

A Typology of Participation and Interests in it

(Adapted from White 1996 and Cornwall 2008, italicized column added for explanation)

Form of Participation	Top-Down Interests Interest of the aid actor in participation	Bottom-Up Interests How the participants see / what they get out of participation	Function Purpose of participation	Respective Roles in Aid Decision-Making
Nominal	Legitimation (e.g. demonstrating that they are “working with the people”)	Inclusion (e.g. enabling them to be “on the list” to access benefits provided by the aid actor)	Display (e.g. to provide an appearance of engagement)	Aid actors are making decisions, with information from affected people.
Instrumental	Efficiency (e.g. utilizing participant knowledge and resources to make their work more effective and/or less costly)	Cost (e.g. the comparative value of time spent participating and how that time could otherwise be used)	Means (e.g. for people to obtain the project outputs and for the aid actor to achieve cost-effectiveness)	
Representative	Sustainability (of their work by ensuring relevance and appropriateness)	Leverage (to influence the aid actor’s work to better meet their needs and priorities)	Voice (e.g., to enable the views of the people to impact the shape of the project)	Affected people are influencing aid actor decisions.
Transformative	Empowerment (by facilitating and working in solidarity with local initiatives)	Empowerment (by taking action on their own local initiatives)	Means and End (ongoing dynamic of growth and change by both the aid actor and the people)	Affected people are in the lead and/or working as partners with aid actors in making decisions.

Accountability should be about more than just transparency and soliciting feedback. Much can be gained by advancing participatory programming and taking ownership for actions and non-actions and accepting credit and blame” –

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