



EXPOSURE VISITS

Exposure visits are organised so that people living in one place can visit another location to observe and learn from the other community's development activities. The purpose of exposure visits is to learn from the experience of others outside your own community, by direct interaction. Participating communities may be a short distance from one another, or in some cases, in different regions or even different countries.

Advantages of Exposure Visits

- The visiting groups take very seriously lessons which are learnt from people who live in similar circumstances to themselves.
- Learning takes place in a real life situation, which allows visiting groups to ask questions about the development activity being implemented and get first hand feedback.
- It is practical, learning from experience (not theoretical).
- Often broader information exchanges take place between the two groups, beyond the core topic.



Maasai women in Kajiado District of Kenya visit a near-by community to learn about donkey harnessing. Practical Action East Africa

How to use Exposure Visits

To ensure a successful exchange visit, it is important that the visiting group is fully involved in identifying the subject matter that they are interested in learning about. Development organisations can help with finding suitable host communities but individual contacts and experiences are also very useful.

- Think carefully about how participants are chosen. They should represent the whole community and be willing to share their new knowledge when they return from the exposure visit.
- Ensure that the visiting and host groups are both clear about the purpose of, and arrangements for, the visit.
- Prepare a programme for the visit. This makes it efficient and cost effective with regard to transport, accommodation and other expenses.
- Allow adequate time for discussions and demonstrations where necessary.
- If the two communities speak a different language, a translator should be arranged in advance.
- Photographs, video or audio tape can be used to record the experience.
- Consider the possibility of reciprocal visits or longer learning tours involving visits to various locations.

Constraints of Exposure Visits

- The cost of travel and other expenses can be prohibitive.
- Visits require time for detailed planning.
- In some countries cultural constraints may be encountered, for example women's freedom to travel outside their home communities.

Real Life Story

Learning from Experience in Western Kenya.

In May 2001 a team of 13 women from Valongi Producer Group made an exposure visit to the Keyo Group. The objective of the visit was to learn about the Keyo group's clay stove production project. The visit started with Esther Ombima, the Keyo Group Chair-lady, explaining how and when the group started and the activities they were involved in.



Trying out the stove moulding process



Unloading the pottery kiln

The Keyo women then demonstrated the entire production process from clay preparation to firing and all the difficulties involved in the process. Members of the Vaongi Group took the opportunity to have a go at the production processes themselves. Advice on managing the business and marketing the stoves was also shared.

The Valongi Group asked questions about how the Keyo Group had been able to stay together for several years without any conflicts or splits. The answer given by Esther Ombima was that each member produced her own stoves and was responsible for her own production material; this meant that they were working as individuals but supporting each other as a group. She said each woman contributes 5 Kenyan Shillings per stove to the group account.

The Valongi Producer Group members were so impressed with what they saw, they became determined to produce their own stoves for sale. They organised another visit for detailed production training and went on to apply what they had learnt in their home community.

Real life stories and photographs by kind permission of *Practical Action*

Further reading

Including the Community in Information and Communication Practical Action Technical Brief
Local Knowledge Practical Action Technical Brief
Demonstrations Practical Action Technical Brief
Drawings and Photographs Practical Action Technical Brief
Video Practical Action Technical Brief

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technical brief