

TRANSECT WALK

Conservation, Livelihoods and Governance Programme Tools for participatory approaches

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A transect walk is a tool for describing and showing the location and distribution of resources, features, landscape, and main land uses along a given transect.

What is it useful for?

- Identifying and explaining the cause and effect relationships among topography, soils, natural vegetation, cultivation, and other production activities and human settlement patterns.
- Identifying major problems and possibilities as perceived by different groups in relation to features or areas along the transect, including climate change related hazards.
- An entry point for discussing how things used to be and / or how people envisage they will or should be in the future.
- Monitoring changes over a period of time, including during the course of a project.
- In the context of ecosystem services valuation this tool can inform an understanding of how communities use and value biodiversity and ecosystem services, and the location of key resources in relation to different social groups within a community.

Suggested steps

Allow approximately **3 hours** for this exercise.

- 1) Agree with participants the route they would like to follow on the walk. This decision could be based on the community resource map if one has already been produced. The planned route should cover the main variations in topography and other features. If necessary, the route can meander rather than be a straight line.
- 2) Start at the edge of the area and begin the walk. As the walk progresses, stop at key features or borders of a new zone (such as residential, topographic, land usage, and so forth) and record the distance from the last zone. As an alternative, stop every 50 or 100 paces (or another suitable interval).
- 3) Ask participants to describe everything encountered or noticed and to explain the key characteristics of areas/features they see. The discussion can be facilitated by asking questions about the details (along the same lines as the community resource map) and by making observations. Make notes of all vital information gathered and take photographs or draw sketches.
- 4) It is not necessary to stick to the original planned route. Participants can deviate when useful or interesting, or even at random, to observe the surrounding area and to gather relevant and useful information. Walk slowly and gain an understanding of the physical features in the village from different perspectives.

- 5) Women and men met along the way can be informally interviewed to obtain local perspectives from people who might not have been able, or felt able, to join the original local participants. Questions to help with discussion and interviews can include:
 - What are the major activities carried out in each zone? By whom?
 - What services and infrastructure are available in each zone?
 - What are the natural resources available in each zone? Who uses them and for what purposes?
 - What economic opportunities are available in each zone?
 - Are women and men, and people from different socio-economic groups, able to equally access each zone?
 - What are the principle problems?
 - What interventions for improvement have been made?

- 6) After the transect walk has finished, sit down in a suitable place to discuss and record the information and data collected. Where more than one transect walk has been completed, results can be combined and compared.

- 7) Ask participants to prepare a diagram of the transect walk using the information. The diagrams can be prepared on a large sheet of paper (or on the ground). On the top line, illustrate the different zones that were visited. Down the side, list headings of the areas of interest (plants, land use, problems, drainage system, and so on) and then fill in the details of what was observed in each zone.

Figure 1: Example of a transect from Bangladesh (World Bank, 2005)



| Land use | Road | Homestead | Home-garden | Crop field | Pond embankment | Pond |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|--|---|---|---------------------------|--|
| Soil | Clay | Clay-loam | Clay-loam | Silty-loam | Clay | Clay |
| Trees and vegetables | - | Trees and vegetables, shop | Pumpkin, bean, cucumber, tomato, sugarcane, amaranth, data, radish, etc. | - | Pumpkin, bean | - |
| Crop | - | Pumpkin, bean, Betelnut, Coconut, Guava, Mango and others. | Pumpkin, bean, cucumber, tomato, amaranth, data, spinach, radish, etc. | BRRI-Dhan-8,11,12,14,28,29, Amon, potato, jute, etc. | Betel nut | - |
| Livestock | - | Cow, goat, duck, chicken | Cow, goat, duck, chicken | Cow, goat (during winter season) rearing | - | - |
| Fish | - | - | - | Shol, gojar, taki, puni, khalisa, etc. | - | Rui, catla, mrigal, big head, silver carp, mirror carp, pangas. |
| Problems | Most of the roads are lanchna | Unemployment and disease | Stealing, pest and disease incidence, lack of irrigation facility | Disease, lack of irrigation facility, high price of agricultural input, lack of agro-technical knowledge | Lack of landuse knowledge | Diseases, unavailability of good quality fry. |
| Recommendations | Activation of LGED | Need more nutritional awareness, activation of service centres | Motivation of farmer to adopt improved agricultural practice. Increased accountability of agricultural departments. Initiation of small scale irrigation project. | Need small-scale irrigation project and popularization of low price agricultural tools and technology. expansion of agricultural knowledge through concerted effort | Training | Needs aquaculture training with follow up mechanisms, establishment of hatchery for the availability of good quality fry. Ponds should be used for commercial fish production purpose. |

Questions to guide discussion and analysis

The following questions can be used to guide the discussion but should be adopted and adapted according to the focus of the exercise.

- What resources are abundant or scarce?
- How do these resources change through the area?

- Where do people obtain water and firewood?
- Where do livestock graze?
- What constraints or problems are in the different areas?
- What possibilities or opportunities are in the different areas?
- Where do different population sub-groups live? Are they segregated or mixed? Do the poorest households live in certain areas (such as on the edge of an area/community)?
- What changes have there been over the past x (number of) years?

Points to remember:

- ❖ This tool only takes into account the currently “observable” situation and features, but can serve as an entry point for more in-depth analysis.
- ❖ Local participants should be encouraged to build as much of the diagram as possible without interruption and to suggest anything else that should be recorded.
- ❖ Before using this tool read the accompanying document, *A guide to using tools for participatory approaches*.

For further information

FAO (2001) *Field Level Handbook*

http://www.fao.org/sd/SEAGA/1_en.htm

World Bank (2005) *Poverty and Social Impact Analysis Sourcebook*

<http://go.worldbank.org/ZGZHJEDBZ0>

This tool is based on the *Transect walk* in the World Bank (2005) *Poverty and Social Impact Analysis Sourcebook*



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