

editorial

Welcome to issue 48 of *PLA Notes*.

News, reminders, and the next issue

The special theme section in the next issue of *PLA Notes* will be on community-based planning. We now have a full complement of articles for the theme section, but if there are any books or other publications, events/workshops or websites that are relevant to this area, which you would like us to consider for the In Touch section, please email us at pla.notes@iied.org.

Just a reminder that back issues 1 to 40 of *PLA Notes* are now available on-line on our website www.planotes.org. Many of you have already accessed these, as shown by the dramatic increase in visits to our website in recent weeks. We believe that this is a really valuable resource for practitioners – and hope that you agree!

Can I also remind readers that subscriptions are now dealt with by IIED's distributor, Earthprint (see address on inside front cover). Cheques, bank drafts etc. from paying subscribers should now be sent to Earthprint, as should renewal notices from non-paying subscribers. Please contact Darren at Earthprint (customerservices@earthprint.co.uk) if you have any queries related to subscriptions. Contributions to *PLA Notes* and other feedback should continue to come to the *PLA Notes* team at IIED, as before.

And finally, news... in January 2004, I will be going on maternity leave for a second time. We are currently in the process of appointing my maternity cover, who will take over from the next issue. Holly Ashley will continue as *PLA Notes* Editorial Assistant and, as a previous Acting

Editor of *PLA Notes*, will be able to provide invaluable support to the new editor. I expect to be back in the Editor's seat by next September, in time for the December 04 issue.

Theme section

The theme section for this issue draws on a recent international workshop on learning and teaching participation (LTP) in higher education. Hosted by the Participation Group at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, UK, the workshop brought together experiences of teaching and learning participation not only in universities but also in other institutions of higher learning, e.g. research institutes and training centres. The workshop and the global dialogue around it aim to examine the role of teaching as a force for understanding and for strengthening processes of civic engagement and democratic participation in development.

The articles in this section describe experiences of teaching and learning participation in a range of higher education settings, from social work education in India, to a law faculty in Peru, to national agricultural research institutes in East Africa, revealing many similarities but also differences in approaches to teaching and learning. They focus on three main areas:

- **participatory modes and programmes of teaching and learning**, including internal aspects of programmes, such as teaching approaches and curriculum content, as well as the role of external relationships with communities and social organisations in effective teaching and learning;
- **university-community linkages**, and the different forms these linkages can take; and

• the role of learning networks and ways of institutionalising LTP.

Our guest editors for this special theme section are Peter Taylor and Jude Fransman. Peter Taylor is a Fellow in the Participation Group at IDS. He has a background in agriculture and formal and non-formal education, and has been engaged in recent years in training and participatory curriculum development for agriculture, forestry and rural development. His current research interests are in learning and teaching participation in higher education, and integration of natural resources management within basic education programmes. He has research, teaching, training and advisory experience in East and Southern Africa, Central, South and South-East Asia, the UK, and Eastern Europe. He is also programme convenor of the new MA in Participation, Development and Social Change at IDS.

Jude Fransman is a researcher with the Participation Group at IDS. Her background is in development studies with an emphasis on participation and education policy and a regional focus on China, South Africa, and the UK. Her research interests include learning and teaching participation in higher education, development education and education for global citizenship, participatory global learning networks, and inclusion and exclusion in secondary education. She is currently working as a consultant for the Development Centre of OECD.

I would like to thank Peter and Jude for all their hard work in bringing together this issue. Thanks also to all the authors for their patient answering of our many emails, and to our reviewers for reviewing papers in double-quick time. I think all this hard

work on the part of all the different parties involved is reflected in the quality of the final papers.

General section

In this issue we have two general articles. The first, by **Perry Walker** of the New Economics Foundation in the UK, describes the development of a new tool, Democs, to help people clarify, express, and share their views on public policy issues. The tool takes the form of a game which can be played at home or in more formal fora, e.g. big public meetings. The game has been used so far only in the UK, to explore issues such as whether genetically modified crops should be grown. But it has the potential to be useful for a wide range of issues and context. The article describes how the games are played and developed, and gives pointers as to situations in which it might be a useful tool.

Judith Chaumba and **Jouwert van Geene** describe a process of participatory capacity building among a network of NGOs in Zimbabwe. They emphasise that capacity building is a much wider-ranging process than simply training or staff development; it involves assessing the whole organisation and its ability to reach its objectives. In participatory capacity building staff themselves assess their current capacity and where and how it can be strengthened, so that change is based on an internal

understanding of problems, and solutions are 'owned' by the organisation. Following on from individual organisational processes, network members came together to see whether and how they could support and integrate their capacity building strategies.

Regular features

Tips for Trainers this time is on role play, and is taken from a new resource pack, *Communication and Power*, put together by the International Reflect Circle. This short extract discusses when role play is useful and the different forms it can take, and gives examples of where role play has been used in communities. The *Communication and Power* resource pack covers different elements of communication (written word, spoken word, numbers, and images) and is available on-line at www.reflect-action.org. It contains much valuable information for practitioners of participation.

Our **In Touch** section for this issue contains our usual selection of book notices, workshops and events, and e-participation. This includes some resources related to the special theme section in this issue, 'Learning and teaching participation', as well as a wide range of other resources which we hope you will find useful and informative.

As regular readers will know, we usually include an update on the

RCPLA Network (Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action Network) in each issue of *PLA Notes*. The network is currently in a phase of evaluation and transition. Following a year of talking to and visiting RCPLA members, Tom Thomas, the network's coordinator, is in the process of revising the network's vision statement. After discussions with steering group members he will circulate the revised vision to current and possible new members and regional networks with a questionnaire asking for views on the RCPLA's vision and its relevance to recipients' work. Following on from this, the network will hold a series of 'writeshops'. These will encourage participants to document their experiences of promoting participatory democracy, as well as providing a space to reflect on the RCPLA's vision and mission, with the aim of building support and commitment to the network. We expect to have a more detailed update on RCPLA activities once these activities have taken place. For further information about the network, visit the newly revamped RCPLA website, www.rcpla.org, or contact Tom Thomas at tomt@praxisindia.org.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *PLA Notes* and – as ever – welcome your feedback and comments on any of the contents.

Happy reading!
Angela Milligan, Editor

Corrections

PLA Notes 46: apologies to Carine Pionetti for spelling her name in several different ways, all of them wrong! Hope we've got it right this time, Carine.

PLA Notes 47: We gave an incorrect address for Wolfgang Bayer, co-author of article 10, 'Participatory evaluation with pastoralists in Sudan'. His correct address is: Rohnsweg 56, D-37085, Göttingen, Germany. Apologies, Wolfgang.