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Participation and Indigenous Peoples

Shelton H. Davis
Lars T. Soeftestad

June 1995



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Social Policy and Resettlement Division

Participation and Indigenous Peoples

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June 1995

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

EA	Environmental Assessment
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPDP	Indigenous Peoples Development Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organization

Contents

Acknowledgments	ii
Executive Summary	1
1. Introduction	5
2. The Foundations of Indigenous Development Planning	9
Identifying Indigenous Peoples	
The National Policy Framework	
3. The Building Blocks of Indigenous Participation	13
Devising Appropriate Consultation Procedures	
Recognizing Land and Natural Resource Rights	
Building Upon Subsistence Lifestyles	
Using Indigenous Institutions	
Investing in Culture and Communication	
Strengthening Indigenous Capacity and Institutions	
Financing Indigenous Development	
4. The Role of the World Bank	26
Notes	28
Annexes	29
1. Geographical Distribution of the World's Indigenous Peoples	
2. Criteria for Identifying Indigenous Peoples	
3. Selected World Bank-financed Projects With Indigenous or Tribal Peoples	
References	34

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Executive Summary

The characteristics of indigenous groups make participatory approaches especially critical to safeguarding their interests in the development process. Such approaches, recognizing the right of indigenous peoples to participate actively in planning their own futures, are supported by major donors and international organizations, including the World Bank, but are difficult to implement. They call for changes in attitudes, policies and legislation to address the key issues: recognizing rights to land and natural resources; ensuring culturally appropriate procedures for consultation and communication; and building on the strengths of traditional lifestyles and institutions.

Why Support Participation?

Indigenous or tribal people, numbering at least 250 million throughout 70 different countries, have often been on the losing end of the development process. In many cases, their resources have been exploited for the benefit of other groups in society and, in many countries, they are the poorest of the poor. Often they experience political and economic discrimination and are perceived as backward or primitive.

Even when development policies and programs have been designed specifically to improve the welfare of indigenous peoples, the approach has usually been paternalistic, seeking their cultural assimilation and ignoring the strengths of indigenous institutions and knowledge (including environmental knowledge). This, in turn, can contribute to worsening poverty, social marginalization and ethnic resistance.

The characteristics which distinguish indigenous peoples include their strong attachment

to the land, their dependence on renewable natural resources, subsistence practices, distinct languages and cultures, their historical identities as distinct peoples, and often mistrust of outsiders. For development institutions and planners, the challenge is how to incorporate such diversity of culture, language, ecological adaptation and history into development planning. Cultural barriers make it especially difficult for the outsider to communicate with indigenous groups, understand their institutions, or discern their needs.

In these circumstances, the participation of indigenous people in planning and managing their own development is a means of safeguarding their interests in the development process. The past decade has seen growing recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, supported by international legal instruments, to decide their own priorities for the development or use of their lands and other resources, and to exercise control over their own economic, social and cultural development.

At the same time, from a practical point of view, a participatory approach to indigenous development is a means of improving the quality of projects. In communities whose institutions, leadership patterns and lifestyles are not well understood by outsiders, participation can ensure that projects and services are relevant to perceived needs, and that they are sustainable through indigenous institutions. To be effective, programs must be undertaken in partnership with indigenous peoples, rather than planned for them or carried out among them.

Key Elements in a Participatory Approach

Although the need for a participatory approach is now widely accepted by international development agencies it is difficult to implement. Obstacles include existing national policy and legislative frameworks, widespread prejudices, a tendency on the part of outside NGOs to control rather than facilitate, and a lack of development planning and management skills on the part of indigenous peoples themselves.

In Bank operations, the challenge is typically confronted in two contexts. The first is in mandatory Environmental Assessments or Indigenous Peoples Development Plans, intended to identify and mitigate potentially adverse effects of Bank supported projects on the livelihoods of indigenous peoples. The second is in a new generation of Bank-funded projects where indigenous peoples are the primary beneficiaries. Critical issues for the task manager on these new projects are outlined here.

The Legal and Policy Framework

Government willingness to devolve some degree of autonomy in decisionmaking to indigenous communities is a precondition of successful projects. Judgements must then be made on whether legislative or policy reforms are needed to support such participation in the decisionmaking process. Many of the line agencies or ministries responsible for relationships with indigenous people are weak, lacking professionally trained staff and often taking a paternalistic approach. In these cases, reforms are needed before a participatory project can succeed. Even where an adequate legislative and policy framework exists, however, local and regional elites may still impede authentic indigenous participation.

Rights to Land and Natural Resources

Despite some recent progress, legal recognition of the customary rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral lands is often lacking, and many development programs have to deal with the question of indigenous land tenure security and natural resource rights. Bank legal staff, and lawyers within client countries, can help task managers through the complexities of national land, resource and environmental legislation as it relates to indigenous peoples.

The Bank has also had experience in improving the institutional capacity of the government agencies responsible for the titling of indigenous lands. This experience has demonstrated the benefits to be gained from indigenous participation in physical mapping and land demarcation.

Culturally Appropriate Communication

In designing consultation and communication procedures with indigenous peoples, several special aspects need to be taken into account: their distinct languages; their traditional means of transmitting knowledge and values; and their mistrust of outsiders.

The language issue is central, since few indigenous people—especially women or elders—speak the national language fluently. Hence consultations need to be held in the vernacular language with the help of skilled interpreters. Development strategies for indigenous education also need to take into account the traditional importance of legends, folk tales and proverbs for the oral transmission of knowledge and culture. Modern schooling of indigenous children has proved more effective when it includes instruction in both vernacular and national languages and when it is bicultural or multicultural in content.

Effective communication depends heavily on the element of trust. Through historical experience,

indigenous people have learned to be cautious of "benevolent" outsiders, be they missionaries, government officials, teachers or anthropologists. Those individuals or organizations which have been able to gain their trust have usually done so through long years of contact, learning and respecting their languages and cultures. If such individuals or organizations can be brought into the project preparation process, there is a much better chance of introducing culturally acceptable mechanisms for consultation and participation.

Building on Traditional Strengths

The traditional lifestyles of indigenous peoples involve subsistence strategies which use locally available natural resources to satisfy their basic needs, while maintaining a balance with their environment. There are many unfortunate examples of programs for indigenous development which have undermined these traditional subsistence strategies without providing socially and ecologically viable alternatives. The most successful programs with indigenous peoples are those which take traditional environmental knowledge and livelihood systems as the given basis upon which to build new knowledge, technologies and economic activities. Similarly, the most successful projects are building on existing institutions, instead of creating new ones to deal with specific development tasks.

Social assessments, in which community members participate as partners rather than mere informants, are used to improve understanding of the indigenous social structure and institutions on which to base development strategies, and to assist the communities in determining how best to adapt their institutions to new purposes. Social assessment techniques can also reveal the existence of conflicts with implications for participation, for example between traditional and modern institutions or sources of authority.

As in any other social groups, strengthening the capacities of indigenous peoples to evaluate

options and implement their own development programs requires training in basic skills, and technical assistance in areas such as management, topography, forestry, agriculture, marketing and community health care. However, it also involves promoting and strengthening traditional systems, for example of natural resource management and medicine.

Direct Funding

Many of the first generation Bank projects with indigenous peoples allocated funds to the national government agencies responsible for indigenous development. The typical result was expansion of the government agency concerned, with little direct benefit to the indigenous communities.

In more recent projects, therefore, the goal is for funds to be controlled and managed by indigenous people themselves. Group-based lending schemes, where groups rather than individuals are responsible for protection against default in repayments, have proved adaptable to the finance needs of poor indigenous populations, as the principle of joint liability is often an important element in traditional systems of social control.

The Role of the Bank

There are several ways in which the World Bank can more actively promote the positive participation of indigenous peoples in the development process. These include (a) focusing more attention on convincing its borrower governments to create adequate policy frameworks for indigenous peoples participation in development; (b) the sharing of experiences in this area (including projects which have failed) with other donors, national governments and the NGO community; and (c), where appropriate, direct assistance to indigenous peoples and their organizations for capacity building, technical assistance and the financing of development projects.

1. Introduction

Although indigenous or tribal peoples comprise a significant sector of the world's population, and often possess sophisticated environmental knowledge, they have largely been at the losing end of the development process. According to conservative estimates, there are over 250 million indigenous peoples, living in 70 different countries, speaking hundreds if not thousands of distinct languages and dialects and possessing a great variety of cultural practices (see Annex 1). While there is much controversy about how indigenous peoples are to be defined, their major characteristics are their strong attachment to the land, their dependency on natural resources, their subsistence practices, their distinct languages and cultures and their historical identities as peoples (see Annex 2; cf. also Burger 1990; Cultural Survival 1993).

In many countries, indigenous peoples experience political and economic discrimination and are conceived as "backward," "primitive" or "marginal." This is especially true when it comes to national development policies and programs, over which most indigenous peoples have relatively little or no control. These policies and programs tend to exploit indigenous labor or resources for the enrichment of other social groups or regions, and seldom take into account their cultural needs and practices. Even when programs are directed specifically at indigenous peoples, they are usually paternalistic and have cultural assimilation or integration as their primary outcome or objective. This assimilationist approach has been documented to have failed in industrial countries, where there are still indigenous or tribal enclaves (e.g., Australia, Canada, New

Zealand, and the United States). In the developing countries, it has contributed — sometimes with World Bank assistance — to some of the major pockets of rural poverty, social marginalization and ethnic resistance (Burger 1987; Goodland 1982; Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues 1987).

Another approach, influenced by romantic notions of the "noble savage" or "pristine primitive," argues for the isolation of indigenous peoples from the consequences of economic development. This approach is also problematic, because there are relatively few if any isolated indigenous peoples, even in such areas as the rain forests of South America and Central Africa, the mountainous regions of South and Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and the other Pacific Islands and the Arctic. The vast majority of indigenous peoples are no longer isolated from the forces of development. They have already been fragmented and displaced, and some are inventing new types of ethnic identities and organizational forms to adapt to or resist modernization.

Actually, it is the great diversity of indigenous peoples — in terms of their cultures, languages, ecological adaptations and historical situations — which poses the greatest challenge to development institutions and planners. How, one may ask, is it possible to incorporate such diversity into development planning?

One answer is an emerging approach which recognizes the right of indigenous peoples to participate actively in the planning of their own futures. This participatory approach to

indigenous development is contained in the programs of most contemporary indigenous organizations, as well as in several international statements and resolutions such as the International Labor Organization Convention 169, the draft UN Declaration on the Universal Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the UN's

Agenda 21 documents (see Box 1). It is also reflected in the World Bank's policy on indigenous peoples, and in recent statements on the subject by the aid agencies of such countries as Belgium, Canada, Denmark, and The Netherlands.¹

Box 1

Indigenous Participation and International Legal Instruments

The participation of indigenous peoples in development is emphasized in several international legal instruments, declarations and conventions. These documents establish basic principles for relating to indigenous peoples, as well as define minimal standards for the relations between them and nation states. Both general and specific aspects of indigenous peoples' participation are discussed in the following two instruments:

ILO Convention no. 169. Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1989) includes the following relevant articles:

"The peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development. In addition, they shall participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans and programs for national and regional development which may affect them directly." (Article 7, item 1)

"The rights of ownership and possession of the peoples concerned over the lands which they traditionally occupy shall be recognized. In addition, measures shall be taken in appropriate cases to safeguard the right of the peoples concerned to use lands not exclusively occupied by them, but to which they have traditionally had access for their subsistence and traditional activities. Particular attention shall be paid to the situation of nomadic peoples and shifting cultivators in this respect." (Article 14, item 1)

"The rights of these peoples concerned to the natural resources pertaining to their lands shall be specially safeguarded. These rights include the right of these peoples to participate in the use, management and conservation of these resources." (Article 15, item 2)

The *Draft UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (1993)*, which was drafted with the participation of indigenous peoples and is now under consideration by the UN, includes among others these paragraphs:

"Indigenous peoples have the right to participate fully, if they so choose, at all levels of decision-making in matters which may affect their rights, lives and destinies through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions." (Paragraph 19)

"Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop all health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions." (Paragraph 23)

"Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands, territories and other resources, including the right to require that States obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands, territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of . . . neral, water or other resources." (Paragraph 30)

While the idea of indigenous participation is now accepted by many donor agencies, it is surprising how few development projects actually fit the needs of indigenous peoples. The reasons for this include: (a) policy and legislative frameworks which do not recognize indigenous land and natural resource rights or provide for the participation of indigenous peoples; (b) prejudices against indigenous peoples and lack of knowledge of their cultures and needs on the part of government personnel (e.g., agronomists, foresters, health workers, teachers, etc.); (c) the tendency of many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (e.g., missionary societies, grassroots development agencies, environmental and indigenous defense organizations) to control rather than assist indigenous peoples in designing and managing their own development projects; and, (d) a lack of skills or preparedness on the part of many indigenous peoples to participate in a self-managed process of development (Beauclerk and Narby 1988).

Successful development with indigenous peoples demands a change of attitudes and perspectives on the part of several actors: donor agencies, national legislators and policy makers, government institutions and officials, non-governmental organizations and indigenous peoples themselves. To be effective, development programs must be carried out in partnership with indigenous peoples, rather than be planned for or carried out among them. Such programs have a better chance of succeeding if the views and needs of indigenous peoples are recognized early in the project preparation process; if an adequate policy framework exists for recognizing and protecting their rights to control their lands, resources and communities; and, if development agencies respect their cultures, languages and beliefs.

This paper, while not providing a blueprint for successful participatory development with indigenous peoples, does suggest some critical issues which need to be considered in the design and implementation of development projects in which indigenous peoples are the

primary stakeholders or beneficiaries. The focus of the paper is not on those types of projects, such as roads, hydroelectric facilities, petroleum and mining developments or land settlement programs, which in most cases adversely affect the lands, resources and cultures of indigenous peoples. The Bank's policy recognizes these adverse effects and tries to avoid or minimize them through such procedures as Social and Environmental Impact Assessments, and the preparation and incorporation of special components or Indigenous Peoples Development Plans.

Rather, the purpose of the paper is to consider a new generation of World Bank-funded projects in which indigenous peoples are the primary actors and participants. Many of these projects are in the forestry, conservation or natural resource management areas, or are intended to provide basic services in education, health or general rural development. Nevertheless, many of the issues and recommendations made in the paper can also be fruitfully applied to those World Bank-funded projects in which there is a need to mitigate adverse effects.

The discussion draws upon the statements of indigenous peoples about such projects, common understandings in the field of applied anthropology, and more than a decade of experience of the World Bank in trying to implement its policy. The paper opens with a section titled, "The Foundations of Indigenous Development Planning," which focuses upon the identification of indigenous peoples as key participants in the development planning process, and proceeds to examine the national policy frameworks which are a necessary condition for such participation. After this, there is a section titled "The Building Blocks of Indigenous Participation." Here, the paper turns to such critical issues as consultation procedures, land and resource recognition, subsistence lifestyles, indigenous institutions, culture and communication, training and capacity strengthening and financing indigenous development. The paper concludes with a section titled "The Role of the World Bank,"

which summarizes the various ways in which the World Bank, in partnership with indigenous peoples and its borrowers, can promote more active participation of indigenous peoples in the development process.

Where relevant, case studies are presented in the text or boxes. Finally, the paper is accompa-

nied by three annexes, presenting population estimates of indigenous peoples by regions, sociological criteria for identifying indigenous peoples, and a list of selected World Bank-funded projects which affect indigenous peoples and have been approved since the World Bank's revised policy was issued in 1991.

2. The Foundations of Indigenous Development Planning

Identifying Indigenous Peoples

World Bank staff and other development practitioners consistently face the problem of identifying indigenous peoples as affected populations, beneficiaries or participants in their projects. The issue of defining indigenous peoples is somewhat different and more complex than identifying these population groups in specific regional and national contexts. Internationally, it has been extremely difficult to reach agreement on just what constitutes the category of "indigenous peoples" because of the great variability in the histories and cultures of peoples throughout the world. In some places, like North and South America or countries like Australia and New Zealand, indigenous peoples are recognized as being the "aboriginal" inhabitants of their countries and hence having certain prior or special rights. In other regions, such as large parts of Africa and Asia, the entire population of a country because of its prior history may consider itself to be "indigenous" and the term, if used at all, is more appropriately applied to specific ethnic, minority or tribal groups.²

The World Bank, like other international institutions, has found it extremely difficult to reach agreement on the definition of the concept "indigenous peoples." The earliest World Bank directive of 1982 used the term "tribal people" to cover relatively "isolated" and "un-aculturated" peoples. In 1991, the World Bank revised its policy and used the term "indigenous peoples" to describe a broader spectrum of social groups (including "indigenous ethnic minorities," "tribal groups," and

"scheduled tribes") who possess "a social and cultural identity distinct from the dominant society that makes them vulnerable in the development process." This policy recognized the great variability in the ways in which national legislation defines indigenous peoples, and put forward a set of criteria for identifying indigenous peoples within particular geographical areas.

Recently, the World Bank has sought a more sociologically informed approach to identifying indigenous peoples which takes into account their cultural specificity and historical experience in particular regions and countries. Several methods are being used to identify populations which, because of their ethnic characteristics and vulnerability, would come under the World Bank's policy and receive special attention in World Bank-financed projects. These include cartographic techniques for identifying the geographical locations of indigenous groups, reports by specialists which profile the social and cultural composition of specific countries, social assessments of populations in particular World Bank-funded projects, and self-identification by indigenous peoples themselves.

With rare exceptions, World Bank Task Managers generally lack the necessary training and knowledge which would enable them to identify indigenous peoples. However, there are some standard ways in which Task Managers can increase their knowledge of the indigenous peoples and other vulnerable ethnic minorities who live within the countries where they work, and in the process provide opportunities for the active participation and

involvement of these peoples in World Bank-funded projects.

The World Bank's libraries, for example, contain a growing body of information on the situation of the world's indigenous peoples by country and region. One of these sources is *The Encyclopedia of World Cultures* (Levinson 1993). This multi-volume work contains an alphabetical listing of all language and culture groups by regions (e.g., Southeast and East Asia, Africa and the Middle East and the Pacific), maps showing their geographical location, and brief descriptions written by anthropologists on the demography, cultural practices and socio-economic situation of these groups. This work was organized by the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) in New Haven, Connecticut and much of the data is also available on CD-ROM.

Within countries, local NGOs — including those organized by indigenous peoples themselves — are often the best source of information for identifying indigenous groups. These organizations should be consulted early in the project identification process, so they can assist World Bank Task Managers and implementing agencies in identifying and contacting indigenous peoples and their organizations. In some areas, there are also regional organizations, such as the Coordinating Body of Indigenous People's Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA), which can provide information on the situation of indigenous groups in various countries.

Many of the World Bank's borrowers also have national institutes or centers which are devoted to the investigation of the country's tribal, religious, cultural and ethnic groups. For example, the national government-sponsored Anthropological Survey of India contains detailed, computerized documentation on over 4,000 cultural communities. The Survey maintains a network of national and international contacts with ethnologists, linguists, historians and tribal research institutes (Singh 1992). Similar sorts of institutions — albeit not on the

same scale as India — exist in countries such as China, Mexico, the Russian Federation and Viet Nam. National census bureaus and geographical institutes can also be sources of vital information on the size and location of particular ethnic and linguistic groups. These sources, however, should be used cautiously, as (depending upon the national context) they often contain information which is unreliable, biased or incomplete.

Another source of information are anthropologists with specific regional, country or ethnic group knowledge. The World Bank's Regional Technical Departments and the Environment Department's Social Policy and Resettlement Division (ENVSP) contain anthropologists, many of whom have had years of field experience living and working with indigenous groups.

In almost every country where the World Bank works, there are also universities and research centers which are staffed by persons who have done anthropological and/or linguistic research. These national specialists should be contacted, if there are any questions about the nature of populations living within the area of proposed World Bank-funded projects.

Government agencies, such as social welfare, education or forestry departments, can also be useful sources of information on the indigenous or tribal groups which exist within a locality, region or country. However, like national census takers, the information which they provide should be checked for its reliability.

The National Policy Framework

Along with the identification of indigenous peoples, another precondition or foundation for successful indigenous participation in the development process is the existence of an adequate legal and policy framework. Many of the World Bank's borrowers have constitutions or special laws which outline government policies in relationship to indigenous peoples and other ethnic minorities. For example, most

of the Latin American and many of the Asian countries have passed laws and/or created special institutions or agencies to deal with issues relating to indigenous peoples and other vulnerable ethnic minorities. In some countries, government relationships with indigenous peoples are the responsibility of special line agencies or ministries, such as those dealing with education, rural development, forestry, social welfare and the like. However, many of these agencies are relatively weak, have staff which have not been professionally trained to work with indigenous peoples, and tend to have a top-down or paternalistic approach. Promoting indigenous participation is particularly problematic in these countries, unless governments understand the value of a more pluralistic approach to development which takes into account cultural and ethnic diversity, and are willing to devolve some degree of autonomous authority and decision-making in the development process to indigenous groups.

A good example of a Latin American country which has taken such an approach is Colombia. Although Colombia maintains a special office within its Ministry of Government to deal with indigenous affairs, its National Constitution recognizes the rights of indigenous communities to control their lands and natural resources and their internal political affairs. Each recognized indigenous community has its own "council" which has the power to decide upon the use of the community's land and resources, to resolve internal disputes, and to negotiate health, education and other programs with regional development corporations and the national government. Recent Colombian legislation also provides for the direct transfer of government resources to these "councils" for projects which they design and execute (Roldan Ortega and Gomez Vargas 1994).

In Africa, some post-independence governments have also recognized the importance of traditional chieftainship as an institution for promoting multi-ethnic or tribal participation in the development process. An example is Ghana which in 1971 passed the Chieftaincy

Act. This act constitutionally recognizes and protects the local governance powers of village chiefs, grants them authority to enforce customary tribal laws, and establishes regional and national assemblies in which they can discuss and govern their affairs. There are currently one national and ten regional Houses of Chiefs that have jurisdiction over numerous customary legal issues, including adjudication of disputes, codification and unification of customary law, and maintenance of cultural heritage, practices and ceremonies. The Houses of Chiefs also have responsibilities for eliminating what are conceived to be harmful cultural practices. The Ghana Chieftaincy Act has sometimes been criticized for causing the intrusion of partisan politics into the traditional institution of chieftaincy and leading to disputes and litigations over rightful occupancy to positions of authority and lands. Nevertheless, it has increasingly played an important role in promoting greater public and grassroots involvement in development decision-making (see Box 2).

Numerous other countries fall along a continuum from those which recognize and support the rights of indigenous peoples to participate actively in development decision-making to those which provide relatively little or no recognition of such rights. Even in those countries where the special rights of indigenous peoples or other minorities are not officially recognized, there may be ways of promoting greater dialogue between official government agencies and local indigenous communities about development policies and projects, and hence increasing the political space for the latter to participate in the development decision-making process. For example, World Bank-financed sector work can play an important role in furthering constructive dialogue between governments and indigenous peoples over development priorities. A case in point is the large amount of World Bank-financed forestry policy and sector work which could profit from greater and more systematic participation by indigenous peoples, many of whom inhabit and depend for their livelihoods

Box 2
Utilizing Traditional Institutions in a Modern Nation State Context

The Bank's Africa Management in the 90s program is investigating the Ghana Chieftaincy Act as an example of new approaches to African governance whereby traditional authority institutions are adapted to modern development conditions.

Speaking before an audience at a 1993 World Bank conference on traditional knowledge and sustainable development, the Honorable Nana Oduro Numapau II, President of the National House of Chiefs of Ghana, said that he was "highly optimistic that the institution of chieftaincy is poised to play an enhanced role in Ghana's development." Chief Numapau mentioned the following factors as reflecting the increased potential for chiefs to participate in the nation's development policies:

First, now we have highly educated chiefs who understand the ramifications of modern development and have the expertise to contribute to it in various fields. Secondly, because chiefs are not associated with political parties, . . . their advice and exhortation will henceforth carry greater moral weight across party lines. Thirdly, it is now widely realized that traditional fora and means of communication are relevant to educating the broad masses of our people on such development-oriented issues as family planning and population control, indiscriminate sexual habits, teenage pregnancy and AIDS. Fourthly, government-sponsored organs have not been able to supplant the chief as a the medium of mobilizing the local peoples for communal efforts at development. As yet, it is now common knowledge that to achieve true development, the laudable efforts of the government will have to be meaningfully supplemented at the local, grass-root level through communal effort.

Source: Davis and Ebbe (1995: 20-21).

on the world's remaining intact natural forest.

In the final analysis, governments must show a willingness to accept the participation of indigenous peoples in the development decision-making process. In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to assist governments in reforming their legislation or policies in order to create an enabling environment for participa-

tion. In other circumstances, some degree of participation can take place even without a reform of current policies. In either situation, judgments must be made about the legal and policy frameworks which promote or inhibit indigenous participation, and what kinds of accountability mechanisms need to be in place to ensure that indigenous development can take place.

3. The Building Blocks of Indigenous Participation

Devising Appropriate Consultation Procedures

Once indigenous peoples have been recognized as possible affected groups or beneficiaries, the long and difficult process of consultation begins. In some ways, the consultation process with indigenous peoples is no different than that of other groups who are poor and marginalized. However, there are some special aspects which do make their situation different from that of other groups. These aspects include their distinct languages, their traditional social structures and leadership patterns, and their generalized mistrust of outsiders, including representatives of the government and other ethnic or social groups. More than anything else, these factors need to be taken into account in the design of consultation procedures with indigenous peoples.

The language issue is central, because most indigenous peoples do not speak the national language, or if they do, they speak it only in a rudimentary fashion. Furthermore, while young men who have had some schooling may be fluent in the national language, indigenous women and elders may not. Therefore, it is imperative that consultations with indigenous peoples be held in the vernacular languages with skilled interpreters provided. This is especially true in former colonial countries, where English, French, Portuguese and Spanish may be the official languages, but where vernacular languages are still widely used in rural and remote areas.

Within indigenous communities, there are often strong traditional institutions and leadership patterns, such as councils of elders or traditional chiefs, which may not be readily observable to outsiders. There may also be factions within indigenous communities, between more traditional and modernizing elements of the local society or between different kin groups (Talle 1994). There are no simple formulas for figuring out who represents these communities; nor should one assume that persons who are officially recognized by the government necessarily represent their communities. Local politics among indigenous peoples — like local politics everywhere — are complex and the best advice in setting up consultative or participatory processes is to be aware of the dynamics and nuances of the situation and not assume that first impressions are correct. Special consultative procedures may be necessary in order to ensure that indigenous women have a voice in the formulation of development plans and projects.

Perhaps the major factor which determines whether or not consultative procedures with indigenous peoples will be successful is the element of trust. Through historical experience, indigenous peoples have learned to be cautious of "benevolent outsiders" whether they be anthropologists, development agencies, government officials, missionaries or teachers. Those individuals or organizations which have been able to gain the trust of indigenous peoples, usually have done so through long years of contact, through the learning of

indigenous languages and through a deep respect for indigenous cultures and traditions. If such individuals or organizations can be brought into the project preparation process, there is a much greater chance that consultative and participatory mechanisms can be introduced which are culturally appropriate and acceptable (see Box 3).

Often times, outsiders think that because they have gained the trust of indigenous persons who work for their organizations, they have necessarily gained the trust of the people. This position, however, is not necessarily true, especially when these indigenous persons identify more with the outside organization or agency than they do with their own communities, or when their primary interest is in improving the welfare of their own families or kin rather than their ethnic group. Obviously, development agencies need indigenous persons who can serve as "cultural brokers," but these positions should not be created at the expense of mutual trust and respect between outsiders

and whole cultures, collectivities and groups (Rudqvist 1994).

As mentioned previously, in many countries there are organizations which defend the rights of indigenous peoples or are actually created by them to represent their interests before the national government, international organizations and private companies. These organizations can be an important source of support (or criticism) of World Bank-funded projects. Task Managers would do well to consult with these organizations early on in the project cycle. They can be important allies and intermediaries in the design of socially-acceptable development projects, especially if they have close contacts with grassroots indigenous leaders and communities. However, Task Managers should be aware of the potential political issues which might emerge from such collaboration, especially if these organizations are not officially recognized or accepted by their governments (see Box 4).

Box 3
Using a Legal Aid Organization to Gain People's Trust

The Legal Assistance Center for Indigenous Filipinos (PANLIPI) has provided legal assistance to the country's Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) for a number of years, especially in the critical area of the recognition and demarcation of ancestral domains. During the appraisal of a proposed Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded National Integrated Protected Areas System Project, the National Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) contracted PANLIPI to organize a series of consultations with local ICCs for a visiting World Bank mission.

In the areas visited, there were a number of contentious issues surrounding ICC ancestral domain rights in relationship to loggers, the state-owned petroleum and energy company and the DENR's Parks and Wildlife Division.

The consultation meetings which were set up by PANLIPI, and conducted in the vernacular languages, provided the World Bank mission with the opportunity to better understand the nature of these conflicts, as well as the attitudes of the ICCs toward the proposed protected area project.

As a result of the consultations, one proposed area was dropped from the GEF project because of ICC unwillingness to participate; and, in the other areas, more attention was focused upon indigenous land tenure, resource access, and livelihood issues and ICC participation in protected area management.

Source: Case study and interview on the Philippines Integrated Protected Areas Project, in the *World Bank Participation Sourcebook* (World Bank 1995).

Box 4
The Politics of Indigenous Participation

Projects which incorporate indigenous consultation and participation need to take into account ongoing and complex political situations. Without a good understanding of these dynamics, even the most well-intentioned and designed projects can lead to unforeseen turmoil and frustration. An example is the checkered history of the Indigenous Peoples Component of the World Bank-funded Eastern Lowlands Natural Resource Management and Agricultural Development Project in Bolivia (approved in 1990).

The purpose of the Indigenous Peoples Component is to provide land tenure security and other services to several Ayoreo and Chiquitano Indian communities in the Eastern Lowlands. Originally prepared in a highly participatory manner by a regional Indian federation in collaboration with a non-Indian technical assistance NGO, the component encountered implementation problems of a political nature immediately following project effectiveness.

The precipitating event for these problems was a protest march by the Indian federation calling for more indigenous control over forest resources. This event soon escalated into a major confrontation between the federation and the regional development corporation (which was the project implementing agency) over who should have control of the component.

The World Bank found itself in the unenviable position of trying to negotiate the differences (some of which had a history even prior to the Indian protest march) which emerged between the indigenous federation and the regional corporation. After long meetings and unable to find a solution, the World Bank was forced to accept the redesign of the component, lessening the executing power of the indigenous federation, and putting more power into the hands of an implementing unit within the regional corporation.

Source: Wali and Davis (1992).

Some of the political issues which can arise in project implementation can be minimized or avoided through more systematic attention to the consultative process during project preparation. For example, it is important to provide adequate time for such consultation so that the views and values of indigenous peoples can be fully incorporated into the project design. In most cases, meetings or other consultative fora need to be repeated or held over a long time period, because the decision-making and consensus-building processes in indigenous societies are different from those in Western societies or the national societies of which they form part. There may also be leaders or representatives in distant villages who need to be consulted by indigenous organizations and the consultative process should take this social and geographic factor into account.

Lastly, there is a need to include government agencies and NGOs in the consultative process with indigenous peoples. Many times, the general cultural awareness and sensitivity of these agencies can be increased through their joint participation in consultative events with indigenous peoples. Such joint consultations can bring to the surface the differences in cultural perception and interests among government agencies, NGOs and indigenous peoples and facilitate a more genuine process of dialogue and partnership. They can also reduce the risk of conflict that is detrimental to the goals of the development initiative; and they may help to bring about negotiated solutions to such conflicts when they do occur. Listening to indigenous peoples is a fundamental part of an authentic consultative process, even when it leads to rejection of an outside development agency's projects or goals.

Recognizing Land and Natural Resource Rights

Indigenous peoples are defined as having close attachments to their ancestral lands and great dependence upon renewable resources for their livelihoods. In many indigenous communities, land and natural resources have strong cultural meanings, are important to their religious and spiritual beliefs, and define their social and cultural identities (Davis 1992). Most traditional indigenous communities also possess customary rules and norms for regulating the possession, use and transfer of lands and natural resources. These customary or common property regimes are often based upon normative principles and associated with traditional dispute-resolution procedures which are different from contemporary Western property systems.

Although some colonial powers recognized customary or indigenous land rights, most governments did not, saying the lands possessed by indigenous peoples were "unoccupied." The state and outsiders assumed rights over these lands without the prior consent or adequate compensation of their indigenous inhabitants. The forests, fish, wildlife, minerals and other resources on these lands were also claimed by colonial governments and these concepts and practices were taken over by post-independence national governments. Thus, we find today that there is still relatively little legal recognition of the customary rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral lands, although the situation is rapidly changing as a result of new pressures being brought by international agencies and indigenous organizations (Plant 1992).

Because of this adverse legal situation and the economic demand for indigenous resources, to be successful, many development programs with indigenous peoples must deal with the question of land tenure security and natural resource rights. The World Bank has recognized the critical importance of this issue in its policy

statements on indigenous peoples, as well as in many of its projects, especially those which finance the opening up of remote frontier areas where indigenous peoples live (Wali and Davis 1992). In fact, many international observers now acknowledge the close relationship between local participation and the recognition of indigenous land rights. Without local participation, most legal and administrative frameworks (including those which deal with land and natural resources) will not address the needs of indigenous peoples.

World Bank legal staff can play an important role in assisting Task Managers to understand the complexities of national land, resource and environmental legislation as it relates to indigenous peoples. In the Forest Management and Conservation Project in Laos (approved in 1994), for example, one of the World Bank's lawyers reviewed national forestry and land legislation as it relates to the customary rights of upland villages, many of which are comprised of ethnic minorities. The results of the review provided the World Bank with the necessary information to open a dialogue with the government on customary land rights and to include provisions for recognizing and regularizing those rights in the community resource management component of the project.

Similarly, lawyers within Borrower countries who have defended indigenous peoples' rights to lands and resources can be invaluable sources of information and advice during project design and implementation. A case in point is the Colombian Center for Indigenous Cooperation (CECOIN), an NGO which provides legal and other technical assistance to the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC) and various indigenous groups. In preparing the Natural Resource Management Project in Colombia, CECOIN provided the project implementing agency and the World Bank with invaluable information and analysis on the land rights and status of land claims of indigenous and Afro-Colombian groups in the Pacific Coast region. As a result of this

information, the project (approved in 1994) contains a significant indigenous and Afro-Colombian land demarcation and regularization component.

The World Bank has also had some experience, especially in the Philippines, Brazil and other South American countries, in improving the institutional capacity of government agencies responsible for the identification, demarcation and titling of indigenous lands. One of the major lessons learned from this experience is that land regularization programs for indigenous peoples are most successful when they include the participation of indigenous communities in the process of territorial delineation and protection. Most indigenous peoples have a sophisticated knowledge of the physical and cultural landscapes where they live, and this knowledge can be put to great use in the physical mapping and legal recognition of their lands (Denniston 1994).

The formal state recognition of lands occupied and used by indigenous peoples should not be confused with the individual demarcation and titling of lands that takes place in many agricultural modernization and land reform programs. While some indigenous groups may wish to have their traditional lands titled as private or familial property, the vast majority — if we are to believe recent statements made by indigenous peoples before the United Nations and other agencies — are seeking security of title for their corporate or communal lands. For this reason, it is important to understand the informal or customary rules and governance structures which continue to define indigenous property relations, land use and natural resource management practices. The persistence of these customary systems, as well as their recognition in national legal systems, are critical to achieving sustainable land management, especially in environmentally sensitive parts of sub-Saharan Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and Latin America (National Research Council 1986).

Building Upon Subsistence Lifestyles

The recognition of indigenous land tenure should be accompanied by measures to maintain and reinforce subsistence lifestyles. Most indigenous peoples are hunters and gatherers, fishermen, horticulturalists, nomadic pastoralists or settled farmers who depend upon locally available natural resources for their food, fuel, clothing, building materials, medicines, etc. Under relatively isolated conditions and low population densities, these peoples are able to maintain a balance with their environment, while satisfying basic human needs for food and subsistence. To give an example, one anthropologist has classified one category of indigenous peoples — the world's hunters and gatherers — as being members of the first "affluent societies" because they are able to satisfy human needs with relatively simple tools and limited amounts of labor, thus freeing up time for ritual, storytelling, play and other leisure activities (Sahlins 1972).

Indigenous peoples are not against change, and they do not wish to forsake the benefits which they might receive from Western ideas, tools and economies. However, many development programs are introduced at the price of the loss of their traditional livelihoods and lifestyles. These programs often lead to declines in food security, with negative effects on health and nutrition. Many government programs whose objectives are to sedentarize and economically transform nomadic peoples, for example, have undermined their subsistence strategies without providing socially and ecologically acceptable alternatives (Hiladik et. al. 1993).

Indigenous peoples produce surpluses and have trade and exchange relationships with neighboring peoples. They also possess sophisticated knowledge of their environments which can be profitably incorporated into the design

of development programs. One of the best cases of such incorporation is the West Bengal Forestry Project in India, in which the traditional knowledge and livelihood patterns of tribal women play an important role in the project's performance and success (see Box 5).

Participation only makes sense when it takes place in a culturally recognizable framework. In the economic sphere, this means building upon what people already know, including their traditional knowledge of the environment, technologies and modes of subsistence. The most successful development programs with indigenous peoples are those which take traditional knowledge and livelihood systems as givens, and build upon them new knowledge, technologies and economic activities.³

The traditional environmental knowledge of indigenous peoples, as recognized in recent international statements such as the Agenda 21 documents of the UN, has a great deal to contribute to the process of sustainable development. However, planners must recognize that this knowledge is deeply rooted in indigenous production systems and, as these pro-

duction systems are undermined or abandoned, this knowledge disappears. Thus, there are very critical issues which indigenous peoples raise concerning the need to maintain the integrity of their subsistence lifestyles, while at the same time protecting their intellectual and cultural property rights.⁴

Using Indigenous Institutions

Indigenous communities possess a variety of forms of social organization and institutions which can serve as the building blocks of participatory development strategies. At the most basic level, these include nuclear and extended families and local lineages. These social groups are, in turn, often organized into larger units such as clans, moieties, phratries and tribes. Villages may also be organized into neighborhoods, age-grades, religious associations, secret societies and the like. Politically, decision-making powers may rest with village headmen, elder's councils, longhouse authorities or traditional chiefs. There may also be types of religious leaders, such as traditional healers or teachers, whose cultural ideas and

Box 5 Tribal Women and Forestry

The West Bengal Joint Forestry Management Program in India is considered to be a model of participatory forest management. One of its most important aspects is the ways in which tribal women, their traditional environmental knowledge, and their livelihood strategies have been incorporated into the program. In most areas, the recognition of the rights of tribal women to collect and market the leaves of *Sal* and *Kendu* trees has been the major incentive which has led to the program's economic and institutional success.

In the village of Pukuria, women gather *sal* leaves for six months of each year for purposes of plate (*thali*) making. One study estimates that experienced women from this village can produce 1000 plates in two days, and the village itself exports nearly 700,000 leaf plates per month (equivalent to two truck loads) during the season.

"Minor forest products," the study states, "represent the primary occupation and most important source of income for Pukuria's tribal women, who are also assisted by children. Given the low investment costs for reestablishing *sal* forest productivity, combined with the benefits of protecting the upper ridge tracts where forests are located, this system seems to have considerable potential for increasing employment and income earning opportunities, while reducing soil erosion levels."

Source: Poffenberger (1990: 13-14).

leadership may encompass whole tribes and even non-related indigenous groups. Instead of creating new institutions to deal with specific development tasks, existing indigenous institutions should be taken as a starting point, making them the locus of development activities.

A good example of this is the way in which the Burkina Faso NGO, Association Internationale Six "S" (Se Servir de la Saison Seche en Savanne et au Sahel), has used the traditional Mossi (the dominant indigenous ethnic group in Burkina Faso) institution of Kombi-Naam for purposes of community development and organization. The objective of the traditional Mossi institution was the "social integration of youth" to the society's "fundamental values of equality, justice, equity and democracy." This institution is now used as the basis for a more widespread community organization called the Groupement Naam. Its membership has been broadened to include other categories of people besides youth, including women and the elderly. The elders, in fact, are the "counselors" of the organization providing it with a moral direction which does not exist in other organizations imposed by outsiders or the government (Communication by Bernard Ledea Ouedraogo, cited in Davis and Ebbe 1995).

Another example is contained in the design of the World Bank-funded Matruh Natural Resource Management Project (approved in 1993) among Bedouin in the desert of the western part of Egypt. Here, it was decided to use a traditional social form, the *bayt* (or Bedouin local lineage), as the basis of the project's rural livelihood and conservation activities. By identifying this institution, the project authorities were able to gain the confidence of the Bedouin population (including Bedouin women) and avoid some of the pitfalls encountered in previous projects where the government introduced Western-style cooperatives (see Box 6).

Obviously, not all indigenous social institutions have sufficient integrity or flexibility to adapt

Box 6
Kinship in the Service of Community Development

Bedouin of the Matruh region all trace their descent to a common ancestor, and are organized into a segmentary lineage system comprised of tribes, patrilineages or clans, and local extended-family household groups. While tribal sheikhs represent these people before the government, most aspects of social and economic life take place at the household level. These groups are called the *bayt* (*biyut*, pl.), are usually 3 to 4 generations in depth, and contain on the average about 14 persons. Describing the significance of these groups among Bedouins in neighboring Libya, the British social anthropologist E. Evans-Pritchard wrote:

The tribe may be the residual owner of land and water, but the biyut are the owners in use. Their members live in the same stretch of tribal territory, move during the rains to the same grazing grounds, use the same wells during the dry season, and cultivate adjacent strips of arable land. The members of a bait (i.e., bayt) have a lively sense of solidarity, and this is most evident in fighting and feuds. (Evans-Pritchard 1949)

The Matruh Natural Resource Management Project, unlike previous government and international donor efforts, is using this traditional institution as the basis for local Resource Management Committees through which economic livelihood and resource conservation activities are being organized.

Sources: Case study on Matruh Natural Resource Management Project, in the *World Bank Participation Sourcebook* (World Bank 1995); Davis and Ebbe (1995).

to the new political and economic realities of nation states and market economies. Some hunting and gathering peoples, for example, are so egalitarian and informally organized that it is difficult to establish legitimate authorities for dealing with outsiders without causing intense rivalries and even the total social disorganization of the group. Similarly, there are situations in more complex lineage-based

societies where women have relatively limited formal political authority, but where they may wield power within the local lineage or domestic group. In these types of circumstances, the uses of traditional or indigenous social institutions for purposes of development may be more problematic and there may be a need to create new institutions, such as Western-style cooperatives or NGOs. The purposes of these organizations, however, should not be viewed as a means of undermining or replacing traditional institutions; rather they should serve as "mediation" institutions for dealing with agencies external to the group.

The use of social assessment techniques is fundamental to understanding the indigenous institutions and networks of social relationships upon which participatory development strategies can be based.⁵ Indigenous peoples should participate in these social assessments, not as "informants" in the classical anthropological sense, but as equal partners in an attempt to adapt traditional or existing institutions to new indigenous development alternatives or realities. Again, the use of vernacular languages is important, both to understand the nature of local social structures and cultural norms and to ensure the informed participation of local peoples.

Social assessments can also indicate the potential conflicts which may exist between modern and traditional, or formal and informal, institutions. Many times, there is a layering of institutions in indigenous communities, which makes it difficult to identify which individuals have legitimate authority in the eyes of the local peoples. National and provincial authorities may recognize one individual or institution as being the legitimate representative of a community or group of people; while the community or group recognizes another. Similarly, there will be different groups (sometimes called "factions") within communities or villages, including persons who are members of different religious groups. Some of these groups may recognize traditional leaders and institutions, while others do not. However, it is important to

recognize that groups and leaders which support traditional values may not necessarily be opposed to development. Indigenous participation, if it is to be accepted and authentic, must be based on a thorough understanding of such situations, including a recognition that within indigenous communities there is often a plurality of belief systems, values and views.

Investing In Culture and Communication

The above comments raise an even more fundamental issue about the role of culture and communication in indigenous societies. Indigenous peoples communicate and transmit their traditional values through myths, stories, legends, folk tales, proverbs, art and other symbolic media. The oral transmission of culture is one of the defining characteristics of indigenous cultures and, in great measure, distinguishes it from the sorts of cultures which are transmitted through the printed word and electronic media. Culture for these people is a form of social capital which is guarded and invested for the benefit of future generations. It is for this reason that many indigenous peoples talk about their culture as a type of "wisdom" inherited from their ancestors.

Participatory development strategies should be based upon these traditional cultural means of transmitting knowledge and values. This is not to say that indigenous peoples are not interested in obtaining formal education, such as Western-style literacy and schooling. However, there is a large amount of research which demonstrates that such schooling is more effective when it includes instruction in both vernacular and national languages and when it is bi-cultural or multi-cultural in content (Dutcher 1994). Recent World Bank-funded education projects in Mexico and Viet Nam demonstrate the interest of national governments in incorporating native language instruction in their national educational programs and producing pedagogical materials in vernacular

languages. The success of such programs in both countries, however, will depend not only on the use of vernacular languages as the first language of instruction, but also on the capacity of government educational ministries to mobilize communities to cooperate with such programs (see Box 7).

Some indigenous organizations are also using radios and other electronic media to communicate with their indigenous constituencies. The use of electronic media is conceived by these indigenous organizations as a means of reinforcing rather than replacing their traditional modes of communication. In this sense, it differs greatly from the commercial use of radio, television and other media which often serves to integrate indigenous and other non-Western peoples into a Westernized "consumer culture."

Many people think that Western pedagogical techniques, such as formal lectures and workshops, are the only ways of communicating new ideas to non-Western peoples. This

attitude is reflected in conventional approaches to rural health, technology transfer and agricultural extension projects. This approach, however, may be limiting and ethnocentric. Other media, such as songs, drama, proverbs, story-telling, etc., may be more appropriate than these Western modes of communicating in an indigenous context (see Box 8).

Culturally-appropriate modes of communication are important ingredients in the design of consultation, development outreach and extension strategies. The production of materials in the vernacular languages, and the use of indigenous extension agents, are essential for the communication and introduction of new ideas and technologies in an indigenous context. Development practitioners need to give more attention to the overall issue of culturally-appropriate communication strategies, which may be one of the most important ingredients in successful participatory development projects.

Box 7

Community Participation in Bilingual Education

Education in indigenous and tribal societies is self-initiated, self-directed and non-formal; i.e., it often takes place in the family, household compound or village and is directed toward the enculturation of local values and traditions. Formal schooling, even if done in vernacular languages, necessitates community ownership and participation to be successful.

In Viet Nam, ethnic Vietnamese constitute the bulk of the population. There are, however, 53 ethnic minorities that live mostly in the mountain areas. The World Bank-funded Primary Education Project (approved in 1993) contains a special Ethnic Minorities Education Component which will finance a comprehensive package of educational inputs to children in selected ethnic minorities. This package consists of policy measures, pedagogical activities, provision for physical facilities and institution building. It is premised upon the intimate and crucial relationship between language and ethnic identity. To implement the component, existing provincial and local-level committees will be involved in teacher training, textbook production and maintenance of local schools.

Similarly, in the Second Primary Education Project in Mexico (approved in 1994), the use of bilingual school teachers and pedagogical materials in the vernacular languages is combined with a strong element of community participation. Such participation is linked to the country's overall poverty alleviation program, and includes the involvement of community committees, Municipal Education Councils, parent's associations and School Councils.

Sources: Staff Appraisal Report for the Primary Education Project in Viet Nam; Staff Appraisal Report for the Second Primary Education Project in Mexico.

Box 8

New Roles for Traditional Forms of Communication

Relatively few development agencies have understood the power of traditional forms of communication.

In West Africa, for example, so-called "talking drums" were never recognized or accepted by colonial administrators as genuine forms of communication. To the contrary, the use of talking drums was actively suppressed; and, in some cases, they ended up in museums so Westerners could view them as examples of "exotic" or "primitive" art. Today, African scholars argue that these drums are sacred objects which do and can play an important role in the transmission of indigenous knowledge, history and values, and hence promote the development process. Some of these drums can be heard at a distance of 40 kilometers. Among Akan of Ghana and the Ivory Coast, the texts produced by these drums record historical events, important personalities, institutional arrangements and fundamental beliefs about living people and their ancestors.

To take another example, among Bhils and other tribal peoples in the Narmada Valley of India, highly ritualized chanting sessions are used to discuss issues and create consensus within the group. At the height of the Sardar Sarovar dam controversy, both sides used such ritual chanting to convince villagers of the truth of their positions. Thus, during the heated arguments with resettlement officers surrounding the allocation of lands to eldest sons in addition to the land that their father's would receive, the chants would begin, "Are you happy? Are you feeling okay?," to which the response in the tribal languages would be, "Not so much our major sons!"

Sources: Opoku (1994); personal communication from Maninder Gill (ASTHR).

Strengthening Indigenous Capacity and Institutions

Participatory development with indigenous peoples implies both the use of indigenous institutions and organizations, and the strengthening of their capacity to deal with new challenges and situations. The latter includes the strengthening of the local capacity of indigenous peoples to solve their own problems and define their own course of development. Government agencies and NGOs can assist in this area by providing indigenous peoples with training in such basic skills as numeracy, accounting, management, project design and budgeting. They can also provide technical assistance in such diverse areas as topography and land demarcation, forestry and natural resource management, agriculture, trade and marketing, community health care, and educational planning.

Again, using existing indigenous knowledge and skills as the basis of capacity strengthening is the best approach. For example, indigenous peoples often possess a sophisticated knowledge of the medicinal properties of plants, and traditional healers play an important role in maintaining the health of local populations. Building the local capacity of indigenous communities to maintain their own health-care systems demands both a respect for their traditional knowledge and healing systems, and the introduction of new skills and procedures based upon Western medical knowledge and public health practices. Recently, there has been a surge of interest in promoting and strengthening these traditional health and medical systems.⁶

Indigenous peoples are also interested in strengthening and improving their traditional systems of land use and natural resource management. For example, in April 1994, the

World Bank supported a workshop organized by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN-Regional Office for Southern Africa) and the Africa 2000 Network on the subject of "Methodology and Tools for Researching Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Southern Africa." The workshop brought together representatives of NGOs from ten southern African countries to discuss methodologies and strategies for incorporating indigenous environmental knowledge into natural resource management and rural development programs. Following the workshop, each of the conference participants returned to their respective countries to organize small research projects which will train village organizers in the collection of such data. The results of this research were discussed at a follow-up workshop in South Africa in April 1995, after which a regional network on indigenous knowledge was formed. The long-term goal of this program is to convince governments of the usefulness of incorporating indigenous environmental knowledge and institutions in the design and implementation of rural conservation and development programs (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources 1994).

Capacity strengthening also means cooperating with indigenous peoples in defining their own development strategies. The issue is complicated because indigenous peoples are often given conflicting signals from outsiders about what types of assistance or development projects are "best" for their organizations and communities. Like other populations, indigenous peoples may have a "development vision" which is not articulated, or they may consist of different groups who have differing views about their development needs, preferences and priorities. Furthermore, the preferences of indigenous communities and organizations change through time, depending upon external or internal factors. Capacity strengthening means obtaining the skills to analyze and evaluate different development paths or

options and ensuring that those which are chosen actually contribute to indigenous values and welfare.

The choice of which development path and projects to pursue should arise out of a process of internal discussion and planning among indigenous peoples, rather than from outside agencies. In this way, indigenous peoples can truly determine their own development, rather than always being subject to the whims of governments, missionaries, donors or NGOs (see Box 9).

The best experiences with capacity strengthening have come from exchanges among indigenous peoples themselves. For example, a number of local workshops have been held in Latin American countries in which indigenous peoples from different tribes and linguistic groups exchange experiences about land protection, mapping and natural resource management. NGOs have played an important role in facilitating these exchanges and many of them have been financed by international foundations and donor agencies (Denniston 1994).

Financing Indigenous Development

Participatory development with indigenous peoples, as with other communities or groups, demands financing. This issue has been left to the end of the exposition because there are so many matters which need to be addressed prior to the financing of indigenous development projects. Within the international donor community, as well as among national governments, there has been a tendency to "throw money" at indigenous communities, without systematically setting the groundwork in terms of participation, consultation, institutional development, capacity strengthening and cultural communication. Therefore, some people have argued that at this stage the real funding needs of most indigenous organizations and communities are for capacity strengthening and pre-investment activities, rather than necessarily for financing actual projects.⁷

Box 9
Investing in Capacity Strengthening

Many observers are beginning to recognize that promoting training and capacity strengthening may be one of the best investments for the long-term economic development of indigenous communities. For example, the World Bank's Latin America and Caribbean Region's Environment Unit (LATEN), in collaboration with the Hemispheric Indigenous Peoples Fund in La Paz, Bolivia, has launched a regional indigenous training program, the purposes of which are to assist indigenous organizations in (a) defining their own development strategies and proposals; (b) strengthening their institutional structures in areas such as personnel management, training programs, budgeting and finances; and, (c) improving their negotiating skills to finance their own development proposals.

The program is financed through grants to government agencies and/or indigenous organizations from the World Bank's Institutional Development Fund (IDF) and with counterpart contributions from these agencies and organizations. Thus far, programs have been designed or are under preparation in Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru. Each training program contains a consulting seminar, a series of workshops, a monitoring and evaluation system and an evaluation seminar. Many of the seminars take place in the regions where indigenous peoples live, and all of them focus upon indigenous values, cultures and philosophies, as well as modern management and development planning skills.

Sources: Davis and Partridge (1994); Gonzalez (1994).

Furthermore, the effectiveness of funding depends upon whether it is controlled by indigenous peoples themselves. Many of the first generation World Bank projects with indigenous peoples, for example, tended to allocate funds to national government agencies, which are responsible for promoting indigenous development and managing indigenous affairs. Typically, these projects increased the amount of staff, vehicles and infrastructure available to the indigenous affairs departments, but did little to better the conditions of indigenous peoples. In fact, analyses of the budgets of some projects showed that while government agencies expanded, the direct benefits to indigenous communities were relatively limited. This was particularly true in the case of Brazil, where the World Bank promoted large investments in increasing the staff and infrastructure of the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) but with minimal results in such important areas as natural resources protection, indigenous health and community economic development.⁸

Hence, the challenges are: (a) to prepare indigenous communities and organizations to

manage and use funds effectively (i.e., in terms of the peoples' actual needs and values); and, (b) to ensure that those funds go directly to them. Sometimes intermediaries, such as non-indigenous NGOs or government agencies, will be needed, but the long-range goal should be the control and management of funds by indigenous peoples themselves. In such countries as Bolivia and Colombia, recent legislation relating to popular participation and decentralized control and administration of public services, has actually begun to channel government funds directly to indigenous communities.

Some of the experiences of the World Bank and other institutions with what is called "group-based lending" also have particular relevance to financing development projects with indigenous or tribal peoples. The theory behind such lending is that groups rather than individuals are responsible for protecting against default in loan repayments, and that the trustworthiness of the members of these groups, rather than land or some other asset, serves as the collateral for loans. This theory of joint liability is fundamental to the moral principles and

social sanctions which underlie many indigenous or tribal societies. Therefore, group-lending schemes (especially in South Asia) have proven to be quite adaptable to the development finance needs of poor indigenous populations, especially indigenous or tribal women.⁹

These group-based lending schemes, like others which provide direct funding to the rural poor, challenge the traditional power relations which are often the cause of persistent poverty and backwardness among indigenous and other rural populations. Money lenders, wealthy landowners and other persons who have traditionally exploited local villagers find themselves without clients; men are challenged by new sources of wealth and power in the hands of women; and, bureaucrats and politicians no longer can control communities through the delivery of patronage. Providing funds directly to the poor, whether they be indigenous peoples or not, is a form of "empowerment" which can, under certain political and social circumstances, transform the power relations in a local village, region, or inter-

ethnic situation. In some cases, however, it can lead to a political backlash or social conflicts which may not have been envisioned when such programs were designed (see Box 10).

Direct financing to indigenous communities and organizations poses special challenges in terms of the procedures of international donor agencies such as the World Bank. For example, many of the complicated procurement and contracting regulations which exist for internationally-financed development projects may need to be modified or waived when indigenous or other poor communities are the direct recipients of funds. Similarly, the standards and paper work required for supervising and evaluating such projects may need to be modified. Indigenous communities and organizations, like other recipients of donor funds, should be held accountable and maintain transparent records of their projects. But, there may be a need to modify the procedures followed by donor agencies when resources are being channeled directly to indigenous communities.¹⁰

Box 10

Decentralized Authority and Indigenous Finance

Providing direct financing to indigenous peoples or other poor segments of society is a form of empowerment which challenges traditional power relations and forms of authority.

A case in point is Mexico where, in 1988, the government's National Indigenist Institute (INI) introduced a special revolving credit fund program for indigenous peoples as part of the government's overall poverty alleviation program. The credit program provided funds to regional networks of indigenous organizations who, in turn, lent the money at low interest rates to indigenous farmer groups, fishing cooperatives, artisan groups and land-holding associations for small-scale village development projects. Eventually, the credit funds were to become autonomous entities, with their own management councils and bank accounts not under INI's tutelage.

In the state of Oaxaca, the INI program functioned relatively well during its initial years of operation, because it was not opposed by the state governor and it was supported by many of the state's municipal mayors. However, in the neighboring state of Chiapas, where there is less of a tradition of state support for indigenous development, and much greater control by the state political apparatus, it has encountered difficulties. The state governor attacked the program, arguing that it created an unacceptable parallel source of funding outside of his government's control. Just at the point when the program was about to take off, the governor accused some of the INI personnel of misusing funds. Although these accusations were never substantiated, the governor did jail the state-level director of the agency and some of its most active personnel.

Source: Fox (1994).

4. The Role of the World Bank

What can the World Bank do to promote indigenous participation in the development process? Obviously, one thing which the World Bank can do is to ensure that the projects which it finances do not adversely affect the capacity of indigenous peoples to participate in development. Since its first policy statement on indigenous peoples (1982), the World Bank has been aware of the potentially damaging effects of poorly planned development projects on indigenous peoples' lands, resources and health. It also introduced mandatory Environmental Assessment (EA) procedures in 1989 which, if done correctly, can help to identify potential social and cultural impacts on indigenous peoples early in the project cycle and lead to their prevention or reduction through changes in project designs or the implementation of mitigation plans.

Similarly, the World Bank's revised indigenous policy (1991) calls for the mitigation of potentially adverse effects through the mandating of Indigenous Peoples Development Plans (IPDPs). In all these cases, the informed and active participation of indigenous peoples is necessary to ensure the adequacy of EA studies and the acceptability to indigenous peoples of IPDPs. Systematic forms of consultations with indigenous peoples are fundamental to the utility and success of these studies and plans.

But, what about the broader issue of participation — that is, the right of indigenous peoples to participate in and benefit from the development process? This is an important question, especially if the major goal of the World Bank's policy toward indigenous peoples — as well as other poor populations — is to move from the

prevention and mitigation of the negative impacts of development interventions to creating positive and culturally acceptable developmental outcomes.

The World Bank can play a potentially important role in this area by convincing governments to create an adequate policy, legal and planning framework (e.g., in the areas of land, natural resource rights, education and governance) that respects indigenous peoples and enables them to participate as distinct peoples in the development process. Here, it is important for the World Bank to discuss more candidly with its borrowers what positive attributes indigenous peoples bring to the development process, e.g., in the areas of environmental knowledge, livelihood strategies, traditional forms of social organization and governance, and perhaps most importantly, moral concerns and spiritual values.

The World Bank can also play a vital role by more systematically sharing its experiences in this area (even when they have not been successful) with other actors, such as national governments, other donor agencies and NGOs. There is relatively little known about how to do participatory development with indigenous peoples, and perhaps the World Bank could serve as a clearinghouse in generating more dialogue, discussion and empirical case materials on this vital issue.

Finally, the World Bank can assist indigenous peoples themselves by supporting their initiatives through capacity building and technical assistance. When conditions permit, it can also provide financing to indigenous development

efforts, either directly to indigenous organizations and communities, for example through group-lending arrangements, or through intermediaries such as indigenous NGOs or responsible government agencies. By convincing its borrowers to invest in indigenous peoples development, the World Bank can play a vital role in remedying what in many cases are centuries of historical discrimination, marginalization and neglect.

Indigenous peoples, as stated in the introduction, have historically been at the losing end of the development process and they are today the "poorest of the poor" in many

developing countries. From the point of view of the World Bank and its Member Countries, promoting the participation of indigenous peoples makes good economic as well as social and environmental sense. Poverty alleviation strategies must take into account the unique or specific needs and cultures of indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups which comprise the population of a country. Furthermore, the international community is coming to recognize the rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral lands and natural resources, and the important role of their environmental knowledge in the design of more sustainable development paths.

Notes

1. For discussions of these international instruments and policies, cf. Alfredsson and de Zayas (1993), Eide (1993), Hitchcock (1994), Stavenhagen (1990, 1992) and van de Fliert (1994).
2. For further information on issues relating to the definition and sociological criteria for identifying indigenous peoples, see Annex 2.
3. Cf. the interesting discussions of economic development experiences among Native Americans in Canada and the United States in the special edition of *Akwe:kon Journal* (Brascoupe 1992).
4. Cf. the interesting discussion of intellectual property rights issues surrounding indigenous knowledge in Greaves (1994).
5. Draft guidelines for social assessment are contained in the ENVSP document, *Social Assessment: Incorporating Participation and Social Analysis into the Bank's Operational Work* (10 May 1994). A comprehensive reference list on social assessment is available from ENVSP.
6. Recent projects from Mexico, Nigeria and Viet Nam in which indigenous medicinal knowledge is being incorporated into rural health programs with the participation of traditional healers are described in Davis and Ebbe (1995).
7. Roberto Haudry, an economist with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), has argued the case for such pre-investment and organizational strengthening programs based upon his experience with IFAD-funded projects among indigenous groups in the Andean and Amazon regions of South America (cf. the comments by Haudry in Davis and Ebbe 1995).
8. Cf. the Project Completion Reports for the Bank-funded Carajas Iron Ore and Railway Project and Northwest Amazon Regional Development Program, both of which contained special Amerindian components.
9. For further information, cf. the section on "Group-Based Financial Systems," which contains several examples of schemes from South Asia, some of which are in tribal areas, in the *World Bank Participation Sourcebook* (World Bank 1995).
10. For more information on this topic, cf. the study of procurement and disbursement issues in Bank-financed projects which contain community participation by Gopal and Marc (1994).

Annex 1 Geographical Distribution of the World's Indigenous Peoples

Region	Sub-region	Population
Africa	1. West and North Africa	8
	2. Horn of Africa and East Africa	6
	3. Central Africa, i.e. Mbuti (Pygmies)	0,2
	4. Southern Africa, i.e. San (Bushmen)	0,1
Asia	5. Middle East and West Asia	10
	6. Arabian peninsula	5
	7. Central Asia	27
	8. South Asia	51
	9. East Asia	67
	10. Southeast Asian mainland	15
Australia	11. Southeast Asian archipelago	15
	12. Australia	0,25
Pacific	13. New Zealand	0,3
	14. Melanesia	6,5
	15. Polynesia and Micronesia	8,5
Arctic	16. Arctic	0,18
America	17. North America	3,5
	18. Central America	13,0
	19. South American highland	19,5
	20. South American lowland	1,0

Source: Soeftestad (1995)

Note 1: The regions and sub-regions are demarcated based on a number of criteria. The same set of criteria cannot be applied to all situations. The various sub-regions can be broken down into smaller units for more detailed analysis. The regions used in this table do not coincide with the term "region" as used in the World Bank.

Note 2: Population figures are given in millions. Several of the figures are conservative estimates.

Note 3: Sub-regions nos. 1-4 include basically only pastoralists and hunter and gatherers, and this view is increasingly being challenged. Sub-region no. 5 includes Kurds, Palestinians and various peoples in Afghanistan. The sources are especially inconsistent and confusing regarding this region, and the figure given here is very uncertain. Sub-region no. 16 covers Inuit in Alaska and Canada, Saami in North Europe and various peoples in North Asia. Sub-region no. 17 covers Indians in the United States of America as well as in Canada. Sub-region no. 18 includes Mexico and the Caribbean.

Annex 2 Criteria for Identifying Indigenous Peoples

Introduction

This annex discusses various definitions used within the UN system and the World Bank for identifying indigenous peoples. As will be noted below, the definitional issue is plagued by historical complexities and ambiguities and it is probably impossible to arrive at a definition of "indigenous peoples" that will be acceptable to all parties and operational in all countries and settings. Therefore, rather than seek a single definition, it is proposed here that the World Bank, and perhaps other development agencies, use a set of sociological criteria — briefly described in the last section of the annex — for identifying indigenous peoples and other vulnerable social and cultural groups in particular regions and countries.

UN and ILO Definitions

The concept of "indigenous peoples," like that of "ethnic" or "cultural minorities," is the subject of intense controversy within the UN system. The United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, for example, spent more than two decades seeking an internationally acceptable definition of "cultural minorities" without success.

When the Sub-Commission began to look at the subject of "indigenous peoples," the Rapporteur assigned to investigate the subject came up with a proposal for a definition which was limited to "communities, peoples and nations... having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies." This definition

applied to the indigenous peoples of the Americas, but also to Australia and the Pacific.

The proposal, however, was only accorded the status of a "working definition" within the UN system. Recognizing the difficulties of obtaining consensus on the subject, the Sub-Commission's Working Group on Indigenous Populations (established in 1982) formulated a Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (in 1993) without proposing a formal definition of the peoples it covered.

The International Labour Organization (ILO), in its Convention 169 (1989), makes a distinction between "tribal" and "indigenous" peoples. The former refers to peoples "whose social, cultural and economic condition distinguish them from other sections of the national community and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs and traditions or special laws or regulations." The latter includes peoples "who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country at the time of conquest or colonization."

Interestingly, much of the debate which took place at the ILO in formulating Convention 169 had less to do with the term "indigenous" than it had to do with the term "peoples" which has very specific connotations in international law in terms of "self-determination." This became a point of great contention between the small number of indigenous delegates and observers at the Convention drafting meetings and the ILO and government delegates.

The World Bank's Definitions

The World Bank in its initial policy of 1982 used the term "tribal people" to cover relatively "isolated" and "un-aculturated" peoples. In its revised policy of 1991, however, the World Bank used the term "indigenous peoples" to describe a broader spectrum of social groups (including "indigenous ethnic minorities," "tribal groups" and "scheduled tribes") who possess "a social and cultural identity distinct from the dominant society that makes them vulnerable in the development process."

Rather than proposing a formal definition of who these social groups are, the World Bank's 1991 policy recognizes the great variability in the ways in which national legislation identifies indigenous peoples and the differing social and economic contexts in which indigenous peoples are found. It lists five characteristics for identifying indigenous peoples within particular geographic areas. These are:

- (a) a close attachment to ancestral territories and to the natural resources in these areas;
- (b) self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group;
- (c) an indigenous language, often different from the national language;
- (d) presence of customary social and political institutions; and
- (e) primarily subsistence-oriented production.

In suggesting the above criteria, the World Bank also recognized that it would be difficult to apply them in all national and social contexts. Therefore, it warned its Task Managers to "exercise judgment" and to seek specialized sociological and anthropological expertise in determining to which populations the World Bank's policy applied.

Country and Regionally Specific Criteria

Since the issuing of the 1991 policy, it has become clear to anthropologists within the World Bank that there needs to be a much more sociologically nuanced approach toward identifying which groups the Bank's policy applies to, especially in regions such as Asia and Africa where large parts of the population consider themselves to be "indigenous."

Hence, the World Bank is now seeking more regional and country-specific ways of identifying those social and cultural groups which should be considered under its policy. It is also using newly developed Social Assessment and Geographical Information System (GIS) techniques to identify particularly vulnerable ethnic groups within specific country, and project contexts.

In an effort to aid these regional and country specific initiatives, the following criteria, based upon the 1991 policy directive as well as other discussions of the definitional problem, are proposed:

- (a) *Pre-existence*: the population is descendant of those people inhabiting an area prior to the arrival of another population.
- (b) *Non-dominance*: the population is differentiated in an economic, political and/or social sense from the dominant regional or national population.
- (c) *Cultural Difference*: the population speaks a different language and/or has different social customs and cultural practices.
- (d) *Self-identification*: the individual members of the population see themselves as possessing a distinct cultural identity and belonging to a distinct people or ethnic group.

In presenting these criteria, the intention is to highlight the historical, political and economic, socio-cultural and subjective aspects of inter-ethnic relations which determine the vulnerability of specific social and cultural groups or populations within the development process.

These criteria need to be applied carefully when adapted to concrete country and project contexts. The idea is that different historical

and social realities require different ways of assessing the relative importance of the criteria. The criteria can be used within the context of systematic Social Assessments to ensure that indigenous peoples and other ethnic or cultural minorities are not adversely affected by World Bank-funded projects and that they participate in and benefit from such development interventions.

Annex 3 Selected World Bank-Financed Projects With Indigenous or Tribal Peoples

The following is a partial list of currently active or recently approved Bank and GEF-financed projects which have special components, programs or action plans for indigenous or tribal peoples.

Africa Region

- Burkina Faso — Environmental Management Project
- Kenya — Protected Areas and Wildlife Services Project
- Mali — Natural Resources Management Project
- Tanzania — Forest Resources Management Project
- Uganda, GEF — Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and Mgahinga Gorilla National Park Conservation Project

East Asia and Pacific Region

- China — Basic Education in Poor and Minority Areas Project
- China — Southwest Poverty Reduction Project
- Indonesia — Third Community Health and Nutrition Project
- Lao PDR, GEF — Forestry Management and Conservation Project
- Philippines — Environmental Management Project SECAL
- Philippines, GEF — National Integrated Protected Area System
- Viet Nam — Primary Education Project

Middle East & North Africa Region

- Egypt — Matruh Natural Resource Management Project

South Asia Region

- India — Andhra Pradesh Forestry Project
- India — Maharashtra Forestry Project
- India — West Bengal Forestry Project
- India — Blindness and Cataract Control Project
- India — Primary Education Project
- India — Integrated Child Development Services Project
- India — Rubber Project
- India — Madhya Pradesh Forestry Project
- India — Tuberculosis Control Project
- India, GEF — India Ecodevelopment
- Pakistan — Balochistan Natural Resource Management Project
- Pakistan — Balochistan Minor Irrigation and Agricultural Development Project

Latin America & Caribbean Region

- Brazil — Mato Grosso Natural Resource Management Project
- Brazil — Rondonia Natural Resource Management Project
- Colombia — Natural Resource Management Project
- Guatemala — Basic Education Project
- Mexico — Decentralization and Regional Development Project
- Mexico — Second Primary Education Project
- Paraguay — Natural Resource Management Project

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