Participatory Relationships: Recipes for Success

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Successful participatory relationships between agricultural professionals and the communities they serve are key to sustained project effectiveness. The structural and attitudinal barriers that often undermine even the most well-intended projects are best addressed during a project's planning phase.

In an effort to move beyond the limits of "traditional" educational models (e.g., the top-down transfer of information from "expert" to "student"), educators have developed a variety of approaches to group or mutual learning, all of which share several common principles. These include:

- · a focus on cumulative learning by all participants (project stakeholders as well as planner/facilitators),
- · emphasis on seeking multiple perspectives, and
- · recognition that only through group inquiry will a project's full potential be revealed.

Elements of these approaches will be discussed. "A Typology of Participation," offered by Jules N, Potty in Regenerating Agriculture, will be examined, with emphasis on practical application for current projects as well as projects now in the design stage.