

RAPID RURAL APPRAISAL (RRA) AND PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL (PRA)

Pathway Component: food production; agricultural income; women's empowerment; processing & storage; health care; caring capacity & practices; diet; female energy expenditure

Search Category: agricultural productivity; food access; consumption; health & nutrition services; farm & non-farm income; gender & women's empowerment; caring capacity & norms

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URL: <https://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/tools-research/rapid-rural-appraisal-and-participatory-rural-appraisal.pdf>

CONTENT SUMMARY

Brief Description: The purpose of this manual is to familiarize users with Rural Rapid Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods, demonstrate the applicability of these methods, and encourage the rigorous application of the methods to obtain the best results. The term RRA is used here to refer to a discrete study (or series of studies) in one or more communities, during which a multidisciplinary team of researchers looks at a set of issues that are clearly defined by the study objectives. The emphasis in PRA is often not so much on the information as it is on the process and seeking ways to involve the community in planning and decision making.

Uses: RRA and PRA will gather information to provide insight about people and their communities to enable projects to:

- Customize interventions according to the needs and circumstances of the communities where they work.
- Focus questions for quantitative surveys that may be conducted to complement qualitative research.
- Refine the approach and activities as information is gathered for monitoring purposes.

- Improve follow-on activities and inform future projects as a result of what is learned in evaluations.

Tool Components: The manual is organized into two volumes:

- Volume I addresses the generic use of RRA and PRA in development projects. The information here is relevant to people working in any sector.
- Volume II focuses on the use of these methods to address specific sectoral concerns, including agriculture/NRM, microfinance, health, education, and food security.

OPERATIONS

Number of Staff Required: In the case of an RRA, the research team may involve people principally from outside the community (project staff, partners, relevant technical specialists). In the case of PRA, the team may include some staff, partners, or specialists, but it is critical that it include people from the community who represent diverse perspectives.

Time: RRA studies typically last from four to eight days. A PRA is an extended process that can last for months or years; a PRA usually begins with training and initial situational analysis (approximately 10 days), leading to a community action plan that is ongoing throughout the life of a project.

Cost of Assessment: Not specified; this will vary depending on context and objectives.

Training: If the project is only beginning to gain experience in RRA and PRA methods, it will want to bring in a consultant to help with the initial activities. Typically, this person would train core staff in a "classroom" setting and then lead a RRA or PRA field exercise.

Geographic Targeting: PRAs and RRAs are conducted at community level. The site selection procedure should be thought out in advance and followed systematically.

Type of Data Collection: A number of different tools are used to collect and report information, including semi-structured interviews, participatory mapping, transect walk, Venn diagram, calendars, wealth ranking, historical profile, matrices, and community action plans.

Degree of Technical Difficulty: The manual explains the approaches clearly, but a consultant may be needed if staff members have no prior experience with RRA and/or PRA.

Complements other Resources: RRA and PRA are qualitative methodologies and can be enhanced and complemented by quantitative information.