

## Terms of Reference for:

### **Training in Participatory Policy Research to PPA Research Partners**

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#### **1. Background**

Institutions committed to poverty alleviation must have ideas about why it occurs, why it persists and how it can be overcome to guide their work. Indeed, they have always operated on the basis of specific theories about poverty that reflect their understanding of cultural, social and economic realities.

Since the second half of the 1980s, public institutions have developed increasingly sophisticated multi-topic surveys as their preferred means to measure, analyse and learn about poverty. In contrast with single-topic surveys (such as Employment, Income and Expenditure Surveys), these multi-topic Household Surveys are designed to generate information on a wide range of issues intimately linked to household welfare. At the same time, private development aid institutions and, to a lesser extent, academic institutions were rapidly pioneering a “participatory approach” to developing information and understanding about poverty.

In their current forms, both methodologies involve poor people in the production of data. The primary difference between participatory and survey-based research is that the former systematically involves poor people in the *analysis* of its findings. It is this analysis, as much as the raw data, which is then synthesised to inform pro-poor policies.

Some of the advantages to Participatory Policy Research are obvious. First, data analysis does not depend on speculation by urban elites about the conditions poor people face. Instead, it is the result of poor people – the “everyday experts on poverty” – reflecting on, theorising about, debating and explaining the world in which they live in. Second, Participatory Policy Research contributes to social democratisation by engaging poor people in policymaking processes.

On the basis of these characteristics, the Government of Tanzania has decided to make Participatory Policy Research, in the form of Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs), a routine part of its Poverty Monitoring System.

The 1<sup>st</sup> PPA Cycle is slated to begin in January 2002 and will run through December 2003 (see Annex 1 for details).

The first component of the upcoming PPA Cycle is the provision of high-quality training in Participatory Policy Research to 24 “Research Partners” (i.e. field researchers) and 2 alternates.

Therefore, on behalf of the Research and Analysis Working Group and Implementing Consortium, the PPA Steering Committee is currently soliciting proposals from institutions capable of developing and delivering an appropriate Training Programme.

## **2. Training Needs**

PPA Research Partners will come from a variety of institution types, including national NGOs, international NGOs, research and academic institutions. Accordingly, they will have different levels of exposure to, previous involvement and formal training in field research. It is unlikely that any will have significant experience or training in Participatory Policy Research (PPR), as distinct from participatory planning methodologies (e.g. PRA). Therefore, a Training Needs Assessment should be conducted and a training programme subsequently developed in response to the real requirements of PPA Research Partners.<sup>1</sup> The resulting programme should build on trainees' current skills levels and challenge both experienced and relatively inexperienced Researchers.

This programme should be residential and probably incorporate the following:

### **A. Introduction to Participatory Policy Research**

Background reading should be provided to trainees and enlivened through critical, discursive:

- Consideration of what “research” is (with a focus on demystification) and is not
- Clarification of the differences between “data,” “information,” “knowledge” and “understanding”
- Exploration of the differences between “high” and “low” quality research in terms of (at the very least) reliability, thoroughness and usefulness
- Examination of the differences – in terms of philosophy, methods and quality – between conventional and participatory research methodologies
- Review of the National Poverty Monitoring System and the complimentary roles of diverse research and data types. This should probably include examples from around the world of how research – and participatory research, in particular – has informed and improved the formulation of pro-poor policies

By the end of this programme component, all trainees should be able to clearly explain the nature and relative strengths and weaknesses of participatory research to others (in language accessible to villagers and Government officials).

### **B. Introduction to Methods**

This training component should begin with an explanation of the difference between research “methodologies” and “methods.” Trainees should then be taught a variety of basic participatory research methods appropriate to rural and urban conditions in Tanzania. Specific methods should be selected in consultation with the PPA Management Team following elaboration of the Research Agenda (slated for late November/early December). These methods should be documented in a practical “Field Reference Manual” (drafted with input from the PPA Management Team) for Research Partners to take with them and use during PPA implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> Needs Assessment can be conducted through the use of a survey or individual interviews.

The theme for the 1<sup>st</sup> PPA Cycle is Vulnerability to Extreme Poverty. Therefore, Research Partners will have to work with some of the most difficult social groups to engage in participatory research processes. In order to do so, this training component should help Research Partners identify techniques *and develop strategies* to systematically ensure the representative inclusion of the most muted social groups.

It is less important that trainees are exposed to a large number of methods than it is that they learn how to use them – singly and in combination – to *analyse* an issue in depth and *corroborate/triangulate* findings. Neither these methods nor their progression should lead towards, or in any way suggest, participatory planning for local action since this is not the purpose of PPR and mixed-messages ensure misunderstanding, frustration and bitterness.

### **C. Report Writing**

Research Partners should be trained in report writing. This programme component should build trainees' capacity to identify what types of details to include in or exclude from daily and site reports.

It may be helpful for Research Partners to develop and agree on a reporting format at this time. The results would be translated into a "Field Note-book" providing standardised data collection and reporting formats.

### **D. Practicum**

Trainees should be split into Research Teams where they will develop, implement and then critique their own Work Plan using methods learnt during previous programme components.

It would, perhaps, be ideal if this practicum took place working with rural villagers. However, it is recognised that this may not be feasible.

The four components presented above may require some two weeks of intensive study and dynamic, applied group work.

The format and style of the Training Programme should be such that they build solidarity between Research Partners, trust in each others' good intentions and willingness to turn to one another for advice and support.

### **E. Work Plan Production**

Immediately after the formal Training Programme, the PPA Research Partners will develop Work Plans to guide them in the field. Though they will be sufficiently flexible to allow adaptation to situations encountered in the field, Work Plans will provide an infrastructure around which comparable research can be built.

The PPA Management Team will facilitate this activity with support from the PPR Trainer(s).

## **F. Mid-term Training Support**

A “Mid-term Training Programme” is envisaged to take place midway through field research. After visiting half their sites, Research Teams will return to Dar es Salaam for R&R and a week-long workshop analysing progress to date. It is expected that three days will be set aside for the review – and improvement, if necessary – of research methods.

Applicants should indicate whether or not their training proposal would include facilitating these activities.

## **3. Timeframe for Training**

A final timeframe for training will be determined at the first meeting of the PPA Technical Committee in early November. A tentative timeframe is as follows:

- Begin Training Programme Monday 21<sup>st</sup> January
- End Training Programme Friday 1<sup>st</sup> February
- Develop Work Plans from 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> February
- Mid-term Training Support (approximately) 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> April

## **4. Profile of Training Institution/Trainer(s)**

Both institutions and individuals are encouraged to submit proposals to provide PPR Training. The strongest candidates will have:

- Sophisticated theoretical understanding of participatory research
- Experience conducting participatory research
- Experience training others in participatory research methods
- Experience developing comprehensive training and reference materials
- Experience managing logistics for a residential training programme

## **5. Proposals**

Concise proposals of no more than ten pages should be submitted by Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> November to:

The PPA Steering Committee  
c/o REPOA  
P.O. Box 33223  
Dar es Salaam

Electronic copies can be sent to:  
The PPA Steering Committee  
c/o CharlesEhrhart@auberon.org

Proposals should include:

- A well-developed outline for the Training Programme
- A thorough explanation of the trainer(s) experience and qualifications
- A list of services to be provided (e.g. training only, training and accommodation) and their cost (by line item)

Collaborative proposals from trainers/institutions working together are welcome.

**Preparatory Year**

<b>Dates:</b>	September 2001	October	November	December
<b>Activities:</b>	Preparation for 1 <sup>st</sup> T-PPAP Cycle			

**Year 1**

<b>Dates:</b>	January 2002	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
<b>Activities:</b>	Research Team Training & Work Plan Preparation		Fieldwork				Production of National and other Reports					

**Year 2**

<b>Dates:</b>	January 2003	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
<b>Activities:</b>	Dissemination, Communication & Pro-poor Support to Policy Processes						Continuing Support (as necessary) to Policy Processes Preparation for 2 <sup>nd</sup> T-PPAP Cycle					