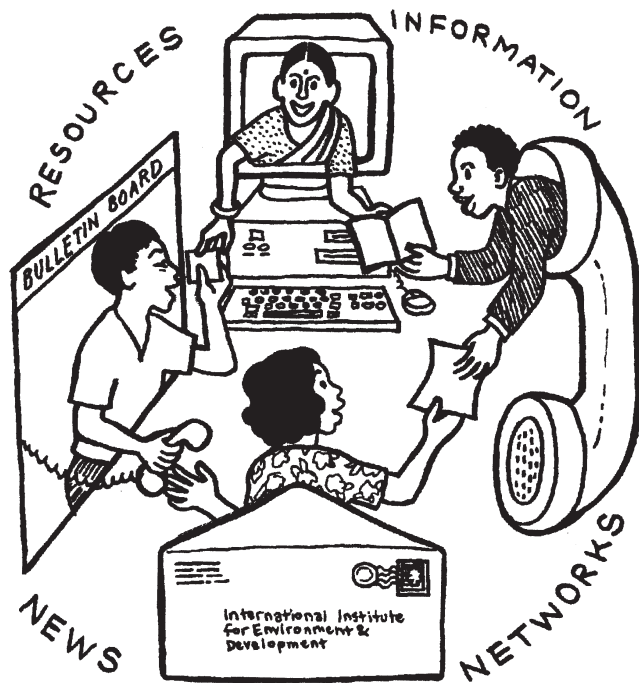


in touch



Welcome to the In Touch section of *Participatory Learning and Action*. Through these pages we hope to create a more participatory resource for the *Participatory Learning and Action* audience, to put you, as a reader, in touch with other readers. We want this section to be a key source of up-to-date information on training, publications, and networks. Your help is vital in keeping us all in touch about:

- **Networks.** Do you have links with recognised local, national or international networks for practitioners of participatory learning? If so, what does this network provide – training? newsletters? resource material/library? a forum for sharing experiences? Please tell us about the network and provide contact details for other readers.
- **Training.** Do you know of any forthcoming training events or courses in participatory

methodologies? Are you a trainer yourself? Are you aware of any key training materials that you would like to share with other trainers?

- **Publications.** Do you know of any key publications on participatory methodologies and their use? Have you (or has your organisation) produced any books, reports, or videos that you would like other readers to know about?
- **Electronic information.** Do you know of any electronic conferences or pages on the Internet which exchange or provide information on participatory methodologies?
- **Other information.** Perhaps you have ideas about other types of information that would be useful for this section. If so, please let us know.

Please send your responses to:
Participatory Learning and Action,
IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London
WC1H 0DD, UK.
Fax: + 44 20 7388 2826;
Email: pla.notes@iied.org

Book reviews

Citizens at the Centre: Deliberative participation in healthcare decisions

● Celia Davies, Margaret Wetherell and Elizabeth Barnett.

Policy Press, London, 2006
ISBN 1861348029 £24.

Citizens at the Centre is the outcome of three years of intensive research and analysis.

The authors conducted an exhaustive process of observation of participation and interviews with all those involved, from the funders and facilitators to the thirty members of a Citizens Council, charged with helping shape policy-making around the National Institute of Clinical Excellence, one of the UK government's key health regulatory bodies.

Anyone interested in the issues raised in this special issue will appreciate the valuable and timely nature of the analysis here. They bring particular clarity to the dilemmas facing bureaucrats, commercial facilitators and everyday citizens when they attempt to walk the tightrope between participatory ideals and the reluctance of those in power to credit knowledge and democratic rights to others.

They also shed light on the challenge of dealing with demands for representative processes, when this can lead to the tokenistic involvement of groups in society who are either in a numerical minority or are not normally involved in policy debates.

Davies, Wetherell and Barnett also discuss the risk that even the most exhaustive and expensive processes, carried out in good faith by well-meaning people, can create new

forms of oppression. It carries a tacit warning that even hugely expensive processes aimed at 'giving people a voice' can actually weaken the voice of groups who already have the least say in decisions.

Along with these key themes, the authors also set the citizens' council in the context of other similar attempts at deliberative democracy, such as the citizens' jury movement in general (see Kashefi and Keene, article 5, this issue; Haq, article 15, this issue) and the 2005 Nanojury in particular (see Singh, article 4, this issue).

This book should be read by anyone who is involved in participatory projects, particularly those initiatives that are funded by single powerful organisations, which, at least in the UK, form the majority. Citizens at the Centre is especially relevant to potential commissioners of such processes, who face the challenge of adapting their institutions and shaping the organisational structures that surround them, in order to create more empowering models of participation.

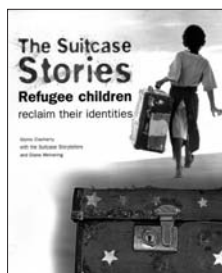
For those who find it easier than ordering the actual book, some of its main findings are usefully summarised in a paper by the same authors which is available at: http://alba.jrc.it/blog/accnt/wp-content/uploads/Citizens_council_Mar05.pdf

The Citizens' Council's official page on a UK government agency website: <http://tinyurl.com/63qpqc>

Reviewed by Tom Wakeford

The Suitcase Stories: Refugee children reclaim their identities

● Glynis Clacherty with the suitcase storytellers and Diane Welvering
Double Storey Books, Juta & Co. Ltd, 2006
ISBN-10: 1 919930 99 X
Paperback, 184 pages



Readers will remember the article by Glynis Clacherty in the general section of *PLA 54*, outlining the Suitcase Project. A book written

by the initial group of children involved with the project has since been published and we are pleased to include a review of the book with a brief background to the project here.

In 2001 Glynis Clacherty initiated a 'psychosocial support through art therapy' project for refugee children in Johannesburg, South Africa. In 2002, Dianne Welvering brought her skills to the project as an art teacher, and together with Glynis developed the work presented in the book.

Unlike many other African countries, South Africa has no formal refugee camps catering to the more than 150,000 refugees and asylum seekers from war torn countries like Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Instead, South Africa's rights-based approach sees refugees making their own way as they can, finding work and accessing social services where possible. There can be significant difficulty in accessing these rights in practice. Navigating the physical and social realities of a foreign, often hostile land can be daunting, especially as an unaccompanied child.

The Suitcase Stories is a small but powerful glimpse into the human realities behind the statistics. First-hand accounts of the refugee experience are strikingly illustrated with colourful visual imagery taken from the second-hand suitcases that the children used for their multi-media art therapy expressions. The stories are

punctuated by concise contextual information, and sandwiched in adult commentary about the therapeutic storytelling process – giving some useful critical insights into the process of art therapy and trauma debriefing that will be invaluable to others working with children from refugee and other backgrounds involving personal distress.

What you won't find in this book are sensationalised horror stories grim with gripping detail. These are first-hand accounts told by real children in their own way, not as responses to interrogative interviewing techniques that search out details readers may want to pore over rather than the experiences that the storytellers feel appropriate to share. Much of what the children have experienced is poignantly illustrated 'between the lines' in a way that leaves their privacy and personal dignity intact.

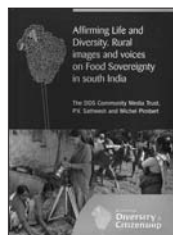
Too often even in the field of participation one finds stories 'taken' from children by researchers and writers who use them as if it is only the adult academic or commercial product that matters. It is refreshing to discover a book that is truly a participatory collaboration between those who actually own the stories and those who are facilitating the storytelling.

Every story in this book is told voluntarily by a child who has actively chosen what to tell (and not to tell), what to publish and what to remove, and what to change in order to protect their own identity and privacy. The book itself is the result of a request by one of the children in the group to 'Help me make a book about my story. People need to know why we are here. We don't choose to come here. They need to know.' What is also striking about the book is the

sense of healing and empowerment expressed by the participants during the suitcase decorating process. This leads one to speculate on the further empowerment and healing that may have come from being able to share their stories with the world in this further way.

■ Available from Double Storey Books
Website: www.doublestorey.com

Reviewed by Je'anna Clements (Young Insights for Planning, South Africa)



Affirming Life and Diversity: Rural images and voices on food sovereignty in South India

● Community Media Trust, PV Sathesh and Michel Pimbert, 2008.

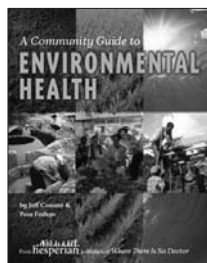
ISBN: 978 1 84369 674 2

This DVD set contains four DVDs and a book and is part of the *Affirming Life and Diversity* film series. The book describes how co-inquirers worked together in the drylands of Andhra Pradesh to produce social and ecological knowledge for sustainability, autonomy and equity. Their collective and empowering experience is vividly captured in the accompanying videos which show the outcomes of participatory action research facilitated by the Deccan Development Society (DDS) and IIED on Sustaining Local Food Systems, Agricultural Biodiversity and Livelihoods. The videos were produced by women farmers who are also village-level film makers with the Community Media Trust of the DDS.

These films show how local organisations of marginalised women farmers and urban food consumers

are regenerating sustainable and citizen controlled food systems – for the well-being of their communities and the land. The rural images and voices offer powerful arguments in favour of an alternative paradigm for food and agriculture – one that resonates with the concepts of ‘food sovereignty’ and active citizenship.

■ For more information and to order a copy visit: www.iied.org/pubs/display.php?o=1455611ED



A Community Guide to Environmental Health

● Jeff Conant and Pam Fadem, 2008
Paperback, 600 pages, illustrated, US\$28

ISBN: 978 0 942364 56 9

This illustrated guide helps health promoters, development workers, environmental activists, and community leaders in small villages as well as large cities take charge of their environmental health.

This book contains activities to stimulate critical thinking and discussion, inspirational stories, and instructions for simple health technologies such as water purification methods, safe toilets, and non-toxic cleaning products. Created by Hesperian in collaboration with 120 communities from over 33 countries, the guide is full of explanations and actions that individuals, families, and communities can take to address both the symptoms and root causes of today's pressing environmental problems.

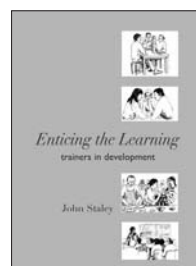
■ Book and CD available from Hesperian Books, 1919 Addison Street, Suite 304,

Berkeley, CA 94704, USA.

Email: hesperian@hesperian.org

Website www.hesperian.org

Free to download at www.hesperian.org/publications_download_EHB.php



Enticing the Learning: Trainers in development

● John Staley, 2008
Paperback, 482 pages
ISBN: 0 704426 072 and 9780704426078

This book is for those who work professionally with communities in development work, social action, community organisation, awareness raising and voluntary aid programmes.

More than 100 exercises, group events, conceptual inputs and methods are presented in detail, with timing and practicalities; and more than 50 handouts – guidelines, case studies, questionnaires, etc – are included. The text tells the trainer what to do at every stage, and why and how, in order to ‘entice the learning’.

The material is drawn from the Development Studies Course conducted at Selly Oak Colleges in the UK, and has been tried and tested in NGOs worldwide. The text is enlivened by the comments, insights and humour of those who have taken part in the training and contains many photographs and line drawings.

This book is an invaluable resource for the established trainer and the would-be trainer.

■ Available from The Institute of Applied Social Studies, The University of Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, UK. Email: w.banner@bham.ac.uk
Price £18 plus postage.

Events and training

Third Global Congress of Women in Politics and Governance

● 19th–22nd October 2008, Philippines

The Center for Asia-Pacific Women in Politics (CAPWIP) and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UN/ISDR) are hosting the Third Global Congress of Women in Politics and Governance in Makati City, Metro Manila. The congress theme is Gender in Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction.

Women and environment experts have raised concern over the absence of women in the discourse and debate on climate change and disaster risk reduction, both of which are major global mainstream issues. The involvement of women in areas of environmental management and is of considerable importance in the promotion of environmental ethics.

The overall purpose is to provide a forum for legislators and decision-makers in national governments and leaders at all levels in formulating gender-responsive legislation and programmes related to gender in climate change and disaster risk reduction.

The discussions will be organised around identifying the challenges, defining the appropriate responses and defining and elaborating actions to cope with climate change and its impacts and preparedness and disaster risk reduction. Special attention will be given to defining how women and gender could be mainstreamed. The Congress should define how women can be given the social space to participate, influence, and benefit from global and local responses to climate

change. Registration fees from US\$1,550 per person.

■ For more information visit: www.capwip.org/3rdglobalcongress.htm; Email: globalcongress2008@gmail.com.

MA Programme Links: Science, Society and Development

● October 2008, Institute of Development Studies, UK

The study of science and society is among the liveliest fields in higher education and one of the fastest growing research areas worldwide. The MA in Science, Society and Development focuses on the most vital health, environment and agricultural concerns of today. But it also asks: how can science and technology best contribute to poverty reduction, social justice and environmental sustainability in the developing world? The MA focuses on practical and policy questions and combines a solid grounding in development theories with an understanding of the politics and governance of scientific knowledge and policy. Based in the Knowledge, Technology and Society Team (KNOTS) at IDS, the course is linked to major new global research hub, the Social, Technological and Environmental Pathways to Sustainability Centre (STEPS). Two full scholarships are available in 2008 for African Students.

■ For more information visit: www.ids.ac.uk/ids/teach/mascience.html or contact: Julia Brown, MA Programme Administrator, Tel: +44 1273 678869; +44 1273 915643; Email: teaching@ids.ac.uk

Advanced Training of Trainers: Visualisation in Participatory Programmes (VIPP)

10–14th November 2008
St. Ulrich, Black Forest, Germany

This Training of Trainers is a specialised workshop for experienced trainers in the development sector from Asia, Africa, the Americas, Australia and Europe, who beyond the basics of VIPP want to improve their trainer skills developing and designing their own training project.

This VIPP Training of Trainers emphasises:

- Advanced facilitation and presentation skills, which will enhance group qualities, synergy and output, including attitudes, behaviours and values of the facilitator.
- Repertoire of VIPP methods and tools used in training. Reflection about the intercultural dimensions of group events.
- Visualisation skills using various media, including cards and charts, drawings and diagrammatic representations.
- The logic and processes involved in training events.

This training combines short visualised inputs, individual tasks, group work, team cooperation, learning by doing and constructive feedback. Key concepts, quality standards and training formats are generated by all participants, a cooperative working style is encouraged and good group dynamics are essential parts of learning and practicing.

■ For more information visit: www.southbound.com.my/vipp/index.html and <http://vipp.wordpress.com/about>
Registration fee 850 Euro or equivalent in US\$ for training fee, lodging (5 nights), full board, VIPP Manual, CD with base material. Send registration to: Timmi Tillmann, Gomaringenstr. 6, D-72810 Gomaringen, SW-Germany. Tel: +49 7072 505656
Email: Tillmann2003@gmx.net
Deadline for registration is 20 September 2008.

Events and training listed on www.comminit.com

The following are a selection of forthcoming events. For more information on the full range of events and training, visit www.comminit.com

Peacebuilding: Strengthening policy and practice

● 17th–21st November 2008, Birmingham, UK

This five-day course is run by Responding to Conflict (RTC). The course is designed to assist participants to identify constructive ways of engaging with the unpredictable and rapidly changing circumstances within which many relief and development agencies work. It focuses on the relationship between policy and practice in complex situations.

The course will enable participants to develop constructive ways to develop policies for appropriate responses in complex political situations. It will draw on the experience of participants and tutors to examine the key issues that are emerging from the field.

This course is for staff of international and national agencies and those with advisory and management responsibility for relief, development, rights and peacebuilding programmes. It is particularly relevant for those engaged in the planning and implementation of aid and development programmes and those concerned with developing policies for appropriate responses in complex, political emergencies.

■ For more information visit: www.respond.org/PSP.html or contact: 1046 Bristol Road Birmingham, B29 6LJ. Tel:

+44 121 415 5641; Fax +44 121 415 4119; Email: enquiries@respond.org. Course fee: £970.

Management information systems for monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

● 1st–2nd Sept 2008, Norwich, UK

This module is offered by the Overseas Development Group. It provides professional managers with the opportunity to develop an Information Technology (IT) Based Management Information System (MIS) in a two-week period.

In week one, the underlying structure for each participant's MIS is designed. Week two takes the design further and using available software packages (database, spreadsheet and World Wide Web software), develops the MIS software. Participants will take home a workable system, which can be field tested with live data. Participants should possess basic competency in commonly available software packages.

Course fee: £2,800 per person (including accommodation).

■ For more information visit: www1.uea.ac.uk/cm/home/schools/ssf/dev/dg/prodev/MIS or contact: Overseas Development Group (ODG), University of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ, United Kingdom. Tel: +44 1603 592340; Fax: +44 1603 591170; Email: odg.train@uea.ac.uk

World Rural Women's Day

● 15th October 2008, globally

Since 1997, the Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF) has organised an annual worldwide empowerment and educational campaign, World Rural Women's Day. Celebrations and events take place in more than 100 countries around the world.

Rural women the world over play a major role in ensuring food security and in the development and stability of the rural areas. Yet, with little or no status, they frequently lack the power to secure land rights or to access vital services such as credit, inputs, extension, training and education. Their vital contribution to society goes largely unnoticed. World Rural Women's Day intends to change this by bringing rural women out of obscurity at least once a year – to remind society how much they owe to rural women and to give value and credit to their work.

Activities can be organised independently in different ways according to specific local priorities and traditions. It is important, however, that any activities or events be concrete and visible to raise the profile of rural women in the public eye. It is up to individual organisations, groups, or committees to make this day meaningful according to their own circumstances.

■ For more information visit: www.woman.ch/women/2-introduction.php or contact: Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF), 11 Avenue de la Paix, CH-1202 Geneva, PO Box 143, Geneva, Switzerland. Tel: +41 0 22 738 66 19; Fax: +41 0 22 738 82 48; Email: wdpca@wwsf.ch or wwsf@wwsf.ch

Community based rehabilitation

● 15th September–10th October 2008, Netherlands

In September 2008, Enablement will offer a four-week international course in management of disability and rehabilitation in the Netherlands. Increasingly, rehabilitation and prevention of disability takes place in the community with the active involvement and participation of the

community. Appropriate technology is advocated, self-help groups are formed, microfinance business training is started etc. Everything is geared towards the empowerment of people with disability and the communities in which they live. This course is offered to rehabilitation professionals and disability and development workers and activists. Please apply well in advance.

■ For more information visit: www.enablement.nl or contact Enablement, Langenhorst 36, 2402 PX Alphen aan de Rijn, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 172 436953; Fax: +31 172 244976; Email: h.cornielje@enablement.nl

Public Participation and Corporate Social Responsibility: from why to how

● 2008 International Conference, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK
27th–29th August 2008

This is the major annual event for the

International Association for Public Participation and the first time the international conference has been held beyond the shores of North America.

The conference is a unique opportunity that provides a forum for communities, industry, governments, NGOs, academic institutions, and key thinkers from around the world.

Keynote speakers include:

- Alan Young: Scottish and Southern Energy: CSR as a permeated business concept
- Professor Doreen McBarnett: Oxford University: International law, participation and CSR
- Martin Neureiter: ISO 26000: Public participation as a international standard
- Richard Douthwaite: Oil peak and risk to community well-being

Public participation and CSR is a new arena: a new politics of responsibility in business towards communities and to citizens. The

response from participants wanting to present has been astonishing with over 70 abstracts accepted to present. These include:

- Guiding principles in community engagement
- The relationship of local people to government in seventeen countries
- Good neighbour agreements in water management
- Light rail development in Phoenix
- Stakeholders driving business decisions
- CSR and sustainable development
- Citizens inside public health policy
- The Australian citizens parliament
- A framework for the evaluation of the UN Brisbane Declaration
- Concept of Zakat: Islamic charity as a tool for CSR

Registration is now open – visit www.cadispa.org then select 'conference' and 'registration'.

■ For more information contact: Diane Coyle at diane.coyle@strath.ac.uk or Tel: +44 141 950 3062.