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ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT: CAN IT BE DUPLICATED?

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Abstract:

In this paper yet another aspect of endogenous development perspectives in the North of Portugal is discussed. That is the possibility to build upon the existing, local and farmer-managed irrigation systems. Guide-lines for institutional support are given.

Keywords:

PORTUGAL, RURAL AREAS, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, SMALL FARMS, (INNOVATION ADOPTION), LEADERSHIP FARMERS, SOCIAL CONSOUSNESS SOCIAL CHANGE, TRAINING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

Summary

This paper traces and describes how a group of young farmers mobilized to improve their economic and social conditions. This took the form of a local endogenous initiative, and through the establishing of what Esman & Uphoff (1984) refer to as interest associations _ in this case the Centro de Gestão da Empresa Agrícola do Barroso and the Beef Association of Salto in order to pressure the Trás-os-Montes Regional Directorate for help in the form of training and other services.

The study was carried out using a case-study approach, and included group and individual interviews, questionnaires, secondary data and data from key informants. The action takes place in the area Freguesia de Salto.

Freguesia de Salto em Terra Fria : A Disadvantaged Area with a Spirit of Traditional Collaboration

The area (80 km²) in which the study was carried out falls within a mountainous area (800-1200 meters in altitude) with high mountain valleys in the *Conselho de Montalegre*. The area consists of common lands (*baldios*) which are forested or are a mix of browse (*urze, giesta e tojo*), woods (*oak, chestnut and pines*) and grasses grazed by ruminants. One can find patches of improved pastures and meadows on the marginal lands and cultivated areas on the less steep slopes. There are mountain creeks and trout streams that cut into the earth, creating ravines for the riparian flora and fauna and high valley flood plains for agriculture. The natural springs found in the area serve as potable water for the inhabitants and at times as sources for irrigation. *Freguesia de Salto* has a Mediterranean climate, but frost at times can hit

hard in early summer and haunt the farmer in the autumn. The soils are fragile, but well-treated by traditional manuring. The rainfall (1.200 mm) is abundant during the winter with less precipitation in July and August. The predominant type of agriculture for the area is extensive animal production with traditional mixed crop production.

In general, the area has lost population and has a large number of older folk, evidenced by unpublished data obtained from a personal contact in the statistics section of the Regional Directorate for Agriculture in Trás-os-Montes (DRATM). This indicates that of the 4616 farms in the *Zona Agrária de Barroso* which includes the *Freguesia de Salto*, only 634 are owned or managed by a farmer who is younger than 40 years of age. The young people who do remain are predominantly involved in the agricultural and service sectors.

People in the area of the *Freguesia de Salto* still assist one another in daily tasks and in community activities. It is this traditional tendency toward community association that has played an important role in the Salto initiative and mobilization described in this study. The description of communal norms and events related below, serve as background to the Salto endogenous development initiative.

Historically, decisions in this area concerning the community were discussed and taken at town meetings called *couto ou ajuntamento*. These community meetings were represented by all the households in the *freguesia*. The meetings were often held after the local church service in the open air or in bad weather in the home of a villager. They were organized around community concerns and were used to resolve quarrels over the use of irrigation water or over boundary demarcations among property owners.

Other communal activities included sharing, in rotation, the use of the community oven (*forno do povo*) for baking bread. In like manner, villagers who had animals to graze would take turns in caring for and herding all the village animals or would share the cost of paying an individual to do this task. This system of sharing freed the farmer for other farm tasks. Another local tradition which stems from the tradition of communal society is the *boi do povo* (community Barrosão bull). Even today you can find villages which share the cost of keeping and maintaining a community bull to sire their cows. An event linked to the *boi do povo* is the traditional *chega do bois*. This is an event which pits one village bull against another in combat normally until the weaker bull flees. The *chega do boi* can bring prestige to the local community just as in the case of our community football team. All of these events are a part of local traditional society found in the *Freguesia de Salto*.

This communal activity within the *Freguesia de Salto* and the evolution of various activities linked to endogenous development lead them toward a greater participation by exogenous institutions.

Antigo Elemento da Junta de Freguesia de Salto and Young Farmer Leaders

The motive or rationale for the initiative and action taken by the local actors was a basic belief in agriculture as a profession and in the type of agriculture practised in the area. However, it was felt that there would be little future for them in the area if they did not act to improve their situation. They wished to remain in agriculture in the area and not be forced as many before them into emigrating. The initial leaders had a good understanding of their situation in relation to the more global agricultural situation and were also aware of the difficulty in getting approval for their EEC 797 proposals.

One of the leaders in the action told us that not everyone accepted the idea of mobilization, but as he put it "the train will leave the station with or without the person", referring to all the changes occurring at both the local level and as a result of entry into the EEC. They were aware of the situation and did not like the image of being left behind in European integration. They did not need exogenous change agents to make the situation clear to them or to mobilize the group, as the local community had already been mobilized. They were aware of and realistic about their situation and had reflected critically on the alternatives. They had concluded that a strategy forming associations around particular interests was their best choice and an appropriate mechanism to mobilize local human resources. In this case, the 'interest association' they formed was not a completely new experience in the area.

It is worth repeating that this type of community action is facilitated by the traditional spirit of cooperation that exists in the villages of Salto. The communities have in many ways always enjoyed community cohesion. The members have exchanged household labor in planting and harvesting potatoes and the irrigation system was one in which water use and times of use was worked out communally. These communities remind one of the Amish communities found scattered throughout North America, with their tradition of helping each other out as illustrated by their barn building activities.

A key leader within the community and a former officer in the *Junta de Freguesia* played an important role in initiating the association. He facilitated whenever possible the requests and needs of the young farmers in the form of financial assistance, moral support and advice and lobbied for them when they needed assistance from the DRATM. He claimed to have seen a change in the attitudes of the young farmers and their ability to work together in groups since the first conception of the idea, working for each other and trying to get the opinions of others to form a consensus. Tait et al. refers to such local leaders as power actors in the community.

The functioning of the group moved to an additional stage when the young leaders and community advisors began to explain their ideas to other young farmers through individual contacts as neighbour, after local church services and in community meeting areas such as the local bar/coffee shop, and during social visits.

Thus the ideas were passed on informally. A barrier was encountered by these actors, in their attempt to reach some of the young farmers since in order to convince them to join the endeavours, they also, had to convince their fathers. If their fathers could not be convinced, the sons or daughters did not participate in any of the programmes. How this barrier can be minimized could be a point for further study by the agricultural

knowledge and information system component of the Competitiveness of Agriculture and Management of Agricultural Resources (CAMAR) project.

Table 1 intends to put some perspective on the initiative or social action of the young farmers and others. The table uses five variables to describe the endogenous development process or social action initiative at Salto while comparing it with what Esman and Uphoff (1984) describe as interest associations.

Table 1. Endogenous Social Development Process

Variables	Interest Association	Young Farmer Initiative and Mobilization in Salto
Rationale for their initiative	To advance the common interests of members and/or perform specific activities for members for a specific time period.	To attempt to improve the conditions of the young farmers through training and the creation of a training center and the Association.
Authority How were decisions made? And by whom?	Only de facto authority which members may concede to the local organization (LO). Informal authority at times.	The decisions were based on common interests with authority elements when members conceded it was for group good. This describes the intra-authority and not the inter-authority network.
Functions What was the reason for their existence?	Single or multiple function depending on the members and what they want from the LO.	There were in the end reasons for the existence of the young farmer group initiative.
Membership Commonality: The members were formed for what purpose?	Personal characteristics (e.g., sex) or activity (e.g., young farmer association in Salto; irrigation association)	The young male and female farmers with a similar agricultural system. The training activities, <i>centro de gestão</i> , and local beef association was one reason for their common interests.
Resources How were the expenses for their aims and activities covered?	Fees, dues, levies etc., from members for group activities or interests; or from outside resources.	The cost and fees of the initial interventions were shared in many cases by individuals, the community, by the junta and DRATM.

Perceptions from Local Level Social Development Actors

The young farmers involved in the initiative apparently thought that they would be left behind in the opportunities afforded by European integration. There were two young male leaders who were less dynamic than the female leader, who has little farm land, but maintains a small cafe with her family. She was a firebrand in interviews and a dynamic figure in the development process. She believed that she had been responsible for a major part of the mobilization process and emphasized her contribution to the initiative in the use of her car and the number of hours volunteered to get people involved in social action. She gives the impression that a central part of the initiative came from her inexhaustible energy and dynamic character. One might draw the parallel of an individual on a religious crusade and some caution was necessary in interpreting her contribution; it is possible that, in reality, she limited the contribution of other actors.

Chefe de Zona Agrária

The type of leadership in the initiative was described later by the Chief of the Agrarian Zone as democratic, participating or consultative. He said that they always appeared to include the others in the process of development and at the initial stage of the training programmes all expenses or costs were calculated by the community to be a community expense.

The Chief was very flexible in assisting this initial process. For example, the Regional Directorate of Agriculture or DRATM was not in favor of having the educational programmes within the *Freguesia de Salto* because they wanted the young farmers to utilize the regional training centre. However, the *chefe de zona agrária* and local adult leaders lobbied the DRATM and convinced them that the programmes would be better attended if the training courses were put on in Salto. The adult leaders and the Council *junta in the Freguesia* also assisted by offering to cover the expenses for a local classroom and to provide desks, chairs and other equipment for the first courses to be offered to the farmers in the *freguesia*. The local training site was eventually used by the *freguesia* for other courses such as family planning and nutrition. The *centro de gestão* and beef association grew from these initial training courses which brought the group in closer contact. They had time during training course intervals to discuss their situation and the information from the training courses among themselves and the trainers. This facilitated the growth of the other initiatives. Thus the sensibility of the community to their initial needs allowed for the early successes to grow into further community programmes with external assistance for the *centro de gestão* and the local breed association. The community also assisted them initially by obtaining transport for about 28 farmers to make a study visit to see a *centro de gestão* in operation and later for a follow-up visit to Salto by one of the farmers who initiated the *centro de gestão* visited.

A significant outcome of this initiative according to the *chefe de zona agrária* was that the young farmers had a real transformation in their abilities to work with groups. He also stated that their abilities to identify and articulate their problems and formulate objectives seemed to be another outcome of their increased functioning as a group. He also noted that there were some individuals who were more active than others in the process. Some seemed to participate because it was a social event, though the majority did so to improve their farm production.

The young farmers interviewed noted also a dramatic change in themselves due to the initiative. As the process matured, they found it easier to speak in front of groups, do group work and articulate their ideas to others. Members of the group who would not speak at all in the initial meetings also opened up and began to share their comments with the group. A key leader in the early initiative to push action forward has gone on to complete her 11th year of education.

The training programmes for the young farmers which grew from their initiative were planned with the young farmers. The early identifications of training needs in some sense were generic and fitted the training programme formulated by DRATM. The other short courses fell in more with their interest in improving their own situation. The early courses that were offered included beef production, maintenance of farm equipment and a course for farm equipment operators. For this last course they were allowed access to national highways with their equipment which facilitated the purchase of petroleum for the farm equipment since the only gas station in the area is on a national highway.

After these initial courses and the opportunity to meet each other during coffee breaks and other intervals which facilitated group dynamics, their interests and needs were better formulated with the additional request for courses in associativismo and farm record keeping. Other requests were linked to the interest by some to present EEC 797 proposals in relation to apiculture and beef production. The alternative for young farmers are bank loans which are difficult to get and the finance charges are abnormally high.

Characterization of the Young Farmers in the Freguesia de Salto

The data to be presented comes from an on-going study. The overall study looks specifically at young farmers in the *Freguesia de Salto*. The study will compare the young farmers who participated in the training courses and the initiation of the *centro de gestão* and the *Barrosão* beef association. For this paper, the authors use 27 surveys of young farmers. The definition of a young farmer includes farmers who were defined as young farmers in 1987 during their preliminary action or initiative prior to getting assistance from DRATM. The farmers were selected through a non-probability or criterion-based sampling in which selection depended on whether they did or did not

participate in the farmer training courses or the formation of the *centro de gestão* or the beef association. The local community network allowed the researcher to identify the whereabouts of the young farmer by the previous interviewee. At the time of the interviews, there was no sampling frame in existence which differentiated between young or old farmers. As before mentioned the selection process "*involved non-probability sampling strategies which include purposeful sampling for extreme or deviant members of a group, typical cases, maximum variation, critical cases*" politically important or sensitive cases" (Patton, 1980), "*or were criterion-based sampling associated with a comprehensive quota or network and extreme, typical, unique, reputational, or ideal samples*" (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984).

The sample of young farmers in the study included six females and twenty-one males which in this study indicates farm households. The data show that 74 percent of the young farmers have completed four years of primary education, and 15 percent have completed six years of education. The remaining had at least entry level to secondary education. It can be assumed therefore that members of the group are literate, numerate, and have a basic comprehension of science.

The groups homogeneity in terms of educational level and type of agriculture practised may have facilitated their working together to promote endogenous development - making it easier for them to participate together in the courses, and to reach common understandings in their mobilization initiatives, such as the founding of the *centro de gestão* and local breed association.

Mixed crop farming and animal production can be observed during the early spring in the Barrosa area when uniform mounds of manure appear on the crop land. The mounds of manure placed in a geometrical configuration in the fields are an indicator of the importance in the relationship to animal production for manure and soil improvement for crop growth. The 27 young farmers were asked to differentiate their principal earning source in agriculture during 1987 and 1990 and a breakdown average for the two time periods showed that 30 percent of their income came from mixed crop production and 70 percent from beef production through an extensive pasture and hay system. The average numbers of hectares devoted to beef production was ten, with four hectares for mixed crop production which included potatoes and cereals. These young farmers maintained an average herd size for the *Barrosão* breed for the years 1987 and 1990 of eleven animals. The agricultural system practised among the 27 young farmers in the sample is quite similar.

Centro de Gestão e Associação de Criadores de Gado

An offshoot of the young farmers forming themselves into a type of interest association, was the assistance of an external institution of the *Zona Agrária de Barroso* in other community interventions. The institution was able to capture their enthusiasm and

expand the training programme activities by advising the group to form the *centro de gestão* and local breed association. The community members participated in the planning process of these programmes, showing clear public involvement, mutual dialogue and learning by the principal actors or targetted group and the external agency.

The centre was formed with the assistance of the Regional Directorate, the DRATM. The center supports farm record keeping which facilitates farm management and planning. This initiative permits young farmers to detect and analyse financial constraints in their production system as a group activity. This is a collective and cooperative effort among the young farmers in the area and is generally perceived as a positive outcome of the young farmers initiative.

The beef association for the local breed (*Barrosão*) has a complicated history in that two associations are competing for recognition by the state. The conflict is being worked out by the two groups through cooperation in mutual animal grading contests and meetings. Nevertheless, both groups wish to promote their breed because of the belief in the quality of the meat product. One of the beef association's objectives is to improve documentation about the herd which will result in better information about the available sires. This effort has the support of the *zona agrícola* and to some extent the CAMAR research group.

Can it be Duplicated?

It seems that from the present work in the area of Barroso and the present description of the situation involving the local development process found in the *Freguesia de Salto*, there are obvious factors which contributed to the 'success' of a rural development initiative which shares some characteristics of both an endogenous and exogenous development process. These factors will be discussed and other considerations identified which can facilitate farmer participation in their own initiatives and those of the external agencies. These ideas are expressed through the eyes of a researcher within the social sciences linked to the area of agricultural and extension education. See figure 1 which summarizes the key points to be advanced for discussion.

One of the key factors in the case involving Salto was the formation of a type of interest association which was made up of a homogeneous group of young farmers. They had many characteristics in common which facilitated this collective action. The farming system and educational level were found to be quite similar. Also, the leaders of the initiative and/or mobilization group had a critical understanding of the situation of the members of the young farmer interest association in Salto.

In order to duplicate this mobilization in time or space, it becomes essential that the local leaders take part in the analysis of the community as a part of a consciousness-raising process. The analysis can be a part of an animation process which involves the population to articulate their concerns and responsibility in the development process through a group approach, in meetings and discussions. Interestingly, the collective actions in Salto were facilitated by their history of communal cooperation. The cohesiveness of their local interest association can be credited to some extent in the success of the initiative. This history of group cohesiveness is not always to be found in disadvantaged communities. In order to elaborate an approach for developing group cohesiveness, the animation process should involve the community in the identification of homogeneous groups, planning the project, decision making and analysis of their local level situation in order to articulate their social and economic needs.

As was pointed out above, the level of education of the group more or less included a primary education of 4 years. The young farmers were similar in this aspect to their educational level. An action programme which has a group composed of unequal levels of education could become dominated by an individual who is not considered a peer or equal in the eyes of the group. A group needs cohesion and interdependence to function cooperatively in decision-making. Homogeneity can help to create this cohesion.

If the positive aspects from endogenous developments are to be repeated elsewhere, a mechanism must be found to ensure that the targetted group is an equal partner in the initiative. The key actors in the process must be the choice of the community and not of exogenous institutions. If an outsider comes in and selects the leaders for the mobilization of a group, the selection might be an indicator of favoritism and there is also a risk that the individual might not be a member of the group. If those chosen by their peers lack the necessary skills to work effectively with groups, the animation process must provide him with leadership and group activity training.

One other aspect in this case which facilitated the overall process was good interpersonal communication and the ability of any external leaders to actually listen to their constituents if they wish them to take advantage of opportunities. An open door policy must be established to channel complaints. This was an essential point in the case of the initiative at Salto. The young farmers made it known to the exogenous institution (*zona agrária de Barrosa*) that there was an interest in training programmes for their local level situation and needs. If the *chefe de zona agrária* had not met them and spent time to listen to what they had to say, an opportunity might have been lost. These farmers entered this foreign or unfamiliar institution in Montalegre to formulate their ideas and to channel their complaints lacking formal communication skills. They felt initially inhibited but after becoming familiar with this institution their attitudes and abilities changed. In fact, one young farmer described how he felt now when entering

this institution as feeling at home "*sente-se como em casa de gente*". This comfort level for their constituents is an essential objective to be reached by external agencies involved in development.

One mechanism or intervention that received high praise by the young farmers was the study visit to a community with a *centro de gestão*. The study visit assisted farmers to visualize and understand how the same type of centre could be established by themselves with the assistance of the DRATM. The language of explanation and mode of communication came from a farmer, who had a similar background as them. This visit was seen by the young farmers as an important model to visualize the potential for their own *centro de gestão*. The cost for the visit was shared by the community and the DRATM and preparation for the visit involved:

- a. contact with the site and establishment of the proposed programme
- b. a description of the groups special interests and qualifications/ experience
- c. the objectives of the visit
- d. the possible dates for the visit with several alternatives.

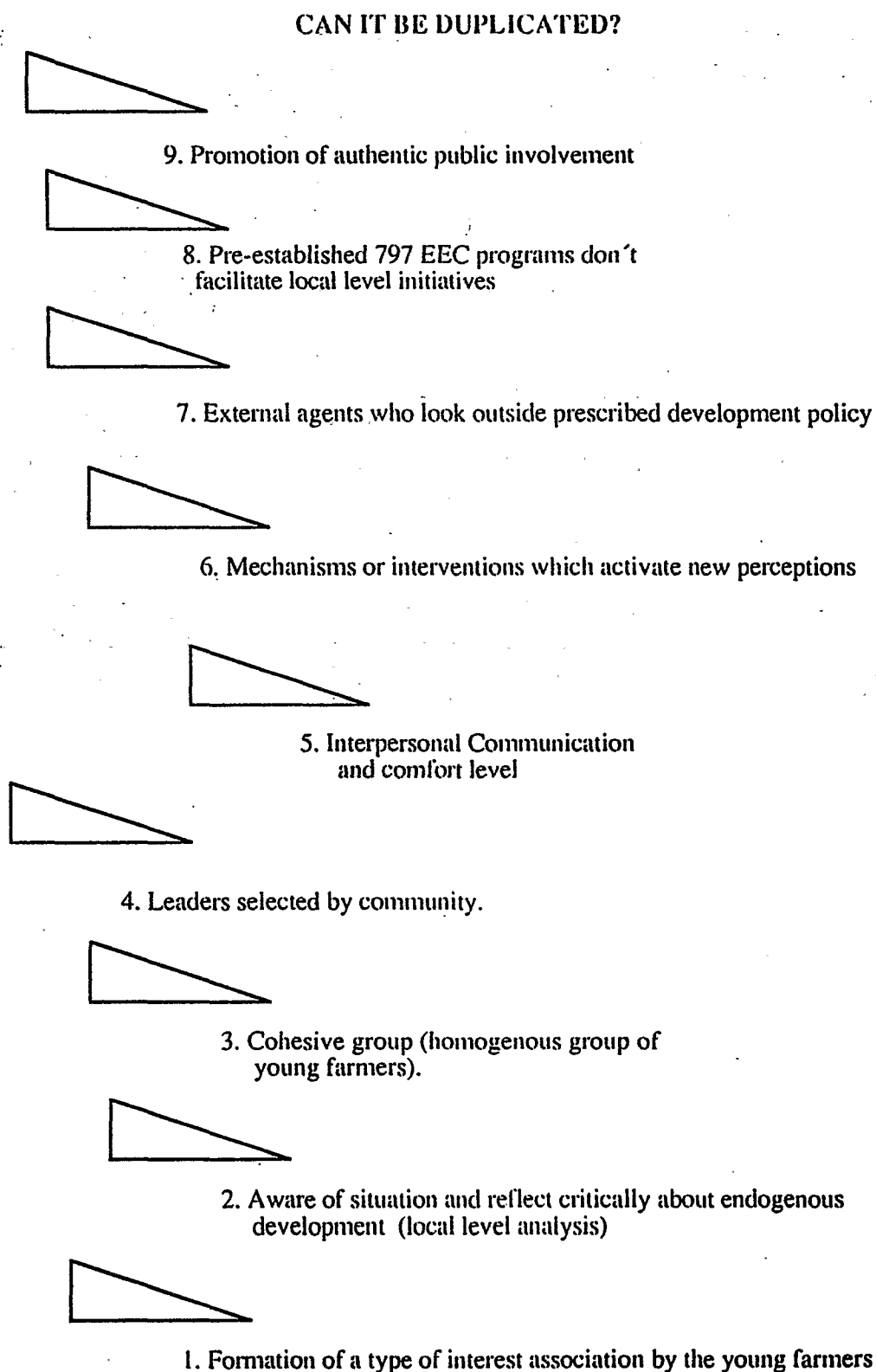
And discussions after the visit covered:

- a. activities observed that were relevant for their situation
- b. assessment of the *centro de gestão*
- c. identification of lessons learnt

The study visit was considered by the young farmers to be a very important method to visualize the establishment of their centre. These types of programmes allow the individuals to establish contacts and activate new perceptions for their responsibility in the development of the community.

Any initiative that comes from the indigenous population and has not been recognized by the exogenous actors as falling into the area of the prescribed development policy should be given more credibility than was apparent in the situation at Salto. For example, one member of the *Instituto Financeiro de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento da Agricultura e Pescas* (IFADAP), an organization involved in approving agricultural loans from EEC funding, became more aware of the real farming situation in Salto after an initiative which was the result of a course in a part-time Master's Degree programme within Extension and Rural Development at a regional agricultural university. A group of students completed an assignment in a course entitled, Knowledge and Technology by interviewing key community leaders and young farmers about the young farmer training, the *centro de gestão and local Barrosão* beef association. One of the members of the group was a technician within IFADAP. From the group interview, he became more aware of the interests of the young farmers and understood better the real situation of these beef producers. Such mechanisms (group interviews) to increase contacts with farmers and their farming system can be a way to ensure that external actors become more familiar with the people and the local situations and not make contact only

Figure



through proposals on paper. These contacts could be in the form of a rapid rural appraisal and group and individual interviews with community leaders or groups from the same farming system domain.

An additional point, which to some extent relates to the Maastricht treaty, is the complicated language that makes it difficult to understand what is being said. The 797 proposals (EEC Farm credit and training programmes) with its pre-established formulation does not facilitate local level initiatives. They have been pre-formulated to the advantage of development initiatives already recognized by the agency approving the proposals. They often require a technician to fill out the forms (not in a language to make it easy for farmers with four years of education) and this technician is more familiar with external influenced development interventions or policies. There needs to be more flexibility by the EEC Portuguese counterpart to capture some of these endogenous initiatives through less bureaucracy and proposal formulations at the educational level of the farm population.

Finally, the external agencies involved in rural or agricultural development require mechanisms which promote authentic public involvement in the designing, planning and implementation of local community development initiatives. The process should emphasize mutual dialogue and the idea that dialogue creates mutual learning between exogenous and endogenous actors. It is a form of transactive mobilization which uses dialogue through authentic public involvement so that the local group begins to identify issues and problems which precedes to the formulation of alternative ideas and forms the basis for discovering solutions in conjunction with internal and external actors.

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