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**“Evaluation of Community Participation in the Jamaica Social Policy
Evaluation programme”**

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Thesis Supervisor: Prof. Elsie Lefranc

**By
Nakiema Dianna Peters
ID#: 98-015701**

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Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organization
CDC	Community Development Committee
CDO	Community Development Officer
CTT	Community Tracking Teams
JASPEV	Jamaica Social Policy Evaluation
SDC	Social Development Commission
YIP	Youth Inclusion Prototype

1 Introduction

This study undertakes a process evaluation of community participation in the JASPEV YIP. The study aims to provide an analysis of levels of community participation achieved during the implementation of this prototype against set objectives laid out by the programme designers.

This study assesses the extent to which the programme goals set for community participation were achieved as well as the ability of project coordinators and process managers to encourage and facilitate community participation. The specific objectives of the study include the:

- Examination of the conceptualization of community participation for JASPEV
- Examination of the preparatory work undertaken by project managers and coordinators to ensure community participation in the prototype
- Exploration of the level of community participation in the prototype in the fulfillment of community roles and responsibilities.
- Examination of the perceptions of participants of the benefits, cost and difficulties associated with their participation as well as their satisfaction with community participation in the prototype.
- Identification of areas of weaknesses as well as best practices in this process which can inform future strategies to improve citizen participation in development processes.

This evaluation is conducted by engaging a number of stakeholders involved in the prototype process including CTT, CBOs, Local Facilitators as well as Project Coordinators. The analysis is also complemented by a review of project documents.

The motivation for this study stems from the Government of Jamaica's expressed intent on promoting processes of good governance in the realization of developmental goals. The government has stated its intent to, "create more effective, complementary and transparent governance structures, seeking to move decision making closer to the People" (Cabinet Office, 2002).

While the move towards increased levels of community participation in the JASPEV project is the government's response to consultations with citizens who requested an increased role in the creation, implementation and monitoring of social policy, the following study presents a starting point to encourage further exploration the readiness of Jamaican communities to participate in policy formation. A participatory process is costly to facilitate and while this research does not attempt in anyway to measure the cost effectiveness of community participation it will provide an initial insight into the process of community participation and how it can be measured.

The study is of paramount importance as governments face increased pressure from bilateral and multilateral organizations to increase levels of community participation in policy and this is often not accompanied by attempts to evaluate whether community participation is as

relevant in the Jamaican culture as in other environments where it has been deemed a success.

Such an evaluation is especially relevant to the JASPEV programme since it is an action research process from which it is hoped lessons learnt can be translated into policy reformation. This study therefore affords policy makers an opportunity to review and improve on their ability to engage and include communities in the planning, implementation and evaluation of social policy, programmes and projects.

The paper begins with a background to the JASPEV Youth Inclusion Prototype. This is followed by a critical analysis of existing literature on evaluating community participation. This review provides the tools utilized in constructing a theoretical framework for the current evaluation.

Noteworthy policy recommendations are presented by the researcher and it is hoped that these will be reviewed and assessed as to their relevance in contributing to an improved approach to incorporating and evaluating community participation in policy, programme and project development.

2 Background

JASPEV is part of a broader emerging paradigm of “democratizing” research, based on the proposition that broad ownership of the generation and analysis of evidence will lead to a more effective and sustainable policy process (Holland, 2002). JASPEV represents a bold step by the Government of Jamaica, to create opportunities for Jamaicans to be involved in the development and implementation of policies and programmes that affect them (www.jaspev.org).

JASPEV is influenced by methodological traditions including New Public Management approaches, emphasizing outcome-based diagnosis and institutional transformation and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation, with its roots in project and community development (Holland, 2002).

The goals of JASPEV include:

- The development a Monitoring System to track social progress;
- The establishment of a new system for Social Policy Formulation and implementation
- The implementation of a “Youth Inclusion Action Learning Prototype”;
- The integration of public sector strategic planning and resource allocation for social policy; and
- The development of a more responsive people-oriented innovative culture in Jamaican

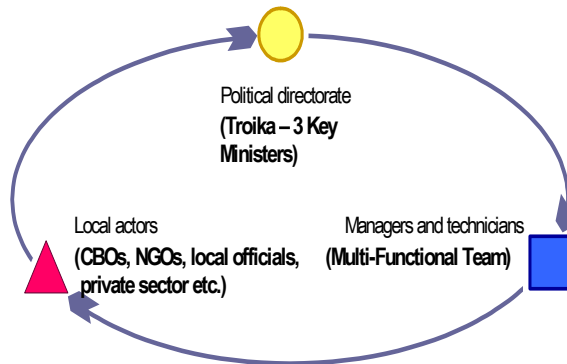
The JASPEV process was initiated in 2001 with government driven consultations to garner from communities their views of social policies and how communities, institutions and

ultimately every Jamaican can contribute to building a proud society. These consultations, revealed that communities not only viewed poverty reduction strategies as failing, but that they did not see Jamaica as a poor country, but one with ‘authorities’ who fail to listen to people’s complaints or suggestions (www.jaspev.org).

These consultations sparked a response from the Government of Jamaica in the form of a Social Policy Framework and Social Action Plan which provide the guiding framework for the development of social policies in Jamaica up to 2015. This Social Policy Framework laid out, for Jamaica, seven social policy goals including: Security, Social Integration, Governance, Livelihoods, Environment, Education, and Health.

An implementation phase was also established in JASPEV to ensure that social policy priorities identified in the Social Policy Framework and Social Action Plan were disseminated and carried forward effectively. One key element in this Framework and Action Plan was the development of thematic areas with the first being Youth Inclusion. Recognizing the gap between the supply of information for social policy and its actual use and the challenges posed by this, Youth Inclusion Prototype involved the creation of interacting nodes (policy, technical/strategic and operational/local) aimed at encouraging mutual learning and action as shown in the diagram below (Holland, 2002).

Figure 1: Prototype Structure



Source: Social Action Plan 2002-2007

The prototype established forms of action research allowing for pioneering and demonstration of new forms of behaviour, relationships, and decision-making that is appropriate to outcome-based management in the public sector. Youth Inclusion was selected as the first theme since it cuts across almost all functional boundaries in the public sector as well as the boundary between the public sector and the rest of society (www.jaspev.org).

The strategic objectives established for the youth inclusion prototype included:

Within the prototype specific areas of responsibility for each node were defined. These are presented in the table below:

Table 1: Role of Nodes in the Youth Inclusion Prototype

Local Actors	Troika	Multifunctional Team
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and validate a set of indicators around which it wants to see progress 2. Agree on the specific indicators the community wants to track 3. Agree on how the community will organize itself in order to manage the indicator process 4. Collect information to find out what is the current situation of youth in the community in relation to the specific indicators that they want to track (called baseline) 5. Share information with the Multi-Functional Team (MFT) and the Troika 6. Organize broad-based community meetings to discuss findings of the baseline 7. Conduct broad-based planning and develop a programme of action to improve the baseline 8. Liaise and network with MFT, the Troika, local agencies, and other communities in order to get information and learn about how to achieve their desired outcomes 9. Oversee the ongoing collection of data and secure records, which show whether or not progress is being made 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public Advocacy 2. Review of Performance Data 3. Interrogation of MFT re strategy and results 4. Support for Institutional Learning 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assessment of performance on the ground 2. Diagnosis of Problems and Potential 3. Assessment and Advice on Local Arrangements 4. Negotiation with Agencies and Departments on Program Modifications 5. Institutionalizing learning about what works and why 6. Publicity and Advocacy

Source: JASPEV Prototype design document

During the implementation of the prototype a number of processes were revised in response to realities which emerged. As such, while communities were asked to undertake the nine roles identified above, following data collection the prototype diverted to the establishment and signing of three charters of collaboration- entrepreneurship, continuing education and police-youth relations. These charters are expected to bring the youth in direct contact with service providers through the use of interface meetings; built into this relationship is also the intent to introduce processes of monitoring service delivery at both the community and agency levels (www.jaspev.org).

The current study is therefore restricted to an evaluation of participation in the prototype by communities up to the collection of baseline data since activities related to the charters of collaboration are currently underway.

3 Methodology

The techniques utilized in this study are qualitative research methodologies. Four methods of data collection were used; focus group discussions, key informant interviews, review of project documents and elite interview. Specific participants were identified for participation in this evaluation based on their role in the prototype.

3.1 Evaluation Instrument

An evaluation tool was developed comprising 39 questions sectionalized based on the participants to whom they were addressed (see appendix 1). The questions explored the achievement of the objectives set for communities in the JASPEV Youth Inclusion Prototype as well as general questions related to the level of preparedness of the communities to participate in the prototype. Questions were also posed regarding the analysis and building of an enabling environment for participation by communities.

Questions also explored the level of support given to the Community Tracking Team by different actors in the prototype and the benefits and challenges to the community of participating in the prototype. Community Tracking Team members were also assessed for their understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the prototype.

3.2 Selection of Communities

Communities were classified in JASPEV based on their socio-economic status and this classification was utilized in the selecting communities to participate in the study. The communities selected include rural poor, and non poor, and urban poor and non poor. Rural mixed and urban mixed communities were not included in the study. Since focus group

discussion were used to engage the communities, mixed communities would require different focus groups to maintain homogeneity among participants, and the timeframe for completing the study did not allow for this

While there were forty (40) communities participating in the prototype only four (4) were selected for this study. While a probability sampling method would have been preferred, a judgmental sampling method was employed. This was due to a lack of adequate resources as well as the timeframe within which the study was undertaken.

While all communities are dynamic, the four chosen of this evaluation were thought to be representative of the communities involved in the prototype. All communities selected matched at the time of implementation of YIP, all criteria laid down by the coordinators for involvement. These meant that these communities like all others in YIP, had active CDCs, expressed a willingness to track the process, and were willing to initiate action and to share honest assessments of progress with YIP stakeholders. Besides this similarity as it relates to criteria for selection, the communities were not comparable in terms of demographic characteristics.

The inclusion of these categories of communities in the study allowed for a comparative analysis of participation. The communities and the classifications assigned by JASPEV are noted table2 below.

Table 2: Classification of Communities Selected

Community selected	Parish	Socio-economic Classification
Greater Portmore	St. Catherine	Urban Non Poor
Maxfield Park	Kingston	Urban Poor
Palmers Cross	Clarendon	Rural Non Poor
Maidstone	Manchester	Rural Poor

3.3 Elite Interviews

Elite interviews were conducted with the JASPEV Youth Inclusion Prototype Coordinator as well as the SDC Research Director who had management responsibilities for community participation in the prototype. Elite interviews were chosen in engaging these persons since both were thought to have expert knowledge of the workings of the prototype and insight into the strategic planning undertaken prior to community engagement.

A semi-structured interview technique was utilized in the interviews. While questions were formulated ahead of time there was freedom to probe beyond the answers given. While this is prejudicial of the aims of standardization and comparability, this freedom allowed for deeper exploration and personal insight into the issues. The weaknesses of this method were recognized and in an effort to triangulate the information collected, additional interviews were conducted and focus group discussions held with CBOs.

3.4 Key Informant Interviews

Key Informant interviews were conducted with two members of each CTT from the four communities in the study. While focus group discussion were preferred, preliminary research in the communities revealed that in most instances members of CTTs no longer resided in the areas and were unavailable for any such focus group discussions.

Key informant interviews were also conducted with SDC CDO who were responsible for facilitating the day to day activities of JASPEV in the communities and would have expert operational knowledge of levels of community participation.

In the case of CDOs from SDC, only one (1) of the four (4) officers concerned still worked within the community involved in the study. Telephone interviews were therefore utilized in engaging two (2) of the four (4) since they were unavailable for one-on-one discussions.

3.5 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were used to engage the CBOs since it is a rapid way of collecting data at a low cost. It also allowed for a deeper understanding of the perspectives of the communities and also identified for the researcher, subtle nuances among communities. Focus group discussion has also been identified in the literature as a useful method in providing valuable insights into whether or not a program has achieved its desired goals (Butterfoss, 2006).

In the communities of Palmers Cross and Maxfield Avenue successful focus group discussions were held with the Palmers Cross CDC and the Maxfield Park Youth Club respectively. Eight (8) persons participated in the Palmers Cross discussion while (13) persons participated in the Maxfield Park focus group discussions.

In two (2) of the communities, focus group discussions were cancelled due to the inability of the researcher to mobilize the CBO for the discussions. In the Greater Portmore Community, the CBO which existed during the initial implementation of JASPEV was dormant and

members of the new organization were not involved in the prototype process. In Maidstone, inactivity in the CBO made it impossible to get a group together for a focused discussion.

3.6 Review of Project Documents

The following documents were reviewed;

- JASPEV/ SDC Memorandum of Understanding, 2003
- Report on JASPEV Youth Inclusion- Community Indicator Validation Report, October 2003
- Individual CDO reports on validation meetings
- JASPEV Youth Inclusion, data collection training and collection of baseline data report, 2004

3.7 Research Limitations

This study relies mainly on the memory of participants as well as the documentation during the project. The opportunity to capture information on vital aspects of community participation may therefore have been lost.

The unavailability of key informants to participate in the evaluation. Most CTT had disseminated and CBOs were dormant. This was considered not only a limitation but it also has implications for the sustainability of participation processes.

4 Literature Review

4.1 Participation

Participation is by no means a new concept in the realm of development. It is defined by Robert Hart (1992) as the process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives. Participation emerged in the late 1970's and has become widely acknowledged as a basic operational principle of development programming (Ackersson et al., 2003).

Participation can be seen as an end in itself, as well as a means towards an end. Conceptualized as an end in itself, participation helps people to acquire the skills, knowledge and experience to take more responsibility over their own development, ultimately being empowered to transform their lives and environment. Conceptualized as a mean to an end, participation is a process whereby local people cooperate and collaborate in an externally introduced project. However conceptualized, there is consensus that participation is 'good' for development.

4.2 Community Participation

Community participation, the focal concept for this research, is a social process in which groups with shared needs living in a specific geographical area actively identify their needs, make decisions and set up mechanisms to achieve solutions. Community participation can be thought of as a process along a continuum which enables communities to maximize their potential and progress from individual action to collective social and political change (Butterfoss, 2006). Government and policy makers have come to realize the important role that communities can play in policy development and as such, whether forced or inspired,

efforts are being made to allow communities to become more involved in policy making processes (Dukeshire et al, 2002)

The rationale for greater levels of community participation incorporates the view that community participation not only strengthens local communities but that a community's perspective can also bring local knowledge to bear on problems and solutions. This can lead to an improvement in the coherence of strategies as well as provide feedback to increase the effectiveness of services. The hypothesis then is *if* communities are involved in the strategies for change and they can establish a sense of ownership, *then* it is more likely that change will be sustained.

Citizens' participation emerged in the late 1960's as a key issue in political science in the United States of America. By the late 1970's, the declaration of Primary Health Care at Alma Ata (World Health Organization 1978) identified citizen participation as a crucial part of the definition of health and health promotions. The concept, however, remained as merely a catchphrase with its content undefined. By the mid 1980's citizens participation was revived with the presentation of a charter for action to achieve HEALTH for all by 2000 and beyond. However up to the late 1980's researchers remained in disagreement over how participation should be defined and whether participation was a process, programme, technique or methodology.

Not only does community participation pose challenges for the communities but also for government policy makers. Dukeshire et al (2002) noted that barriers such as perceived

resistance of communities as a partner in policy development, jurisdictional issues, attitude of government towards communities and structural barriers within government will impede their ability to facilitate community participation.

With all the challenges and barriers to community participation it is encouraged for its reputed benefits. In the area of health, community participation is said to heighten the sense of responsibility and conscientiousness regarding health and the concomitant gain in power achieved through the acquisition of skills and control over resources. Community participation is said to result in a greater diffusion of health knowledge in the community and greater use of indigenous expertise (Zakus and Lysack, 1998).

The benefits of community participation are only presumed, however, due to the complexity of the community participation process as well as how community participation is understood. The manner in which community participation is expressed varies considerably with the context in which it is implemented, thus making the comparison of projects and their evaluation highly problematic. It therefore becomes complicated to disentangle the effects of community participation from other effects (Zakus and Lysack, 1998).

Rahnema (1990) also suggests that the use of the concept of participation in development sometimes obscures real power differential between change agents and those on the receiving end of the development relationship. It sometimes serves as a pleasing disguise for manipulation. Kelly and Vlanenderen (1995) follow up on this by stating that in community

development, the superficial application of ostensibly democratic procedures serve to legitimize relations of domination under the guise of correct procedure.

Community participation lacks significant critical analysis, even though it is a prominent guiding principle in development policy. Jewkes and Murcott (1996) state that the lack of critical analysis coupled with the conceptual ambiguity underlies many of the failed expectations around community participation in health.

At the root of this shortcoming must be the inadequate conceptualization of community (Lysack 1996). Zakus and Lysack (1998) have concluded that the inadequate conceptualization of community coupled with the additional challenges posed by the meaning of participation results in community participation becoming a far more complicated idea and initiative than it appears at first. This makes it even more difficult to arrive at a final judgment with respect to the value of community participation overall.

4.3 Evaluating Community Participation

The inadequacies in the realm of community participation must also be related to shortcomings in the evaluation of this process. At various stages in a programme, policymakers, funding organizations, planners, program managers, taxpayers, and program beneficiaries would like to distinguish worthwhile social programs from ineffective ones. They are interested in whether the program is reaching its target population, whether the intervention is attaining the desired goals as well as whether the program is cost effective among other questions (Rossi et al. 2004). A program evaluation allows for these and other questions to be answered.

Programme evaluation can be defined as the use of social research methods to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention programs in ways that are adapted to their political and organizational environments and are designed to inform social action and improve social conditions (Rossi et al. 2004).

One widely used form of program evaluation is the assessment of the process. Process evaluation investigates how well the program is operating, how the services actually delivered are with the goals of the program, whether services are delivered to appropriate recipients and the level of organization in service delivery. Process evaluation can also look at the effectiveness of program management as well as the use of program resources (Rossi et al. 2004). In this study a process evaluation of community participation in the JASPEV YIP is pursued.

The evaluation of participation effects and outcomes face several difficulties which hinder the monitoring of change and learning across different contexts. Evaluations tend to be defined by short term funding or project cycles as well as the fact that a range of factors influence research, policy, health and social change thus making it difficult to attribute such change to any single process or actors (Kuruvilla, 2005).

There is also tension between standardized tools that facilitate comparison across programmes and specialized tools that fit specific programmes and community contexts. What becomes clear from the literature is that no one framework can be holistically adopted.

4.4 Appraising Theoretical Frameworks for Evaluating Community Participation

A review of theoretical frameworks and models purported by Gaventa (1980), Rifkin (1988), Kelly and Vlanenderen (1995), Khan (2005), Kuruvilla (2005) and Butterfoss (2006) provides an excellent basis on which to build a framework for the evaluation of community participation in JASPEV YIP.

Rifkin's (1988) framework for the evaluation of community participation is one of the revered models and has been tweaked and critiqued throughout the literature. Rifkin offers a set of indicators for measuring community participation based on his definition of the concept. Rifkin et al (1988) presented a framework focusing on the need to assess the process of change. Five factors were identified which influence community participation; needs assessment, leadership, organization, resources mobilization and management. It was thought that these indicators could be used to measure community participation at different times in the same program, by different assessors of the same program or by different participants in the same program.

This framework, also called the spider model, utilizes a continuum to rate the level of community participation from narrow to restricted, then mean to open and finally wide. It is the combined rating from all five domains which provides an overall measure of the level of community participation. A baseline measurement with appropriate markings on each continuum can show the breath of participation and is useful for comparative assessment at a later time as well as by other assessors.

Rifkin's model provides a tool to assist those involved in a programme to not only describe participation in the programme, but also to base future actions on their assessment. It should be noted though that this method is a descriptive one and does not attempt to determine whether participation is good or bad but to provide a visual presentation of the participation process.

Rifkin's model and hierarchical approaches to assessing participation is criticized for the uncertainty surrounding whether or not the different levels of the scale developed are equidistant. Should we assume that there is equal distance between narrow and restricted participation as there is between open and wide participation?

While the spider model for evaluating community participation is useful in its comparison of levels of community participation in a program, it is criticized for its neglect of some indicators in favor of others. It is also criticized for the fact that it does not indicate whether or not community participation and changes in levels of community participation is good or bad. Kuruvilla (2005), also highlighted the fact that hierarchical scales such as that presented by Rifkin utilizes a language which suggests that the goal of community participation is for every one to be participating at the same time, even where this may be impracticable, inefficient and ineffective.

Rifkin's continuum for measuring levels of community participation though criticized is very useful not only for the exploration of the variables presented, but can be imported to explore

other variables which impact participation such as support for community activities of a group mandated to drive a participation process.

What Rifkin leaves open to interpretation is the definition of the different levels of participation and this adds to the lack of consensus in the field. The model also fails to state how a final combined score for each indicator should be interpreted in terms of overall levels of community participation. It therefore falls short of presenting itself as a benchmark against which other evaluations can be measured even though it provides the generic variables to which indicators specific to a program being assessed can be assigned.

Kelly and Vlanenderen (1995) challenged the Rifkin Spider Model. These writers found that the literature on community participation was lacking in ideas of how to evaluate the relational and communicative dynamics between partners. They also noted there was still a need for the development of methods to evaluate how participants interact.

Kelly and Vlanenderen (1995) utilize the findings of an evaluation of participation in community health development to provide insight into how community participation can be more effectively evaluated. They noted that the evaluation of participation processes should feature a number of specific objectives and identified six points of concern which any evaluator of participation must bear in mind. According to them, in planning a participation process evaluation one should consider:

- *Evaluation of modes of participation*: the focus of the evaluation should be not only on how participants view themselves in the process but also on alterior views of their participation or how their mode of participation is understood by others.
- *Evaluation of the degree to which the project incorporates meta-dialogue* as a part of the work of the project. The authors identify the importance of assessing the degree to which the communicative problematic of participation have been identified and dealt with in the context of the project.
- *Evaluation of changes in the nature of participation* and degree to which participation changed the existing relational dynamics between the parties involved. The authors brought to the fore the expectation that in projects promoting community participation, a degree of capacity building would be involved through which there is a development of the capacity of the more marginalized participants to increasingly engage in all the activities of the project. This capacity building can take many forms but all with a common feature of enablement of capacities which are required to facilitate participation.

They also noted that a process evaluation of participation should focus on the extent to which a project is cognizant of the impact of the socio-political context out of which it emerges and specifically of the societal power dynamics involved. The success of the project would therefore be judged by the degree to which it brings about different alignments and groupings that exist in the broader society in which the project exists.

- *Evaluation of the needs analysis process*: similar to Rifkin's needs assessment indicator, Kelly and Vlanenderen noted that an evaluation of participation must look at the ways in

which the participation processes took into account the range of interests having an impact on the project.

- *Evaluation of the process of converting needs into strategies:* participation process evaluation should track the development of the needs assessment process and assess the relative degree of involvement of all partners in the process of needs assessment and programme design.
- *Evaluation of the coordination process:* finally the authors noted it is important to evaluate the relation between the coordinators and participants. They propose that an index of the adequacy of the participation processes is the degree to which the coordinators are able to stand between rather than become enmeshed in the participatory dynamics of the project. They also highlighted the importance of evaluating the shifting role of coordinators as it is expected that participants would increasingly take over ownership to the broad vision of the project and responsibility for its furtherance.

Kelly and Vlanenderen (1995) model of participation is very useful in its inclusion of the mode of participation in the discussion. It highlights the fact that participants' perception could influence how they participate in the project. This is seen in the current study as a useful method of triangulation of the data collected from the various actors involved in the study. This move to capture the modes of participation and an alterior view constitutes cross checking in evaluation studies for the purposes of measurement and analysis.

The authors' discussion of the importance of including an analysis of capacity building is also useful since it allows for the marginalized in society to harness skills required to have a

“voice” in projects. In the current evaluation this variable is also incorporated especially since rural and urban poor communities were expected to undertake similar activities as their rural and urban non poor counterparts. It is hypothesized that for these communities to participate effectively in the prototype, capacity assessment and capacity building would be required.

Finally this model is considered useful in its inclusion of increased ownership of a process by the community and a gradual transfer of responsibility from program coordinators to participants. Within the current context of a program geared towards participation in a policy process, the sense of ownership by the community of the process is crucial since returns on their participation are not expected to be immediate. One would expect an understanding of their roles in the process and a sense of pride and ownership of the process. As such these variables are also included in the current.

Gaventa’s (1980) theoretical framework for investigating citizens’ participation is also reviewed here since it introduces the importance of exploring external factors which impact on community participation. Gaventa’s approach comprises three power dimensions:

- A pluralistic approach to studying the visible consequences of power such as the observance of conflicts in decision making exploring who participates, who gains and how loses
- A pluralistic approach (‘power’s second face’) which examines how the organizational structure of society excludes certain individuals and groups from participating in community life and prevents certain questions from getting on to the political agenda and

- A third dimension viewing power as ideology which focuses on the means which shape, legitimize and determine patterns of participation including languages, symbols, social myths and norms.

Gaventa's framework allows for an exploration of the variable representativeness as it relates to the organizational structure in the community and how this can exclude some persons from decision making. He also explores the socio-cultural aspects of the environment which enables or disables participation. In this respect Gaventa's framework provides a good reference point for the current study but is deemed weak in that it does not focus on other factors outside of the socio-cultural environment which shape the patterns of community participation. The researcher postulates that this knowledge of the external factors affecting community participation must prompt efforts by project developers to prepare communities for participation.

Zakus and Lysack (1998) noted that in preparing the ground for community participation the following things are required;

- A formal organization to be established and sustained. This organization should be developed with significant community input and with positive links with local political and government structures. It should also be sensitized, open and knowledgeable about collaboration and coordination with other individuals and programmes. They also noted that the degree to which these organizations represent local issues is crucial to determining the legitimacy of the representatives in the eyes of the population which they serve.

- Investment in the training of new members of community organizations. They noted that individuals participating in organizations will require ongoing education and support.

These variable form performance criteria against which the preparation of communities for the YIP can be measured.

Bracht (1991) also highlights the importance of measuring the representativeness of citizens and leader groups that are established, and provides additional variables by which these groups can be measured. The author introduces variables such as opportunities for and levels of decision making, the amount of time devoted to goal directed activities, the representativeness of the citizen and leader groups that are established, the perceived/achieved degree of social ownership, satisfaction with the processes of participation as well as the assessment of the level of achievement and maintenance of long term goals.

According to Bracht (1991) the variable community participation can be treated as both an independent and a dependent variable when, in the former, the focus is on the consequences of participation, and in the latter the focus of analysis is on the causes of participation.

In is apparent that Butterfoss (2006) adopted some of these indicators identified by Bracht (1991) and went on to introduce additional indicators useful in evaluating community participation including:

- The diversity of participants/organizations

- The recruitment/retention of members
- Role in the coalition or its activities
- The number and types of events attended
- Benefits and challenges of participation
- The balance of power and leadership
- The opportunities and levels of decision making
- The amount and duration of time devoted to goal activities
- The representativeness of members and leader groups

While Butterfoss falls short of presenting a model for community participation general indicators are identified which, allows for the current study to adapt those indicators deemed relevant in the current evaluation. In the process of community participation in the YIP a number of the indicators identified by Butterfoss become relevant and can be adopted. These include; the diversity of participation, the recruitment of members, and the benefits and challenges to participation.

The representativeness of CTT as well as that of participants from the wider community is explored in all areas of analysis in the current study. This is supported by Butterfoss (2006) discovery in a review of community collaborative partnerships, that substantial sectors of the community were not well represented and that coalitions were not as diverse as the partnerships expected. Surveys and content analysis of coalition member rosters, indicated that sectors that were most often inadequately represented or not represented at all include

business and faith based groups, minority groups and certain age groups including children, the elderly and youth.

Butterfoss' contribution allows for evaluators to identify objective indicators in circumstances, as exists in JASPEV, where project designers fail to identify their own performance criteria. The indicators presented can also be deemed as valid and reliable since they have been repeatedly used across the literature to assess community participation.

Butterfoss (2006) proceeds to establish a number of process evaluation methods to measure community participation. Among the methods identified are participant surveys, and events/activities log. Key informant interviews are also identified and focus group discussions are suggested since they have proven useful in collecting information about populations served by community coalitions. Butterfoss (2006) also suggests that a review of existing documents can also be used including meeting agenda, attendance registers, minutes and annual reports to determine how, when, where and how often members participate. Here the authors presents an excellent pool of tools from which the current research benefits.

4.5 Assessing the Enabling Environment for Community Participation

In addition to adopting various aspects of models purported by authors discussed above, this study attempts to concretize the importance of including an assessment of the environment created for participation of communities. It is proposed that the enabling environment for community participation must be assessed by project designers and attempts made to create an enabling environment where one does not already exist.

The World Bank (1999) has laid out a theoretical framework which is useful in assessing an enabling environment for civil engagement in its Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PSRP) countries. The Bank noted that the enabling environment for civic engagement can be understood as a set of interrelated conditions that impact the capacity of Civil Society Organizations and other development actors to engage in development policies, strategies and projects at the national and local level in a sustained and effective manner

This framework assesses the legal and regulatory framework, political and governance context, socio-cultural characteristics as well as the economic conditions in an environment which impact civic engagement. Within this assessment an ARVIN framework is utilized where each aspect of the environment is assessed based of its impact on residents in terms of:

- Association
- Resources
- Voice
- Information
- Negotiation

In this study the indicators in this framework are adopted to examine the YIP process. This is deemed essential since communities possess various levels of resource endowment and this could impact significantly their ability to participate. It is assumed that project designers have a responsibility to engage in an assessment of the current reality which impact on community participation. While authors such as Gaventa (1988) and Kelly and Vlanenderen (1995) point to the importance of exploring some aspects of the external environment the current study

attempts to bridge the gap in the literature by introducing the enabling environment as a key variable which determines levels of participation.

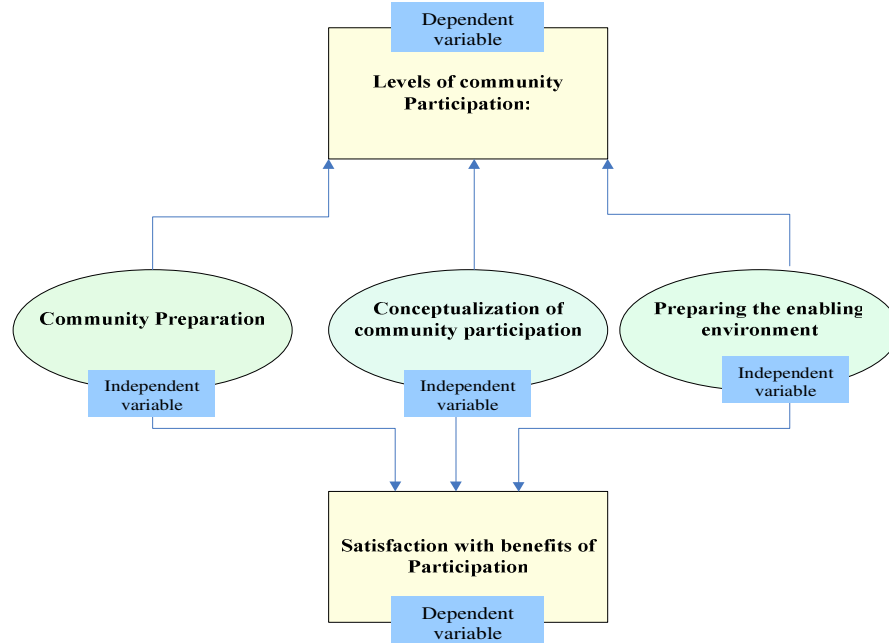
It can be concluded that while some published measures of community participation are clearly derived from theoretical frameworks, the literature overall is merely a fragmented collection of tools. Rigorous evaluation assumes valid and reliable measurement tools. Given the broad array of tools from which to choose coupled with a lack of consensus in the literature, Granner and Sharpe (2004) encourages evaluators to approach an evaluation of community coalition functioning by:

- Identifying an overarching framework theory or combination of theories
- Identifying specific evaluation objectives based on project needs, community context and the expectations of stakeholders for the evaluation. This should be done by giving consideration to the scope of the project, the available resources, delimiting the pool of concepts to be assessed, the use of qualitative and quantitative methods as well as the stages of coalition development
- Identifying measurement tools with adequate validity and reliability and/or create and validate new tools if time and resources allow

5 Postulating a Framework for Evaluating Participation

Figure 2. Represent the model of community participation to be evaluated in this study.

Figure 2: Theoretical framework for evaluating community participation



5.1 Dependent Variables

There are two dependent variables identified in the study; level of participation and the degree of satisfaction with the benefits of community participation. In measuring the level of community participation the researcher utilized indicators identified by Butterfoss (2006) and Bracht (1991) including the achievement of objectives, the level of representativeness and the diversity of participants.

Degree of satisfaction is measured utilizing indicators identified by Butterfoss (2006) including the degree of ownership perceived, the perceived benefits of participation, the difficulties posed by participation as well as the cost of participating.

5.2 Independent Variables

The researcher hypothesizes that the level of participation achieved and the degree of satisfaction with participation is related to the process of establishing the community participation systems. The researcher has identified three elements in this process which are related to the dependent variables abovementioned.

The conceptualization of community participation is thought to be related to levels of participation as well as the degree of satisfaction with the benefits of community participation. This variable is measured in the current study by indicators including consensus on the definition of community participation, identification of performance criteria against which to measure community participation and establishment of a management process for community participation. The use of these indicators in the current model is informed by the emphasis placed on the lack of conceptualization of community participation by authors such as Zakus and Lysack (1998).

The extent of community preparation is also related to the dependent variables aforementioned. Community preparation is measured by utilizing the two indicators identified by Lysack and Zakus (1998). The authors noted the importance of establishing formal organizations to lead the process of community participation as well as investment for continued education of the members of these structures. In the current study the research also incorporates capacity assessment as an indicator of community preparation.

The preparation of an enabling environment is the final independent variable included in the model. The researcher pulls five indicators from the World Bank established ARVIN

framework for assessing the enabling environment. Included in the model as indicators of an enabling environment are freedom of association, access to the minimum resources required for participation, having a voice in decision making, access to relevant information and freedom to negotiate. These five indicators will further be measured across four external factors including; the legal and regulatory framework, political and governance structure, socio-cultural context as well as economic conditions.

5.3 Hypotheses

- Poor conceptualization of community participation leads to low levels of community participation
- Inadequate community participation leads to low levels of community participation and low levels of satisfaction with benefits of participation
- Non creation of an enabling environment leads to low levels of community participation and low levels of satisfaction with benefits of participation

In testing for the hypotheses stated above the research will also introduce additional variables which are considered important. The programme being evaluated allows for a comparative analysis of communities based on socio-economic (poor vs. non poor) as well as residential (rural vs. urban) variables. These variables will be introduced into the model to further explore the relationships hypothesized.

6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

6.1 Conceptualizing Community Participation

The literature reviewed indicated the problem in evaluating community participation created by a failure to adequately define and gain consensus on meaning of community as well as participation. The study revealed that in the YIP *community* was defined, but there was a failure to unambiguously define participation and how community participation would be defined and measured.

Community was defined as, “*a place where policy happens to people.*” “*For the JASPEV prototype, communities were not classified solely based on geographical location but included communities of interest or institutional type communities*” (elite interview-JASPEV prototype coordinator).

While this definition allowed for the expansion of the concept to community beyond a geographical space, the definition adopted for community participation, by JASPEV, was that of an agency-SDC-which defined community as “*a defined geographical area, grouping people based on common ownership of resources or sharing of social, economic and cultural facilities, and where residents show regards for themselves as having common objectives, interest and needs.*” This therefore means that the mobilization of communities to participate in the prototype was, from the outset, restricted by the definition adopted.

One can therefore expect, as is supported in the literature, that this failure to adequately conceptualize community participation in designing the prototype would result in difficulties in evaluating the participation process and measuring success.

What is clear though is the distinction made by the coordinator between participation and consultation. According to the YIP Coordinator,

“Community Participation is defined as distinct from consultation and was expected to include not just information sharing but an active participation in planning, implementation and evaluation of policy, programmes and services. Participation was considered to be a dynamic interface and interchange with the community which is meaningful.”

In this prototype, which supports the notion purported by Zakus and Lysack (1998), community participation was selected as the approach because of its reputed benefits. This deduction is supported by the coordinator’s assertion that,

“Government realizes they will not get the outcome they want if they don’t place the participation of citizens in the forefront since they cannot afford to fund every aspect of development, people have to make their contribution and they need a stake in the country and a sense that they are contributing to the development of the country. The sustainability of the processes and policies are dependent on the extent to which there is buy in and ownership from by the citizenry.”

It was noted however, that the Tasmanian experience was also used as tangible evidence of the value of community participation to a policy process.¹

In addition to this, international commitments by the Government of Jamaica is said to have played a major role in the approach utilized. International agreements such as the Millennium Development Goals as well as Agenda 21: the Rio Declaration on Environment and

¹ The YIP coordinator noted that the Tasmanian process showed how community participation could make a difference in achieving social policy outcomes.

Development² were identified as international arrangements to which the Government of Jamaica is signatory and which binds them to the promotion of community participation.

In the process of conceptualizing community participation a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the SDC and the Cabinet Office which detailed the commitments of SDC to the prototype as the main facilitators of community participation. The SDC was charged with the responsibilities of preparing the communities to participate in the prototype.

Though this MOU speaks of a group of representatives who would lead ‘successful’ community participation, it makes no attempt to define this or explore how it would be measured. Thus while a management structure was laid out within the MOU, the researcher concludes that community participation was defectively conceptualized in the YIP.

6.2 Community Preparation

Zakus and Lysack (1998) present a framework for the preparation of communities to participate. First, a formal organization must be established and sustained and investment must be placed in ongoing training, education and support.

Research revealed that both these standards were met as it related to the preparation of communities for participation. What remains inconclusive is the extent to which communities thought themselves prepared for participation in the prototype.

² Agenda 21 makes explicit reference to the importance of people’s organization, women’s groups and non-governmental organizations as sources of innovation and action at the local level. It also encourages governments, in cooperation with appropriate international and non-governmental organizations, to support a community-driven approach to sustainability.

The JASPEV Youth Inclusion –Community Indicator Validation report (2003) revealed that, in each of the 40 participating communities in the prototype, CTTs were established as the formal organizations to lead the process in the community.

The selection of these tracking teams also appeared to conform to standards laid out in the literature. The report noted that a participatory approach was adopted in the selection of these tracking teams. This is supported by the CDO in the Maxfield Park community, who noted that,

“Community representatives were asked to volunteer for membership to these tracking teams, with the only stipulation laid down being the percentage of the group to be comprised of youth. In this community [Maxfield Park], the Community Tracking Team had representation from three of the five districts and 90% of the members where youth ages 17 to 22 years.”

Caution is exercised though in the assumption that CTT which were established out of an initial participatory process were the same teams which lead the process through the YIP. As revealed by the CDO Palmers Cross

“the indicator validation meeting was used to ask persons interested in the process to volunteer, but this approach fell through and I had to handpick persons, but they were representative of the community.”

However selected, the CTTs were thought to be representative of the districts which make up the community, the levels of education in the community and met the stipulations for age range laid down by the prototype facilitators.

One area of deviation in the establishment of CTTs was their linkage with local political and government structures as identified by Zakus and Lysack (1998) as being important to their

ability to participate effectively. One questions the wisdom of establishing new organizations for the processes of this prototype even though communities were chosen for participation because they were said to have strong, effectively functioning CBOs ready for action. These structures, called CDCs, were recognized structures linked into local and political and government structures.³ Why then weren't these structures utilized and the linkages created by them utilized?

This has been highlighted by the prototype coordinator as one lesson learnt in the implementation of the prototype, According to him,

“One lesson learnt would have been to initially work through the CDC where they would have initially identified the youth to participate in the prototype and take responsibility for the succession planning and training therefore transferring more responsibility to the community groups with SDC support instead of an SDC lead process.”

It must be noted however, that in establishing the formal organizations, , CTTs reflected representation from existing CBOs. In Greater Portmore, for example, a tracking team member noted that three members of the CTT were from the executive of the Youth Club in that community. The situation was the same for the rural community of Palmers Cross where the SDC CDO noted that, two tracking team members were identified from existing CBOs.

The prototype was also successful in achieving the second standard of preparatory work required for community participation as identified by Zakus and Lysack (1998). As indicated by the prototype coordinator and supported by the SDC Research Director, while no formal

³ Local Government reform Ministry Paper recognizes the existence of CDC and refers to the governments pledge to dedicate 10% of revenues from property taxes collected in a parish to projects identified by a CDC in a participatory Planning Process.

assessment of existing capacity was undertaken the capacity of the communities was built to undertake the activities assigned.

The coordinator noted that, *“SDC’s operational knowledge of the capacity of the community at the time was relied on. The assumption was that communities could have at least provided the volunteers, whose capacity could have been build during the prototype to carry out the roles identified”*

CTTs were also thought to have competence in the areas relevant for the accomplishment of assigned tasks. In Palmers Cross, the CDO noted that the CTT possessed the requisite secondary level education required, were competent in their knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities as well as their ability to mobilize resources required to participate.

The situation was the same for the urban community of Maxfield Park where the CDO noted that the CTT was very competent in their knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibility, had the requisite secondary level education.

A test administered to the CTT supported the perception of these CDOs. All CTT members knew at least five of the seven roles assigned to them , with no variations based on socio-economic status or residence

There is also evidence of capacity building activities initiated by the JASPEV coordinators. The SDC Data Collection Training Report (2003) indicated 383 participants across all prototype communities in training sessions where CTT members exposed to quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies as well as sampling techniques and interviewing skills. These skills were required by the CTTs to undertake data collection activities.

In judging the success of capacity building processes, the current research is limited due to the time lapse between the capacity building exercises undertaken and the time of this evaluation, however, the prototype coordinator indicated that the success of the capacity building processes can be judged by the completion of data collection activities in all communities in the YIP.

The researcher concludes that the capacity building processes were centred on data collection and did not equip the CTT-with the skills required to adequately engage the wider community and other local actors and secure their participation.

No attempt was made to equip the CTTs with mobilization techniques, communication skills or any other skills required for them to fulfil tasks assigned. One could then infer that communities were being prepared for data collection processes, which they ultimately conceptualize the JASPEV project to be.

It is also difficult to draw any conclusions about the level of preparedness of the wider community to participate. While local facilitators of the process spoke to attempts made to

sensitize the community and prepare them to participate in the prototype, at least one community noted that they did not feel prepared. One Maxfield resident noted, *“mi neva prepared, mi nuh rememba nuting when it really organize, but mi just rememba when dem did go roun wid di paper, a tink some questionnaire or something like that.”*

The researcher questions the effectiveness of the community sensitization methods utilized by the SDC in preparing the communities to participate, especially for large communities such as Palmer Cross where a CTT member noted that, *“most meetings consisted of Community Based Organization executives and the Community Tracking Team and were not well attended by the community.”*

Reports submitted by SDC CDOs in the four communities engaged, revealed that the main sensitization methods used in preparing communities for participation included community meetings, one on one discussions, meetings with CBO executives and distribution of reading materials such as brochures and flyers.

The ability of community meetings to adequately engage a wide cross section of a community is questioned since reports indicated low levels of attendance when compared to the populations in the communities studied. In Maxfield Park for example, the indicator validation report noted that, with an estimated population of 4713, the sensitization process was said to have engaged 65 persons. This means that without taking into consideration the types of interests represented at these meetings, attendance was a mere 1.4% of the population.

The ineffectiveness of this method of preparation is supported a SDC CDO who noted that, “because of the size of the community the methods utilized were not very effective. A more diverse participation was required and would have needed more resources and time for sensitization and mobilization.”

6.3 Assessing & Creating an Enabling Environment for Community Participation

The ARVIN model indicates that an adequate assessment of the external factors which impinge on the enabling elements would include an analysis of issues such as the types of laws, regulations and cultural norms needed to create a conducive environment as well as the economic constraints faced by communities which impinge on their ability to effectively participate.

The project omitted a formal assessment of the enabling environment and instead relied on the operational knowledge of the SDC. Table3 below was utilized by the researcher in, an elite interview with the SDC Research Director, who map out the level of preparedness of the enabling environment for communities to participate.

Table 3: Creating an Enabling Environment for community participation in JASPEV YIP

	Legal framework	Political and Governanace Context	Socio-Cultural Charateristics	Economic Conditions
Association	All Jamaicans have freedom of association	CDC exist and these communities were chosen because of it	Social capital was judged by the existence of the CDC so no barriers were thought to exist.	Community venues were utilized e.g. school, churches and centres and it was thought that this would be at little cost to them to associate.
Resources	Community Groups enjoy a right to raise funds		Relationship of the communities with their CDO would motivate them to give of community resources	While the stress of the current environment was recognized, it was believed that community would be motivate to volunteer their time

	Legal framework	Political and Governanace Context	Socio-Cultural Charateristics	Economic Conditions
Voice	All Jamaicans have a freedom of expression	There was an open media in community meetings to express opinions	Community groups were open all inclusive structures allowing for all to participate	The only cost attached to expression of views was that incurred by residents to travel to meetings
Information	The access to information act allows for residents to demand information	Easy access to information by communities through the CDO working directly with them	Project documents were simplified to ensure understanding and most sensitization of community was done by CDO in one-on-one discussions	No fees were attached to accessing information
Negotiation	The prototype structure allowed for dialogue spaces among partners	The prototype structure with the inclusion of the Troika showed political will	In all community engaged no values to exclude certain sectors was identified	Community stated resources required through their SDC CDO

Source: elite interviews, SDC Research Director.

These findings revealed that the participation process would have benefited from a formal assessment of the 'health' of enabling elements in the communities. The researcher concludes that participation process was built on faulty assumptions.

One first questions the composition of the CDCs in the communities in whom confidence was placed to ensure that residents had freedom of expression, voice and reflect high levels of social capital. CDC would them have been the drivers of the process in the communities since it was the forum by which mobilization of enabling elements in the environment would take place. The failure of the project to engage the CDCs then meant that the enabling elements were not mobilized.

The inadequacies of the preparations made for the enabling environment are reflected in the results achieved on the ground. As noted by SDC Research Director:

“The project was unable to get the CDC fully onboard and even though they were said to exist in many insistence they were not up to scratch. JASPEV assumed that SDC had the ability to get them onboard, get them to participate, keep them interested, to mobilized

and SDC was affected by a lack of resources and the extremely high staff turnover level at the time so that the CDC was not mobilized at the levels expected.”

The researcher cautions the assumption by the coordinators that the mere existence of the CDC structures suggests freedom of association and the existence of social capital. Coordinators must first explore, in depth, the features of social capital as defined by its principal theorists-Putman and Coleman to arrive at an adequate judgement (Locher et al 1999). The researcher proposes that a review of the existing levels of trust and reciprocity as well as networks of secondary associations could be a starting point on which coordinators could have built their assessment of social capital.

Even while the lack of resources within the SDC was highlighted by the Research Director as one cause for their inability to get CDCs involved the fact is collective action of a community is facilitated by the existence of social capital (Locher et.al, 1999). Therefore the failure of the CDCs themselves and by extension the wider community to take the initiative and become more involved in the process speaks volumes about the real existence or absence of social capital.

The enabling environment seems also to be built on the relationship between the CDO and the communities in the prototype. This meant that CDO themselves needed to be committed to the process and have an excellent grasp of its goals to transfer this to the communities and translate the needs of communities for participation back to JASPEV.

There was also the reliance on the effective functioning of other arms in the prototype such as the MFT and Troika which would allow a platform for communities to participate. In both

these instances there appeared to be shortfall in the process and resultant negative effects on levels of community participation. In validating these concerns the SDC Research Director noted that,

“Some of the staff did not fully grasp the concept of JASPEV and it was treated as a project and this was credited to the budgeting mechanisms attached to JASPEV. Once everything was budgeted CDO stuck to things which could be requested for travelling. The approach by JASPEV as well was added to the difficulty on the ground. It was more extractive. Community expectations to engage the MFT and Troika were not met. So while the process promised a lot, there seemed a lack of connection to the top.”

While efforts were made in preparing the environment for easy access to information, real constraints such as the willingness and ability of community representatives to read and assimilate information are brought to light. Thus while information was made available through CDOs this arrangement rested on the assumptions that CDOs took the time out to distribute and explain the information related to the prototype and that residents themselves were able to comprehend the process. In addition, The SDC Researcher Director noted that progress reports for the prototype were placed on the internet. The researcher submits that in two of the four communities engaged in this study there was no access within the community to the internet.

The assumptions made about the impact of economic conditions on the enabling elements are also considered to be faulty. As noted by Kelly and Vlanenderen (1995), efforts must be made within a process to ensure that the marginalized are given opportunities to participate.

The assumption make by the coordinators would have excluded considerations of those who, with the best of intentions would be unable to participate in a process due to financial constraints. Thus while both poor and rich communities participated in the process, the

researcher would hypothesize that some residents were excluded from active participation on the basis of their economic conditions. Concerns related to assumptions of communities' ability to satisfy economic requirements of the prototype are discussed further in the cost associated with participating in the prototype

6.4 Community Participation in the Prototype

JASPEV clearly laid out how communities were expected to participate in the prototype, by identifying for them nine roles. The coordinators, however, failed to do was establish performance criteria. As such an evaluation of the communities' participation through the achievement of these goals must be done using standards identified in the literature as being useful to such an assessment.

Of the nine roles which the communities were expected to fulfill, [as identified in Table 1 on page 13], the communities engaged could identify with only three of these. All communities engaged noted being involved in:

- Identifying and validating a set of indicators around which it wants to see progress
- Agreeing on how the community will organize itself in order to manage the indicator process
- Collecting information to find out what is the current situation of youth in the community in relation to the specific indicators that they want to track

This would not be an adequate evaluation, to simply state whether or not the objective was achieved. One must, explore the quality of community participation in the achievement of these set objectives. To do so indicators including representativeness of participants making

decisions on behalf of communities; measured by the gender split in participants, the age range, the number of districts represented as well as the level of education of participants is used. In the context of the project the researcher also explored the level of support from CBOs in the process of goal accomplishment since were led by the tracking teams.

Interviews with CDOs and CTT members revealed that objective one and two listed above were both achieved in one community meeting in each community involved in the prototype. In this instance meeting reports were submitted from each CDO and a breakdown of findings from these reports are indicated in table4 below:

Table 4: Community participation in indicator validation and tracking team selection

Community	Total number of community participants	Gender split of participants		Districts Represented	Age range of participants
		Male	Female		
Greater Portmore	53	31	22	6 of 25 SDC recognized districts	50 participants below 30 yrs only 3 above 30 years
Maxfield Park	39	17	22	3 of 5 SDC recognized districts	16-22yrs: 8 23-29yrs: 11 30+: 20
Palmers Cross	32	16	16	4 of 9 SDC recognized districts	14-19yrs: 9 20-25yrs 12 25-30yrs 3 30+: 8
Maidstone	21	16	5	*	14 to 30 yrs: 14 30+: 7

* District representation not stated in report.

None of the reports reviewed indicated the types of interest represented at the meetings held and this limits the analysis that can be done. It must also be noted that meeting plans reviewed indicated that the target for these meetings was 70% participation from persons 14 to 30yrs.

There were low levels of attendance by the community in all areas reviewed, if comparison is done based on the population in each area, since in each community the total population stands at over 1000 persons.⁴ It is evident that in all communities except for Maidstone, a good gender balance was achieved allowing for the views of both males and females to be incorporated in discussions, though direct observation would further indicate the actual levels of participation by gender. One could also infer that if districts had varying interests based on their geographical distinctions this was also adequately represented in two cases; Maxfield Park and Palmers Cross.⁵

While the targets set for age participation was achieved, the question of the adequacy of these community meetings to sensitize the wider community is raised again since some community actors would have been excluded from mobilization since they may not have coincided with the age restrictions.

In collecting information to find out what is the current situation of youth in the community in relation to the specific indicators, all communities engaged noted that this activity was lead by the tracking team and their participation was mainly in responding to questionnaires. In some instances CTT members noted that the participation of the community went beyond this and at least CBOs were involved in collection of data along with the CTT. As noted by

⁴ Review of SDC Data Collection Training reports indicated the number of dwellings in each community from which a population figure was estimated using the national average of 5 person to a dwelling.

⁵ SDC defines districts as a subset of the community; characterized by the same features, shares the basic services of the community and, see themselves as a part of the community. Some distinguishing features of these sub areas include, an area with its own basic schools, churches, PA served by the community Post office e.t.c.

the CTT members in Maxfield and echoed by all other CTT members interviewed, “*dem go roun wid wi [speaking of youth club members] and the community ansa di question dem.*”

In addition to the representatives of communities involved in data collection, communities participation must also be evaluated based on response rates for each community. In evaluating this objective the research did not explore issues of representativeness since participants in the survey was solely dependent on sampling probability. The response rate though gives an indication of the levels at which communities were willing to participate in the prototype, especially when one considers the fact that a socio-economic survey was done which required sensitive information from interviewees.

While reports perused failed to indicate the response rate achieved in the survey conducted, The SDC Research Director noted that there were very few cases of non response, but this may be credited to the systematic stratified sampling method utilized. She also note that communities actively participated in focus group discussions which formed part of the data collection process and were also involved in preparatory work for these discussions including venue preparation and mobilization activities.

It is also interesting to note that all communities could readily associate with this aspect of the prototype and the fact that once they were asked to participate in the survey, they heard nothing more of the project. According to one participant, “*like dem get a early morning flight and fly out.*” Some community representatives saw the process not as a participatory

one but rather as an information extractive process. This is reflected in the views of residents engaged in focus group discussions:

“It just come and go weh like Hurricane Ivan”

“It just come through”

“Mi nuh believe, the Government a tek we little common people who live dun inna de hole serious”

“At the meeting it sound like dem want wi fi participate, but mi nuh see it”

“Yes we interested, but nuh baddy nuh come back”

The community was interested in participating

Thus while JASPEV made the distinction between participation and consultation the fact that project activities appeared to come to a halt after data collection, communities saw it as merely a consultative process.

6.5 Satisfaction with Participation in the Prototype

As noted by Butterfoss (2006), evaluating community participation must include an assessment of the benefits and challenges of participation, satisfaction with the process of participation, as well as the degree of local ownership perceived /achieved. Community representatives in focus group discussions as well as CTT members were questioned about these aspects of their participation.

While community representative in Palmer Cross alluded to the information generated from the process as a benefit of participating, Maxfield Park residents engaged felt they gained, *“nutting at all.”* Some noted that police and youth relations had improved a little as a result of participation in the prototype.

CTT members in Palmers Cross and Maxfield Park noted that the project allowed them exposure since they got a chance to meet and interact with others through the process. One

member from Palmers Cross also alluded to the fact that he had gained insight into community issues through involvement in the process.

In Maidstone and Greater Portmore views of the process was different as participant noted there were no real benefits from the project. As stated by a member in Maidstone,

“no real benefit, mi just help out because a my community.” This viewpoint was shared by a member from Greater Portmore how noted that, *“we just collect the information because wi had the time and the SDC officer ask us to.”*

Costs though were identified by CTT members inclusive of bus fare required to attend meetings, purchasing refreshments, clothes purchased for meetings,. One CTT member noted that they had to take loans for bus fare to participate in the process.

Some tracking team members noted difficulties with finding time for JASPEV activities. A CTT member in Palmer Cross noted that meetings were often times called abruptly and coincided with other personal engagements. Other members noted time lost with their children and time taken from their job. In other instances such as Portmore and Maidstone CTT members noted that since most activities were done in summer there was no difficulty in participating and the centering of activities in the community meant they incurred no transportation cost.

The cost faced by the tracking teams bring to the fore the question of levels of support received from the prototype coordinators. The YIP coordinator noted, *“JASPEV was strong*

on being careful not to appear to be paying for volunteerism.” Support or incentives for community participation and non financial rewards including T-Shirts, Certificates of Participation and granting community representatives opportunities to travel out of their areas.

One questions whether this seeming lack of support from coordinators, a view supported by ratings done in community focus group discussions, resulted in less than ultimate community participation. The coordinator though was keen on this issue as he stated that;

“Because communities believe that projects come along with money there is no attempt by communities to utilize/mobilize their own resources available. Principle in JASPEV was that community must recognize that they need to contribute some resources to the process. Community need to demonstrate capacity in drawing on their own local resources (human, physical, natural etc.) A lesson learnt was that JASPEV assumed pure community participation despite the existing environment (socio-cultural and economic). However the production of the reports was to be an indicator of participation then JASPEV could be said to have achieved participation with little or no financial support.”

What was conceded by the coordinator was that the issue of financial support may have been addressed in some way if there was greater understanding and ownership of the process by communities. He however noted that in most instances once communities where adequately sensitized on the principles of the project they were willing to dedicate their time and the issue of financial support became more an issue from the CDO than of the communities themselves.

This must be understood in light of the fact in all communities engaged in the study, there was no support for the process, at any stage by other local actors identified by project designers as being integral in the local processes. These would include local informal leaders, churches, local agency departments or Non-governmental organizations.

While the researcher cannot speak to the level of ownership of the wider communities of the process, the CTT noted that there was a high level of commitment to the process, reflected in their willingness to undertake activities assigned. Except for Greater Portmore where a CTT member noted that they participated in the data collection because to the relationship shared with the CDO all other tracking teams engaged noted that they were not only excited about the process but there was a sense of pride in being apart of the process. As noted by a tracking team representative in Maxfield Park, “*everything JASPEV call wi if do, wi do it like wi a wuk mi dem.*”

6.6 Reviewing the Research Hypotheses

The preparation of communities to participate appeared to be the most influential variable in determining levels of participation. This was true for both rural and urban communities and also poor and non poor areas. While there were obvious gaps in the level of preparation of the wider community, the capacity building of the CTT led to the accomplishment of the goals laid out for communities.

The researcher notes that the inadequate assessment of the enabling environment contributed to the lacklustre support by the CBOs and other local actors for the CTTs. The inadequate conceptualization of community participation is also thought to have played a role in this instance but the researcher purports that even if not clearly defined community participation would have benefited from a more in-depth look at the current realities of the communities to be engaged.

An adequate conceptualization of community participation would have informed the overall approach used to sensitize the communities and get them more actively involved in supporting the activities of the CTT. This would have been reflected in broader community meetings and a greater sense of ownership for the project.

The researcher also purports that the failure of the coordinators to adequately assess the enabling environment resulted in faulty assumptions especially as it relates to the involvement of CDCs in the process and this led to low levels of participation by the wider community in the process.

Levels of satisfaction with community participation, was also mainly influenced by the lack of community preparation. It was evident during the discussions held with communities that their expectations went beyond the projections of JASPEV, and these unrealistic expectations resulted in a lack of satisfaction with results seen. Therefore, while JASPEV prepared them to achieve their roles, they were not fully sensitized on the ability of the programme to fulfil community needs. It was evident though that the level of satisfaction of the CTT with the process was higher than that of the wider community and this reinforces the apparent relationship between community preparation and levels of satisfaction.

The research though highlights the lack of information in some instances, which restricts a greater analysis of the impact of confounding variables such as residence and socio-economic status of communities on the variables explored.

7 Conclusion and Recommendations

The process of undertaking this evaluation reinforced the difficulties identified in the literature about stating whether participation is good or bad, or even classifying it as high or low. Within the JASPEV process it was evident that coordinators were able to achieve assigned goals but the perception of communities as it relates to their participation is mixed. While one notes that participation in a policy process must be defined as distinct from participation in a project or programme, the fact remains that JASPEV was understood by communities as a project and as such they participated expecting that they would soon realize the fruits of this participation.

A lack of understanding of the policy process, lack of information and lack of community resources has been identified by Dukeshire and Thurlow (2002) as barrier to community participation in policy development. These must form apart of the ground work of programme coordinator in their assessment of the environment in which community participation is required. While programme coordinators hope for high levels of volunteerism and commitment, expectations must be grounded in the current realities of citizens and their ability to 'fund' their own participation.

This evaluation also brings to the fore the conceptualization of participation and what levels of community participation to expect. Do we refer to the numbers in attendance at meetings and if so what percentage of total population is acceptable to state that communities have participated? Do we rate participation by the quality of input by residents and how do we track and measure this during the process to aid an evaluation of it? Or do we measure

community participation by achievement of outputs? Shouldn't community participation in policy be seen as an end in itself and worthy of measurement instead of merely a means to a more tangible end?

What is clear, is that the Government of Jamaica has embraced the concept of good governance, whether forced or inspired to do so, and as such this brings to the fore the need to adequately define community participation and evaluate it. Grounded in these conclusions the researcher notes the following recommendations to improve processes of community participation:

- Participation of communities will require commitments of time and resources for sensitization processes and a building of relationships of trust and reciprocity between partners in the policy process. Communities must understand how their decisions impact policy and must see themselves as equals in the process if genuine participation is to be engendered.
- If communities have already developed their decision making mechanisms for participation these should be legalized and utilized by project implementers. If not, limited community resources become split across various interventions and full participation cannot be achieved.
- Securing support from local actors within a process cannot be left up to communities to facilitate. It requires proactive strategies by project coordinators.
- More emphasis must be placed on the creation of enabling environments if levels of community participation are to be enhanced. This will require analysis at the community level and must be built into programme design as a key preparatory step.

- If the government of Jamaica is infact serious about the inclusion of communities in policy processes, then efforts must be made to define community participation and to establish indicator of community participation. It cannot be sufficient to judge process by its outputs, the process must be tracked and evaluated based on indicators agreed on by relevant stakeholders.

Appendix 1

Evaluation Instrument

JASPEV Coordinator

- What is community participation as defined by JASPEV?
- Why was community participation chosen as the approach in JASPEV?
- How were communities chosen for participation in JASPEV?
- Please detail the plan of action laid out during the design phase of JASPEV to engage the community?
- What steps/processes were put in place by JASPEV to ensure that this plan of action could be achieved?
- Were community capacities assessed?
- How was this assessment done i.e. what were the areas of focus?
- What tools were utilized in this assessment?
- Were community capacities built?
- How was community capacity built?
- How has this been measured?
- Was there support provided by JASPEV to communities during the implementation of the project? What kinds of support were provided?
- Were any indicators of community participation developed during the design phase of the youth inclusion prototype to assess levels of community participation? If so what were these indicators?

SDC Research Director

1. In the establishment of a MOU with JASPEV to facilitate the participation of communities in the prototype were objectively verifiable indicators of community participation established to measure over time the participation of communities? If so what were these indicators?
2. Was any assessment done of the political, social, cultural, economic and governance environment in each prototype community and how this would impact community participation? Please comment on any assessment done with reference to :

Association

- The freedom of residents in JASPEV communities to associate?

Resources

- What were the minimum resources required of communities to qualify them for participation in the prototype?
- The ability of participant communities to mobilize resources to fulfill their objectives

Voice

- The ability of participant communities to formulate, articulate and convey their opinions

Information

- The ability of participant communities to access information?
- Was information provided in a manner that can be readily understood by communities?
- Was the mechanism for providing or requesting information accessible to all communities?

Negotiation

- The existence of mechanisms/spaces and rules of engagement for negotiation and public discussions and debates
- If so how was this assessment done?
- What were the areas of weaknesses identified and how were these addressed to ensure an enabling environment?

SDC Community Development Officer

- How were communities sensitized about the project?
- What process was utilized in the establishment of Community Tracking Teams?
- Please comment on the diversity of membership within the tracking team?

Define and rate (use a scale of 1-4 with 1=Incompetent, 2=Fairly Competent, 3=Competent, 4=Very Competent), the competence of Community Tracking Teams to manage the JASPEV process in terms of:

- Knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities
- Levels of education of members
- Resources available to them as well as their ability to mobilize the necessary resources and
- Amount of time available to dedicate to the activities of the team
- Ability to get the wider community to participate
- Were existing Community Based Organizations involved in the activities of the Community Tracking Teams?
- Were these Community Based Organizations prepared for participation in activities of the Community Tracking Team and in what ways were they prepared?
- Describe the nature of involvement of CBOs in the activities led by the Community Tracking Team outlining the main challenges as well as opportunities presented by this partnership
- How would you rate the level of support given to the Community Tracking Team by the following local stakeholders in the prototype:

Local Stakeholders	Minimal	Restricted	Fair	Open	Maximal
Local Organizations					
Local Activists/Informal leaders					
Churches					
Service Clubs					
Local officials of Departments					
Local Agents of Natl/Int. NGOs					

The following represents the roles of the Community as defined by the coordinators of JASPEV. Please describe whether the role was fulfilled or not fulfilled, describe the types of interest represented at each stage and the level of community involvement by commenting on the:

- gender balance
- age range
- level of support from other Community Based organizations
- numbers of districts represented and
- levels of education

Of participants at the different stage in the prototype:

Activity	Approximate gender split of community participants		Age range of participants	Level of support from other CBOs					# of districts / sub areas represented	Level of education of participants
	Female	Male		Minimal	Restricted	Fair	Open	Maximal		
Agree on the specific indicators and desired outcomes the community want to track										
Agree on how the community will organize itself in order to manage indicator process										
Conduct broad-based planning on how to improve baseline										
Develop a programme of action to improve the baseline										

Please discuss the community participation methodology utilized in the various stages of the prototype and your perception of the effectiveness of these approaches.

Community Tracking Team

The following questions are designed to test your knowledge of your roles in the JASPEV youth inclusion prototype, please answer true or false to the following statements based on your experiences.

Community Tracking Teams were expected to fulfill the following roles in JASPEV:

- Collect relevant baseline community data around the indicators T F
- Collect regular measurement data to monitor change T F
- Organize the data collected by sorting, coding and batching the completed instruments T F
- Arrange for the sharing of the data with prototype partners; MFT and Troika T F
- Participate in the preliminary analysis and discussion of the data T F
- Report results of measurement to a broad-based community planning group (such as a CDC) T F
- Advise on local decisions for action T F

How would you rate the level of support received from the CBOs in your community as well as the JASPEV coordinators in the following activities of the Tracking Team:

Activity	Level of support from other CBOs					Level of support provide by JASPEV Coordinators				
	Minimal	Restricted	Fair	Open	Maximal	Minimal	Restricted	Fair	Open	Maximal
Agree on the specific indicators and desired outcomes the community want to track										
Agree on how the community will organize itself in order to manage indicator process										
Collect information to find out what is the current situation of youth in your community in relation to the specific indicators you want to track										
Share information with the Multi-Functional Team (MFT) and the Troika										
Organize broad-based community meetings to discuss findings of the baseline										
Conduct broad-based planning on how to improve baseline										
Develop a programme of action to improve the baseline										
Liaise and network with MFT, the Troika, local agencies, and other communities in order to get information and learn about how to achieve your desired outcomes										
Oversee the ongoing collection of data and secure records, which show whether or not progress is being made										

Describe in more details the relationship which the Community Tracking Team shared with the following stakeholders, stating the: nature of the relation, the process of information sharing (formal or informal) as well as any obstacles faced in an attempt to undertake activities related to JASPEV:

- Existing Community Based Organizations
- The Multifunctional Team
- The Troika
- SDC Community Development Officers

Discuss the community meetings which were facilitated by the Community Tracking Team to share information and undertake action planning. For each meeting please state the:

1. Variations of interest which the tracking team was able to mobilize
2. The level of attendance at these meetings
3. The usefulness of these meetings in terms of decisions taken and outcomes realized as well as plans developed.
4. Would you say that there was any sense of ownership among tracking team members of the JASPEV process in terms of their:
 - commitment to the process
 - sense of pride in being apart of JASPEV
 - expressed care about the future of the community tracking team
5. What were the main difficulties associated with being apart of the Community Tracking Team?
6. What were the benefits associated with being a part of the Community Tracking Team?
7. Can you identify any cost involved in your being apart of this JASPEV tracking team?

Community Based Organisation

1. Was your CBO prepared for participation in JASPEV? If so, state what was done
2. What are your perceptions of the members of the Community Tracking Team in terms of their representative ness of the wider community (taking into consideration):
 - level of education
 - age range
 - gender balance
 - sub areas/districts represented
3. Describe the nature of involvement of your CBOs in the activities led by the Community Tracking Team outlining the main challenges as well as opportunities presented by this partnership
 - Was this JASPEV process useful to your community? If so in what ways?
 - What were the main benefits and changes to the community as a result of JASPEV?
4. The following were outlined as the main activities to be led by the Community Tracking Teams in the Youth Inclusion Prototype. Please state whether or not you were involved and rate your level of support to the team in each stage:

Activity	Involvement		Level of support from CBO				
	Involved	Not Involved	Minimal	Restricted	Fair	Open	Maximal
Agree on the specific indicators and desired outcomes the community want to track							
Agree on how the community will organize itself in order to manage indicator process							
Collect information to find out what is the current situation of youth in your community in relation to the specific indicators you want to track							
Share information with the Multi-Functional Team (MFT) and the Troika							
Organize broad-based community meetings to discuss findings of the baseline							
Conduct broad-based planning on how to improve baseline							
Develop a programme of action to improve the baseline							
Liaise and network with MFT, the Troika, local agencies, and other communities in order to get information and learn about how to achieve your desired outcomes							
Oversee the ongoing collection of data and secure records, which show whether or not progress is being made							

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Unpublished Project documents

JASPEV Prototype Design document

SDC Report on JASPEV Youth Inclusion- Community Indicator Validation Report, October 2003

Data Collection Training Report for JASPEV