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# Who Cares What They're Saying: Participation in International Development Analysis

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# **Who Cares What They're Saying?**
## Participation in International Development Analysis

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I Hearby Reaffirm the Lawrence University Honor Code
SHD

## Introduction

International development is an international process by which more-developed countries assist and provide aid for less-developed countries. They do so by employing direct bilateral financial aid in the form of direct grants or loans from one country to another, or multilateral financial aid, where grants and loans are coming from a centralized international organization like the United Nations (UN) or the International Monetary Fund (IMF). There are also non-financial development programs that involve on-the-ground programs, such as direct medical intervention, refugee assistance, peacekeeping operations, and other such targeted development programs. In recent years, these targeted development programs have been guided by a set of international goals called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were set by the UN. Direct programming relating to the MDGs ended in 2015; in 2016 the Sustainable Development Goals were established to replace the MDGs as the guiding principles for international development from the UN.

The development process can be broken down into three major steps with two outlying stages. The first main step is the planning phase, the second implementation, and the third evaluation and assessment. The two outlying stages are not actively part of the development process. Rather, they are the early phase of receiving funding and the pre-planning process and the post-program phase wherein the development agency leaves and the program is left to function on its own. I am interested in the relationship between the evaluation step and the post-program phase. Furthermore, I am interested in how differing levels of participation in the evaluation process effect impact post-program. Specifically, I am asking if the ways that "success" is conceptualized, defined, and

measured change the lived experience of the populations being helped directly and over the long term. This could be demonstrated in a very clear-cut relationship, where there is no difference between evaluated success and the lived experience of participants, or it is possible that there could be large differences between success as it is conceptualized by evaluators and how it is experienced by participants. To answer this question I look at four cases, two from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Bangladesh and two from United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Ethiopia. I will use the program evaluations from these four cases to analyze how evaluation happened and what measured successes look like when compared with programs evaluated as failures. Two of my cases were evaluated as successes, one each from USAID and the UNDP, and two were evaluated as failures. My goal is to establish how participation is used in evaluations and to see whether programs evaluated as successful have long-term effects on the lived experience of the local population. I will argue that there is a difference between conceptualized evaluative-success and the experience that the local participants and beneficiaries. Moreover, I argue that we can't talk about good development without first understanding what we mean by good: how we conceptualize success directly impacts what we think of as "good development." Furthermore, we have to distinguish between impact, success, and our metrics for success in these conversations about development. My intention is not to argue for or against participatory development; however, I will demonstrate that, in understanding "success," we must also understand the impact that these programs have on participants and the role that participation plays in modern development projects.

This question bridges the gap between the multiple ideas of success and sustainability of development and the experience of the communities that are being targeted. There is a body of research on the experience of developing communities in anthropology, and a similar body of research on the success and sustainability of development in economics and political science, but there is very little crossover between these bodies. How do we connect the human experience and also do "good" or "financially stable" development? This research will start to address the way that participation happens on the tail end, and illustrate the relationship between developers and participants in sustainable development.

I will draw on the tradition of academic work starting with scholars like Robert Chambers, who canonized the framework of participation in the development literature. This body of research was so accepted by the international community that most major development organizations use so-called participatory models. What that means and how that is implemented is often different from organization to organization, but in a broad sense participation has been taken to mean that the target population should be involved in stating the needs of their community (Chamber, 1994). This means that participation is generally seen to happen before implementation, in the early planning stages. More recent scholarship has looked at the impact of involving participants in the middle implementation stages, hiring local workers, and working with local organizations or peer education groups.

More recent development programs have also focused on keeping resources within the community, focusing on the middle step of development. Participation in this middle step uses local agencies, hires local workers, and utilizes pre-existing institutions

to implement projects. This is useful in terms of large-scale international development focused on infrastructural and environmental programs that can be delegated to local actors. It is also used in terms of national-level targeted programs like many national HIV/AIDs reduction programs.

Participation during the tail end of development (the evaluation and assessment phases) has been relegated to the category of interviews, where the participants are asked, by the evaluation team, a number of questions about the program. The rubrics for evaluation are made by the organizations and are often formatted and determined by large national or international level organizations like USAID and the UNDP. These organizations have set notions of what success looks like, and how to measure it. These rubrics make participation as it happens in this final stage into something non-participatory. Moreover, I will demonstrate that even when evaluation rubrics include detailed interview and survey work, the voices of local participants are still not represented in the formal evaluation process.

Development is often seen as failing local populations (Cooke and Kothari, 2001), and practitioners use the ideas and language of participation to escape critiques of ethnocentrism and deterministic development. The new critiques of development say that participation is failing participants: some critiques argue that there can be no truly-participatory development (Mosse, 2004). These critiques focus on the impacts of participation in and on the first two steps of the development process. There is remarkably little literature examining how assessment affects the development process and the role of participation at this stage.

I will suggest that because of this lack of participation in the end stages of development, these critiques are missing the point. Instead of critiquing how participation impacts development and calling participatory development a failed paradigm, scholars should look at the ways in which even the best participatory development programs fail to be aware of power dynamics at all potential levels of development. The critiques of participation can only talk about development insofar as it is participatory: if development is not participatory, the critiques fail to address the ways in which development is actually happening. I will argue that evaluation is non-participatory and that the experiences of local participants, if taken into account, would change our notions of what success looks like in development programs.

My research exists at an intersection between fields, drawing from the methodology and processes of both Anthropology and Political Science. This blending of fields allows for a cross between the types of questions that each field asks. Political scientists focus on how policy, money, and relationships between countries and networks of NGOs affect development and target populations, whereas anthropology asks how groups of people are changed by development and what the cultural relationship is between development, globalization, and institutional power structures. Neither field is monolithic: there are economic anthropologists and culturally-focused political scientists, but in general the methodology and theory of each field pushes to certain types of analysis. Political science is much more likely to be explanatory than anthropology, a field where exploratory qualitative research is much more likely to be accepted.

This research is motivated by a pilot study I conducted in Pune, India on participatory development. I worked with an NGO that was specifically a sex worker

collective: it was founded, operated, and run by sex workers from the local red light district. The research done with this collective focused around their former engagement with a well-regarded international funding agency that ran the HIV/AIDS reduction efforts in Maharashtra.

From my experience in Pune I established that there was a major disconnect between the lived experiences of those affected by development programs after the agencies left and the proclaimed international success of these programs. Pune's HIV/AIDS reduction program is a categorical success in the terms of the international community, but the on-the-ground reality is completely different from what you find in the reports. The women who ran the NGO were both dissatisfied with the program's impact, citing cases of what could be considered fraud on behalf of the evaluation team, but also with what choices were made about what to measure and how to address the programs success and impact. The development initiative focused on peer education and increasing access to community learning about HIV/AIDS in the red light district. Local NGOs were given funding to give training and support peer-education initiatives, as well as to do blood tests and, in the case of the NGO I was working with, funding to help run their clinic. The markers that the evaluation team was looking for were the number of women who participated as peer educators, the number of women who participated in peer-education events, and, most importantly, the number of blood tests performed by each NGO. The disconnect from the perspective of the women I was working with was that, as an established NGO, they had already worked with most of the women who came to their clinic before and knew their HIV statuses. Beyond feeling that the international funding organization was "evil," these women also were frustrated with their lack of

understanding of how programs in the area worked, with the realities of peer education, and with the feasibility of HIV/AIDS reduction. The feelings that the evaluators did not understand the realities of their programs lead me to my main question: how does local knowledge and participation shape the understanding of success?

I do not want to assume that there was malevolent intent or lack of oversight in all development programs, so I am interested in finding out where the disconnect between lived experience and reported success happens. To establish this connection, I hope to bridge not only an academic divide between two fields in the academic world, but I also hope to shed light on what seems to be a major divide between participants and developers.

Throughout the paper I will use the idea of the "impact" of a development project to address the experience of participants, which I define as the outcome as seen by the target population. This idea of impact encompases both the short term and long term effects of project on the local population. I will contrast this with the idea of "success," or a successful program to refer to the outcome of a formal evaluation. This "evaluative-success" refers only to a project that was given a positive evaluation, by a formal evaluation team.

By engaging with questions of modernity, the "good life", and globalization, research from the anthropological field has focused on the participants' culture and tradition, as well as what is seen as a decline in traditional cultures. This anthropological tradition sees development as a form of colonial power, even when done in a participatory manner. In contrast, political science, environmental studies, and economics have focused on the "bang-for-your-buck" side of development. These fields are interested not in the

participants' culture, but rather with other results of development such as increasing production; increasing capital available in the global market; decreasing environmental impacts; and more-democratic, more-capitalist, and more infrastructurally-complex trading partners. These outcomes are seen as beneficial, and the "success" of development then becomes in meeting these outcome goals. The differing interests in these fields have led to very different critiques of participation and differing suggestions in terms of the continuation of development.

## Literature Review

Early Literature: The earliest literature on development is mostly philosophical: writers in the Kantian tradition focus the early opinions and mindsets about development aid focusing on goals and motives. This early writing focuses on the advantages and reasons for aid and development. They focus on building global communities in the framework of Kant's democratic peace. In the twentieth century this early philosophical view impacted aid, which took the form of post-war rebuilding (Wilson, 1918). A more practice-focused body of work takes over after this point, no longer solely in the realm of the theorist and the philosopher: aid and development have moved into the realm of international organizations and policy. By the 1960's the conversation surrounding development had really been taken over by practitioners. This started with the early declarations by the UN in summits and meetings on the goals of development (UN 1969), and the 1965 incipience of the UNDP. These goals are focused on the alleviation of extreme poverty, infrastructure development, and economic development. Early development focused almost exclusively on country-level development. Coming out of a theoretical framework influenced by the liberal perspectives that motivated the Marshall

Plan and other post-war plans, development focused on creating systems of democracies and economic partners (Arnold 1962). During the Cold War, this trend turned more defensive with development taking on an anti-communist lean. At this point development was still highly influenced by the creation of economic and democratic networks, but with a strategic goal. In the Soviet Union development was similarly focused, but created communist networks (Arnold 1962).

The Role of Economics: The importance of economic viewpoints in terms of development was clearly-stated in the development literature. In Easterly's 2007 "The Ideology of Development," "developmentalism" is presented as a type of ideology comparable with communism or socialism. This ideology presents economic development and entrance into the western free market as the "one true way" to develop and be a part of the world network. This early focus on economic development has shaped the way that development has evolved, and it has driven the goals of people doing aid.

Traditionally driven by developed countries' governments, development has mostly taken the form of bilateral aid programs. Bilateral aid is given directly from the government of one country to the government of the other: this is a fairly common form of international aid. Multilateral aid, in contrast, is pooled from many developed countries and distributed by an outside aid program: this type of international aid is much rarer, and generally comes in the form of loans directly to countries. It has also historically come from organizations like the World Bank or the IMF. Official development aid (ODA) is primarily bilateral, representing 72% of all ODA; multilateral aid amounts for 28% of ODA. Bilateral aid, given either as loans or grants, represents a

more-political aspect of aid which countries use to form alliances and protect their own interests in a developing country. Multilateral aid represents a huge investment of money through international cooperation, whether it is given through regional development banks (which loaned approximately USD 4 billion in 2010) or the World Bank (which loaned close to USD 13 billion in the same year)[1].

Even more recent scholars look at development as a form of active construction, and in many ways, a highly political act. Stoke (2009) calls the UN's development agencies "nation builders." They provide economic rewards and commit monies to specific development goals. These goals have changed and varied over the years but are generally constrained by the political and theoretical consensus of the times. Before the end of the Cold War this was political and economic engagement; during and after the 1990s, some of this focus turned to humanitarian aid in the form of direct help in crises, aid given to refugees, or short-term post-traumatic-conflict aid like that sent after the Rwandan Genocide.

Participation: In the late 1980s and early 1990s Robert Chambers promoted a model of participatory development. Participatory development is a model of development that seeks to involve the local communities and targeted populations in the development process. Participation ranges from including local spokespeople in the planning phases to training local people to carry out the development programs. Chambers (1994) saw participation as a way to increase the agency of local communities and counteract what he saw as a power imbalance between developers and local people. Participatory development was to replace a model of development that had developers

[1] The numbers here come from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s website OECD.org and from the World Bank

come in with a set plan, which they would execute themselves. This older model is exemplified by IMF conditionality loans, which targeted country-level development and came with specific conditions that were determined by the IMF to produce positive changes. These loans were expressly for the purposes of development and came out of the Marshal Plan. The conditionality agreements were meant to ensure that countries the IMF, World Bank, and their members were helping would succeed. Conditionality agreements were very rigorous and dependent on how the IMF thought development practices needed to go.

As a paradigm, participatory development moves away from large infrastructure and industrial development, a top-down model. Table 1 contrasts these two paradigms, noting the major differences between them. The point of departure and reference was "things" in the older model and "people" in the new participatory model (Chambers 1994). Similarly, the mode of development is "blueprint" versus "process", where planning is the major focus of development in the old model and participation is the focus in the new. There is also a view that the change is an idealistic model where "we" participate in "their" project, contrasting with the less-ideal participatory model where "they" participate in "our" project. The importance of this is to emphasize that the ideal model of participation gives ownership to the local community, and not the international developers.

Participatory development relies on using local knowledge and needs in planning and executing development programs. The first element of participatory development is to ask what the local population knows about the flora, fauna, and resources in the area and how best to utilize them. Most modern development projects are still bilateral aid

given directly from country to country; however, there has been a marked increase in the development projects done by small NGOs and local organizations. These groups have much lower program costs and many fewer resources but, in following Chambers' model, they have moved towards intensive projects on small scales. These smaller scales and targeted programming decrease the direct political manipulation often found in bilateral aid, as they are not directly going to a national government. The movement towards less-politicized development work is a pushback against the work of large NGOs. The critiques of such works call them manipulative, claiming that they focused exclusively on the developers' work. Ferguson's cornerstone piece, *Anti-Politics Machine* (1994), addresses the ways that developers themselves impact their work and how development was controlled both by the culture and work environment of the UN and ideas of "not offending the borrower."

Goals of Development: The discourse surrounding development work has changed since the UN summit in 1969: in 2015, the UN released 17 "Sustainable Development Goals" (SDGs) for the following 15 years. These goals highlight the ways that development discourse has changed and the ways it has stay stagnant. These new 2015 goals are broad and global, with objectives like eliminating hunger and poverty by 2030. The scope of these goals and their all-encompassing nature, from city planning and ocean management to consumption, are a framework by which the international community proclaims their main goal: to improve the standard of living for everyone and create a sustainable international commerce system. The SDGs come out of the MDGs which, set at the end of the 20th century, highlighted the international leaning towards increased economic partnerships, increased standard of living, and gender and health

issues. These goals were similarly broad in scope to the SDGs; however, they focused more on specific target goals[2].

These goals highlight the shift towards sustainability, which, although the International Institute of Sustainable Development (IISD) has been publishing papers on sustainability in development since the 1990s, did not enter popular discourse until recently. Instead of talking about economic impacts, these new goals look at the long-term effects of things like global health, global environmental changes, and even sustainable development. This shift focuses development on a metric and a model for success (sustainability and participation respectively). This new, focused, narrow model has much more room for small organizations and targeted projects, like those focusing on HIV/AIDS reduction or local environmental rehabilitation (Mosse 2005). On the other hand, development has not changed in some very basic, fundamental ways: it is still driven by the political and capitalistic goals of the international community; the UN is still directing its nation-building efforts; and the US is still one of the largest donors to development projects, with most of its funding going through USAID and, to a lesser extent, through the Defense Department's development projects in the Middle East and its military outposts.

Although there has been a shift in the paradigms regarding how aid programs should be implemented, the end game analysis has not particularly changed much. The major debates still boil down to the goals of economic liberalism, spreading of democracy, increasing interconnectedness, and (some would argue) increased westernization (Bathelt and Cohendt 2014).

[2] See the appendix for a copy of both the MDGs and the SDGs.

Efficacy: The debate over the efficacy and efficiency of aid belongs to the economists, who take the established and stated goals of development and look at statistical impacts, creating a "bang for your buck" style of analysis. The question of whether aid works boils down to the rhetoric and data chosen by each side. Some works choose to stay outside the debate and address the issue with no clear side. The general conclusion of authors who choose this outside perspective is that there is not enough data on aid and its outcomes (Riddell, 2007). This side of the efficacy debate tries to establish a set of principles to establish a way to analyze if aid agencies are performing well. Some of these principles include sending aid to those in need, not sending aid to corrupt governments, putting more effort into development aid and less into technical aid and food aid, and having less tied aid (Easterly, 2007). Parameters for measuring a project's success include the project's stated goals and ability to improve on historic problems. Once the criteria for the efficacy of aid have been established, sides are generally chosen for ideological reasons more than through the strength of the data: only a few of the markers can be empirically measured, and even those tend to be subject to inconsistency. Furthermore, every member of the international community seems to all have a different way of measuring the data (Riddell, 2007). Beyond issues in the quantitative data, much of the argument about aid is based on normative assumptions that are never supported or addressed; some of these are shared across the literature, and some are drastically different.

Should We Send Aid? By far the biggest supporter of development aid is Jeffrey Sachs. Sachs was heavily involved in creating the millennium development goals, and in his book *The End of Poverty* he argues that aid should be drastically increased. Sachs

argues that in order to start developing at all, countries need all manner of capital (including, but not limited to: monetary, human, business, infrastructural, natural, and knowledge capital). A country with insufficient capacity in any of these categories, Sachs argues, will be unable to independently develop or better itself. Aid from the international community is the only way to solve these problem, and ensure the necessary capital for development (Sachs, 2005). The rising tide, in this case, raises all boats. In another metaphor, which is similarly resonant with Interdependence Theory, Sachs argues that LDCs are not even on the ladder of development and that it is the developed world's responsibility to ensure their access to the ladder.

Metaphors aside, Sachs also states that the investment need from the wealthiest to better the poorest is relatively little. Sachs claims that the US would need to give .7 percent of its GNP to the third world in order to successfully boost the latter to the ladder of development (Sachs 2005). This aid is vital, Sachs argues, and, according to his calculations, completely affordable for the developed world. Sachs continues to say that not only is aid vital, but the system that it is funneled through is similarly vital. Aid is ineffective merely because we are not putting enough resources into it, and were the developed world to put more into the aid system, they would see more results. Sachs doesn't specify whether this aid should come through multilateral or bilateral systems, or what form it should take; instead, he argues that all aid is good aid and the developed world is responsible for providing it. The model Sachs is using urges for shock therapy (that is, large doses of aid) which can then taper off after the set of goals, specifically his millennium development goals, are met.

The argument against aid is headed by William Easterly, an economist specializing in development and foreign investment and aid. Easterly argues that aid is simply inefficient, not meeting its own stated goals, and at times counterproductive. Aid, Easterly says, should be funneled to those in need and used to improve the standard of living. He emphasizes the stated goals from within aid programs as a way to measure the efficacy of aid (Esterly, 2007). Easterly demonstrates that there has been very little positive change in aid programs; furthermore, in his article on the ideology of aid, he argues that developmentalism will run its course when the world sees its inefficiency, its lack of effective change, and its insistence that all countries follow the same patterns. Easterly directly attacks the assumption that Sachs and other development aid supporters make that all development must follow the same path. Easterly sees developmentalists as toting a "one correct answer" solution to the problems of the third world, claiming that their solution is pseudo-scientific and that they are ignoring the hard numbers (Easterly 2007). Easterly's main thesis is that development is not sustainable, rather ineffective, and harmful in the long term.

Moyo (2010) has a similar view; she argues that aid has led to corruption in Africa, and is actually harmful to the development of the continent and individual countries. Moyo says that aid money is too easily accessible and that the international community is incapable of regulating how it is used. The accessibility of the money to corrupt leaders and the temptation of easy money leads to further corruption. Moyo goes a step farther than Easterly, who merely says that the system is failing, and says that the system is causing failure. Moyo calls for the end to aid and a reevaluation of development goals, asking the developed world to let Africa find its own path to success.

Although economists are still focusing on the dollars in and results out as their primary mode of assessment, new ways in which the results out can be measured are being explored. New ways of measuring outcome are, however, applied mostly at country levels, with only a small number of economists focusing on small scale and local development programs when they address results. This rule is, however, broken in terms of medical aid, where results are measured specifically at the local level where programs are taking place.

In the past decade and a half the literature on development has expanded. Where before the literature was a conversation about capitalist growth focused in the economic realm of "results out for dollars in," more recently different fields have entered the conversation. Most notably different from the economists are the anthropologists. Anthropology as a field focuses on the lived experiences of the people development is said to help. This leads to asking how development changes culture and how modernity, globalization, and development interplay with the local cultural understanding of the world. Edmunds (2013) looks at these questions and at the idea of a "good life". This model of inquiry is one of the major ways that anthropologists have interacted with development.

The idea of a "good life" is one that underlines a large amount of cultural anthropological literature. Instead of looking for a universal understanding of the concept, anthropology focuses on a very local understanding, asking what the markers of a good life are for any one group of people. This question of a good life interacts interestingly with the exploration of globalization. The markers of a good life change over time, and globalization has drastically increased the rate of change in some places.

Mary Good addresses these interactions in her paper "Modern Moralities, Moral Modernities: Ambivalence and Change Among Youth in Tonga" (2012). The paper looks at the ways signal markers of status and modernity in youth are a counterpoint to the traditional culture that has long demarcated the good life. Good's paper addresses these conflicting ideas at a very local level, but these questions are reflective of a much larger process. What makes a good life? Is globalization changing that? Even harder to answer for anthropologists is the question of whether we should change it. The answers to these questions all have impacts on development and what the goals of development end up being. Should we tailor development to what is already considered a good life, or should we have standards of a good life that are global?

For anthropologists, participatory theory is a way to engage with the local populations. For example, in a development project in western India, locals were asked about trees, what the local population knew about what trees they had access to, and how to use them. This project was run in part by the local forest service and was intended to reforest the area with trees that would be useful to local populations. Participation was important in identifying the key species of trees in the area and how they were used (Mosse 2005). This first element of development is that of engagement and comes from Chambers' (1994) ideas of participatory paradigms.

The second element of participatory development, specifically for anthropologists, is to ask and look for what is lacking in a given community and how to develop or provide for that feature. This is where you get aid programs that provide a thing or help the local community gain access to it based on their need. For example, in the case in west India, the goal was to see what trees had been lacking in the ecosystem

and which were most necessary to the local community. The forest service saw that there had been large amounts of deforestation and, instead of planting a predetermined variety of trees, they utilized the local populations to understand what trees were absent for the ecosystem and which were most necessary (Mosse 2005).

Using local knowledge and local actors in development is targeted at making aid more impactful and cost effective. The cost efficiency of participatory development brings in one more piece of participation: using local people to execute the projects. By funneling wages into local communities instead of hiring outside actors these development programs are acting as economic stimulus. They are creating jobs and adding money into local circulation. Local labor is often much cheaper for development agencies as well.

Fabrizio, McCann, and Rodrigues-Pose (2012) look at participatory theory as a way to tailor development and aid to the specific needs of a place. In this way, participatory development becomes a way to tailor projects to the constraints and recourses available in a specific region. This is a particular response to Sachs geographic argument: by specifically looking at placed-based projects, they argue that participation utilizes the resources and cultural knowledge specific to a place and can come to locally-appropriate solutions. Participation is then a workaround for the structural limitations of the "northern" model of development as put forward by Sachs (2005). The solutions participatory development provides are not dependent on the "northern" model of industrial development.

Participatory development was intended to challenge the power roles that Chambers saw in the traditional approach to development. In a world moving away from

purely country-to-country development, Chambers and others saw a possibility for an idealistic paradigm shift towards participation. In the years since, others have critiqued this new paradigm for failing to change the dynamics of development. Participatory development attempts to cause a paradigm shift through the three functions of development: engaging with the target population, engaging with their resources and problems of the community, and engage in place-specific development. These all put participatory development in contrast with a large-scale, country-, and even world-level development that tries to create a homogenous global system.

Tyranny: Several authors have all challenged participation as merely reinforcing power structures in different ways. This major critique, boiled down to the term "tyranny" by Cooke and Kothari (2001), looks at the dynamics of power between the developer and local people, referring back to the model of a "we" participating in "their" project instead of "them" participating in "our" project (Chambers 1994). The ownership of projects that Chambers spoke of comes to represent who has the resources and knowledge, or rather, the power, in the development system. An example of this critique is found in the West Indian forestry project. Mosse (2004) argues that the participants in his project all showed a preference for a tree for which they had few actual uses, because the forestry department was thought to favor that species. These programs don't change power structures; instead, they reshape them. As idealistic as any model can be, what really counts is the actual practice. In the case of Mosse's 2004 study, the participants themselves reinforced power structures in their participation through their perception of the forest service's desires. Mosse argues that these power structures are inherent when you have outside forces with money and resources driving the programs.

The specific use of tyranny as a critique of participation is pointed and refers to a long tradition of the word being used pointedly in contexts of globalization. Bell and Morse revisit the idea in their 2011 paper, referring to the long history of methodological hegemony in development and echoing Easterly's (2007) ideas presented of developmentalism. Bell and Morse's 2011 paper revisits ideas presented in an earlier paper, addressing the ways in which macroeconomic methodology was the hegemonic form of control for most of the 20th century. This critique of methodological tyranny is an echo of a more colonially-informed understanding of the word. Tyranny, according to Cooke and Kothari (2001), is a form of colonial control, and development is the newest extension of the power wielded by the west as a colonial, at times tyrannical, force. The critique focuses specifically at participatory development because it claims to be an inversion of power structures, where developers are taking their guidance from those who they are helping to develop. For Cooke and Kothari, this is a critique because participation sets itself up as a solution to the problems of power and control that Chambers highlighted in the early nineties: the general understanding in participatory development is that through participation colonial and "traditional" power dynamics are subverted. Cooke and Kothari's critique is that, rather than subverting those power dynamics, participatory development and its practitioners are reinforcing them.

These critiques ignore the role that analysis of success and the goals of developers play in impacting the power dynamics in participatory models. Drawing from my 2014 paper on a small Indian NGO's experience of participatory development, I will argue that although the critiques of participatory development are valid, one of the major shortcomings is their lack of attention to analysis and evaluation of projects. Good

participatory programs are getting short-changed by international agencies that are tasked with analyzing them, and the programs that most tightly follow the evaluation rubrics are being rewarded even when their programs are less effective than others.

Pune India, A Case Study: My research in India looked at an NGO that was the local site of a participatory program in Pune, India (focused on HIV/AIDS reduction). This program used the participatory model by funding local organizations and providing them with materials to do participatory peer education in the red light district. They came at this model through focus groups with the NGO leaders in the area. The specific NGO, which for anonymity purposes went unnamed, felt that the program had been a failure, even though the international community lauded the program as a great success. The major place where power structures were evident in this case was in the process of analysis of the aid. In a program run by local operators, many of the critiques of imbalanced power fail because there were no evident power differences: in fact, most of the workers at the NGO I was looking at were themselves sex workers, and the project focused on training peer educators. In this regard it really was a program looking to create equal power at the levels of planning and execution. Nonetheless, I found that the NGO felt the international organization had been rude, "immoral," and called the program a failure, as well as regarding the international organization with distrust. The area where power was clearly asymmetric was in the analysis. The way that the program was evaluated was separated from the reality of the sex workers' lives, and saw them as numbers to give to funders.

The critique of participation fails to address where agencies can make power imbalances better or worse, and I feel that it is in the area of analysis where true

participation is not only possible, but necessary in avoiding tyranny. The power ultimately lies in who labels success and failure. If the metrics programs are judged on (in Pune, for example, the metric was reduction in rates of HIV/AIDS) are decided on before the program's implementation is planned, then there can be no real participation.

Policy Ramification- A Political Approach: If anthropology as a field is focused on the purpose of participation and its critiques, political science is focused on the policy ramifications of participation. Before the shift towards participatory development in the 1990s, international development and aid was organized through well-known, easily-researchable institutions, like the IMF and the World Bank, as well as departments of western governments dedicated to development. These organizations had easy policy to study and their influences were clear. However, since then development and aid has become significantly more multifaceted, with many more specific interest programs developing and more grassroots organizations and NGOs entering the game. These new developments have been the focus of political scientists in the newest literature on development; they focus on the interactions that these new smaller organizations have with larger, more-traditional development organizations. Political science is particularly interested in the efficacy of these relationships. This line of study, however, is reliant on a measure of success that is reflective of the real outcomes of development. This is problematic, as is demonstrated in the literature from anthropology (Mosse, 2005) and economics (Riddell, 2007), as these measures of success are often times hard to find and trust. In other terms, this literature relies on the outcome analysis used developers which come in the form of end-of-project evaluation forms.

Environmental programs are places where this type of analysis for political science is effective, so most articles focus on this aspect. Cronin (2013), Lostarnau et al (2011), and Sivaramakrishnan (2000) all address environmental issues in their work. These articles all look at the reduction of environmental stressors as their outcome and, as such, are easily measured. In environmental terms success is a clearly defined and there are few, if any, participants. Even ideas such as sustainability are easily understood in an environmental context. Because these programs are so easily-understood in terms of their success, it is easy to take them as case studies when looking at what makes successful programs successful. Even programs like the ones David Mosse (2001) addresses in his article "'People's Knowledge', Participation and Patronage: Operations and Representations in Rural Development" are fairly easily measured. Political scientists make policy suggestions and discuss the field in terms of these projects. This bias in the literature makes environmental development incredibly important as a field, and at times disproportionately represented in the shaping of future plans.

Although these programs are fairly easy to measure and are easy to plan in terms of strategic interventions, they too have been a part of participatory programing. Mosse (2001) speaks of a program in Bengal where the goal was reforestation: in an attempt to be participatory, they asked the local population for suggestions as to the most useful trees that had been lacking in the region. What could have been an incredibly simple project now entered into the realm of a participatory project, which made its simple goal of "add more trees in the area" murky. What now are the goals of projects that attempt to engage the local population? Success here is not as easily measured as it was before. In

this way, even the simple case studies of environmental projects are made murky and subject to critique in the ways that they impact the lived experience of local populations.

In a body of literature that has come to accept participation as the "best practice" of development, the evaluation of development programs in terms of their successful use of participation fits with the academic literature. However, the role of participation in evaluation has not been directly addressed by the literature. Specifically, the disconnect between lived experience and the impact on local populations as the local populations see it and the institutionalized models of evaluation are an unexplored territory.

## Methods

In order to answer my research question, I will set up a number of comparisons between four development projects. Each case will be a large-scale development program targeting one of the Millennium Development Goals. I chose cases from the UNDP and from USAID.

Both organizations are large and established funders and organizers, so all of the programs had institutional support and experienced program runners. Moreover, both organizations have embraced participatory models and work with in-country organizations for implementation. Beyond this, the evaluation rubrics for each organization are more-or-less equivalent: they use the same metrics and have similar

qualifications for success and failure[3]. Although there are minor differences in the organization of the templates, they are formulated in similar manners.

The UNDP is the United Nations development office; it works to "eradicate poverty". The UNDP's office ran the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), goals which targeted humanitarian and development improvements that guided much of development work in the early 2000s. The MDGs expired in 2015 and were replaced in 2016 by the Sustainable Development Goals. These goals shape much of the focus of international development. Both of the cases from the UNDP in Bangladesh were funded by the MDG fund for gender equality.

USAID, in contrast, is a national-level organization. It is the United States' agency for development. USAID's website says that their goals are to "end extreme global poverty and enable resilient democratic societies to realize their potential." In 2014 the United States gave 8.5 billion dollars in Official Development Assistance (ODA)[4]. Most of the United States ODA and other development spending is handled by USAID.

The four comparisons will offer me an exhaustive look at the four cases and allow me to address the evaluations given and to assess their legitimacy and validity as cases. I will set up two Most-Similar Systems (MSS) design comparisons, and two using a Most-Different Systems (MDS) design. In picking cases I kept in mind the necessities of making comparisons, thinking of the comparisons in a four by four grid and creating comparisons between all adjacent squares. Two cases are from UNDP and two from

[3] Guides for evaluation from the UNDP and USAID are available on their respective websites; I read through them to establish that a comparison between the evaluation process from these two organizations would be valid.

[4] This number comes from data.oecd.org

USAID; similarly, two were evaluated as successful and two evaluated as failures. I picked one successful program and one failed program from each organization. To further allow for an MSS design, I chose both cases which were in similar areas of development, run by a single organization, and in a single country. This allows for an MSS design comparison between both cases from the UNDP and both cases from USAID. The other two comparisons will be MDS design, where both failures will be compared and both successes.

I am looking for instances where successful development cases share indicators of success with failed cases and where levels of participation are similar across cases. I am also looking for instances of contradictory evaluation metrics; that is, where one evaluation tells me that indicators are of success and other evaluations use similar metrics to evaluate cases as failures. I will also look for evaluations which entirely fail to use those same metrics. I am mostly looking for inconsistencies in my MSS comparisons and consistencies in my MDS comparisons. I will use the methodology sections and the raw data sections in the evaluation documents to find these consistencies and inconsistencies. Once I have established how success or failure is measured, I will analyze whether those methods are participatory and similar or different across evaluations. I will also be able to look at what methodologies are used, as evaluations use mixed methodologies, and how data impacts outcome. I will be looking for instances where participatory data is collected and how it is used in establishing the success or failure of cases.

There are two general ways in which "success" is being used in this paper. The first use of the word, and what I mean when I use success, is to highlight the evaluated outcome of development projects. Success in this sense implies that the project's goals

were met and that the official evaluation team deemed it a successful program. The second form of success I refer to as "impact," and it is the effect that development project has on its participants and whether they feel that it was a good program[5].

Because of limitations in my data sources, I choose my countries primarily based on which had failures because there are many more successful ratings. It is hard to find development programs that have been considered failures because evaluation is so important to receiving continued funding that evaluators are far less likely to actually dub any project a failure. One of the limitations of this study is that the failed evaluations are all done on contract. This is not a direct problem, because there are also a large number of programs that have been successful in evaluation that were evaluated on contract as well; moreover, even contracted evaluation teams have to use the same rubrics and formats as official evaluation teams from the UNDP and USAID.

From the UNDP I found cases from Bangladesh. This allows me a fairly compelling comparison with India because, although there is a religious difference between the two countries, they share cultural similarities due to their closeness as neighbors; furthermore, it has only been around 70 years since they separated into two countries. Both of my cases from Bangladesh are focused on development programs targeting women.

To move away from South Asia, my cases from USAID are both from Ethiopia and are country-wide interventions. In comparison to the cases from Bangladesh, which

[5] It is possible that, at times, projects that were incredibly impactful will have low levels of satisfaction in target populations; however, when I address the impact on the target population, I am not concerned about combining satisfaction with success, because there are very few humanitarian projects which are unpleasant. This would be more worrisome in the case of an infrastructural development project, like the building of a major dam, that might displace local residents, in which case they would be unsatisfied even if the project was successful. However, with regard to the programs looked at here, the concepts of success and satisfaction are linked.

were more focused in their scope despite their large scale, both of the programs from Ethiopia focus on country-level distribution of humanitarian resources. One case focused on the healthcare system and the other on the education system.

Four Cases: My first success case is from a program run by UNDP in Bangladesh and is a targeted program on the development of entrepreneurial tendencies in Bangladeshi women. The program ran from 1998 (operations started in 1999) through 2003. The program was operated in country by Jatiya Mohila Sangstha (JMS) and was executed by the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MWCA). The program's aims were to:

1. Develop entrepreneurship among women undertaking income-earning activities with the potential for scaling-up and enhanced investment.
2. Strengthen the capacity of the implementing agencies for effective service delivery.

The program goal was to target 7000 women from around Bangladesh who had previously received micro-credit loans from JMS, participating NGOs, and from the Department of Women Affairs (DWA). These women were then given entrepreneurship training before receiving two-year loans ranging from Taka 30,000 to Taka 150,000 (approximately USD 400 to USD 2,000). The overarching goal of the program was to create and incorporate a number of self-organized groups that would continue to give access to this knowledge to women in Bangladesh. This development program targeted mainly non-poverty women, instead of only targeting women in absolute poverty. Non-poverty women are a major actor in the Bangladeshi economy, so this focus was significant to the project.

The second case from Bangladesh was assessed as a failure. This program was targeted at reducing violence against women: the project title was Joint Program to Address Violence Against Women (JP VAW). The program was a direct part of the Millennium Development Goal programs and was a joint program combining resources, personnel, and funding from several UN branches. The program was commissioned by the UN's Resident Coordinator's Office, and managed by the Joint Program Management Office with guidance from the UN's Population Fund. Quality assurance and assessment was done by the MDG-F Secretariat. The JP VAW's goals were to positively impact the lives of Bangladeshi women and girls by:

1. Promotion of an adequate policy and legal framework.
2. Promotion of changes and attitudes that condone gender violence.
3. Comprehensive and culturally appropriate support to survivors through improved care and access to justice.

JP VAW was a 7.9 million-dollar program with nine participating UN agencies and 11 national counterparts, as well as 20 implementing partners. The program was the largest joint project at time of implementation. The target population was all women in Bangladesh. As a participatory program, JP VAW mostly involved local NGOs and country-level workers instead of working directly with the target population. This is not an uncommon form of participation and, in fact, is almost exactly the same model as from my pilot study from Pune, India.

The first of the USAID programs in Ethiopia is the success, a program targeted at increasing the standard of life for people living with HIV/AIDS and to increase the

efficacy of local healthcare infrastructure in handling such cases. Since it was a targeted medical intervention, the program provided food-by-prescription to qualifying patients. The Ethiopia Food by Prescription Program provided Ready-to- Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) and/or Ready-to-Use Supplementary Food (RUSF). The main site of evaluation was the health service delivery system. The evaluation examined results of integrating Nutrition Assessment Counseling and Support (NACS) into HIV care and treatment services and reviewed the systems in place to integrate the quantification, management, and distribution of RUTF and RUSF commodities into the Logistics Management Information System (LMIS) at the national and regional levels.

The final of four programs is the case assessed as a failure from USAID in Ethiopia. The Improving Quality of Education Program (IQPEP) was a country-level targeted intervention aimed at increasing access to quality education in Ethiopia. IQPEP directly supported 2,615 primary schools, 30 Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs), 200 focus woredas (districts), and all regions and city administrations of Ethiopia to achieve two overarching goals: to improve reading proficiency in early grades and enhance learning achievement of primary school students, and improve planning, management, and monitoring of primary education. Some of the main goals for the program were:

1. Strengthen pre-service teacher education.
2. Enhance in-service teacher professional development.
3. Improve decentralized educational planning and management.
4. Improve gender equity.

IQPEP was a 5 year program starting in 2009 and ending in 2014.

**Data**

Two Cases from Bangladesh: The first two cases are the UNDP cases from Bangladesh. Both programs are focused on the economic and societal well-being of women. Both programs were funded by the MDG fund and were conceptualized under the guidance of the Millennium Development Goals. Implemented within a few years of each other in the same country, both programs were working with the same legal, institutional, and governmental frameworks in-country and were monitored through the same in-country office. Both programs suffered from a lack of monitoring from in-country officers, and most during-program monitoring happened on the fly and to satisfy demands from the UNDP about reporting. Each evaluation reflects these issues in their introduction and problems sections. This haphazard approach to monitoring means the formal evaluations are more important and have to be more in-depth, as most evaluations use the program reports as a secondary document in writing their formal evaluations. This also impacts the type of information available to the evaluators, as traditionally these monitoring reports are a huge source of data: this lack of reports actually forces an increase in use of participatory data such as interviews and focus groups. These were mostly with implementers, however, and did not include large numbers of participants from targeted women.

In looking at the evaluation process, the methodology used for the two evaluations is almost identical. Both used short-term in-country visits to conduct a number of interviews with in-country program staff and government officials and NGOs. Both evaluations interviewed only a small number of the target women. Because of the

time constraints of their evaluation schedules, the evaluation only looks at performance in a small number of districts. These are the standard procedures for all UNDP evaluations and are outlined both in the evaluation reports as well as in the handbook for evaluation that the UNDP publishes. In the JP VAW, evaluators only visited two of the districts where development efforts were happening. The EDW program was slightly better, visiting four districts. Both of these programs were national programs that had operations in the majority of districts in Bangladesh.

The similar methodology is not surprising between the two evaluations because the requirements of UNDP evaluations are standardized across the board. Because the evaluative techniques are held stable, making the argument that differences in evaluation cause the ultimate success or failure of a program is more difficult. However, the EDW program was seen as successful in the evaluation, but when talking about the experiences of women who were the target participants of the program, the evaluation found that they did not understand why the program was happening or what its goals were. This is a major issue for the actual success of the program, as one of their main target goals was to "educate women on economic autonomy" and program participants had to go through a training program before receiving any loans. Many of the loans -- the evaluation says as many as 20% -- never even made it to the participating women and instead were given directly to the male head of household. This supposedly-successful program was failing in its main goal of educating women, as shown by their lack of understanding of program goals; its target population was not even necessarily getting the money that was supposed to allow it to have the level of economic autonomy the project was aiming for. In general, the program was below-target on all of its goals but gained a successful rating because

the agency was superficially meeting the metrics of measurement, in this case money given out in loans, and women who had been through the training.

In contrast, the JP VAW was evaluated as a failure, although the official evaluation documents show that it failed to meet only one of its three goals completely and had much higher rates of success on two of them than did the EDW in any of its stated goals. The main theme of the evaluation is that the program was not well-organized and the main reason for failure was the lack of consistency between departments. The program was a joint program between 16 offices in the UN, and the lack of institutional cohesion is what seems to have ultimately led to the failure of the program. Moreover, this program was less-directly targeted at women, because while the participating target population did see themselves as the intended beneficiaries of most of the programming, they were not included as participants. The participants in the program were mostly government workers and social workers that ran shelters and gave legal help. Since the goal of the program was so vast, they could not target all women in Bangladesh directly and so had to work through these intermediaries. The program was impactful in all of the areas where it was measuring the actions and changes in the government workers. For instance, the first goal of the program was to make changes in the legal code at district levels, which the evaluation says improved across the vast majority of districts. These positive evaluations seemed to have no impact on the final evaluative process, as on the preset target goals of "fewer women being the targets of violence against women" and "more women utilizing the legal system when they are the targets of violence" the program was failing to make significant changes at the time of evaluation.

The disconnect between the programs and the official metrics for evaluation is evidence that the evaluative process is not participatory. For example, the women in the EDW did not know what the program's goals were, even though the program itself was targeted at training and education as well as loan distribution. The nature of the program, in fact, required women to both go through the training but also *to pass out of it* before loan distribution. The program goals focused on easily measurable metrics as opposed to participatory data and metrics such as participant understanding of goals and the training. The fact that the women felt that they did not understand these things is evidence of some level of failure in the education aspect of the program and highlights the lack of participation in the evaluation.

These two programs also highlight a few other lessons of development because, unlike smaller programs with fewer sub-projects, we can compare not only the programs as a whole but also their parts to see when and why parts of the program were impactful. All of the instances of the programs meeting or exceeding the goals as measured by the participants happened in the context of high participation. The word that the evaluations use to represent this success in highly participatory situations is “ownership”. Ownership of programs means that local participants feel like the programs are theirs: they understand the goals and the mechanics of the program. In the JP VAW, we see that the most-impactful aspect of the program was in the government, where government actors were given a large amount of control and respect by the UN developers. The changes made by these participants were real and they saw the outcomes directly. This combination of respect by outsiders, control over programs, and real tangible changes mean that they felt high ownership of the program. Ownership, in this case, then acts as

an example of good participation. In contrast, the EDW program was less-impactful because the women participating did not understand the goals of the program and as such could not have that same level of ownership over the program.

Bangladesh and Ethiopia: Two Failures: Improving Quality of Primary Education Program (IQPEP) in Ethiopia was a program run by the USAID which focused on education in Ethiopia. The program worked with all levels of government from federal down to districts (called *woredas*) to improve the training of teachers, access to pedagogical materials, and to improve gender equality in education (which it aimed to do by increasing young girls' access to education and increasing the number of female principals and women in higher education). The evaluation states the program history and goals as:

> Launched on August 4, 2009, and ending on August 4, 2014, the Improving Quality of Primary Education Program (IQPEP) was a five-year, country-wide program in Ethiopia. IQPEP directly supported 2,615 primary schools, 30 Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs), 200 focus woredas (districts), and all regions and city administrations of Ethiopia to achieve two major goals: 1) improved reading proficiency in early grades and enhanced learning achievement of primary school students, and 2) improved planning, management, and monitoring of primary education. Three outputs were considered to be essential to achieve those goals: 1) strengthened pre-service teacher education; 2) enhanced in-service teacher professional development; and 3) improved decentralized educational planning and management. Improved gender equity was also an essential goal within the program, as was monitoring and evaluation of program results. (USAID Evaluation)

The JP VAW, in comparison, was equally widespread and on a country-wide level. The UNDP evaluation states the goals as:

> The JP VAW's objective was to have a positive effect on the lives of women and girls in Bangladesh by reducing, preventing and responding to VAW through the promotion of (i) an adequate policy and legal framework; (ii) changes in behaviors and attitudes that condone gender violence and; (iii) comprehensive and culturally appropriate support to survivors through improved care and access to

justice.

These programs were incredibly different in their intent and construction: the JP VAW was a country-level joint program that focused on changing opinion and implementing policy, whereas IQPEP was a more-focused program, attempting to increase access to resources and create opportunities in country for those resources to be disseminated and made available.

Both of these programs were found to have failed by their evaluation teams. Although the programs were incredibly different, the ways in which the evaluations were conducted were very similar. The method of program evaluation is standardized: USAID has specific metrics for evaluation. In comparing the evaluation procedures for USAID and UNDP, we see that these metrics are similar across the two agencies. The major categories of assessment for IQPEP were:

> EVALUATION QUESTIONS
> Approach, inputs and results
>
> > Did the program meet established targets at all levels under the IQPEP contract, performance monitoring plan, and implementation plans? …
>
> Program Management …
>
> Host Government Satisfaction
>
> > To what degree has IQPEP responded to perceived needs of its beneficiaries: teachers, education managers, government partners at the school clusters, woredas, regional and national levels? Which activities are perceived as most important? Which ones are perceived as least important? Why?
> >
> > Do regional and woreda-level education officials feel a sense of ownership of the project?
> >
> > What is the opinion of the school directors, teachers, woreda and regional education officials about the trainings and relevance to their needs?

> How have IQPEP activities and outputs been integrated, where appropriate, into initiatives of the Ethiopian government at CTEs, cluster centers, woredas, regional and national levels, in terms of government policy and planning? (USAID Evaluation)

These are very similar to the points of evaluation for JP VAW, which looked first at the outcomes of the three different goals (all of which line up fairly well with the broad categories of the IQPEP evaluation). The questions regarding approach and results are straightforward, and are the section where pre-formed metrics are most important for the evaluation. Did the program meet targets? The second section of evaluation metrics reveals an important feature of evaluation: determining how well the program was run. Evaluating whether or not the people in charge of the operation did their job skillfully is incredibly non-participatory because this part of the evaluation process is not interested in the target population's reactions but rather the internal functioning of the project. Both IQPEP and JP VAW had issues in this area and, as such, the evaluations make mention to program management as a failure of the program, even with high levels of satisfaction from participants. The third category harkens back to Ferguson's 1994 paper and one of the most-common problems with development: the fact that the host government has control over what happens during programming. In this case, however, both failed programs were given favorable reviews from the host government and, since the programs' government worker participants felt satisfied with the program they, experienced high levels of ownership.

The similarities in the evaluation process continue in that the time frame and scope of the evaluation were similar across both programs: both programs had teams in-

country for less than a month, used purposive sampling[6], and used structured interviews across a broad number of respondent categories. Although both programs were considered failures, they both had positive responses from participants in the program at levels where the program was participatory.

The difference between the final evaluation and the feelings of participants in surveys is demonstrative of the hypothesis that the evaluation process is not participatory. Even in highly-participatory programs like IQPEP, which primarily trained educators (both teachers and teacher educators, with the intention that they could continue work beyond the scope of the program) and people involved in education policy, the metrics for analysis are more important than the feelings of the respondents. In the JP VAW, government workers and women involved in the social programs were highly satisfied with the program. In the IQPEP, at all levels, the majority of respondents said that on a scale of 1-5, where 5 was the most satisfied with the programs, they rated the program a 4 or 5. There was no instance in the IQPEP data where the majority of participants were dissatisfied with the program. Both programs, however, despite being seen in a favorable light by the program participants, received failing evaluations.

Since these programs were supposed to meet predetermined targets, the opinions of the participants did not matter; furthemore, they both failed to achieve the goals set out by the prodocs[7] and preliminary program plans. In this way the evaluation process fails to be

[6] Purposive sampling is a form of non-quota sampling. Instead of drawing a representative population, purposive sampling finds participants with relevant experience.

[7] Prodocs are the program documents that guide development programs. They are written during the early stages of planning and outline the goals and targets of the program. These are the documents that guide evaluation teams and set markers for goal completion.

participatory because, despite positive reactions of participants (and, in the case of IQPEP, overwhelmingly positive reactions), the evaluations do not weigh the voice of the participants. Why did a program that was seen so favorably by participants, met all of the target evaluation goals (according to its participants), and that had high potential for sustainability fail its evaluation? The evaluation document itself presents no clear answer other than the weight and importance put on some target goals over others. When participants' voices have no impact on development evaluation and goals set out in pre-program planning stages are weighted arbitrarily, how can these programs claim to be participatory? If programs that failed evaluation had such positive participant reactions, and programs like the one I studied in Pune, India (considered a success in formal evaluation) had such negative participant reaction, how valid are evaluations? What makes a program successful? As evidenced by the IQPEP, it certainly is not the experience of participants.

Bangladesh and Ethiopia: Two Successes: Ethiopia Food by Prescription (EFBP), a program from USAID, was given a successful rating at the project's close by International Business and Technical Consultants Inc. The project was targeted at providing Food by Prescription (FBP) to people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV). The evaluation describes the program thusly:

> The FBP activity provides technical assistance for the integration of Nutritional Assessment Counseling and Support (NACS) into the routine care and treatment services for PLHIV. The activity supports the provision of Ready-to-Use Supplementary Food (RUSF) and Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) to moderate and severely malnourished adult PLHIV, including pregnant and lactating mothers and Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC).
>
> With Save the Children US as the prime IP, FBP supports five strategic areas: (1) commodity sourcing, procurement, and distribution of RUSF and RUTF; (2)

> capacity building of key stakeholders and health facility staff and communities to deliver FBP activities; (3) support for adherence and behavioral change through information, education, and communication (IEC); (4) increasing coordination of HIV and nutrition interventions and policy issues with key stakeholders; and (5) monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to support FBP programming.

The program was a country-level targeted health intervention. Similarly, the EDW program in Bangladesh was also a targeted program, although in this case the program focused on gender as opposed to health outcomes.

The major similarity in the evaluations of these two programs is the emphasis put on target goals being met. The argument for evaluating the programs as successes is based, in both cases, on quantitative metrics, disregarding data gathered from qualitative methods. EFBP draws these numbers from target patient numbers and by number of prescriptions and diagnoses made; similarly, EDW judged its success on the number of women put through entrepreneurship training and number of loans given. Target numbers for these goals were set by the prodocs in the pre-programing phase and the valuations just have to look at monitoring reports to check goal achievement. This ease of evaluation is one of the main reasons that this method is used in development projects. Having target goals to achieve make receiving funding easy and demonstrating success streamlined.

Both programs also had qualitative segments of evaluation, but they were both very limited in scope and participation. EFBP had interviews with 70 key informants in the program, none of whom were participants; rather, they were members of the Ethiopian government and health service who were involved in implementation. The evaluation team also held 32 focus group discussions with participants in the program. These interviews and focus groups are only referred to in the methodology sections. In

the findings section of the evaluation only quantitative results are shared. This goal orientation in evaluation stresses the non-participatory nature of this type of evaluation. It is notable that both of these projects were targeted interventions: as a program type, targeted programs like both EDW and EFBP are easy to set goals for because they are looking at numbers of people with access to the program.

Another similarity between EDW and EFBP and which is highlighted in both of their evaluations is their lack of sustainability. Both programs were highly reliant on the funding from the development agency to provide the intervention materials. Once funding for the program was cut at the end of program, the interventions stopped. In the case of EFBP, the Ethiopian government said that they would only continue to give out the RUSF and RUTF packages until supplies from the USAID program ran out. The EDW was slightly more sustainable, with the potential for the regional groups to continue doing training with new members and potentially having access to other microloans after the program. Once the EDW ended, however, the easily-accessible loans and funding for training were no longer available. In most development projects sustainability is a major point of concern in the evaluation: it has its own section in both the UNDP's and USAID's rubric for evaluation. Despite this, and even though these programs are acknowledged as being unsustainable, they seem to have gotten a pass by virtue of their pre-established goals .

These two successes highlight the standards of evaluation: they benefit from clear numeric goals that can be set at the beginning and monitored throughout the program. These goals, set up before in-country work begins, are non-participatory and controlled

by the development office. The metrics in program evaluation also move away from information gained from participants during the evaluation stage. This brings into doubt the validity of the official evaluation rubrics: does success in programs like these actually reflect the ideas of success that the literature, or even the organizations themselves, establish?

Two Cases from Ethiopia: Finally, both of the cases from Ethiopia, IQPEP and EFBP, highlight similar differences between success and failure that have already been presented. What we can learn from these cases is how important goal-based planning is in the eventual success of development projects.

IQPEP's impact was demonstrated in the feelings of participants, participants who overwhelmingly felt that the program was both impactful and sustainable. Teachers who participated in the program felt that they had improved their teaching by receiving the training and that they would continue to use what they had learned. *Woreda* officials thought that training programs would continue even after the project's end. What was ostensibly an incredibly impactful program failed not in evaluation, but at its incipience. It was a project that could not succeed because it did not have clearly numeric and achievable goals. In contrast, EFBP, a project that was inherently unsustainable — depending too much on direct funding to continue after that funding was no longer present — had clearly achievable goals which allowed for its measured success. We find in looking at these two projects that participants' knowledge of the effect on the program did not matter in evaluation: instead, numeric goals have the final say.

These two programs differ greatly in level of participation. IQPEP was incredibly participatory and locally embedded. Programing involved providing training to local

participants and engaging them in the process to the point where participants took over the original training. The program provided resources and opportunities for locals across the spectrum as long as they were involved in education. The project managed to engage a broad swath of demographics while also maintaining their program goal of increasing the number of women involved in education, specifically at the administrative level. This deeply-participatory program had high levels of ownership combined with high levels of impact. In contrast, EFBP was barely participatory. The program engaged the local supply network, providing infrastructural improvements in the health delivery network in-country, and the program sought feedback from participants throughout the process. Due to this cursory engagement with the local population, the program is technically participatory. The evaluation process included a number of focus groups and key informant interviews. These interviews and focus groups were to establish the response of participants. However, there is no use of these interviews in the process of evaluation and responses are not presented in the evaluation.

EFBP was an incredibly successful project while it was running which greatly and positively impacting the lives of its participants. PLHIV who were a part of the program got healthier and saw improvements in their nutrition levels. The project was a success in that regard. In the short term, it was more impactful than IQPEP. The evaluations show that in terms of actual increases in primary education outcomes during the project, IQPEP did not increase students' literacy or test scores to the point where the program could recognize them as legitimate improvements made as a result of programming. In contrast, there were direct and measurable improvements made during EFBP. It is this difference in measurability and short-term impact that make the work of intervention projects with

clear goals like EFBP so successful: their impact can be measured easily. However, in terms of long-term impact in the lived experiences of participants, these programs do little beyond their short 5-year time period. Their inability to continue functioning after the program's end leaves participants out after their final stages. IQPEP, a less noticeably productive and successful program, however, had long-term impact on the lived experiences of participants. Even small improvements in the quality of teachers can dramatically change the primary education of children; young girls who see administrators in their schools who are women might feel more comfortable to continue on to higher education and might feel safer in school. These outcomes cannot be clearly measured by the evaluation but they are arguably more impactful over the course of the participant's life than a few years with access to better nutrition.

## Conclusion

The four cases I have looked at here demonstrate the different levels of participation in development programs.

| Program | Stated Goal | Success/ Failure | Level of Participation | Country & Organization | Sustainable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| IQPEP | Increase access to quality primary education | Failure | High | Ethiopia USAID | Yes |
| EFBP | Provide dietary supplements to PLHIV | Success | Low | Ethiopia USAID | No |
| JP VAW | Reduce VAW and change opinions about VAW | Failure | Variable | Bangladesh UNDP | Mixed |
| EDW | Increase the economic autonomy of women and provide them with | Success | Moderate | Bangladesh UNDP | No |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | microloans | | | | |

As the table above demonstrates, each of these programs had a different level of participation, sustainability and success.

There are a number of reasons that different authors would give for the impact of each of these programs individually based on their levels of participation. Robert Chambers predicts that the more participatory the program is the more likely it is to be successful; if he were correct, we would expect IQPEP to have been evaluated as the most successful program. Chambers' thoughts line up well with many authors who promote participatory development as a way to increase the efficacy of aid (Fabrizio, McCann, and Rodrigues-Pose, 2012; Mansuri and Rao, 2004; and Lavallee et al. 2012). Bathelt and Cohendt (2014) would assume that participatory programs that provide opportunities for participants to receive training or skill education would be more effective. Bathelt and Cohendt's assumptions would point to EDW and IQPWP as being most likely to be measured as successful. Others, like Cooke and Kothari (2001), feel that participation creates a false sense of security and would point to the fact that neither of the two aforementioned theories was correct in their predictions.

I contend that our way of measuring the success of a project, and therefore testing theorists' predictions, is based far too much on the opinions and goals of the evaluation teams. All literature on development relies on some level of understanding the success or failure of a program. To discuss how to do the best development, we must first understand what good development is; however, if our examples of good development are programs which are unsustainable (EFBP) or where the aid does not go to the people intended to receive it (EDW) and our examples of bad development do not reflect the

feelings of participants (IQPEP), then our understanding of what is good and bad will be skewed.

Looking at the four cases presented here, "success" seems to mean "goal completion." These goals were set in the prodocs and before the programs were implemented. Both of the successful programs, EFBP and EDW, had clear targets; in contrast, the failures, IQPEP and JP VAW, both had larger and harder-to-measure goals. The reality of these four programs is not as clear-cut.

It is hard to say that EFBP failed: it met all of its goals and helped improve the nutrition of PLHIV. However, it was an unsustainable program. As a targeted health intervention it was "successful" for its duration; however, in the long term, did it really change the lives of participants? There is no monitoring after the program's end, so that is not something that USAID can track and which cannot be found out without extensive in-country field work.

EDW similarly was "successful": women went through the entrepreneurship training and they received loans. The program met its stated goals. However, the program also had its shortcomings: lack of in-country monitoring meant that most of the evaluation happened based on cobbled-together reports. In and of itself this would not have been enough to be truly problematic; unfortunately, even just based on those reports it was obvious that around 20% of the loans were being given not to the women they were intended to help but rather to their male heads-of-household.

IQPEP was considered a failure: the program was graded as unsustainable and as having almost no impact on primary education. This contrasts with the survey results (presented in the appendix), where on *every* metric the majority of respondents responded

favorably to the program. This failure highlights the difficulties of causal relationships in development evaluation. Because education is such a large institution it is incredibly difficult to measure impact.

JP VAW was also assessed as a failure, as it failed to meet its main goal of changing public opinion regarding VAW. Although this program truly did fail to change public opinion on any deeper scale, the program did integrate more favorable laws and court procedures when it came to dealing with women survivors of violence and created support systems for survivors, giving them access to support centers and legal consult that they would not have had before.

These four programs demonstrate the deeply complex nature of development programs. None of them are simply successful, but neither do any of them completely fail. This complex nature is hard to address in evaluations, where donors and international development agencies need ratings to base their future programs and funding on. Moreover, even when the data presents an understanding of the program's effect on the local populations, the fact that the evaluations lack this understanding demonstrates how little evaluators utilize participatory methods in evaluations.

My goal has not been to judge whether development should be participatory, although I demonstrate that higher levels of participation could provide a clearer understanding of what it means for programs to be successful; instead, I am working within the standards of the field. Evaluation processes are failing to meet the internal standards of participation.

Programs aim to be participatory and are graded on such. Programs with high senses of ownership tend to be more impactful. The idea that participation might not be

the best form of development, especially with regards to existing development projects, is useless in understanding good development because we only have projects that attempted some level of participation. Critiques of participation that focus on the lack of truly egalitarian power structures are not giving participatory development a fair chance, because without participatory evaluation processes we cannot claim that we have evidence of truly-participatory development. Given that participatory development is so ingrained in modern systems, how then can we talk about evaluating development's success broadly if our program evaluations do not reflect these accepted models?

I have shown that there is a lack of participation in the evaluation process and that, because of this, development as an international institution is not completely participatory. Before arguments can be made about the value of participatory development or participation as an answer to a perceived failing of development, the entire process must reflect those ideals. I suggest that evaluators learn how to understand the data they are receiving from participants. Utilizing a more qualitative approach to the question of impact and success will allow evaluators to see more than the outcomes of numeric goals. Projects like IQPEP, with large and complex problems, will be better-served if the voices of the people engaged with the problem are heard. Participants' voices are vital at every stage of development if it is to be participatory, and they are being ignored in the evaluation step. This could well be impacting the long-term success of all development programs.

An On the Ground Example: The problems highlighted by my four cases all refer me back to my pilot study in Pune, India. The women I worked with in Pune were an integral aspect of the AIDS reduction program in Maharashtra, since they worked in Pune

as a resource for women living with HIV/AIDS in the red-light district. The NGO felt like they had high levels of participation: they were a collective and, as such, were run and operated by sex workers. During the program with the international funding agency they helped develop and run peer education programming and received funding to continue to run a health clinic targeting women with HIV/AIDS.

The women I interviewed stated over and over again that they felt like the program took advantage of them, assumed that they were less-than-capable because they were illiterate, and did not listen to their feedback. They recounted the evaluation process wherein they were asked to lie about blood tests and numbers in order to receive funding. They were even asked to inflate attendance numbers at peer-education programs beyond the number of women living and working in the red-light district. One of the most striking things they told me about this attempt to get good numbers was how it changed the ways the program ran. Instead of trying to help women living with HIV/AIDS get access to treatment or helping slow down the rate of infection, the program officials were only interested in getting the numbers they needed for a successful evaluation. The most striking example of this was related to me by the local NGO's then-accountant, who was asked to sign off on documents that lied about the results of the blood work of several women. The woman in question was a former sex worker and was illiterate; she took these documents to the executive director of the NGO, one of the only women on staff who was not herself formerly a sex worker. Together they read through the document that she had been asked to sign. She refused to approve those numbers. At this point, the NGO lost their funding from the organization because they were not reaching the standards of the program. Although the local NGO I did research with to this day refuses

to work with the international funding agency in question, they did read through the evaluation report. The report claims that in Pune there was a 42% decrease in instances of women living with HIV/AIDS. My participants passed on to me their great astonishment at this number, which they both knew to be wrong from working in the district and found laughable, as there is no cure for HIV/AIDS: any reduction in cases would either have been from women leaving the red-light district or, more likely, dying from either illness or violence.

This case in particular highlights the ways in which evaluation drives development. It seems obvious after my experience with this case and my understanding of the funding options available to most development organizations that development programs are forced to be successful at the expense, at times, of being impactful. I was driven to do this research not only because development is important but also because doing good, impactful, and not-harmful development seems the obvious goal. The evaluation stage seemed incredibly important in this process of doing impactful and not-harmful development after my experience in Pune. What role do participants play in saying what success is? As my four cases demonstrate, a fairly minimal one. If my other cases reflect similar instances as the case in Pune, then this could be indicative of a much deeper problem than merely constraining academic critiques of participation.

The Next Steps: In order to ascertain whether there is a deeper problem and if participants are being ignored to the detriment of impactful development, further research is required. This would entail extensive fieldwork and qualitative data collection tools. To examine the cases only from Bangladesh would take a budget of around USD 10,000 and a year of living in-country. In proposing this hypothetical research I would hire a research

assistant and translator, conduct around 50 interviews with participants in the two programs at all levels of participation, and conduct interviews with key informants from the UNDP country office in Bangladesh. This research would utilize the methodologies of institutional ethnography (Smith 2005) and would mainly focus on semi-structured experiential interviews. Four months would be spent for each of the two Bengali cases, because of their national level, and, in an attempt to have a representative sample, four months would be dedicated to each program. In that time I would travel around Bangladesh to conduct my interviews using purposive sampling. I would also spend two months in Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, to conduct interviews with government workers who had helped implement the programs. The research for the cases in Ethiopia would require a similar time frame and budget and would use the same methodological approach.

There is more research that can be done on this topic: development is a multi billion-dollar international institution that is not going away anytime soon. The UN released the SDGs earlier this year; at the same time, the international community is dealing with a refugee crisis and other humanitarian crises globally. These are important relationships to understand in the attempt to improve development programs and increase the impact of development dollars. Understanding the relationship between success and impact will be critical in creating truly "good" programs going forward.

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**Table 1,** From Chambers, 1994

| Point of Departure and Reference | Things | People |
|---|---|---|
| Mode | Blueprint | Process |
| Keyword | Planning | Participation |
| Goals | Pre-set, closed | Evolving, open |
| Decision-making | Centralized | Decentralised |
| Analytical assumptions | Reductionist | Systems, holistic |
| Methods, Rules | Standardized | Diverse |
| Technology | Universal, Fixed package | Local, varied basket |
| Professionals' interactions with clients | Motivating | Enabling |
| Clients seen as | Controlling, beneficiaries | Empowering actors, partners |
| Force flow | Supply-push | Demand-pull |
| Outputs | Uniform, Infrastructure | Diverse, Capabilities |
| Planning and Action | Top-down | Bottom-up |

## Appendix 1

### Millennium Development Goals UN 2000

1. To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2. To achieve universal primary education.
3. To promote gender equality and empower women.
4. To reduce child mortality.
5. To improve maternal health.
6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.
7. To ensure environmental sustainability.
8. To develop a global partnership for development.

### Sustainable Development Goals, UN 2016

1. **Poverty** - End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. **Food** - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. **Health** - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
4. **Education** - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. **Women** - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
6. **Water** - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
7. **Energy** - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and clean energy for all.
8. **Economy** - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

9. **Infrastructure** - Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
10. **Inequality** - Reduce inequality within and among countries.
11. **Habitation** - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
12. **Consumption** - Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. **Climate** - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
14. **Marine-ecosystems** - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. **Ecosystems** - Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
16. **Institutions** - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. **Sustainability** - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

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