

**Participation in the Institutional Development of Water User Groups
An Evaluation of the Traditional Irrigation Improvement Programme in Arumeru
and Mwanga Districts of Tanzania**

By

Ian Stephenson

**[MSc. (Co-operative Organisation, Food Marketing and Rural Development),
University College Cork] (2000)**

Abstract

The primary purpose of this research was to evaluate, from the point of view of the programme's stakeholders, the extent of participation in the institutional development of water user groups by the Traditional Irrigation Improvement Programme (TIP) in Arumeru and Mwanga Districts of Tanzania. Established in 1988, TIP took a participatory approach to the organisational strengthening of water user groups, building upon traditional institutions for irrigation management. A sample of six groups was taken to represent different districts, topographical zones, size of membership, and stages of intervention. The research method involved direct observation, field walks, semi-structured group discussions, household and key informant interviews. This provided in-depth qualitative data, validated by methodological, social and spatial triangulation. From the study, it was found out that the participatory approach of TIP had led to the development of sustainable local institutions for natural resources management with equitable distribution of benefits. However, in one group, a majority had excluded a minority from benefiting, causing conflict with the group. Conflict resolution and participatory monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were, therefore, required to improve the otherwise successful participatory approach of the programme.