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ENDNOTES

1. Rodale's *International Ag-Sieve* is a bi-monthly collection of gleanings of the latest and most applicable information in the field of sustainable agriculture in the Tropics. Written for people working in the field in the developing world, the *Ag-Sieve* contains the technical information that the scientific community needs, and the practical information the field worker can use but does not require a PhD or dictionary to understand.

It links the work of the major agricultural centres, the insights of the farmer, the experience of the multi-disciplinary development team, and the individual researcher into an eight-page newsletter that highlights breakthroughs in sustainable agriculture. Our audience functions as an Information Exchange Network. Readers contribute information to the newsletter and also benefit from our reader information service.

Recent thematic issues cover the latest in tropical forest products, training opportunities in sustainable ag, seeds and biodiversity. Coming up are issues dealing with urban gardening and vegetable systems, women in agriculture and agroforestry.

For a free copy, write to: **International Ag-Sieve, Rodale Institute, 611 Siegfriedale Road, Kutztown, PA 19530, USA**

Fax: 215/683-8548

US \$ 18 (\$33 for 2 years)

A bound set of back issues: US \$24

For readers interested in regenerative agriculture in West Africa, *Entre Nous* is published in French by Rodale International. Contact: Rodale International, BP A237, Thiés, Sénégal.

2. Call for Articles: A reminder to all readers about three upcoming special issues for which we would greatly welcome experiences and reflections from the field:

■ ***RRA Notes Special Issue on Children***

■ ***Special issue on PRA and Gender***, following the workshop held at IDS in December 1993.

■ ***Special issue on PRA methods and techniques for use in urban areas***. As a result of many requests from readers, IIED's Human Settlements Programme is collaborating with the Sustainable Agriculture Programme to prepare a special issue of *RRA Notes* on the use of participatory inquiry in urban areas. We invite groups and individuals using participatory research and development approaches in urban areas to send us papers describing and analysing their experiences.

We hope to compile a broad range of experiences and insights. There is such a variety of ways in which different countries distinguish between rural and urban areas that what are considered rural villages in some countries may be small urban centres in others. We plan to include papers on the particular application of PRA in 'large' villages which have many characteristics associated with urban areas (for instance several thousand people living in a relatively concentrated settlement).

Please send us papers about the different methods and techniques you have used, what has worked and what has not, what have been the problems and successes. We will reprint articles that have been published elsewhere, if those who hold the copyright permit this. Note that *RRA Notes* is an informal publication. Articles can include drawings, maps and diagrams of work undertaken. The length of articles should be between 1,000 to 5,000 words. We have some funding for translation costs and would be delighted to receive articles in French and Spanish. In addition to sending the special issue to all those who currently receive *RRA Notes*, we also intend sending copies to subscribers of *Environment and Urbanization*.

3.Clark University Publications: The following is a list of recent publications from the *Program for International Development* at Clark University:

■ ***Managing Resources with PRA Partnerships: A Case Study of Lesoma, Botswana***. September 1993. English and Setswana editions available.

■ ***Gender, Class, Ecological Decline, and Livelihood Strategies: A Case Study of Siquijor Island, The Philippines***. Ecogen Case Study Series, March, 1993.

■ ***Pockets of Poverty: Linking Water, Health, and Gender-Based Responsibilities in South Kamwango [Kenya]***. Ecogen Case Study Series.

■ ***Introduction to PRA for Rural Resources Management***. Spanish, Setswana, Kiswahili, Somali and Malagash versions.

All the above can be obtained from: Director, Program for International Development, Clark University, 950 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01610-1477, USA.

4.Recent PRA-Related Publications from the Drylands Programme at IIED.

All these publications are edited by Mamadou Bara Guèye, and can be obtained from Nicole Kenton, Drylands Programme, IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD. Cost: £8.00 each.

5. Bangladesh PRA Network. In September 1993, this network produced its first newsletter, as an experiment to see whether it would be a useful contribution to PRA users. The idea is to share PRA experiences, anecdotes and notes, and calls for all PRA practitioners to contribute. This first issue includes an article on the dangers of using artist-drawn pictures for communicating with farmers without field-testing them first. The PRA Network is holding (or has already held) a series of monthly meetings in 1994. The programme is as follows:

January 31 What if community desires conflict with developmental/environmental priorities. What are the limits of intervention?

February 28 Urban applications (re-defining the "R" of PRA)

March 28 Preventing PRA becoming mechanical/routinised. Quality control of PRA

April 25 Different applications of mapping

May 30 Is PRA too rapid to ensure real assessment of the community's knowledge?

June 27 Who are the best informants?

The contact for the network is Aroma Goon, PACT, House 56, Road 16 (New) 27 (Old), Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1209, Bangladesh. Fax: 880-2-813416

Another contact is Dee Jupp, of SHOGORIP, 5/4 Iqbal Road, Block A, Mohammedpur, Dhaka 1207, Bangladesh.

6.Recent Publication. Mukherjee, Neela. 1993. *Participatory Rural Appraisal. Methodology and Applications.* Studies in Rural Participation - 1. Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi. 160 pages. ISBN 81-7022-473-X. Available in India for Rs 200.

This book is an important contribution to the emerging wealth of participatory methods in rural situations. It is divided into four chapters. The first chapter provides a short introduction to the logic of participation and the methodology of PRA, its significance, principles, foundations, kinds and origin. The second chapter analyses the indigenous knowledge-sources and touches upon the sequencing of methods to illustrate its significance for in-depth analysis of rural issues. The third chapter describes applications of PRA in understanding poverty, wealth, ecology, gender and health. Finally the fourth chapter illustrates some policy measures flowing from such applications, discusses the limitations posed to the use of PRA and the opportunities which PRA offers as a participatory methodology.

What is particularly valuable is the drawing on a wide range of examples from different countries. This gives substance to the debates on participation, its values and limitations. This book is neither a handbook nor a cookbook. But it will give new insights to trainers and practitioners worldwide.

It is available from bookshops, or directly from the Concept Publishing Company, A/15-16, Commercial Block, Mohan Garden, New Delhi: 110059 (Tel: 5554042/5504042)

Review by Jules Pretty

7. Two recent Masters theses employing PRA research techniques in Indonesia have been completed at the University of Waterloo's Faculty of Environmental Studies, based on fieldwork associated with the Bali Sustainable Development Project (BSDP). The BSDP is a research project linking the University of Waterloo with Universitas Gajah Mada (Yogyakarta, Java) and Universitas Udayana (Denpasar, Bali).

■ *From Tea Makers to Decision Makers: Applying Participatory Rural Appraisal to Gender and Development in Rural Bali, Indonesia.* Sara Kindon.

■ *Farmers Ain't No Fools: Exploring the Role of Participatory Rural Appraisal to Access Indigenous Knowledge and Enhance Sustainable Development and Research Planning. A Case Study of Dusun Pausan, Bali, Indonesia.* Trevor Wickham.

Both theses will soon be available at cost through the University Consortium on the Environment's Student Paper Series, c/o Drew Knight, Faculty of Environmental Studies, University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G1.

8. Forthcoming Guides from IIED: Two guides are in preparation which will be published in the course of 1994. These are:

■ *A Trainers' Guide for Participatory Inquiry*

■ *A Users' Guide for Participatory Inquiry*

These will be cheaply available, fully illustrated, and draw on the experience of trainers and practitioners worldwide.

9. Gandhigram Rural Institute Participatory Rural Appraisal Project.

The Gandhigram Rural Institute has recently produced a report of a PRA workshop organised to understand the recurring problem of sand dune encroachment in a Western Ghat village in south India. "*Sand Over the Soil: PRA Approach for Sorting out an Incessant Agricultural Problem in a Western Ghat Village*" describes how a two-day PRA successfully identified the underlying causes of the problem. Time lines and group discussions revealed how the sand encroachment started in the 1940s, following widespread deforestation of the Western Ghats. A government scheme in the mid-1960s planted trees to bind the sand and act as windbreaks. These trees were often planted on private farmland and 225 people were appointed as paid 'watchers' to prevent people from them. However, with the cessation of the scheme in 1988, the watchers were no longer paid, and the trees were rapidly felled. The recent decrease in rainfall and subsequent drop in ground water level was attributed to the loss of tree cover. Farmers had to shift their fields to the less fertile western side of the village, despite the threat of sand encroachment. Consequently since the 1940s, 80 per cent of arable land has been taken out of production.

Walked transects in the surrounding agricultural land revealed another issue. A percolation pond formerly used by the whole village had silted up and was being farmed by only a few farmers. Villagers blamed this for the drying up of more than 90 per cent of wells in the vicinity of the pond.

During the plenary session at the end of the workshop, the facilitators found it a struggle to wean the villagers away from a "dependency syndrome" to one of voluntary participation where they came up with their own solutions. However villagers did make a number of suggestions, including:

- planting trees of economic importance on private land; the landowners would be responsible for the trees' well-being, as well as being allowed to reap the benefits; and
- holding discussions with the occupants of the pond land to persuade them to vacate it, and establishing a people's committee to restore the pond.

For further details of this report, and of the work of the Gandhigram Rural Institute, contact: Dr N. Narayansamy, Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram 624302, Dindigul Anna District, Tamil Nadu, India.

Review by Fiona Hinchcliffe

11.MA/Postgraduate Diploma in Community Drama for Development. This one year course, validated by the University of Southampton, integrates community drama practices with cultural studies and development theory, culminating in a major practical project undertaken in the UK or overseas. It offers students training as facilitators of cultural strategies in communication and community participation in evolving and sustaining criteria for development. The course is taught by specialists with substantial theoretical and practical experiences in various parts of the world in the fields of community drama, cultural studies and development theory and practice. It is directed at the needs of development agencies working in the UK and overseas. So far, it is the first course in Europe that offers an advanced forum for students from the North and South to jointly evolve the use of community drama as a tool for development in local and global contexts.

For details, write to: The Admissions Officer, King Alfred's College, Sparkford Road, Winchester, Hampshire, SO22 4NR, Great Britain.

12. Letter from Grindl Dockery, Liverpool:

"For some time now I have been meaning to write to you about several matters pertaining to Rapid Appraisal (RA). I have referred many students to you and RRA Notes in the course of teaching RA, mainly at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. I have been training NHS health workers, engineers working overseas and international students on how to carry out a RA for doing a needs assessment. Over the course of time, there have been pertinent questions asked by students and myself as to the correct definition of different terms, which appear to be used by RA practitioners and authors of articles on the subject. For those new to the field it has appeared to cause some confusion and uncertainty and I will list them accordingly.

- 1. Why is it still referred to as RRA, emphasis on the rural, when it is applied now in different contexts ie, urban, refugee, disaster etc.? People have felt this implies that it is a research approach only for rural areas. This is why I use the term Rapid Appraisal (RA) so that the focus is on the process, rather than the context, which may be other than rural.*
- 2. There have been questions raised about the differences between Rapid Assessment Procedures (RAP) and RA. If one is to base their reply on the material published by Hurtado and Scrimshaw, is this limiting the interpretation to the individual's point of view and therefore, not necessarily correct or inhibiting the broader concept of such approaches?*
- 3. Is it not possible to standardise terms where possible, without inhibiting spontaneity and innovation? Perhaps authors should clarify what they mean when using certain terminology? One case in point is the use of PRA, which I would define as Participatory Rural Appraisal, applicable to whatever context in which the RA process may be used, rather than refer to the term Rural. This again implies that participation may occur in rural areas, whereas it is not something to be emphasised in all contexts where the RA process is being used.*
- 4. Another point is the use of the term "Rapid" which in my experience has prompted negative comments such as "Oh, that quick and dirty method". For many of us committed to the principle of participation, it is apparent that it is not a rapid process, but involves a much longer term commitment of time and resources. My suggestion would be to change the term "rapid" to "community" and therefore, refer to the process of Community Appraisal (CA). Within this concept the different types of RA may be further defined, including the methods that may be used in the process.*
- 5. In discussion with other researchers, mainly conventional, there have been comments made that the RRA case studies presented in the Notes, focus on the actual RA survey carried out with very little about what happens after completion of the RA survey. I must agree in part, although I am as much at fault by emphasising the RA survey process itself more than how that process continues after the actual survey. This has been highlighted further by students asking what they do after the survey is completed and how they use the information to make changes or implement new initiatives.*

These points may have already been discussed/debated in RA circles and I am only repeating what is already recognised. As I am increasingly being asked to assist NHS personnel carry out Needs Assessment surveys, it is apparent that RA has a lot to offer within the Western context. It is likely that demands for

information on the RA process to be made more widely available will arise. I have already had requests to make training material on RA available to health managers and other interested personnel.

If the application of the RA process and methods are to be better understood by a growing audience from different contexts, the need for a more open and wider discussion within both the formal and informal sectors is necessary".

13. Letter from Claus Euler, Enfants du Monde, Bangladesh:

"During recent field trips I tried several different methods. After a very successful orientation workshop my colleagues are eager to try something themselves. I will see the results at the end of the month, when everyone will be back.

During my trip to the north-west I did a matrix of both the best times to meet women and men (separate matrices were giving different results for the two women and the one men groups, where the two women groups were more similar to each other). I compared this with the working hours of the government staff, which showed the expected result that during the best time of day (between 1 and 3pm for the women) the staff have a lunch break. A lot of second, third and fourth priorities were either before the office opening hours (10am) or after 4pm, which is a clear indicator that we are often visiting at inconvenient times".