

Editorial

This special edition of RRA Notes comprises the proceedings of a recent two day RRA review Workshop, jointly organised by the Institute for Development Studies, Sussex, England and IIED, and held at IDS in June 1989. This was the second in a series, the first having been reported in RRA Notes 1. It was attended by some 35 participants from NGOs, universities and development assistance agencies.

The workshop was organised into two distinct sections. In the first a number of presentations were made of recent findings and new developments, covering the topics of Diagrams, Aerial Photographs, Interviewing and Groups, Ranking, Health, Participation as Theme, and Monitoring and Evaluation. Brief summaries of these presentations are reproduced here in Part One and readers wishing to receive full versions should write directly to the authors. Each of the seven sections was followed by plenary discussions: for the purposes of this report all have been relocated in the appropriate discussions that came after all the presentations. The second part of the workshop was conducted entirely in plenary after groups of participants had identified a list of issues crucial to the future of the field of RRA. The full discussion is reported in Part Two. Several points should be highlighted, particularly those relating to present limitations and future dangers:

- we must avoid RRA becoming the new orthodoxy - there is great danger in the kind of statements implying that RRA 'should be used wherever possible';
- we must not oversell RRA - beware of excessive faith. RRA could very quickly be killed by too much money and too rapid expansion;

- great care is required in training - good RRA is not easy, and requires close quality control and long follow-up;
- RRA may be quick, but the development process is still long;
- self-criticism of methodologies used should be rewarded - it adds greatly to the credibility of the work; and,
- focus on principles, not labels. The very diversity of RRA is its strength, it should not be pinned down, but be developed separately and according to individual institutional and locational needs and conditions. The principles and rationale should always shine through.

We would welcome comments of any length on these Notes, particularly on contentious points and key issues that may have remained untouched by the two day review.

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