

Book reviews

CLIMATE CHANGE



Tiempo – a quarterly bulletin on climate and development

● *IIED and SEI*

This quarterly bulletin on climate and development is published each quarter by IIED and the Stockholm Environment Institute. It covers global warming, climate change, sea-level rise, and issues related to climate change in the developing world. Articles are contributed by writers from developing countries. To download copies and for more information visit www.tiempocyberclimate.org/portal/bulletin.htm

For francophone readers, *Tiempo Afrique* is now available in French through ENDA Tiers Monde in Dakar, Senegal. This has a regional West African focus. Contact: enda.energy@orange.fr or visit the website: <http://endaenergy.org/2008/11/13/tiempo-afrique>



Joto Afrika

● *ALIN and IDS*

Joto Afrika – Swahili for 'Africa is feeling the heat' – is a new series of briefings and online resources about adapting to climate change in Africa. The

journal is produced by the Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN) in Kenya in partnership with AfricaAdapt and the Institute of Development Studies, UK.

Joto Afrika focuses on thematic areas around climate change adaptation and development. It draws lessons, experiences, and practical information from across sub-Saharan Africa. Written in a clear, easy-to-read style, it includes summaries of academic research on climate change, case studies of community-based knowledge and action in response to climate change, and feedback from readers. It targets NGOs, government officials, researchers, decision makers, planning departments, CBOs, and all individuals in Africa who need to know about climate change adaptation at the regional and local level.

The first issue, edited by Victor Orindi from the International Development Research Centre in Nairobi, Kenya, looks at climate change and African food security and was produced in June this year.

Visit ALIN's website for more information: www.alin.net



Understanding Climate Change Adaptation: lessons from community-based approaches

● *Jonathan Ensor and Rachel Berger*
Practical Action Publishing, 2009

ISBN: 978 1 85339 683 0

Co-authored by one of the guest editors of this issue of *Participatory Learning and Action*, this book is an important and timely contribution to the climate change adaptation debate, providing both analysis and experience from practice.

The introduction locates community-based adaptation in the broader context of ongoing development challenges and international negotiations.

The main body comprises a series of case studies of adaptation projects, which seek to clarify the meaning of adaptation and draw lessons for practitioners and policy makers. Each chapter has been prepared with the participation of one of the team members that undertook the project work. The chapters contain a section on lessons learnt to give a frank discussion of what worked well, as well as any weaknesses that emerged.

The concluding chapter examines the relationship between reducing vulnerability to climate change, building adaptive capacity, and strengthening resilience. It also addresses the challenges of scaling up adaptation projects, noting the necessity of addressing existing policies, politics, and power relationships if communities are to be empowered to identify and develop appropriate responses to the challenges of climate change.

Available from Practical Action Publishing:
www.practicalactionpublishing.org



The Earthscan Reader on Adaptation to Climate Change

Edited by E. Lisa F. Schipper and Ian Burton
Earthscan, 2009
ISBN 978 1 84407 531 7

This reader opens with a chapter on the origins, concepts, practice, and policy of adaptation and continues with contributions from many climate experts exploring the theory of adaptation, offering a collection of some of the most significant writings on adaptation to climate change from the past two decades.

The book is divided into five parts: adaptation theory; adaptation, vulnerability, and resilience; adaptation

and disaster risk; adaptation and development; and adaptation and climate change policy.

Recommended for all who need a solid grounding in all aspects of climate change adaptation.

Available from Earthscan:
www.earthscan.co.uk



Climate Change and Vulnerability

● *Edited by Neil Leary, Cecilia Conde, Jyoti Kulkarni, Anthony Nyong, and Juan Pulhin*
ISBN: 978 1 84407 688 8

Earthscan, 2009 (paperback)
Together with *Climate Change and Adaptation*, these two books are the result of a research initiative proposed by the IPCC after its Third Assessment in 2001 and highlight the much needed investments required to reduce vulnerability.

The case studies in the book are detailed and well researched, providing a deeper analysis of vulnerability to climate change in different sectors and countries in the developing world.

The book is essential reading for those who wish to further their understanding of how climate change affects people and their environment, and what they can do to reduce vulnerability.

Available from Earthscan:
www.earthscan.co.uk



Climate Change in Africa

● *Camilla Toulmin*
African Arguments
ISBN: 978 1 84813 015 9

This book offers a comprehensive, succinct, and timely review of the challenges facing Africa in the context of climate change. It opens with an overview of climate change science and the implications of the IPCC's assessment report of 2007 for different

regions of Africa, outlining the agreements, institutions, and funding mechanisms set up, and reviews performance in achieving cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. As elsewhere in the developing world, the climate change challenge for Africa is of finding ways to adapt. Adaptation needs attention at many levels, and the book emphasises the need to combine a focus on building more resilient local food and water systems with national plans for food security and international management of key resources.

Toulmin looks at the impact of climate change on the availability and access to natural resources, firstly looking at how water availability is affected. With some areas becoming drier and others wetter as a result of climate change, the very limited investment in managing domestic water supplies in rural and urban settings needs addressing, as well as the untapped potential of dams to capture water for energy generation and agricultural production.

The reliance of African countries on agriculture and natural resources means that farmers are facing ever greater challenges. Toulmin draws on success stories which incorporate greater resilience into farming systems, particularly in the West African Sahel.

Forests are a huge source of income and provider of services, and the growth in carbon markets and Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) schemes bring potential benefits to Africa. Toulmin questions who has the rights to trees and who can claim payments from a global fund. She emphasises the time and effort required to clarify and enforce rights of access and use over these resources, so as to best distribute the proceeds from these schemes among local people, local government, and national authorities. In her view, a combination of local empowerment and national support is likely to work best.

Urban growth can bring many negative impacts on people's health and the environment, as well as vulnerability in the context of climate change. Toulmin looks at the potential of cities to be part of the solution rather than the problem, through redesign which will need the close collaboration of local communities, residents' groups, town councils, and local government.

In a chapter on climate change and conflict, Toulmin questions whether future conflict and resource wars could be attributed entirely to climate change. She examines the effect resource scarcity can have on migration patterns, which often have a very significant impact on people's income. She also looks at the rise in biofuel cultivation and the 'land grabs' which are taking place in some regions. Again, Toulmin suggests positive ways forward to reduce the shifts in resource availability.

Overall, Toulmin focuses on the opportunities facing Africa, and how it can gain from the new funding streams that will arise from the climate change negotiations. Africa has a large part to play in the new carbon economy, but it is the voices of the poor and vulnerable – who are most affected by climate change – which need to be heard as the policies and institutions for addressing climate change are designed.

Available from Zed Books:
www.zedbooks.co.uk



**Planning with
Uncertainty: Using
Scenario Planning with
African Pastoralists**

● *SOS Sahel UK and
IIED, 2009*

ISBN: 978 1 84369 743 5

This booklet illustrates how the idea of scenario planning as a participatory tool is being used to help pastoralists in Africa manage uncertainty and change. It uses scenario planning in a constructive way to

imagining multiple futures and consider how they might be influenced. Pastoralists are masters in the art of engaging with uncertainty and turning it to their advantage, since unpredictability is characteristic of the ecological environments in which they operate.

The book is based on SOS Sahel UK's work with Boran and Somali pastoralists in Kenya and IIED's work with WoDaaBe pastoralists in Niger. It captures the early lessons from an approach which has excited all those involved.

After a brief introduction, the first section looks at the three experiences from which this booklet is drawn – two in Kenya and one in Niger. The second section discusses the role of the facilitator while the third describes the main elements of a scenario planning process. The final section offers some concluding reflections.

The booklet is written with community development workers primarily in mind – for those who may be interested in facilitating scenario planning with communities and wish to know more about it. It describes the process involved and discusses the benefits, challenges, and implications of the approach. The booklet includes a DVD and is also available in French.

To request a hard copy, please contact: SarahWitts@sahel.org.uk or download a copy at: www.iied.org/pubs/display.php?o=12562IIED

GENERAL



Communication for Another Development: Listening Before Telling

● Wendy Quarry and Ricardo Ramirez
Zed Books, 2009

ISBN: 978 1 84813 009 8

This is fun and entertaining book looking at the challenges of communicating in the development sector. It is a lively, personal

account by two development practitioners who have been frustrated with the outcomes of their research not being communicated effectively.

To quote from the book; "it is not communication that makes good development but good development that contains good communication". The book unravels this notion. It is divided into three parts – the first looking at the move away from results-based approaches, at communication for *Another Development* and how development is more about exploring and enabling, rather than prescribing. It also explores why communicators have a hard time explaining what they do.

The second part reflects on experience. It looks at early champions in the field and uncovers principles which made them successful communicators – these include combining advocacy, educational and participatory communication functions. It also looks at new ways of working with established media.

The final part looks forward to how things can be done differently, noting that even with new technologies, there are some hardy principles to adhere to. The book is a must for all development professionals and shows clearly the opportunities arising from good deployment of communication processes.

Available from Zed Books
www.zedbooks.co.uk



Speaking to Power – 27 Voice Tools Building bridges for participatory learning, action and policy-making

● Neela Mukherjee
Foreword by Robert Chambers

Studies in Rural Participation Series No. 7
Concept Publishing, 2009
ISBN: 81-8069-588-3

This book looks at the practical side of enabling ordinary people to 'speak to

power'. Those whose voices are rarely heard include women, minority groups, indigenous peoples, and the poor – and making these people's voice heard in policy-making remains a serious issue.

This book is based on the assumption that if those in power do not listen to ordinary people then the latter can use their united power to try and influence them. The book provides tools and mechanisms to organise people's voices for transmission, thereby connecting the community voice at the local level with higher levels of policy-making.

As the title says, the book presents 27 voice tools from practice. These are divided into tools for participatory assessments and tools for social accountability. The first set includes methodologies such as participatory poverty assessments, participatory monitoring and evaluation, and most significant change tools. The second set includes participatory budgeting, citizens' advisory boards, lobbying and advocacy, and people's courts.

The concluding chapters look at aspects of institutionalising community voice, including major gaps and weaknesses of the conventional policy framework.

Available from Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi:
www.conceptpub.com



Strengthening Voices of the Excluded

Affirming Life and Diversity, Rural images and voices on Food Sovereignty in south India.

● *The DDS Community Media*

Trust, P.V. Satheesh (DDS) and Michel Pimbert (IIED), 2008

ISBN: 978 1 843969 674 2

In *PLA 58*, we announced *Affirming Life and Diversity*. Here, two reviewers give their thoughts on this multimedia publication.

Reviewed by Nick Lunch, Director and Co-founder, InsightShare

Affirming Life and Diversity celebrates local knowledge, innovation, self-determination, and local action for change. The compilation of 12 videos made by women filmmakers, who are all local farmers from Andhra Pradesh working with the DDS (Deccan Development Society) Community Media Trust, are a clear and outstanding result of community-led research, guided by the International Society of Ethnobiology's Code of Ethics.

Throughout eight years of work, DDS and IIED have encouraged local communities to undertake their own research and make their own publications. This logic identifies the local inhabitants as the best experts to conduct research on biodiversity in their own communities. Using a tool that equalises access to the results, the *dalit* women used community video and radio to record systematically the variety of voices horizontally and vertically.

This project also clearly celebrates action as a direct result from research. As Michel Pimbert acknowledges in his radio interview with Mark Sommer (*A World of Possibilities*, 2008), action research provides space for direct democracy and cultural affirmation.¹ The videos produced in this long-term action research project show collaboration, production, and validation of common knowledge with an active role of the community in its outputs.

Affirming Life and Diversity sets a precedent in participatory and action research showing how multimedia is a

¹ Listen online: <http://tinyurl.com/pimbert-interview>
Full URL: <http://aworldofpossibilities.org/program/vanishing-and-re-emerging-reviving-biological-and-cultural-diversity>

perfect tool for results dissemination and establishing equality in access, while creating outputs with a multiplicity of uses as advocacy tools. Besides, the long-term approach opened up a creative space for local capacity building and strengthening farmer-led research instead of extracting information to provide knowledge for outsiders.

The community videos unpack a reflective process, and make visible the careful adherence to participatory practices that have led to local communities gaining autonomy in decision-making as well as horizontal sharing from local to global spaces. The exchange and mutual learning processes among farmers from India, Peru, Mali, Iran, Indonesia, and South Africa might be shared also with many other farmers around the globe, thanks to the videos.

The final palpable outcome is a high and advanced level of community collaboration, both local and global, involving political empowerment and power over decision-making. The research findings are judged in terms of the degree to which communities set research agendas and frame policies. It is refreshing to learn of a long term participatory video intervention that has led to so many positive changes in local people's lives.

The evidence of the process: an outline of the community videos²

The 12 videos are carefully organised to articulate an argument with a variety of voices: farmers, scientists, CSOs representatives, government officials, and international stakeholders. This result of this participant-led research had put everyone at a sangham shot level: that is, the eye level when you sit together in a sangham community group. As PV Sateesh commented to InsightShare in 2007 in a video interview, the process has

achieved farmers talking to farmers locally and globally:

That is for me the power of community video.

The video-arguments articulated by the women filmmakers include:

- Explanation of the research project and process, presenting the stakeholders and the case.
- Celebration about biodiversity events as a community forum for awareness and decision-making, creating a privileged space for sharing local knowledge and establishing an agenda on food sovereignty. The process of filming and screening back to the community is documented too.
- Concrete examples of successful advocacy using community video films, e.g. reversing the Public Distribution System which had flooded local markets with subsidised rice and has now become the Community Grain Fund, promoting indigenous cereals like sorghum; or the wonderful case of banishing BT Cotton from the State of Andhra Pradesh following a long-term video campaign by the Community Media Trust; or the controversial work of local citizen juries who shamed DfiD and UK partners into abandoning the green revolution tactics which supported the spread of GM seeds and export-led industrial agriculture.
- Analysis of biodiversity (uncultivated food), including a diversity of voices and comparing traditional and scientific knowledge.
- Sharing of local technology innovation among local farmers.
- Analysis of markets and their influence in the communities of Andhra Pradesh. Presentation of issues and solutions, such as community certification, alternatives to established markets, development of community action groups, creation of new local market institutions, education campaigns, and inclusion of all the

² See: www.insightshare.org/video_PVSateesh1.html

stakeholders in the process.

- Review of the national learning group role on the action research project and their interaction with community members. The video also documents the process of participatory video as a tool for research and for opening new pathways: ‘radio and video are our weapons’ (quote from a *sangham* filmmaker).
- Documentation of the DDS progress and the influence of the local *sanghams* in policy-making at local, regional, national, and international level. Evidence of the power of community video as a rigorous tool for research and advocacy.
- A case of horizontal global exchange: Indian-Peruvian farmers. It includes the sharing of sustainable farming techniques, culture, market institutions, community videos, and participatory tools for biodiversity registration. This is the powerful, human, emotional, spiritual side of development we rarely see.
- Documentation of the process of doing research through participatory video in relation to BT cotton. The research was conducted throughout three years, filming once a month systematically. Emphasis on stories and its impact on action and change.
- Global advocacy video: how to take the process beyond. The *sangham* filmmakers decided to take the research to the Global south, including farmers, scientists, and other stakeholders from South Africa, Indonesia, Thailand, and Mali, to record experiences around GMOs and BT cotton.

Similar experiences and approaches from InsightShare

I met PV Satheesh³ at his home in Pashtapur in 2005. You may laugh, but it was a bit like meeting my guru! Sitting under a huge tree in a beautiful courtyard and sharing local food as farmers came

and went from a variety of *sangham* meetings, we chatted about participatory video, we talked to the ladies at the Community Media Trust, shared videos, and agreed to work together to bring other PV pioneers across the globe together and build a coherent movement for community media. What struck me most from that meeting with Satheesh was the dedication and life-long commitment it takes to seed real change. He lives and breathes what he preaches! On my return to UK, I also met with Michel Pimbert, who since has remained a mentor and friend.

At InsightShare today we feel in mid-stream of a powerful current. And we continue to nurture long-term links with the wider work of IIED’s Food Sovereignty Programme partners, as well as other IIED initiatives focused on community-based adaptation to climate change.

We have carried out capacity building for community video in many countries since our beginnings in 1996. This has shown us there is no standard pathway, but that a community hub (physical space to come together and produce community videos, similar to the DDS Community Media Trust) will need some form of hands-on support, encouragement, and mentoring for two to three years minimum. What we have learnt from making mistakes is that we need to build relations at the most grassroots level to ensure we are contributing to positive social change. We work less and less with development agencies and more directly with communities.

There are huge advantages to anchoring the hub within an already supportive and responsive network such as The Christensen Fund’s regional programmes and the UNDP Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grant Programme’s local partners, or the Land

³ See: www.insightshare.org/videos

is Life network of indigenous organisations, as we have been doing in our Biocultural Diversity programme.

We call *Year One* the conception phase, whilst *Year Two* is the birth of the hub. Some community partners may choose not to host a permanent media hub but many opt to go on developing a truly community-led and long-term social media hub. *Year Three* would see the development of a more intensive strategy for developing local sustainability strategies for the hubs, with less hands-on involvement from InsightShare. Projects would be almost entirely locally driven afterwards.

Our strategy to hand over the tool and connect the communities in a global network is palpable in the videos created by our first two hubs: Durban and London.³ This year, in a multimedia project called **Conversations with the Earth**, we are working with six indigenous communities to identify, train, and equip local videographers to enable them to record the impacts of, and responses to, climate change at the local level.

Sharing these video stories will enable indigenous peoples to present their own perspectives on the effects of climate change to inform the global discourse and build capacity in community media for locally-driven processes. These six hubs are in Peru, Panama, Cameroon, Kenya, Canadian Arctic, and Philippines.

I am convinced by the words of Djengui (the Great Spirit of the forest) who has predicted a radiant future: I feel it is in our hands and I am going to work for that.
Member of the Baka Community Association in Eastern Cameroon

Affirming Life and Diversity: Rural Images and Voices on Food Sovereignty in south India is undeniable proof of the unlimited possibilities of combining participatory action research and

community media for cultural affirmation, self-determination, capacity building, and socio-political local and global change – led by and for the real development experts: community members, farmers, indigenous peoples, and local inhabitants. It is a must-see for those in the development industry, development academia, and policy makers. And it is an inspiration to fellow community media practitioners!

For more information about InsightShare, visit: www.insightshare.org

For more information and community videos amplifying voices of indigenous peoples on climate change visit: www.conversationearth.org

Reviewed by Zoe Young, a Film Producer and Sian Sullivan, a Lecturer in Environment and Development at Birkbeck College, University of London.

Smartly packaged and produced, this box set of films and text is an important document of community focused action research and media, exploring the food sovereignty of marginalised people in dryland areas of Andhra Pradesh, India. It offers multi-vocal accounts of action research on food, farming, ecology, and livelihoods ‘by, with and for’ people who have tended to be treated by well-meaning elites as objects of research or of pity, and as more-or-less passive recipients of aid and agricultural extension work. A particular contextual focus is the displacement of local diversities (crops, technologies, farming practices, exchange strategies, etc.) through the distribution of free or cheap white rice produced in industrial monocultures. This is a staple which requires little labour to prepare, but which is relatively low in nutrient value. The films highlight some of problematic outcomes of this incidence of India’s ‘Green Revolution’. Even more importantly they document the processes engaged in by local people, and

particularly local women, to remember, reclaim, and share indigenous knowledge and diverse farming practices appropriate to the relatively dry and remote (in terms of urban market access) rural landscape in which they dwell.

Issues covered include alternative strategies for distributing food to the poorest, growing new and traditional crops for market, the use of natural fertilisers, the establishment of biodiversity festivals to celebrate local diversity, and the problems faced by local farmers pressured to grow genetically engineered cotton. A significant emphasis is on the ongoing work, networking, and organisational development of the Deccan Development Society (DDS) as a highly progressive and effective campaigning development NGO. A key aspect of the initiative, and one which is of particular relevance for IIED, for 'participatory development work' in general, and for this publication, has been the establishment of an ethical research protocol and practice between the Deccan Development Society and IIED, and village *sanghams*. These are 'voluntary associations of poor women... basically formed by *dalit* women, but not to the exclusion of poor women from a wide array of castes' (p. 16). An Annex sets out the comprehensive Code of Ethics, established and agreed by the International Society of Ethnobiology, which has been drawn on in this project to guide good research practice in the new, ethically unarguable framework of 'farmer first'.

This is an innovative combination of locally-filmed and directed visual material with an accompanying and well-produced text elaborating further on the geographical and institutional setting of the research. The films contain moments of real beauty and excitement. High points for us were sections where farmers speak among themselves, making matrices for local biodiversity registers,

dividing up benefits between villagers, and documenting seed-keepers' storage facilities. From these, the passion of speakers committed to this grassroots approach to development and conservation is clear. On a more technical note, the film graphics are generally good and clear, and the sound mix mostly works. There is some varied audio and light levels on a couple of films (e.g. Film Three is very dark for some reason), and at times for us the repetitive and almost constant use of women singing, whatever is being said or is happening on screen, grated after a while.

More substantially, the total package slightly misses an opportunity to really document and present the project as a potentially exemplary process of participatory video making. The accompanying booklet states: 'Participatory video was an integral part of this action research; the CMT [DDS Community Media Trust] documented the dynamics and outcomes of the research through the eyes of marginalised women farmers and other small farmers' (p. xii). But while the camera may directly present what local women's eyes were seeing, the soundtrack only rarely presents what their voices might be saying. Film Seven ('Learning from Grassroots') does give more space to women's voices, including their views on the role and practice of participatory video in the process of co-inquiry, but for the most part, women's voices are heard primarily as untranslated background group singing. Where they might be telling their own stories, and interviewing each other to give narrative shape to the films that we see, we are led instead by an authoritative male narration, scripted (according to the credits) by PV Satheesh, the director of DDS. We wondered why the women filmmakers themselves were not describing in their own words the significance of their local biodiversity festivals, or sharing their experiences of

travelling to Peru to discuss local agro-biodiversity issues with Andean farmers? There is room here for a separate film focusing on the participatory video process itself in the context of this project, indicating, for example, how women's groups agreed on edits and storylines and including some clarification of their engagements with specialists in producing the final versions. Another interesting option would be to hear PV Satheesh's own personal and professional experience as a key motivating force behind such a globally important and innovative social movement organisation.

One of the films that does approach this more successfully is the first film on DVD 4 (themed as 'Grassroots confront genetic engineering'), entitled 'Why are Warangal farmers angry with BT Cotton?' This film opens with clips of farmers heatedly explaining that this modified crop actually does not provide the return they need on their investment. For us, this opening grabbed our attention and concern as viewers, because we were able to see and hear those immediately affected voice their views and experiences directly. At the same time, and from a professional filmmaker's perspective that understands the time and interest of a viewer to be at a premium, some of the farmer accounts regarding what then went wrong with these introduced cash crops perhaps are allowed to run on too long, thereby losing the viewer's attention and concern. This is a common dilemma for filmmakers desiring to give space for views and voices that often remain unheard, while producing edits that also are attractive, coherent, and attention-grabbing for the viewing consumers of the 'product'.

In general, however, we would have appreciated a few more glimpses of local people making and watching films together, as well as some more time given to permitting the emotional connection that can be made when hearing

protagonists speak directly of their own views and experiences. Arguably, it is through making possible these sorts of felt and empathic connections with people in such different contexts and experiencing such alien constraints that the broader changes associated with sustaining and celebrating diversity, both biological and cultural, might manifest. With the sensitive use of translation and subtitles, filmed media can provide powerful vehicles via which such subtle yet strong connections can be engendered.

In sum, however, this is an exciting initiative and product with great educational value in terms of content, methodologies, and institutional setting. We would love to see some sort of distillation of the material here into a single hour-long film that weaves the connected issues together through a succinct juxtaposition of images, content, and narration. This should be possible, and would constitute a product with great pedagogical value for a wide range of contexts. These could include the sharing of experiences between different localities and rural peoples globally, as a resource for 'development professionals' as well as for social movements and campaigns working with related issues, and in university teaching for a range of courses and degree programmes. Such an extension of this product would of course encounter tensions in the interactions between the producers of content and editorial choices. But we feel that these productive tensions would be worth grappling with, so as to enhance the reach and impact of the significant stories, experiences and 'developments' documented here.