



# Participatory Assessment of Development

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## Langbinsi info sheet, no.4

### 'Inclusion of the poor' by Agnieszka Kazimierczuk (summary)

Agnieszka Kazimierczuk was a team member during the first workshop in Langbinsi (2008) and subsequently stayed in the area for more in-depth research about the impact of projects on different wealth groups (see info sheet 3). During her research she discovered that both the poor and the very poor had been under-represented in the first workshop. In 2010 she returned to Langbinsi to investigate how this 'exclusion of the poor' had influenced the workshop results. During the follow-up research she also studied children's perspective on development (not reported here).

Agnieszka used the local classifications of five wealth groups – resulting from earlier workshops – to identify poor and very poor households in the village of Gbangu. She organized two 'PADev-style' workshops in Gbangu: one follow-up with people who had participated in the 2008 workshop (mainly representing the average, rich and very rich); and one with only poor and very poor people. After that she compared the results.

In the local classification of wealth groups, people found it quite easy to distinguish between the poor and the very poor. The very poor are clearly a marginalized group that makes up just over ten percent of the population. Many of them are physically or mentally challenged and their poverty is quite visible (bare-footed, no clean clothes, begging). They have no farm or livestock; they mostly live alone, attached to a bigger household, and depend on others for survival.

The line between poor and average households is thinner. Both are small-scale farmers who use their own labour to work the land. Those that are considered poor have problems sending their children to school; they live in thatch-roofed houses without any furniture; they have no

bicycle, no goats (only poultry) and no health insurance; they have no reliable source of non-farm income; and they are food insecure during several months a year. They are not respected in society and marginalized in public gatherings and decision-making.

The workshop held with poor and very poor people revealed two major findings:

1. The very poor virtually do not benefit from any of the interventions. This group is exposed to very specific problems. Therefore, helping them to improve their quality of life would require quite a specific approach.
2. Secondly, the poor had very limited knowledge about development interventions. To a large extent this is because they were not beneficiaries of most projects. Conversely, it could be argued that perhaps they did not benefit from interventions because they were excluded from the knowledge about these projects.

Public goods such as boreholes, a school and a clinic were the only initiatives that reached most of the population, including the poor and very poor. However, even with such interventions, the average, rich and very rich benefit more.

The study concludes that the non-participation of the group of poorest people in the 2008 Langbinsi workshop did not have major implications for the results because members of this group were usually not direct beneficiaries of development interventions. They lacked knowledge of the projects and hence would not have been suitable to evaluate them.

Full reference: Kazimierczuk, A. (2010). *Gbangu follow up workshop report: Inclusion of the poor*. PADev Working Paper W.2010.2. Amsterdam AISSR.

