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**ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF MARGINALIZED PEOPLE IN
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND THE ROLE OF
WORLD VISION MYANMAR**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to explore the participation of the marginalized people in community development, and specifically how World Vision Myanmar facilitates that participation. The Area Development Programme implemented by World Vision in Thabaung Township was selected as a case study. Employing theoretical continuums of participation in conjunction with qualitative research methods, the nature and level of participation of marginalized people and the factors influencing their participation, as well as the role of World Vision Myanmar in promoting their active participation, were investigated.

Before the 1990s, the dominant modes of top-down and externally-induced development failed to provide the hoped-for results in reducing poverty. As a result, a more people-oriented approach to development was encouraged and the participation of the previously ignored beneficiaries of development initiatives is now seen as vital in achieving and sustaining development outcomes. However, community participation in development initiatives does not mean that all segments of a community have an equal role in development programmes and share benefits equally.

This study found that nearly all community members participate in community development projects initiated by World Vision Myanmar but that the form of their participation varies. Three socioeconomic categories (the rich, the middle-class and the poor) were present in each research village, and the results showed that the poor were marginalized from active participation in important aspects of community development, especially in leadership and decision-making. The poor were characterized by a cluster of disadvantages. This study noted that the decision-making power remained mostly in the hands of the powerful people in the community. However, leadership styles differed between research villages, demonstrating that the poor can contribute to decision-making processes when the leadership style in the communities is inclusive of the marginalized. In contrast, when the leadership style is authoritative and individualized, the poor remain marginalized from development processes.

World Vision Myanmar has policy documents and guidelines that encourage the participation of every segment of the community, especially the poor. However, there is still room for the organization to make these guidelines more accessible for Community Based

Organizations (CBOs) so that they can apply them more effectively in their communities, and it could work to build capacities of the marginalized to facilitate their empowerment.

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, my loving sisters, my beloved wife and my lovely daughter. They are the soul and heart of my life as well as the source of my happiness and strength.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT		ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT		iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS		vi
LIST OF FIGURES		ix
LIST OF TABLES		ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS		ix
I. INTRODUCTION		1
1.1	Introduction	2
1.2	Research Background	2
1.3	Research Rationale	3
1.4	Research Aim and Objectives	4
1.5	Introductory Narratives about My Research Fieldwork	4
1.6	Thesis Structure	5
II. PARTICIPATION OF MARGINALIZED PEOPLE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT		6
2.1	Introduction	7
2.2	Overview of Community Development	7
2.3	Participation in Development: Concepts and Definitions	8
2.3.1	Emergence and Evolution of Participation	8
2.3.2	Definitions of Participation	11
2.3.3	Typologies of Participation	14
2.4	Participation of the Marginalized People in Community Development	19
2.4.1	Who are the Marginalized People?	19
2.5	Issues Surrounding Participation in Community Development	22
2.5.1	Who Participates in What?	23
2.5.2	Motivating Factors for Participation in Community Development	24
2.5.3	Challenges to Participation in Community Development	25
2.6	Chapter Conclusion	27
III. CONTEXT: MYANMAR, THABAUNG TOWNSHIP AND THE ROLE OF WORLD VISION		28
3.1	Introduction	29
3.2	Myanmar	29
3.2.1	Geographical Location and Climate	29
3.2.2	Demographic Characteristics	31

3.2.3	Political History	32
3.2.4	Leadership Style in Myanmar	33
3.3	The Profile of Thabaung Township	34
3.3.1	Geographical Location of Thabaung Township	34
3.3.2	Demographics and Socio-economic Conditions of Thabaung Township	35
3.4	History of World Vision International	36
3.5	World Vision Myanmar	37
3.6	World Vision in Thabaung Township	38
3.6.1	World Vision’s Area Development Programme in Thabaung Township	38
3.6.2	Structure of World Vision Thabaung	40
3.7	Chapter Conclusion	42
IV.	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	43
4.1	Introduction	44
4.2	Research Design	44
4.3	Selection of the Study Area and Participants	45
4.3.1	Selection of Thabaung Township as the Study Area	45
4.3.2	Selection of Participants	47
4.4	Data Collection Methods	49
4.4.1	In-depth Interviews	49
4.4.2	Focus Group Discussions	50
4.4.3	Observation	50
4.4.4	Document Analysis	51
4.5	Data Analysis and Interpretation	52
4.6	Ethical Considerations	53
4.7	Reflections on the Field Research	55
4.7.1	Advantages of Being “Close” to the Study Area	55
4.7.2	Challenges, Limitations and Constraints Encountered in the Fieldwork	55
4.8	Validity and Reliability	57
4.9	Chapter Conclusion	58
V.	FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	59
5.1	Introduction	60
5.2	Socio-economic Characteristics of the People Marginalized from Participation in Community Development	60
5.2.1	Economic Status	61
5.2.2	Types of Occupations	63
5.2.3	Low Level of Education	65
5.2.4	Physical Dwellings	67
5.3	Forms of Marginalization, and Factors Affecting Participation of the Marginalized People in Community Development	68
5.3.1	Membership of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)	69
5.3.2	Decision-Making Processes	70
5.3.3	Distribution of Community Development Fund (Revolving Fund)	72
5.3.4	Distribution of One-off Benefits	76

5.3.5. Age	77
5.3.6 “Gatekeepers” and Power Relations	78
5.3.7 Gender	81
5.4 The Role of World Vision in Facilitating Community Participation	82
5.4.1 The Role of Community Development Facilitators (CDFs)	82
5.4.2 Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)	83
5.4.3 Targeting	85
5.4.4 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)	85
5.5 Chapter Conclusion	86
VI. DISCUSSION	88
6.1 Introduction	89
6.2 Discussion of Objective One and Recommendations for Further Research	90
6.3 Discussion of Objective Two and Recommendations for Further Research	102
6.4 Thesis Summary and Conclusion	107
REFERENCES	110
APPENDICES	117

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	Arnstein’s Ladder of Participation	15
Figure 2:	Characteristics of the Marginalized Households	22
Figure 3:	Geographical Location of Myanmar and its Neighbouring Countries	30
Figure 4:	Geographical Location of Thabaung Township	35
Figure 5:	World Vision Thabaung and its Target Villages	40
Figure 6:	Organizational Structure of World Vision Thabaung	41
Figure 7:	Three Aspects of Community Development Process	69
Figure 8:	Structure of Community-Based Organizations in World Vision’s Target Villages	84
Figure 9:	Participation of the Marginalized People According to the “Stages of Participation” by Cohen & Uphoff (1980)	95

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Pretty’s Typology of Participation	16
Table 2:	Different Continuums of Participation	18
Table 3:	Population Distribution by Gender and Age in Thabaung Township in 2012	36
Table 4:	Breakdown of Respondents by Gender and Social Ranking In Semi-structured Interviews	48

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Area Development Programme
CBOs	Community-based Organizations
CD	Community Development
CDF	Community Development Facilitator
CRC	Convention on the Rights of Children
D, M & E	Design, Monitoring and Evaluation
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
VSLAs	Village Savings and Loans Associations
WVI	World Vision International
WVM	World Vision Myanmar