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**Maximising Participation:**  
An Integrated Model Of Alternative Development And  
Participatory Instructional Design.

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A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
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## **Abstract:**

This thesis is concerned with participation by third world people within an alternative development context. The thesis is aimed at identifying the current parameters within which participation is accepted and proposes that these should (and can) be extended. The thesis proposes a holistic alternative development model, which promotes maximum participation. This model is achieved by the integration of accepted alternative development practice and current instructional technology practice.

The thesis initially outlines the theoretical perspectives of both practices to define each process and identify relational, structural and methodological linkages. Investigation of relational linkages reveals a strong link between the two practices with corresponding steps occurring at each phase of the process. In addition the investigation reveals similar considerations, in respect to participation, particularly in the areas of needs analysis, design and evaluation. A parallel ideology in respect to participant input, empowerment and self-determination is also evident.

Secondly the thesis proposes an integrated alternative development model that maximises participation and achieves enhanced empowerment, equity and appropriateness. Primary research by way of a case study is utilised to further investigate the model. The case study (based in Vanuatu) gives comparison between current alternative development practice and the integrated model. The study reveals the integrated model significantly enhances participant input resulting in a development intervention that fully considers the instructional needs of participants and better promotes empowerment and efficiency.

Using a web based questionnaire as a research tool, the thesis also investigates current participatory trends in instructional design. This research aims to identify if development practitioners have 'picked up' on current instructional technology. The survey revealed that 88% of all respondents whilst promoting participation, did not seek participant input during instructional design.

The findings of the thesis show a definite developmental advantage in enhancing participation by the integration of the two practices. Additionally the integrated model proposed in the thesis gives a clear direction as to how this can be achieved.

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

Current alternative development practice (development from below) emphasises participation leading to empowerment as a key developmental tool (Nelson and Wright, 1995, pp.1-18; Friedman, 1992, pp.14-36). As such participatory analysis of developmental needs and developmental outcomes are the norm. Additionally people participate by acquiring/applying new knowledge and skills that will assist them in achieving an improved quality of life. Such knowledge and skills are normally offered through a change agent utilising some form of instruction.

The principles of participation are acknowledged as appropriate and effective in respect to the areas they are applied to (particularly rural development), but it is questioned whether these principles are carried through the entire developmental process (Rahnema, 1997, pp.377-403; Uphoff, Esman and Krishna, 1998, pp.5-8). In particular the area of instructional design is of concern with indications that little consideration is being given to target population input by a majority of development practitioners during this critical phase of development. It could be argued that during this phase past inappropriate development methodology and attitudes are the norm with the 'expert' in a particular field of instructional requirement, without any input from the target population (other than a broad instructional goal gleaned from the latest PRA exercise), deciding instructional inputs (to achieve the identified goal), instructional methodology, assessment criteria and even limitations as to who can participate.

To grant the expert such licence in the developed world would be unheard of by those following accepted principles of instructional technology where emphasis is placed upon input from the intended recipients. Such input ensures instructional content satisfies instructional needs in the most efficient manner, due consideration is given to remedies other than instruction prior to identifying instructional content and the required knowledge and skills are taught in the most appropriate way. In addition the target group is fully considered in respect to how they learn best, cultural requirements, the best learning environment, how

instruction is best structured, and when, to whom and at what pace instruction is best delivered.

It is proposed that such anomalies can however be overcome by the integration of accepted instructional technology practices and theory into the alternative development model with such practice becoming part of, and an enhancement to alternative development. Such an integration is not considered to alter currently accepted alternative development practice but rather create a more holistic model that extends the principles of participation past that of identifying developmental needs, participation in the intervention and monitoring/evaluation. Proposed additional participation would ensure past anomalies in instructional design, particularly in respect to instructional efficiency and appropriateness, would be negated with fair and equitable participant input guiding the instructional design process.

This thesis therefore seeks to answer four key questions, how similar are the principles/methodologies of alternative development and instructional design, is the integration of the two models theoretically possible, what concrete advantage would arise from an integrated model and to what extent is participation during instructional design being considered by current development providers. To answer these questions the thesis incorporates three key tools of enquiry: a review of current theoretical literature, the application of evaluation research in a case study scenario and a web based survey.

This thesis is structured to first investigate current theory in respect to alternative development and instructional technology with a purpose of profiling a theoretical model that integrates them. The thesis then gives practical comparison of application of the separate models on one hand and an integrated model on the other, to the development process. Finally the thesis enquires as to current development practice in respect to instructional technology.

To this end chapters two and three seek to define firstly alternative development and secondly instructional technology to set the broad parameters within which the study is set. In addition the theoretical perspectives of both are investigated with emphasis being placed on concepts, the individual processes and like barriers to achieving these processes. Chapter four explores the relationship between

alternative development and instructional technology highlighting the structural linkages, process linkages and linkages in ideology. From consideration of these chapters a conceptual framework for their integration is derived in chapter five with the introduction of a diagrammatic representation of the integrated model and discussion of its advantages and what additional processes are incorporated into it.

Chapter six presents a case study based on a development intervention in Vanuatu. The chapter gives good example as to the use of the separate and integrated models and discusses methodology and evaluation. It also critically analyses outcomes and participant comment from the two different processes. In this chapter the advantages of an integrated model are discussed with all conclusions being based on participatory monitoring and evaluation.

To compliment the case study it is considered appropriate to investigate current trends in respect to participation (in instructional design) in the context of today's development organisations. Chapter seven introduces a web based survey designed to enquire as to what percentage of respondents were involved in instructional design on a regular basis with additional consideration being given to the amount of participant input. Questions in the survey further aim to identify the exact nature of participant input. A full analysis of results and logical conclusions from this analysis is also presented.

The thesis concludes with a discussion of both the theoretical and primary findings and seeks to draw conclusions from these findings in respect to the appropriateness and practicability of an integrated alternative development/instructional design model to better advance development practice and thus third world development.

## Chapter Two

### Alternative Development: An Overview

#### Introduction

This thesis is set within the parameters of alternative development. The concepts of participation, empowerment and 'bottom up' process are seen as the basis of effective developmental micro interventions (Chambers, 1995, pp.30-42). In particular appropriate forms of participation form the foundations of a process of empowerment that should evolve through the development program building on itself as participants contribute to each stage of the developmental program. As such, it is considered important that the validity of alternative development strategies is identified, alternative development is defined, and the processes/components surrounding alternative development are discussed. This chapter thus gives definition to alternative development, highlights its components/concepts, offers a model of the alternative process and discusses the common attitudinal barriers to achieving the process.

#### Defining Alternative Development

The development industry has evolved over the years through a never-ending shift of paradigms reflecting changing political, social and economic times. Initially proposing 'grand' theories of development, the industry sought to develop the South in a linear fashion moving from traditional society through a series of stages to developed society mirroring that of the North. By the 1990s development theory had shifted its emphasis to self-help and bottom up development. This shift resulted in an expansion of the development industry to a far broader base to incorporate this new theoretical position and a different style of development practice that focussed on participatory interventions in 'grass roots' situations (Preston, 1996).

Chambers (1983, p.147) gives good definition of emerging alternative development in a rural context in a critique of a proposed World Bank definition. He states:

*Rural development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of development. The group includes small-scale farmers, tenants and the landless.*

This definition reflects much of what the process of alternative development is about. The key factors of poor, want, need, livelihood and control depict an accurate picture of what development is involved with. In a later publication Chambers (1997, pp.9-14) follows the evolution of such factors when suggesting concerns of well-being, livelihood, capability, equity and sustainability are the key considerations of today's development practice.

Such considerations have led to the evolution of an alternative development style focusing on 'people centred, micro interventions'. Within these interventions the considerations of gender, environment and development from below, span the entire spectrum of development ideologies. As discussed by Korten (1990, pp.197-201) a people centred approach to development involving key principles of empowerment and participation is paramount to achieving good and equitable development at grass roots level. This observation is further supported by Brohman (1996, pp.251-276) when discussing participation and power. Although the elusive nature of achieving true participation is highlighted he identifies participatory processes as the 'backbone' of good development.

Cowan and Shenton (1995, pp.27-29) highlight the fact that development is rarely "coherently" defined and suggest the term "defies definition." This reflects the complex/diverse nature of development and it is suggested that true definition can only be achieved within specific areas/contexts. Although alternative development covers a broad spectrum of current development practice the key principles of equity, participation and micro intervention as discussed above establish the parameters within which it can be defined.

Within this context I therefore define alternative development as a process involving strategies of bottom up, people centred micro interventions resulting in the acquisition of a variety of material, social and environmental items/conditions particular to micro group needs within the context of the immediate environment; acquisition of such items/conditions normally equating to improved well being and quality of life.

### Components/Concepts Of Alternative Development

Change and Outside Intervention. Change and development are intrinsically linked, development be it positive or negative depends on change. Change can happen internally through a 'natural' process or can be manipulated/accelerated through outside intervention. Outside intervention is central to Northern development methodology and as is seen as a precondition to change by most development agencies. Chambers (1997, p.3) cites change as "a natural condition of physical, biological and social systems" he depicts change as an unstoppable force that requires harnessing, shaping and direction if it is to achieve appropriate development. It could well be considered that 'outside intervention' is just one element of such change acting as an accelerant to, and a determining factor in, the way change evolves. In this context outside intervention may not necessarily be a precondition to development but rather an integral component of a particular development initiative (Chambers, 1997, pp.3-32; Pieterse, 1998, pp.344-355).

Participation and Empowerment. It can be argued that participation alone often contributes little more to the development process than the satisfaction of the requirement for the target population to contribute to the labour component of a project. Often this is the result of the development practitioner's need to involve local people thus satisfying the requirements of the donor with the needs of the local people being a secondary consideration (Burkey 1993; Brohman 1996, p.251). Broham (1996, pp.251-253), identifies this type of participation as totally undesirable labelling it "coerced participation" that is forced by a bottom down developmental approach, often imposed on participants.

Alternative development calls for participation of an entirely different nature described by Brohman (1996, p.252) as “spontaneous (bottom up) participation” reflecting “voluntary and autonomous action”. Such participation is seen as an whole developmental process spanning the entire developmental cycle.

As such the logical extension to participation is the notion that the involvement of the people should lead to them gaining the knowledge and skills to improve their own quality of life through personal/group empowerment. Moser (1989, pp.1814-1817) identifies participation as an absolute precondition for this process and thus emerges the additional concept of empowerment further quantifying participation and proposing a participatory process. This process leads to the disadvantaged having greater control their own lives and through the acquisition of knowledge and skills enables them to become better able to understand causes of their poverty. This newfound knowledge puts them in a far better situation to organise and use resources available to improve their quality of life and current situation (Burkey, 1993, pp.57-59; Potter, 1999).

External Agents. The process of alternative development normally requires an external catalyst to initiate it and to support its growth. This is provided through development intervention involving outside agencies and facilitated by an external agent. The agents general role is best described as a two way process of providing knowledge/advice to the local people and seeking/representing their views to outsiders involved with the intervention. The agent may not necessarily be one person and could be a local NGO, an external NGO, a development technician, or an appropriate person from within the local community.

The general role of an external agent is to provide knowledge/advice and seek/represent the views of the people. These general roles can be expanded into specific participatory activities:

- Assist in identifying developmental needs and problems through a program of critical awareness building.
- Promote group action and its advantages, encourage/assist in the building of appropriate group structures.
- Promote the broadest possible participation through the creation of interest groups using motivational strategies to ensure all have a voice.
- Encourage and assist in the development of leadership skills within the community.

- Assist and encourage communities to establish appropriate links and communicate their needs and grievances.
- Share specific knowledge that may be of advantage to the community in improving their quality of life.
- Assist the community in evaluation of the development intervention (including the performance of the external agent), encourage community input through all steps of the intervention.
- Continually review their own (the external agent's) performance and modify/improve undesirable aspects.

The preceding list highlights the key areas of concern to the external agent with activities being amended/added depending on the developmental situation. In addition it highlights the complexity of the job at hand and the need for an external agent to possess a special combination of practical skills and appropriate knowledge (Burkey, 1993, pp.78-81; Chambers, 1983, pp.145-148).

Participants. "Speak about 'the people' and it is the minorities of the oppressed – those sections of the world population who have no economic or social status in society if judged by the standards of the dominant structures – who come most readily to mind" (Carmen, 1996, p.4). This description profiles the broad base of participants in an alternative development context. Carmen (1996, pp.4-5) further qualifies his statement citing varying degrees of poverty and oppression covering a broad socio-economic spectrum within the third world. Chambers (1997, p.12) identifies the preferred participants as "the poor, weak, vulnerable and exploited." In addition both authors place an emphasis on rural women citing them as the most disadvantaged.

Chetkov-Yanoov (1986, pp.26.27) suggest that participants are intrinsically linked to, and grouped according to the type of activity that is taking place. This definition targets the community and components within it providing finite micro groups for each intervention and a second level of definition. Groupings such as "those who are suffering from a specific (problem) condition", "residents of specific geographic areas" and "clients or consumers of specific agency services" are all identified as such micro group participants (Chetkov-Yanoov, 1986, p.27).

Of extreme significance are the rights of such participants. For too long eurocentric idealism and top down models of development have proposed change to the cultural, traditional and personal rights of participants in the name of modernisation and progress. Economics have overshadowed social equity and an emphasis on modernity has often led to the deterioration of rights to tradition (including traditional access) and customary practice. (Friedmann, 1992, pp.1-13). Friedman (1992, pp.8-13) categorises participants' rights into three specific areas; human rights giving the right to an equitable standard of living in respect to the basic necessities of life, citizen rights reflecting recognition of citizen status and thirdly the right to conditions which enable a participant to develop to his or her full capacity as an individual (human flourishing<sup>1</sup>).

Consideration of such rights is the cornerstone of alternative development with equity, capacity and self-determination coming to the fore. Friedmann (1992, pp.12-13) further argues that such consideration is both complex and at times even contradictory particularly in the areas of human rights and human flourishing. But emphasises that the right to free choice is paramount.

### Alternative Development (The Process): Key Considerations

Shown below is a diagrammatic representation of the 'bottom up' alternative development process and lines of input from key players.

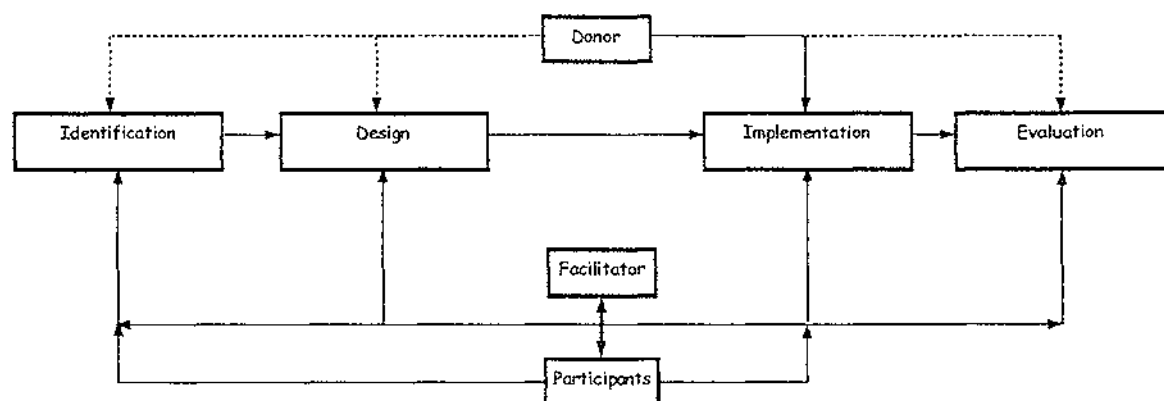


Figure one: The Bottom Up Alternative Development Model

Adapted from: (NZODA, 1996, p.9)

<sup>1</sup> A term Friedmann (1992) cites as originating from the works of Margaret Jane Radin challenging our consideration of the definition of a 'full human being' (Radin 1987)

As discussed the process of alternative development is people centred with participant input/control desirable during each stage:

Identification of developmental needs is normally achieved through a process of appraisal involving participants and an outside facilitator (change agent). The most commonly accepted method to achieve this is some form of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). Chambers (1997, p.102) proposes PRA as a process that enables local people to actively participate in the identification of their developmental needs in an equitable manner that gives them fair control over the process and enables full consideration of their knowledge of life and local conditions.

PRA offers proven participatory methods of enquiry including; local analysis of secondary sources (such as detailed maps, photographs), mapping and modelling, seasonal calendars, time and trend analysis, Venn diagramming, daily time use analysis, shared presentations and analysis and participatory planning (Chambers, 1997, pp.117-119). Central to all such activities is the principle Chambers (1997, p.117) names "handing over the stick and they do it." In other words the participants are given control (empowering them to make the decisions) whilst the outsider takes the role of facilitator only.

Design of the intervention is best described as the phase in which the facilitator, the participants and sometimes the donor identify alternatives for the intervention, identify the most appropriate alternative and plan appropriate methodology. Within alternative development practice the past rigidity of the logistical framework and project is somewhat redundant with a preference being shown for open-ended development programs (sometimes supported by a loose logistical framework plan). This approach is proposed by Cusworth and Franks (1993) as the "adaptive approach" to development relying on maximum participant input and flexibility in methodology to better reflect the needs of the participants thus resulting in appropriate, equitable development. Such design becomes an ongoing factor of the intervention and although more time consuming (something much resisted by larger development agencies and governments) the end result is a program of development that has evolved rather than being enforced which reflects satisfaction of the participants absolute needs within the context of their

particular social/cultural conditions and their immediate environment (Cusworth and Franks 1993).

Implementation in an alternative development situation follows the design process and should be virtually seamless with it. Given that interventions are small, people centred and focussed, and that the program of development is continuously adapting to achieve improved equity and appropriateness there is often no clear entry point for the main development effort but rather a gradual shift towards major development activities rather than planning activities. This transition often creates concern when the donor is governmental or a large institution where the focus is often on project based fixed term development. Of key importance during implementation of the program is the recognition that significant input/feedback from the participants is paramount during the entire process. This initiates further design modification of the program as it continues (Cusworth and Franks, 1993, pp.85-86).

Evaluation is a process that reflects the people centred approach and the 'evolving nature' of many alternative development programs. As such monitoring and evaluation of interventions must fit two key criteria; firstly it must be ongoing throughout the entire program and for some time after participants consider developmental objectives achieved. Secondly monitoring and evaluation methodology must be such that equitable participation (of participants) is achieved in partnership with other key players resulting in participants being considered partners in the process rather than "objects of the evaluation" (UNDP, 2002). Chambers (1999, p.2) suggests that PRA methodology is the most appropriate to achieve participatory monitoring and evaluation citing the three common elements of the PRA approach; responsibility<sup>2</sup>, equity/empowerment, and diversity, as the common base of all participatory processes.

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<sup>2</sup> "Individual responsibility and judgement exercised by facilitators, with critical self-awareness, embracing error" (Chambers 1999, p.1)

### Common Attitudinal Barriers To Achieving Good Alternative Development

Alternative development promotes a partnership between participants and those facilitating the development. This partnership is by no means one sided but does place a responsibility on those outsiders concerned with the initiative, in respect to creating the appropriate 'climate' within which good and equitable development can happen. Creating this partnership is normally the responsibility/role of the external agent who provides the catalyst for development. In an alternative development intervention the agent is the key tool in achieving knowledge transfer. As such and given the complexity of the job, the extensive range of skills required and the diverse nature of target groups there are many factors that can, and do, negate the effectiveness of the external agent. Failure of many development programs although adhering to the principles of participation and empowerment can be directly linked to the attitudes and resulting methodologies of the external agent. Attitudinal factors negating effectiveness can be separated into four main categories: human bias, culture, communication and personal motivation (Chambers, 1983, pp.2-6; Rahnema, 1992, pp.122-123).

Human Bias is well explored by Robert Chambers (1983, pp.13-27) who cites humankind's bias towards: self comfort (the air conditioned vehicle, the civilised environment, fine weather), preferred persons (the elite, male, the innovators, the active), the most obvious (the project, the model), and the favoured (the progressive, the land owners, the entrepreneurs, the leaders), as being a direct barrier to achieving participation of all key players. In a practical sense such bias can lead to:

- Exclusion of poorer households due to difficult access.
- Development focus only on communities within easy commuting distance of an urban centre.
- Little appreciation of development problems during adverse conditions such as the monsoon season.
- Lack of consideration of the needs of marginalized groups such as women, the aged and youth leading to development methodology that reflects the needs (and aspirations) of those already advantaged.
- Little evolution of power to the extremely poor resulting in a lack of true representation in respect to identification, control and initiation of development activities.

Culture plays a large part in any development initiative and in the case of external agents is equally important. It is not only the culture of the target population that is of concern but also the culture of the external agent. "Outsiders fall into two main cultures: an academic culture, mainly social scientists, engaged in unhurried analysis and the culture of practitioners, engaged in time bound action" (Chambers, 1983, p.28).

In general the culture of the practitioner centres on action and positive optimism. This unfortunately comes with its own set of pitfalls; the emphasis is on success and as such the practitioner will often in the interests of program acceptance and funding: manipulate input from the people to fast track the development process, embellish reports to reflect appropriate achievement when that is not the case, resist attempts at 'good' evaluation, shun constructive criticism and forecast outputs that are over optimistic/unobtainable.

The academic in contrast adheres to a culture of critical evaluation and is often seen in the role of consultant, acting as an external agent on a short-term basis. A tendency to emphasise the negative combined with theoretical postulations and intellectual rhetoric often overshadows the main objective of the program or an acceptable but partial success and in many cases alienates the target population through the sheer complexity of methodology/terminology (Chambers, 1983, pp.30-35; Burkey, 1993, pp.81-84; Rahnema, 1992, pp.123-125)

Lack of consideration/understanding of the target population's culture is also an important factor negating the effectiveness of the external agent. The key word in facilitation is partnership with which comes the concept of acceptance. Far too often partnerships become unworkable through lack of acceptance of the external agent by the people due to cultural blunders. Additionally developmental concepts sometimes work against other cultures (e.g. gender issues, devolving power) and as such an intimate knowledge of cultural ideals is essential in introducing them for consideration.

Communication whether written or verbal can pose extreme barriers to the effectiveness of the external agent. Lack of proficiency in the local language or cross cultural communication leads to misinterpretation, misunderstanding and leads to a shift in power favouring those that speak the agent's language. The

most obvious case of this is the use of local interpreters who often gain power both over the agent and the people through their position. Such power is commonly misused for the interpreter's own personal gain. Additionally external agents often rely heavily on an interpreter's advice, which does not necessarily represent the view of the majority. The tendency of many external agents to produce/use written media also poses problems. Such media normally reflects the culture of the writer/producer normally alien to the local population. Often great lengths are taken to translate such media but this is still of little value to the illiterate and the use of written media is often instrumental in setting the communities power base within those that are literate. In addition procedures that rely heavily on the production of overcomplicated media promote a culture of agreement by reflex through lack of understanding (Agunga, 1996, pp.233-245).

Personal motivation is often the greatest negative factor in respect to external agents. What individually motivates the agent is the driving force behind that way they operate. In a group organisational situation (e.g. NGO's) similar motivational needs are often the cornerstone of the group's ideology. As such, the change agent's motivation directly effects development methodology and outputs as well as the target population's perception of the agent. People are motivated by an extreme variety of factors such as: self-glorification, paternalism, religious fanaticism, personal gain and pity, none of the preceding have a place in the development arena. Such motivational factors lead to distrust, hidden agendas, conflict, and manipulation.

On a positive note many external agents overcome the above barriers to assist in the achievement of good and equitable development. Burkey (1993, p.76) cites Freire's comments in respect to this which state: "It is necessary to trust in the oppressed and in their ability to reason." Mutual trust and respect provides the cornerstone to the external agents role and although attaining this can be a complex task, many succeed.

## Summary

Alternative development is defined as a process concerned with people centred development from below, focussing on micro interventions and the developmental needs of specific groups. The objective of alternative development is the improvement of quality of life of such groups, particularly the poorest of the poor.

The focus of alternative development is change through empowerment, often accelerated through outside intervention. The key concepts/components of alternative development are; the participants, who are normally a like group often identified as such due to the activity that is taking place; participation (leading to empowerment), and an external catalyst (agent) to facilitate appropriate participation. In particular the consideration of the participants rights is integral to the process.

The process of alternative development follows four specific stages; identification of developmental needs through a participatory method of enquiry such as PRA, design of the developmental program to satisfy developmental needs, implementation of the program and a process of evaluation that considers not only developmental outcomes but monitors the entire developmental process and its impact on the participants and their surrounding environment. Although the process follows a set pattern of stages, there is absolute consideration of this process as an evolving program with mechanisms (through evaluation) to facilitate necessary program changes to better reflect the expressed needs of participants.

Key barriers to alternative development lie in the attitude of those (agents) facilitating the partnership between donors, change agents and participants. The key to success of such development is equity and effective knowledge transfer. As such inappropriate bias's of personal preference or towards certain preferred groups; rigid eurocentric cultures pertaining to change agent's particular operational background; a lack of acceptance/understanding of the participants' culture, poor communication skills on behalf of the change agent and inappropriate personal motivation reflecting such attitudes as self glorification, paternalism or even religious fanaticism all create impenetrable barriers between the agent and the participants leading to lack of equity, poor knowledge transfer and developmental failure.