

Participation, Civil Society Organizations and Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses participatory approaches to sustainable development and the roles of civil society organizations (CSOs) in fostering these approaches. There are at least three streams of thought in sustainable development. They are: (1) Linking environmental degradation with poverty, aiming at alleviating poverty in the South while regenerating the natural environment or at least without degrading it further; (2) Incorporating various dimensions of development, trying to integrate multiple facets of sustainability; and (3) Considering the earth's carrying capacity and promoting development within the limit. Sustainable development means that each of the three different concepts is integrated and achieved at all levels of the international community. Participation can be classified into four steps: Information sharing; Consultation; Shared control over decisions; Initiating action. In promoting participation both widely and effectively, the importance of CSOs, which includes both non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs), is highlighted. Within this framework, there are five participatory approaches to sustainable development: PRA Technique Approach; Group-Formation Approach; Building on Existing People's Organizations Approach; Policy-Level Approach; and Development/Environmental Education Approach. Experts and organizations, whether governments, NGOs, POs, or international organizations that foster any kind of participatory approach to sustainable development need to recognize the whole picture of both participation and sustainable development, understanding where their particular approach is located in this overall picture, in order to increase interactions, information exchange and collaboration among each approach. International organizations are in an ideal position to foster this coordination, in cooperation with active CSOs throughout the world.

Introduction

"Sustainable development", "participation" and "civil society organizations (CSOs)" and/or "non-governmental organizations (NGOs)" are "frequently-used" key concepts in contemporary development studies and practices. "Sustainable development" has begun to be widely recognized since the middle of 1980's, especially after the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) published *Our Common Future* in 1987. However, it is a complicated and tricky phrase due to its comprehensive characteristics. Some people use the concept as sustainable

"economic growth", others understand the phrase as sustainable "environmental conservation". The phrase is also sometimes used to refer to a sustainability of development "project" itself. Because of these varied usage, "sustainable development" is often an unclear and confusing concept, meaning different things as used by different experts.

Since the 1970's, some development experts have stressed the importance of "participation" in development, and a number of donors as well as recipient countries have expressed their support for promoting participatory approaches to development. However, just what participation means and how participation can actually be realized in development efforts are vague and ill-defined. Wider recognition of massive environmental degradation has led to call for participation as an essential tool to foster environmental protection. But here, too, there is lack of clarity as to how participation could be an effective vehicle for promoting ecological conservation in practice.

Due to the vagueness of these two concepts, there is need at the present time for clear answers to the following questions: (1) Just what is "sustainable development"?; (2) What is "participation" or participatory approaches to development?; (3) How could "participation" be realized in development practice?; and (4) What are "participatory approaches" and how can they contribute to achieving of sustainable development?

One of the keys to understanding these concepts and to promoting both sustainable development and participation lies in the roles which civil society organizations (CSOs) can play. In general, CSOs includes both people's organizations (POs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), POs are voluntary, autonomous and democratically controlled institutions, including: traditional community councils; informal groups; cooperatives; rural workers' organizations and peasant unions; women's associations, etc. (FAO, 1992: 4). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines POs as:

democratic organizations that represent the interest of their members and are accountable to them. They are formed by people who know each other, or who share a common experience, and their continued existence does not depend upon outside initiative or funding. In developing countries, many of them are small, locally based and loosely established. But they need not be confined to the grass roots--they can spread upwards and outwards from the local to the regional and national level, representing networks of community groups, or professional groups or trade unions (UNDP, 1993: 84).

UNDP also define what NGOs are :

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can be defined as voluntary organizations that work with and very often on behalf of others. Their work and their activities are focused on issues and people beyond their own staff and membership. NGOs often have close links with people's organizations,

channelling technical advice or financial support as intermediate service organizations (UNDP, 1993: 84-85).

An understanding of the different characteristics of POs and NGOs is crucial, as they give each type of organization a different way of functioning and financing itself. First, POs are organizations whose members are both providers and recipients of the services by the organizations, whereas the recipients of the services provided by NGOs are not identical with the NGOs themselves in their role as suppliers. A second consideration is that POs are, in principle, financed by the members themselves, while NGOs are often dependent upon outside finance. Third, there are some POs established by government and in this case, they are politically less self-reliant and democratically less controlled, whereas many NGOs are politically independent of government, or sometimes are even anti-governmental in nature. Nonetheless, it should be noted that "[t]he distinction between the two is not rigid--many groups could reasonably fall into either category" (UNDP, 1993: 85).

In terms of the actual working relationship between POs and NGOs, UNDP explains as follows:

Most NGOs work with, and through, people's organizations, offering financial and other support. The links can be established in different ways. In much of Africa, NGOs usually provide assistance to existing people's organizations. In Bangladesh and India, the NGOs often take the initiative to form new people's organizations. In Latin America, both approaches are common (UNDP, 1993: 87).

With these considerations in mind, this paper will explore the origin and the transition of the concept of "sustainable development". In Chapter II, the concept and the level of "participation" will be examined. Thereafter, the paper will summarize five major streams of participatory approaches to development (Chapter III: PRA techniques; Chapter IV: Group-Formation; Chapter V: Existing People's Organizations; Chapter VI: Policy-Level; and Chapter VII: Development/Environmental Education), outlining both the theory and the methodology of each approach and showing how each approach seeks to promote participation in efforts toward sustainable development. At the same time, the paper will seek to identify shortcomings of each approach and propose a direction towards environmentally sustainable development from a participation standpoint.

It is hoped that this paper will contribute to greater understanding of the concept of sustainable development and show how sustainable development can be achieved by enlisting the participation of civil society organizations.

I. The Concept of Sustainable Development

In order to understand this concept of "sustainable development" clearly, it will be helpful and meaningful to trace how it was originated and developed. This exercise will clarify what sustainable development is about, making it easier to explore the linkage between participatory approaches and sustainable development thereafter.

Exploratory activity which led to the formation of the concept of sustainable development began in the mid-1980's, spurred by two major realities facing humankind, i.e., perpetual poverty and massive environmental degradation world-wide. Poverty in the South is one of the horrendous predicaments prevailing in the contemporary world. More than one billion people in the world are living in poverty and over 600 million people are destitute (World Bank, 1990: 1). The World Food Summit held in 1996 revealed the total number of 840 million people in the world are starving due to lack of food. Indeed, more than 35,000 young children have died from malnutrition and infection every day from 1982 to the present day. Regardless of the enormous efforts for development of southern countries in the last 50 years, the situation has been getting worse. For example, the income gap ratio between the rich and the poor has been expanding from 30: 1 in 1960 to 59: 1 in 1989 (UNDP, 1992). The volume of external debts of southern nations continues to increase, making it impossible for some governments to even pay the interest on its debt.

Furthermore, in the world today we have begun to recognize not only "local-specific" environmental problems such as pollution, but also many forms of "global" environmental degradation: the depletion of the ozone layer; climate change; deforestation; acid rain; extinction of biospecies, etc. Table 1 on the next page summarizes a part of world-wide environmental deterioration. Since the 1980's, these facts about global ecological degradation have led many scientists and academics to realize how serious the deterioration is for human society both in the present and in the future.

Origin and Transition of "Sustainable Development"

(1) The Origin of the Concept: Linking Environmental Degradation with Poverty

These unprecedented changes in the natural environment as well as the unsolved problems of poverty have forced the international community to consider not only environmental problems seriously, but also its implications for the poor, and led to the establishment of the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) in 1984. After a three-year intensive discussion, the

Table 1: Global Environmental Degradation, its Impacts, and Main Causes

Type of Global Environmental Degradation	Major Impacts	Main Causes	Main degrades/polluters
Depletion of the Ozone Layer	- "1-2-3" rule ¹ : Increasing skin cancer and cataracts; - Lowering immune systems and food production; - If the layer is completely depleted, which could be happened, no one can survive on the earth.	- Emission of CFCs & HCFCs; - Emission of Halons; - Emission of Methyl chloroform & bromide.	Developed countries The rich
Global Warming	- Deteriorating eco-system; - Accelerating desertification; - Decreasing food production; - Sea-level rise, leading to the end of 36 islands, coastal low-land countries in 100 years; - Secret of Antarctica. ²	- Emission of CO ₂ ; - Emission of other "green house" gases, such as CFCs, PFC & SF ₆ .	Developed countries The rich
Deforestation	- Losing world forests 10 times as faster as they recover; - Lost 76 % of the indigenous forests; - Accelerating global warming, extinction of biospecies, and desertification; - Water shortage - Food shortage.	- Commercial timber cuttings; - Overgrazing to produce meat for export to developed countries; - Expanding cash crop farming for export to developed countries; - Fuel-woods consumption.	Developed countries Developing countries
Acid Rain	- Acidifying soils and lakes; - Deteriorating eco-system; - Accelerating extinction of species and deforestation; - Harming human health.	- Emission of NO _x , SO _x .	Developed countries The rich
Extinction of Biospecies	- More than 50,000 species a year; - Deteriorating eco-system; - Lowering "human life power" (i.e. increase of HIV, cancer, allergy etc.).	- Over-development; - Deforestation; - Agrochemicals	Developed countries The rich
Population Explosion (Contributor to global environmental degradation)	B.C. 1 mil: 1 million 10000: 10 A.C. 0: 100 1000: 200 1500: 500 1800: 1000 1900: 1500 1990: 5500 2050: 10000 million - Perpetuating poverty; - Food shortage.	- Break-down of self-reliant economies; - Introduction of cash(-crop) economies; - Trade with developed countries;	Developed countries The rich

1 When the ozone layer decreases by 1%, the volume of ultraviolet rays B (UV-B) increases by 2%, thereby the negative impacts such as skin cancer, cataracts and lowering immune systems increase by 3%. At the present time, 10% decrease of the ozone layer on average is observed not only in the southern but also in the northern hemisphere.

2 This is one of the key issues on climate change, since the potential impact is enormous. The details are explained in the IPCC Report 1995, and in Takagi (1994, 1995a, 1995b).

Commission reached the conclusion, in a report entitled *Our Common Future*, that we must "aim for sustainable development". According to the Commission,

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts: a) the concept of "needs", in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and b) the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs (WCED, 1987: 43).

There are many implications in this report, but two points are especially emphasized: (1) there is a close linkage between the world's poor and environmental degradation; and (2) if the present approach to development continues, it must be made more ecologically sound. Therefore, the original meaning of "sustainability" was neither "economic" sustainability *per se*, nor "project" sustainability, but rather "environmental" sustainability, coupling its relationship with the world poor.

Southern nations have especially been placing stress on the importance of poverty alleviation, since they regard poverty as both a cause and a result of environmental deterioration. The natural environment is extremely important for rural people in the South. The environment not only provides daily food and energy but also it is their work place (Umahashi, 1990: 40 and 44). But at the same time, those who are poor and hungry often destroy their immediate environment in order to survive: they cut down too much of the forest; they allow their livestock to overgraze grasslands; and they overuse marginal lands (UNICEF, 1989: 10). As a result, these people lose their basis for living, then further devastate their environment over and over in order to ride out the situation.

In *Our Common Future*, the notion of environmental degradation due to poverty gives first priority to poverty alleviation in pursuing sustainable development. However, the full extent of ecological deterioration due to poverty in the South was not clearly understood when the report was published in 1987.

(2) The Refinement of the Concept: Incorporating Various Dimensions of Development

There has been much discussion pertaining to sustainable development after the Commission's report was published. The concept has been construed differently by different groups and experts. As previously mentioned, those who are primarily concerned with economic and industrial development understand sustainable development as a means to achieve "economic prosperity", while to environmentalists it means "environmental sustainability".

This discussions of sustainable development from different perspectives has led to

refining of the concept, i.e. recognition of various dimensions of development and sustainability. For instance, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) regards sustainable development as an integration of five pillars of sustainability: economic; social; political; cultural; and environmental sustainabilities (CIDA, 1991). The World Bank has developed a similar definition of the concept, dividing sustainable development into four inter-related components: social; human; man-made; and natural capitals (Serageldin, 1995). FAO defines sustainable development as:

the management and conservation of the natural resource base, and the orientation of technological and institutional change, in such a manner as to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations. Such sustainable development conserves land, water, plant and animal genetic resources, is environmentally non-degrading, technically-appropriate, economically viable and socially acceptable (FAO, 1992a: 7).

Through this process of discussion and analyses from various angles, the original definition of sustainable development formulated by the Brundtland Commission has been refined and expanded to include its comprehensive characteristics.

(3) A New Horizon of "Sustainable Development": The Earth's Carrying Capacity

There has been another attempt made to understand the concept. That is a focus on analyzing the degree of seriousness of contemporary global ecological deterioration from a "super-macro" standpoint. This endeavour was undertaken because neither the Brundtland Commission nor other agencies dealing with sustainable development had fully grasped the magnitude of the critical situation created by global environmental problems and the extent of the seriousness of environmental degradation caused by poverty in the South. Table 1, shown above, provides information on some aspects of this situation. However, recent studies have sought to estimate the degree of ecological deterioration at the global level by measuring human's impacts on the earth from a macro perspective.

As of 1999, there are 6 billion people in the world. Among them, 5 billion are the poor, primarily living in the South. These poor people consume minimum natural resources and create minimum wastes in meeting their basic human needs (let us put the degree as "1"). The rest of the population, 1 billion people, are the rich, predominantly living in the North. These people, in their consumption of resources, creating roughly 100 times more waste on the planet than the poor does. Consequently,

$$5 \times 1 + 1 \times 100 = 105 \text{ billion}$$

This means that on the earth as a whole there is consumption and waste occurring in

an amount equal to 105 billion people (Takagi, 1995b).

Now, just how much waste can the earth absorb? Or how much food and resources can the earth provide in a sustainable way?, i.e. what is the carrying capacity of the earth? There are various studies and figures, but on average, the answer is 10 billion at the level of the poor (Takagi, 1994, 1995a, 1995b; Matsui, 1993; Brown, 1994; Furuta, 1997). This means that we have already gone 10 times beyond the limit of the earth's carrying capacity. For instance, the world's forests are being destroyed 10 times faster than the rate of recovery, which means there will be no more forests on the planet in 100 years, if this pace were to be continued (Takagi, 1995b; FAO, 1993). It is estimated that in 2030 the world food supply will be able to meet the needs of no more than 10 billion people at the current level of Indian consumption (Brown, 1994). It is also widely recognized that the emission of CO₂ has vastly exceeded the limit of the earth's CO₂-absorbing capacity and that northern states are responsible for 70% of this CO₂ emission which, obviously, should be greatly reduced (IPCC, 1995).

Another implication of the formula pertains to the "root" cause of ecological deterioration. Some argue that over-population in the Third World is the main threat to the environment. Nonetheless, when we look at the formula, it would be the same degree of damage to the earth, even if 5 billion (the poor) are removed from the formula. In other words, the root cause of the environmental degradation does not lie in the over-population in the South but in the massive consumption and massive waste in the North.

The studies cited above suggest that over-consumption and over-waste in the North be greatly reduced. In so doing, it is critical to raise environmental awareness at all levels, especially in the North. Furthermore, the studies suggest to create a clear vision of a sustainable society in harmony with the environment together with realistic steps to achieve this, thereby changing people's values, attitudes and deepening their understanding of the need for a sustainable society.

Thus, sustainable development can be categorized into three streams, evolving from the first category to the third: (1) Linking environmental degradation with poverty, aiming at alleviating poverty in the South while regenerating the natural environment (*SD-1*); (2) Incorporating various dimensions of development; trying to integrate multiple facets of sustainability (*SD-2*); and (3) Considering the earth's carrying capacity, attempting at development within the limitation (*SD-3*). Sustainable development means that each of the three different concepts of SDs (*SD-1*, *SD-2* and *SD-3*) is integrated and achieved at all places and levels of the international community.

II. The Concept and Levels of Participation

The Concept of Participation:

"Participation" is another complex and comprehensive concept, which is interpreted in many different ways. Because of this characteristic, it is difficult to formulate one clear definition. Moreover, it is not the purpose of this paper to define participation *per se*. However, it will be worthwhile reviewing some of the studies on the interpretation of participation in order to grasp what it is about.

Oakley discusses participation both as a *means* and as an *end*. Participation as a *means* is a way of harnessing the existing physical, economic and social resources of people in order to achieve the objectives of programmes and projects. On the other hand, participation as an *end* is a process which unfolds over time and whose purpose is to develop and strengthen the capabilities of people to intervene more directly in development initiatives (Oakley et al., 1991: 7-8). This author also offers three specific definitions of participation: participation as *contribution*; participation as *organization*; and participation as *empowerment*. The first definition sees participation as implying voluntary or other forms of contributions by people to predetermined programmes and projects, while the third refers to enabling people to decide upon and to take actions which they believe are essential for their development. Organization, on the other hand, is viewed as a fundamental instrument of participation (Oakley et al., 1991: 8-10).

In relations to participation as *empowerment* presented by Oakley, in its *Human Development Report*, UNDP defines participation as follows:

Participation means that people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political processes that affect their lives. People may, in some cases, have complete and direct control over these processes -- in other cases, the control may be partial or indirect. The important thing is that people have constant access to decision-making and power (UNDP, 1993: 21).

This definition of participation clearly places stress on people's access to political processes relevant to their lives, especially decision-making process in order to realize their empowerment. But, what can be the actual steps to achieve this? The World Bank analyzes this point from a different perspective, which is helpful to understanding the general idea of participation. The Bank classifies participation into four steps. They are: (1) Information sharing; (2) Consultation; (3) Shared control over decisions; and (4) Initiating action. According to the Bank, (1) and (2) are prerequisite for participation, i.e. a *means* to an *end*, whereas (3) and (4) are the essence and result of participation, that is, an *end* (FAO, 1995: 16).

Since the main theme of this paper is sustainable development, the achievement of which requires more than just development projects and programmes, a broader definition of participation is proposed which draws from the Bank's analysis, the UNDP's definition of participation, and the various interpretations of participation presented by Oakley et al.

Levels of Participation:

One of the basic questions in regard to participation is "Whose participation is being referred to?" As our concern is participation in connection with sustainable development, the main target is the poor, primarily the poor living in southern countries (*SD-1*). At the same time, citizens in the North cannot be ignored, since they are the primary agents of global environmental degradation and poverty in southern countries (*SD-3*). The forms of participation can also be divided into two parts: individuals and groups. Accordingly, there are at least four specific targets for participation: (1) People, especially the poor, mainly living in the South; (2) People, particularly the rich, primarily living in the North; (3) Groups or civil society organizations (CSOs) in the South; and (4) Groups or CSOs in the North.

The next question concerns the levels of participation. That is, at what level is participation to be realized? There are at least four levels of participation to be considered: (1) the community level; (2) the national level; (3) the regional level; and (4) the international level.

Why Participation is Necessary to Achieve Sustainable Development ?

In the context of achieving sustainable development in the South (*SD-1*), it is important to note that people's participation, in many cases, articulates what people really need, where the problems lie, and the extent of the problems. Understanding these basic but crucial factors are essential for promoting any activity aiming at poverty alleviation and sustainable development. By articulating problems and needs through participation, an opportunity of enabling people to establish their own schemes, to make their plans, which is better suited to their particular needs and methods, is created. As a result, participation can lead people to be the subject of their own development (Ouedraogo, 1989). Participation also helps to create the opportunity to draw out latent abilities of people, and to make them self-reliant in the long run. It is especially because through participation, people themselves can do what they want in their own unique way, and through this process, people's own knowledge, especially knowledge which local people have traditionally owned can be utilized for fostering sustainable development.

It is of importance for people to use their own local knowledge, not only because it gives local people a dignity and pride, which is necessary for their self-reliance, but, indigenous technical knowledge is also crucial for pursuing sustainable development. For instance, many traditional farming systems, based on local knowledge and peasants' experience, have turned out to be efficient and environmentally friendly. Lambert argues that inter-cropping--the cultivation of a variety of crops, which is one style of traditional farming--is reasonable, because it maximizes harvest security within the confines of available land. Furthermore, he maintains:

...the system is efficient and invariably provides a balanced diet and allows the farmer to stagger his harvests throughout the year. To have sustained their people and productivity over centuries means that crop combinations are adapted to local environmental conditions and resistant to the vicissitudes of insect pests and plant pathogens. This achievement suggests a repository of useful knowledge in traditional systems (Lambert, 1986: 220).

Besides inter-cropping, there are many other forms of indigenous knowledge which can be utilized for sustainable development, such as: appropriate land use; soil and water conservation; ridging; spacing; tillage; pest management both in the field and in storage; tree cover; tree utilization; livestock exploitation; medicine or pharmacognosy; tools and equipment (McCall, 1988: 49-54).

Therefore, when local people are well informed about a development project in their area, involved in the process of decision-making, that is, participation, there will be a greater chance to utilize these knowledge. This will allow them to be in a position to promote better natural resource management projects, while stopping projects and/or programmes that seem environmentally-unsound. In other words, the people themselves are the most powerful front-line defence of their own natural resource base, because they are the ones who possess the best knowledge about their local natural environment, including indigenous technical knowledge. Here a linkage between participation and sustainable development is observed.

With regard to realizing *SD-2*, it is again local people themselves not outsider that know about various situation of the community: its political, economic, social, cultural and ecological situation. It is also the people who should maintain any fruit of development projects. Without effective participation of the people themselves, it is hard to promote activities to achieve the goal of *SD-2*.

In the North,, information sharing, which is the first step of participation according to the World Bank, is vital. Without knowing any information, for example on climate change, people would not make any effort to reduce their energy consumption, driving less etc. in order to prevent climate change. Therefore, it is indispensable for sharing information on environmental problems and poverty issues in order to enable

them to take action to change their lifestyle and predominant values in industrialized societies for the achievement of sustainable development (*SD-3*).

Roles of Civil Society Organizations

Needless to say, participation cannot be taken place in vacuums. The question, "Who promotes people's participation?" needs to be answered. Obviously, it is almost impossible to foster participation by one individual only. As Oakley previously mentioned, a collective power, that is, organizations are essential for promoting participation. Organizations can pool resources of the poor, collecting voices and needs of people, offering a place for information exchange and discussion among people, and conveying these voices to government services and other authorities concerned. Organizations that have a number of members and networks can foster participation both widely and effectively. These are the reasons why the importance of civil society organizations is emphasized.

There are a great number of CSOs all over the world. UNDP shows some illustrative figures:

- Kenya has 23,000 women's groups alone.
- Tamil Nadu state in India has 25,000 registered grass-roots organizations.
- Bangladesh has at least 12,000 local groups that receive local and central government financial support (and many more that do not).
- The Philippines has 18,000 registered NGOs, of which at least two-thirds might be considered people's organizations, such as community associations or cooperatives.

In terms of the outreach by NGOs, it has also been growing considerably in recent years. UNDP argues:

In the early 1980's, one rough estimate suggested that NGO activity "touched" 100 million people in developing countries--60 million in Asia, 25 million in Latin America and some 12 million in Africa. Today, the total is probably nearer 250 million-- and will rise considerably in the years ahead (UNDP, 1993: 93).

Because of these growing activities and influences of CSOs, their positive roles were indeed recognized internationally, especially after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was held in Brazil in 1992. A number of CSOs throughout the world attended the Conference, promoting lobbying, holding various parallel events in order to affect the decision-making process. The consequence is seen in the document produced, that is, Agenda 21. Agenda 21 clearly views CSOs as a key player in carrying out the tasks for sustainable development. For example, in the Philippines, NGOs constitute one-third of the membership of the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development, which was established in September 1992 to guide

national follow-up to the Earth Summit (UNDP, 1993: 92).

After UNCED, CSOs have participated in, as key players, major international conferences, such as the United Nations Conference on Population and Development; the Beijing Conference on Women; the World Food Summit; and the Conferences of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In these conferences, CSOs have done a lot of lobbying, influenced decision-making processes toward pursuing sustainable development for the sake of the poor, future generations and the earth beyond narrow national interests insisted by government delegations.

Now, based on the above analyses of the concept, the targets, levels of participation, the linkage between participation and sustainable development, and roles of CSOs, the paper further strives to explore more concrete and detailed cases of participation. Various approaches to participation in relation to the three categories of sustainable development discussed in Chapter I will be considered in the following Chapters. They are: The PRA Technique Approach (Chapter III); The Group-Formation Approach (Chapter IV); Building on Existing People's Organizations Approach (Chapter V); The Policy-Level Approach (Chapter VI); and The Development/Environmental Education Approach (Chapter VII).

III. The PRA Techniques Approach: to better enable outsider's intervention

Background and Overview:

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques were formulated as a result of a realization that many conventional development projects had not taken into account the views and needs of local people in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the projects. Consequently, projects had too often been introduced without local people's participation, had not satisfied their "actual" needs, and had led to unsuccessful results. The main concern of the PRA approach, therefore, is how "outsiders", i.e. development experts and professionals, can effectively intervene in projects, effectively identifying actual needs and problems of local people through the people's participation.

One of the key features of PRA is its interdisciplinary character. With view to acquiring as complete an understanding of the situation of a rural community as possible, PRA teams are generally composed of four to six experts. For example, a team may be made up of experts on agronomy, economics, rural sociology, community development, water, soil, forestry and on live stock, depending on the focus and the particular programmes or project agency carrying it out (NES & Clark University). In this sense, PRA can be described as an interdisciplinary technical package for outsider's

intervention, which strives to comprehend the circumstance of a rural community and get the local poor involved in the development process. PRA is also an action-oriented approach. After a series of research and village meetings, PRA teams usually identify problems and priorities, in full consultation with villagers. Thereafter, several village groups are often formed in order to implement each task of the development plan which had been decided upon at the village meeting. PRA, therefore, can be viewed as a preliminary means of group formation for development action, although group formation is not the main purpose of the PRA approach.

There are a number of other approaches in this category, including: ZOPP or Project Cycle Management (PCM); Appreciation-Influence-Control; SARAR etc. (World Bank, 1994). Among PRA techniques, there are various skills, including: social mapping; farm sketches; time-line; trend lines; transect walk; wealth ranking; Venn Diagram; seasonal calendar and so forth (NES & Clark University).

The PRA is a useful tool for facilitating interaction and dialogue between outsiders and rural populations, and for gathering general and specific information on their community. When PRA is used from the outset of a project, it often creates a sort of mutually agreed-upon kit of tools and indicators between outsiders and villagers to facilitate participatory planning and implementation. PRA techniques are also applied to natural resource management, including soil conservation, agroforestry and water resource management (NES & Clark University). For these reasons, PRA has been gaining much attention and is widely used in "participatory" projects, including those financed by UNDP, the World Bank and other bilateral agencies.

A major limitation of the PRA approach is that its projects tend to remain in the domain of techniques for outsider's intervention, even though its main intention is to facilitate people's participation and to draw the poor in the centre of development. It does not always guarantee participation of every poor household as well as the promotion of self-reliance of local people. There is no guarantee of project sustainability after the termination of outsider's intervention. Due to these limitations, the PRA techniques approach is viewed as only one of the skills used by outsiders seeking to better initiate a participatory process involving rural people.

How Participatory is PRA?:

The main targets of the PRA techniques approach are people, especially the poor, in project areas in the South, trying to get them involved in the process of development at the project and community level. After information gathering from villagers and development planning with them in a community, groups of villagers who participate in the project are sometimes formed in accordance with tasks to be implemented. In

this sense, the form of participation in the PRA approach is both individuals and groups in southern communities. However, there is not a certain mechanism to promote and maintain groups and group activities in the PRA approach. Furthermore, participation in the decision-making process at the local government level, upon the part of members of the groups created in a project, is often out of a framework of the PRA project.

Accordingly, participation realized by the PRA approach is often limited to the poor individuals and families in a community and, not having a solid mechanism to maintain activities after the termination of the PRA project, although there are some cases in which project villages are connected to various organizations within and outside the communities. In this sense, participation as empowerment realized through the PRA approach is generally limited.

Linkage with Sustainable Development:

Since the PRA techniques utilized by interdisciplinary PRA teams are used in an effort to understand the situation of a target village (usually a poor community), including its natural environment and its economic, social, political and cultural characteristics, and to tap the abilities and resources of villagers, the approach is closely linked with *SD-2, the integration of various dimensions of development* at the community level. When the techniques are utilized for the amelioration of the natural environment, together with income-generation activities such as reforestation, watershed management, agroforestry and soil conservation etc., they can be regarded as an effort to achieve *SD-1, alleviating poverty while at the same time regenerating the environment* (NES & Clark University).

However, there is much less use of the PRA in northern industrialized nations in seeking change of lifestyle and values of people in the North, thereby, solutions of global environmental crisis. Therefore, the PRA techniques approach, as it stands, is out of stream of *SD-3, considering the earth's carrying capacity and promoting development within the limit*.

IV. The Group-Formation Approach: empowering the poor

Background and Overview:

The Group-formation approach emerged along with a growing recognition that the role of outsiders is limited, or even counter-productive, since it often increases dependence of local people on outsiders. The basic thrust of this approach is that it is not outsiders but local people themselves who can and should identify and solve their own

problems. Yet, the local poor alone are weak in many respects, lacking sufficient financial, technical, political and social capabilities. As a result, many of them are left out of development processes, become apathetic, the so called "silent majority". How can the poor get out of this situation? The only way, according to this approach, is for the poor to organize themselves as a self-help group for participation in the development process. In this approach, each group, not outsiders, decides on activities and priorities, with the help of group promoters or field workers from the side-line.

There are three major rationales for group formation. First, economy of scale can be achieved through group formation. Even though each of the poor possesses only a small amount of money, pooling these small amounts and depositing and saving them as a group can enable a group to initiate some income-generating activities which group members could not realize alone. Second, forming groups facilitates mutual learning and sharing of limited resources, including knowledge and experiences. This kind of group dynamics can help the poor tap their potential in various ways. Third, grouping can reduce delivery costs for outsiders. That is, it is easier for governments and/or NGOs to deliver any sorts of inputs, information, training and other services to organized groups than scattered individuals.

A number of southern NGOs such as the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka, and the Naam Movement in Burkina Faso as well as northern NGOs, including Shapla Neer, a Japanese development NGO, promote the group-formation approach. International organizations such as FAO also foster this approach. An example, dating from the early 1980's is the People's Participation Programme (FAO-PPP: FAO, 1990, 1992b; Uemura & Lindemann, 1995).

The Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka facilitates group formation based on gender, age and types of occupations, i.e. mothers' groups, children's groups, youth groups, and farmers' groups (Macy, 1983; Uemura, 1993). On the other hand, the Grameen Bank, the Naam Movement and FAO-PPP seek to form groups of from 5 to 15 like-minded people around one or more kinds of income-generating activities. In the cases of the Naam Movement and FAO-PPP, further effort is made to establish inter-group associations composed of self-help groups, organized for the purpose of information exchange, thereby furthering economy of scale and gaining political bargaining power in relationship with local and national governments and, ultimately, of enabling the poor to participate in decision-making processes at local and national levels in matters related to their concerns.

One of the major problems with this approach is a project sustainability: How can groups and group activities be sustained after the termination of a project? Are projects to be financed forever in order to assure the continuation of self-help

activities and to continue the hiring of project coordinators, group promoters or field workers needed? Self-help activities based on this approach are often dependent upon external finance for the hiring of project staff such as project coordinators, group promoters and field workers. When external finance from donors stops, for whatever reason, it is difficult for the project to continue. This problem has become especially evident in recent years as economic recession and "aid fatigue" among developed countries has led to decreasing external finance available for any kind of project activity. There are also potential constraints to promoting group building due to lack of trust among group members and competing interests both among group members and groups formed.

Linkage with Participation:

The targets of the group-formation approach are, first, the poor in the South and, second, the groups formed as a result of a group formation project. Within a group, it is generally managed in a participatory way, partly because groups formed are small and homogeneous, which is easier to facilitate dialogue between members, have greater economic flexibility and are less likely to be dominated by management elite or break down into factions (FAO, 1990: 12).

In fostering group-formation approach, the role of group promoters or field workers is of vital importance. In the case of the FAO-PPP, group promoters monitor the situation of each group, holding meetings on a regular basis so as to ensure the group is managed in a democratic and participatory manner. Group promoters also try to help groups connect any service available in and outside the village, such as banking, health-care and other government services both locally and provincially. It is group promoters that sensitize and persuade local power-holders in order to avoid confrontation with local power structure, thereby smoothly promoting project activities. FAO argues:

At local level, project staff can help overcome this antagonism by winning the support of traditional, administrative and other leaders. They may need to call meetings to sensitize leaders to the objectives of the participatory project and, above all, to illustrate the benefits of its activities to the area as a whole. These benefits include improvements in community living standards, an increased flow of government services to the village and, consequently, greater prestige for the village and its leaders (FAO, 1990: 13).

Group formation is usually carried out within project action communities. In some cases, group formation is conducted in most parts of a given province and even in an entire country as is being done by the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka. The extent to which group formation projects influence policy

and decision-making at the local and national levels is unclear, but FAO-PPP, for instance, succeeded in persuading the Sri Lankan Government to establish its Small Farmers' Development Unit within the Ministry of Agriculture as a means of promoting the group-formation approach in the country. There is another case of showing influence of this approach on political power at the provincial level that the leader of the Naam Movement became Governor of a province in Burkina Faso. The Naam Movement has also even gone beyond one country, creating the Six "S", an association that affiliates like-minded self-help groups in Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Togo (Pradervand, 1989: 99; Uemura, 1996a). This points to the possibility that the group formation approach could nurture participation at the regional level.

Linkage with Sustainable Development:

Although group formation itself has no direct linkage with environmental conservation, self-help groups could be building blocks for actions for protecting the environment. For example, groups in the Naam Movement and the Six "S" promote the restoration of soil by means of soil erosion projects, using traditional knowledge of stone lines ranged along contours. These groups also distribute information about improved three-stone stoves based on the traditional three-stone fire. This stove is simple to make at almost no cost, but can save 35-70 % of wood used. Thus, it helps prevent deforestation as well as reduce the workload of gathering firewood for women (Uemura, 1996a: 3).

A few groups of FAO-PPP in Pakistan have carried out nursery projects which involves planting trees in nurseries and creating income by selling the trees. Groups created by the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India are promoting agroforestry and watershed management activities which both regenerate the natural environment and create income generation opportunities (*SD-1*). In order to foster this kind of environmentally-friendly activities, the training of group promoters and project coordinators, with the assistance of technical experts, is crucial in making the group-formation approach effective with respect to environmental conservation.

With respect to *SD-2, incorporating various dimensions of development*, as long as we assume that groups usually take into consideration economic, social, political, cultural and ecological issues in their villages in fostering their activities, it can be basically achieved. On the other hand, this approach does not have much to do with *SD-3*, since its targets are the poor and groups in the South not those in the North. There is, however, some participation of citizens in the North in the form of development cooperation and financial support to group-formation activities through northern governments and/or NGOs.

V. Building on Existing People's Organizations Approach: towards a project sustainability

Background and Overview:

In fostering the group-formation approach, a question as to which organization should be the main agent or promoter of this approach has arisen. It is partly because projects sponsored by bilateral agencies, NGOs or international organizations often could not expand sufficiently. Some group-formation projects prove to be unstable and are unable to continue after the termination of financial aid from outside. On the other hand, projects initiated and sponsored by people's organizations (POs) have proven to be more viable and more likely to continue. One of the reasons for this is that POs are, in principle, financially supported by the members themselves in the form of membership fees.

There are thousands of organizations of this type in rural and urban areas both in the South and in the North, including cooperatives, farmers' associations, rural workers' organizations (RWOs) etc. In those organizations, the members themselves are servers as well as clients of organizations. In this sense, this type of organizations is highly participatory, at least among members, providing the organizations are managed in a participatory and democratic way. The members of these organizations themselves are often "experts" in matters of local-specific problems, and are able to promote many activities without heavy dependence on external finance.

Owing to these characteristics of membership-based people's organizations, projects and programmes fostered by these organizations are often encouraged in rural development efforts in the South as well as in environmental conservation movements in northern states. One example is the National Tree Growers' Cooperative Federation Limited (NTGCF), which vigorously fosters agroforestry, organizing self-sustaining village cooperatives for ecological restoration activities in India (NTGCF, 1996).

Another is the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), a trade union in India. SEWA is based on Gandhian thinking, aiming at the empowerment of women through full employment and self-reliance. The Association believes that the basis of development and progress is organization, thereby concurrently promoting the labour movement, the cooperative movement and the women's movement. The basic strategy of SEWA's approach to rural development is to organize women into groups, leading them to create cooperatives and their federations in accordance with the members' needs in their respective sectors and regions. Their activity are assisted by development supportive services such as rural credit, leadership training, health and child care, housing

and legal aid, and linking groups and cooperatives with governmental and other outside services. Although SEWA is often critical of state and national governments, requesting better wages and working conditions for the poor as well as for a better rural development policy, it is often asked by the government to implement government's programmes. Development for Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) is a good example of a state government's providing seed money to establish an association, implemented by SEWA, and managed and run by the members of the association created.

The total membership of SEWA in 1995 was 218,797, of which about 67% were rural women. The total membership included: 26,170 Cooperative members; 5,525 members of DWCRA groups; 63,290 Savings and Credit organization members; and 86,307 federation members. SEWA possesses about 250 full-time staff, of which 200 staff were financially supported by organizations created by SEWA. Since their activities are highly regarded, many famous world leaders have visited SEWA, including: Hillary Clinton, the first lady of the United States; Shri Manmohan Adhikari, the former Prime Minister of Nepal and Nelson Mandela, the former President of South Africa. In South Africa, a similar organization, the Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU) was launched with the help of SEWA in 1994 (Uemura, 1996b: 3-4).

There are, however, some negative aspects of people's organizations. For instance, existing cooperative structures in many developing countries are generally weak. First, the level of government intervention and control is often high. Second, government pricing, taxation and cooperative law policies tend to discourage autonomous business cooperative development. Third, a weak internal capital base, together with a low level of cooperative business management skills, tend to make cooperatives ineffective. In addition to these limitations, high member illiteracy rates, low member participation and poor cooperative business performance constitute major problems with this approach.

Rural workers' organizations (RWOs) in the South primarily cover those salaried workers who are employed in large-scale, para-statal dominated, export-oriented agriculture in such field as bananas, coffee, cacao, tea, cotton and sugar. Under the impact of structural adjustment programmes, however, many of these large enterprises are now being "downsized" or privatized with the result that many members lose their "employed" status and become a new group of marginalized independent small farmers while, nevertheless, maintaining their membership in the union. This group now constitutes a growing proportion of agricultural union membership. Unions feel a responsibility to support these independent farmer members in building new lives as independent cultivators and/or in developing other income generating activities which

can help support their families and indirectly develop their local communities. Yet, they often find it difficult to shift from an advocacy/political bargaining function focused on securing better wage benefits for their members to one concerned with broader sustainable development.

Linkage with Participation:

The targets of people's organizations are both the members and potential members of such organizations, in accordance with their particular objectives. The targets, therefore, can be the poor, farmers, various workers and women both in urban and in rural areas. The degree of participation of these people is dependent upon the extent to which their organizations manage their affairs in a participatory way and upon the quality of an organization's projects and programmes.

A successful example is SEWA's rural development and eco-regeneration programmes for the lowest caste, minority women in Gujarat. In these programmes, impacts of participation as an *end* are clearly observed in terms of social relationships among neighbours and with their husbands. Many members who have not had any job or never earned an income, got both after joining the programme. They relate that after starting their activities, in addition to gaining jobs and income, more interactions took place with neighbours. Answering to the author's interview, a woman said that she began to participate in meetings on a regular basis and their husbands became cooperative, helping with cooking and child care. The members also become more self-confident. They told the author that they are now not afraid of talking with outsiders and government officers and are able to go to SEWA district centres and big cities by themselves.

Roughly speaking, participation promoted by this approach is occurring at all levels, i.e. from community, national and regional to international levels. For example, the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) unites, represents and serves nearly 200 organizations, representing over 760 million individuals in over 90 countries in all sectors of activity, including: agriculture; banking; energy; industry; insurance; fisheries; housing; tourism; and consumers (Karl, 1996: 12). Another example is the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) which represents hundreds of millions of farmers world-wide who are members of its 82 affiliated organizations in 58 countries (Karl, 1996: 12). The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has 194 affiliated organizations in 136 countries on all five continents, with a membership of 124 million (Karl, 1996: 11). The extent to which these people's organizations affect local and national policies varies from one area or one country to another. There are a number of communities that do not have any POs, whereas there

are other cases, such as that of Japanese farmers' cooperatives, in which POs have a strong influence on local and national politics.

Linkage with Sustainable Development:

There are many successful cases of *SD-1: poverty alleviation while regenerating the natural environment*, including the Eco-Regeneration programmes of SEWA; Natural resource management programmes in Honduras and in Ghana fostered by rural workers' organizations in cooperation with FAO; and agroforestry programmes promoted by the National Tree Growers' Cooperative Federation Limited (NTGCF) in India. SEWA's Eco-Regeneration programme helps the lowest caste, minority tribe women in India, who have become members of the organization, through: (1) growing nursery trees and plants with technical and financial support of the forestry department of Gujarat State (the members get income based on the quantity of nursery products produced); and (2) selling agroforestry products (fruits and fodder) at a market in a nearby town or to local farmers.

With respect to the extent to which this approach achieves the objectives of *SD-2: incorporating various facets of development and sustainability* is dependent upon the abilities, leadership and the level of training in understanding economical, social, political, cultural and environmental sustainability of the POs concerned, as these organizations vary widely in terms of objectives, sector and management. Yet, POs established in a particular area, hiring local staff from that area, dealing with matters in the area basically understand the conditions and situations of the area including various sustainabilities mentioned above.

There are some examples in this approach related to *SD-3: reduction of massive consumption and waste in the North so as to mitigate global environmental degradation and live within the earth's carrying capacity*. This is evident especially in:

(1) the efforts of POs urging the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to adopt binding reduction targets within a specified time frame for CO₂ emissions and other climate-related pollutants (ICFTU); (2) Drawing up environmental action plans and programmes, e.g. the initiatives of IUF member unions: the Fish Industry Workers' Union (FIWU) of the CIS, the General Workers' Union (SID) and the Women Workers' Union (KAD) held a Conference on the Sea Environment in 1990 at which they drew up an International Trade Union Plan of Action for the Sea Environment with concrete measures to protect the sea, including more ecologically-based agriculture to reduce the discharge of nutritive salt into the sea; the Swedish Agricultural Workers' Union has drawn up a Programme of Action on the External Environment; and the General Workers' Union in Denmark has produced

a document on Ecological Farming with concrete proposals for converting the various agricultural sectors in the country to ecological farming in both short and long term; (3) Responding to UNCED, which specifically outlined responsibilities for major groups in civil society. Chapter 32 of Agenda 21, adopted by UNCED, concerns "The Role of Farmers". Following UNCED, IFAP drew up a series of commitments by farmers' organizations under the title "Farmers for a Sustainable Future: the Leadership Role of Agriculture". In September 1995, the ICA membership adopted the "Cooperative Agenda 21" demonstrating a significant commitment of cooperatives in all sectors to promoting sustainable development (Karl, 1996: 24).

(4) Consumer cooperatives in Japan are also strong in environmental protection activities, developing and marketing ecologically-friendly products all over the country.

VI. Policy-Level Approach : spreading an integrated approach on people's participation

Necessity of Policy Intervention

As explained earlier, each of the above three approaches has their own strengths and weakness. Therefore, it is important to improve shortcomings of each approach and to integrate the "good" portions in accordance with each specific situation. The best results can be obtained, it is now believed, through an effective mixture of the above three approaches. With a view to implementing effective participatory projects or programmes to achieve sustainable development, development experts, POs, NGOs, governments and international organizations need to formulate a solid policy on participatory approaches to sustainable development, the policy which, at the same time, is flexible and easily adaptable to local circumstances.

In situations in which there is no rural organization in a project area, it would be beneficial to form new organizations and groups to initiate sustainable development projects or programmes. In cases there are people's organizations in an action area, but it seems inadvisable to try to build on them, local NGOs or activities promoted by other NGOs should be identified for the project. Another possibility is to assist these weak POs by the formulation of policies by NGOs, governments and/or international organizations designed to strengthen these POs. The areas for intervention aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of these POs would be to assist in project formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; in organizational management, finance, accounting, capital formation, communication, computer skills, negotiation skills; and in other technical issues such as rural credit, natural resource management, agriculture, women in development, health, water, etc. Both northern and southern

NGOs could play a vital role in creating and supporting POs, linking POs with governmental services and with related bilateral and international agencies. NGOs are actually filling gaps in weak government programmes, or provide certain services in the face of governmental withdrawal that is taking place especially as a result of the implementation of structural adjustment programmes promoted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

On the other hand, there are a number of active POs that could be a vehicle for sustainable development. In this case, the projects or programmes should be built on these organizations. PRA techniques could be utilized by outsiders to understand the situations of action areas, identifying active POs or NGOs there. Moreover, the best result will come if locals belonging to local people's organizations use PRA techniques by themselves in fostering development and environment-related activities.

Promoting Dialogue and Collaboration between Government, NGOs and POs

There is one most important and powerful actor in development efforts which must not be overlooked. That is government. Both local, provincial and national government are vital in development efforts, because they possess both financial and human resources, although there are some governments that are very weak in both resources. Governments also possess local branches, legitimacy and legal enforcement power in promoting development activities. Integration of the three participatory approaches would be difficult to be realized without linking governments with NGOs and existing POs for whatever form. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to arrange or establish a sort of forum for dialogue and collaboration among the three main actors for sustainable development: government; NGOs; and POs. Through this sort of forum, NGOs in Bangladesh have a strong influence on government development policy, and the government has given some leading NGO figures important advisory positions. In Chile, when a democratic government was elected in 1990, the participatory approach that NGOs had fostered became an important aspect of government policy--indeed, many people who spent time in NGOs now hold key government positions (UNDP, 1993: 92-93).

International organizations (IOs) can be an important member of such forum, since they play a crucial role in achieving sustainable development, as is the case of FAO. For example, FAO held a series of discussions with, and training of, Vietnamese government staff members in cooperative law for the purpose of helping those officers understand the nature of cooperatives. This has helped to create an environment in which cooperatives are able to act vigorously, which can eventually lead to Vietnam's national development. FAO has also been organizing dialogue sessions with trade un-

ions--through a system of biannual consultations with trade unions--since the early 1970's. The dialogue sessions have begun to include farmers' associations and cooperatives since 1995. Furthermore, there are a number of collaborative programmes and projects between FAO and these POs and NGOs, including a joint research programme on cooperative capital formation; the establishment of a national farmers' federation in Turkey requested by the Turkish government in 1996; and rural development programmes in cooperation with the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC: FAO, 1994). Nevertheless, the extent of dialogue and collaboration between governments, NGOs, POs and IOs has been far less than desired. That is why the policy-level approach should be advocated and, in this process, international organizations, as is politically neutral, can play a major coordinating role.

Policy-Level Approach at the Global Level

In view of the importance of exchanging information on participatory projects and programmes and of creating effective policies on participation at the global level, the Inter-Agency Group on Participation (IAGP) was established in 1995. The members comprise the United Nations agencies including FAO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNCDF etc.; other international organizations such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank; bilateral agencies including USAID and CIDA; and NGOs both from the South and from the North.

Members of IAGP are active in information exchange on participation by e-mail as well as in formal meetings. Although the IAGP is a new effort, still in the stage of "trial and error", its goal is to gain understanding of both the nature and the actual situation of participatory projects and programmes world-wide, thereby, identifying the best participatory approaches in each country. However, its focus up until now has been on southern countries only, excluding any projects and programmes for *SD-3* in northern industrialized states.

VII. Development/Environmental Education Approach: beyond development and developing countries

Background and Overview:

The last approach is concurrent with the latest evolution in the thinking of NGOs throughout the world. NGOs have evolved both in terms of numbers and of quality since the second World War. This evolutionary history can be summarized as five "generations" of NGOs (Uemura, 1997). First, most NGOs started in the North for humanitarian reasons to help "miserable" people in the South suffering from

starvation, poverty and conflicts. These NGOs collected quantities of basic necessities for daily living such as blankets, powdered milk, can-food etc., and sent them to war-affected or poverty-stricken areas (*The First Generation*). But it soon became apparent that just giving food, clothing and money to those who are suffering does not help them to improve their living conditions in the long run. This realization led many NGOs to go directly into the field so that they could help the poor first hand (*The Second Generation*).

However, regardless of the conscientious efforts of these NGOs, little was accomplished toward overcoming poverty in general. Once projects by the NGOs are over, the situation often reverts back to the previous condition and, in some cases becomes even worse, because the poor become dependent on the external aid. For this reason, many NGOs re-evaluated their efforts to provide assistance with the result that some of them stopped going into the field directly to support the poor first hand. Instead, many NGOs began to look for reliable local partnering organizations and assisted these organizations in implementing their own projects in order to encourage self-reliance upon the part of local people. These NGOs also created local NGOs and groups of the poor so that the poor could start saving and arranging loans from local banks, thereby initiating community development and income-generation activities by themselves. As a result, southern NGOs began to mushroom, linking with northern NGOs to expand their activities (*The Third Generation*).

Despite these successes, there are still myriad of people who are suffering from poverty. This realization has led some northern NGOs, for the first time, to look back to their own society in the North and to study the relationship between their ways of living, the structure of the world economy, and poverty in the South. The result was a transformation of understanding of development and underdevelopment: from "While the North has developed, the South is still poor" to "Because the North has developed, the South is inevitably poor". In other words, they began to focus attention on the current international economic system in which northern countries import natural resources from the South at a very low price or use low-paid local labour to produce value-added goods, then selling those goods back to southern countries at a high price. This process, repeated over and over, has led to a constantly expanding gap between the rich and the poor nations.

Another aspect of this situation is the demand for cash-crops produced in the South, which are exported to the North. This has led to rapid increases in the production of cash crops in the South, such as shrimp, bananas, coffee, tea, sugar etc., which results in some portion of local people becoming better off for a while. However, their better situation is often not sustainable and they are worth off in the end. Furthermore,

this kind of cash cropping contributes to environmental deterioration and destruction (Uemura, 1998b). This realization has led some northern NGOs to focus their attention on conducting "development education", i.e., programmes designed to help people in developed countries become aware of the relationship between the lifestyles in their own countries under the current international economy and poverty in the South (*The Fourth Generation*).

Particularly after UNCED in 1992, NGOs began to give serious consideration to ecological as well as development issues. As they became more aware of the seriousness of global environmental degradation, they began to seek ways to reverse the current situation. One of their main thrusts has been to get people in industrialized countries involved in efforts to establish a sustainable society in harmony with the environment, because it is these northern people, their way of life, and their current political and economic structure which supports massive consumption and waste, that are the principal cause of global ecological decline. Second, these NGOs seek to convey the facts about the global environment through lectures, newsletters and participatory learning workshops as a first step toward raising the awareness of the general public. Third, in spreading information, NGOs often use multimedia, including Internet. Based on these three thrusts, "environmental education" or "global citizenship education" has now developed as a means of coping with both world-wide environmental problems and poverty eradication together (*The Fifth Generation*).

One of the problems of the development and environmental education approach is that its results or effects occur at a slow pace and are largely invisible. This approach cannot be expected to solve the "immediate" and "visible" problems of the poor, or of local-specific problems in southern communities. This is because the approach is generally neither technical nor material, characteristic necessary for solving the visible problems of the poor. Rather, it is about the lifestyle and even spirituality of people living in industrialized states. This approach is also generally resisted by the economic sector of society and materialistically-oriented people because it implies a reduction of profits and of their current standard of living of people in northern countries.

Accordingly, highly-elaborate methods and skills in conveying messages through lectures, workshops and newsletters, together with sound financial management of organizations are required for the success of the Fifth approach. The Network "Earth Village", established in 1990 in Osaka, Japan, is an example of an environmental NGO which has been very successful in transforming people's values toward a sustainable society in harmony with the environment. "Earth Village" offers more than 500 public lectures and seminars a year on global environmental issues and lifestyle throughout the entire country, spreading the message that for the sake of ourselves, future

generations and our global environment, there must be a transformation in the Japanese way of living. The popularity of the "Earth Village" in Japan can be seen from its rapid growth in members, from 300 in the beginning of 1994 to 25,000 in the middle of 1999. Moreover, it has 150 local "Earth Village" networks that are created by the local members in each area of their own accord. Many northern NGOs, however, have not been as successful as the "Earth Village" and are still groping their way as they seek to expand their programmes and activities.

Linkage with Participation and with Sustainable Development:

The outlook and general orientation of the fourth and fifth generations of NGOs, that is, the development education and environmental education approach, which seeks the participation of people living in the North in the process of realizing sustainable development, is now, for the first time, explicitly viewed as a key to both poverty alleviation in the South and to global environmental conservation (*SD-3*). It is usually northern NGOs and in some cases POs, such as consumer cooperatives, that foster development and environmental education. Their targets are citizens and organizations in northern societies, including government and private companies. These NGOs try to sensitize citizens to the seriousness of poverty and environmental issues. Their efforts include disseminating information, holding a series of lectures, seminars and participatory workshops, as well as local, national, regional and international conferences with other NGOs throughout the world on the global environment and sustainable development. Through these efforts by northern NGOs, some people living in the North start to participate in various activities, gradually changing their lifestyle, as is shown by the rapid increase in members of the "Earth Village", in order to achieve sustainable development (*SD-3*).

The effectiveness of influencing a decision-making process at national and international levels depends on the skills and ability of each NGO and close collaboration among NGOs. Effectiveness can sometimes be high in cases of large international conferences on the global environment at the global level. Some of the more successful instances of effectiveness are UNCED; the Conference on Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer; the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change etc. However, the development/environmental education approach has less to do with *SD-1* and *SD-2*, although this approach indirectly relates to *SD-1*. It must also be recognized that this approach still does not represent the "main stream" in development efforts. Having said that, activities and programmes of northern NGOs on development and environmental education are currently increasing at an encouraging rate and can be expected to gain

greater recognition in the near future.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has examined five different participatory approaches to sustainable development. The role of civil society organizations (NGOs and POs) was also highlighted in promoting these approaches both in the South and in the North. The features of these five approaches can be summarized as follows (Table 2).

Within the context of the thinking and orientation of the five generations of NGOs, the first-four approaches to sustainable development --PRA, group-formation, building on existing people's organizations and policy-level approach-- are associated with the Second and the Third Generations, whereas the last approach -- development/environmental education approach-- is associated with the Fourth and Fifth Generations. The first-four approaches attempt to cope with "immediate" and "visible" problems such as poverty and/or local-specific ecological problems in a community in the South with concrete participatory methods. In contrast, the last approach sees the "root" causes of poverty in southern nations lying not in the southern countries themselves, but in the developed countries, as well as in the present "unjust" structure of the world economy, matters with which the first-four approaches do not deal. In order to achieve full scale sustainable development, all approaches are essential; the first-four approaches contribute positively toward the goals of *SD-1* and *SD-2*, whereas the fifth approach plays a crucial role in realizing *SD-3*.

In terms of mitigating global environmental degradation, the first-four approaches, with some exceptions which involve building on existing people's organizations in the North, do not effectively confront the issues of *SD-3*. Yet, it is worth noting that one of the factors in the hardship of the poor stems from ecological degradation, a phenomenon which will become clearer as time passes. For example, deforestation leads to water shortage, desertification, flooding and food shortage; climate change causes drought, desertification, flooding and food shortage; similarly, skin cancers, cataracts, diseases of the immune system, and reduction of crop and fish yields are caused by the increase of ultra-violet B, resulting from the depletion of the ozone layer. Thus, if the purpose of these four approaches is to improve the lives of the poor, these approaches need to consider how to incorporate the aspects of global environmental change (*SD-3*) in their approaches. In other words, in addition to conventional approaches to fostering rural development programmes for poverty alleviation at the community level in southern countries, it is imperative that effort be directed toward the "awakening" of people in the North and soliciting of their active participation in changing their ways

Table 2: Summary of Five Participatory Approaches to Sustainable Development

	PRA Techniques Approach	Group-Formation Approach	Existing POs Approach	Policy-Level Approach	Development/ Environmental Education
Target	Local Poor in southern communities	Local Poor in southern communities	Members and Local Poor mainly in the South	Government, NGOs, POs in the South + IOs	People and Organizations in the North
Who promotes it?	Development experts, PRA experts from bilateral & international agencies	Development experts, Group promoters from NGOs, bilateral & international agencies	Members of POs, Development experts from international POs	Development experts, members of GOs, NGOs & POs, bilateral & international agencies	Northern NGOs and Institutions
Main Purpose	Better enable outsider's intervention	Participation and Self-reliance of the poor	Participation and Self-reliance of the members and the poor	Creation of a forum for dialogue and collaboration between GOs, NGOs, POs & IOs	Changing way of life to mitigate global environmental degradation & poverty
Project Sustainability	No guarantee	No guarantee	could be "Yes"	One of the main goals is to ensure project sustainability	Up to the degree of support by people in the North
Main problems to be dealt with	Poverty and local specific problems	Poverty and local specific problems, but mainly, economic one	Depends on type & sector of POs	Lack of policy on participation; Lack of dialogue among GOs, IOs, NGOs and POs	"Root" causes, i.e. massive consumption and massive waste in the North
Time Span	Short-term	Short-term	Short-term	Middle-term	Long-term
Scale	Communities in the South	Communities in the South + some regional	Communities in the South + some in the North	Country level in the South + some international	Northern countries & Global
Type of SD	SD-1 & 2	SD-1 & partly SD-2	SD-1, 2 & partly SD-3	SD-1 & SD-2	SD-3, & indirectly SD-1

of life in order to achieve sustainable development.

Experts and organizations -- regardless of whether they are governments, NGOs or POs -- whose aim is to foster participatory approaches to sustainable development need to recognize the whole picture of both participation and sustainable development. They need to understand where their particular approach is located in this overall picture for the purpose of increasing interactions, information exchange, mutual learning and collaboration among the practitioners of each approach. This will make each approach more effective in the long run. International organizations are in an ideal position to promote this coordination in order to foster participatory approaches to sustainable development, in cooperation with active civil society organizations throughout the world.

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