



# Guidelines for Participatory Local Development Planning



Based on experiences  
from the field



# Technical Record

## **Title**

Guidelines for Participatory Planning - elaborated from some experiences in the field

## **Project**

Sustainable Land Use Planning for Integrated Land and Water Management for Disaster Preparedness and Vulnerability Reduction in the Lower Limpopo Basin

## **Implementation**

Government of Mozambique  
Government of South Africa  
Government of Zimbabwe  
Government of Botswana

## **Technical Assistance**

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)

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# Introduction

These Guidelines for Participatory Local Development Planning are the result of extensive fieldwork experience of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) with communities and local authorities, in collaboration with the governments of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana.

The idea is to present in a simple and clear manner the sequence of key concepts that were used during fieldwork, which constitute a planning method that can be applied within the framework of other local development projects, involving the targeted population and the local authorities.

The pictures used in these guidelines were taken during a participatory planning exercise carried out in 2006 in Gaza Province, Mozambique, with rural communities vulnerable to floods and droughts.



# Objectives of a Participatory Planning Exercise

The technical staff meet with the community and the local authorities in order to discuss existing **problems** in the area, identify **possible solutions**, develop an **action plan** and, consequently, prepare for the **implementation of priority interventions**.



# The Different Stages of a Participatory Planning Exercise

## Stage 1 Characterising the area

- Presentation of maps, aerial photographs and/or satellite images
- Determining the geographic location of the main features of the area

## Stage 2 Mapping the existing situation

- Preparing a land use map
- Determining the location of the main infrastructure and basic services

## Stage 3 Defining the main problems

- Drafting a list of the existing problems
- Discussing and prioritising the problems

## Stage 4 Identifying possible solutions

- Proposing solutions
- Discussion and definition of interventions
- Determining the community contribution

## Stage 5 Developing the action plan

- Organising the collected information
- Presenting a draft action plan to the community and local authorities for their joint assessment, revision, and approval

## Stage 6 Implementing priority interventions

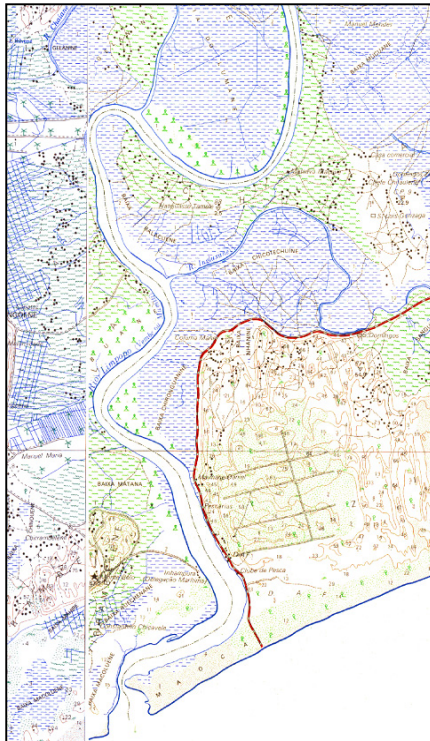
- Defining the responsibilities of each stakeholder
- Assessing training and capacity building needs
- Preparing all required technical drawings and projects
- Establishing partnerships at all levels
- Involving the community in decision-making

## Stage 1: Characterising the area

The technical staff present the available **maps, aerial photographs and/or satellite images** of the study area.

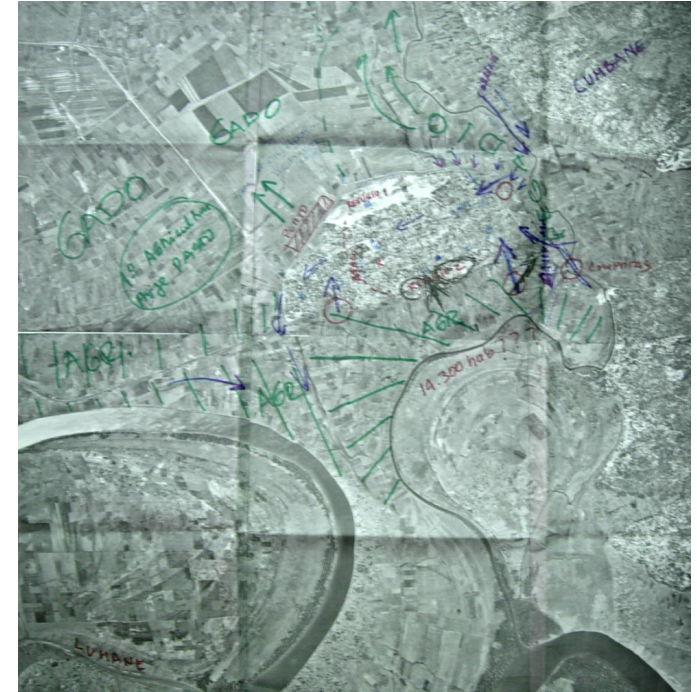
These materials can be easily understood by the community; for example, in the aerial photograph it is possible to locate the single houses, the trees, etc., as shown in the next page.

Through an interactive process with the technical staff, the community helps **determining the geographic location of the main features of the area** such as: roads, market, river, crops, school, health centre, etc.





## Stage 2: Mapping the existing situation



Based on the information provided by the community, the technical staff **maps the existing land use** (residential area, agriculture, pasture, etc.) onto a satellite image or an aerial photograph. Similarly the **location of the main infrastructure and basic services is mapped** (water points, school, health centre, market, administrative buildings, etc.).



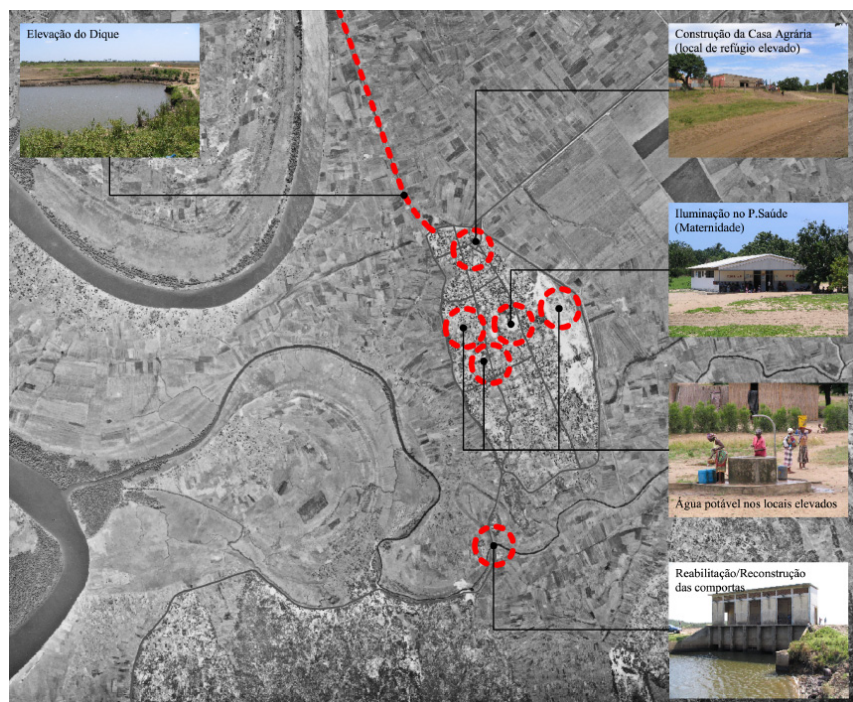


## Stage 3: Defining the main problems

The community is requested to talk about its local development problems, for example: poor access to safe drinking water, poor sanitation facilities, lack of social services (school, health centre, etc.), ineffective solid waste management, erosion, inefficient irrigation system, bad roads, pollution, negative impact of floods, droughts or cyclones, etc.

**The main problems are listed;** if possible, these are also **located on the map** drafted during the previous stage. Thereafter, all problems are **discussed openly** among the community, the local authorities and the technical staff.

As result of the discussion, the **problems are ordered according to the priorities of the community.**



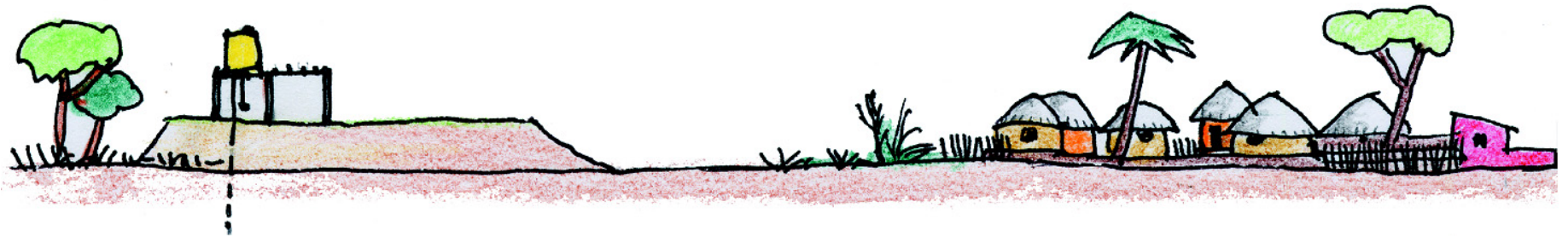
## Stage 4: Identifying possible solutions

The **community**, assisted by the local authorities and the technical staff, **proposes solutions** to the identified priority problems.

These solutions are discussed in relation to their **feasibility** and with respect to the **available resources**. In this way the **interventions to be implemented are defined**.

All contributions are taken into consideration, since they will enrich the action plan to be elaborated in the next stage.

It is important to define **what the community's contribution will be** as this will inform the development of a good implementation strategy.





## Stage 5. Developing the action plan

After the interactive process with the community and the local authorities, the technical staff drafts an **action plan proposal** where all collected information is **properly organised**, and which includes an **implementation strategy for the priority interventions**.

**During a second meeting**, the technical staff presents the proposal to the community and the local authorities for their **joint assessment, revision and approval**.



## Stage 6: Implementing priority interventions

During this second meeting, the **respective implementation responsibilities of each stakeholder** are determined, and **training and capacity building needs at the local level** are assessed.

All required **technical drawings and detailed proposals** for executing the selected interventions are prepared. Essential **partnerships** are established at all levels.

The sub-contractor responsible for carrying out the works should be encouraged to **actively involve the community** in all decision-making processes.

It is important that the **community takes ownership of the project** so that the future well-being of the interventions is strengthened.



## Conclusion

The community counts now with an action plan that enhances their status, serving as precious guidelines for implementing future interventions.

Furthermore, this plan represents a valuable local planning tool that could be used at district level, and integrated into plans at the provincial, regional and national levels.



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