation	1.76	0.184	Insignificant
	Collaboration	1.99	0.159	Insignificant
	<b>Empowerment</b>	12.31	<b>0.001</b>	Significant

TABLE 4. Correlation between Location and dimension

Consultation	p-value	.092 not significant
Collaboration	p-value	.074 not significant
Empowerment	p-value	.010 significant

\*significant at 0.05 level of significance

The highest optimal weight of the collaboration dimension indicates that NGOs' and GOs' programs and projects provide opportunity structures for people participation. These programs and projects apparently provide a more direct access to benefits, thus lending the motivation factor. The agency and representational spaces indicators are the Achilles heel of the empowerment dimension. This suggests inadequacies in asset endowments (psychological, informational, material, organizational) and/or social capital and institutional mechanisms to drive real empowerment (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005). It is noteworthy to mention that empowerment is the only dimension that has significant correlation to socio-

demographic variables (occupation and length of service) and level of area participation. This implies that although collaboration is the main driver of participation, empowerment is a critical factor in achieving high level of participation. Lastly, NGO-based organization's outranking GO-based ones in collaboration and empowerment dimensions not only confirms the notion that NGO are committed to principles of participatory development but also implies that GOs are in general more concerned with the delivery of goods and services than they are with the more complex if not more costly process and outcomes of participation. These two sectors represent the means versus ends arguments surrounding the participation controversy.

### V. CONCLUSION

After more than two decades of discourse on and attempts at active citizenship, social capital, empowerment, it is apparent that participatory development still has not achieved full realization, at least in the developing and underdeveloped regions. Institutional policies and procedures carry the burden of providing the mechanism for civic participation but they must be informed by empirical studies on the variables that are associated with this concept. As it is, efforts at participatory development must not only aim at full collaboration with people's organizations but must also strengthen their internal endowments and consider facilitating their engagement in existing representation spaces.

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