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## PRA training workshops: follow up issues from Uganda and Ethiopia

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### • Uganda

In late 1992, John Devavaram of SPEECH and I facilitated a PRA field-based training workshop in Uganda with the support of the Forest, Trees and People Programme (FTPP) and with the coordination of John Aluma of the Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR). This note summarises what was achieved after this workshop. The follow up workshop was attended by almost all the participants who had attended the first PRA workshop. The progress that had been made in six months was very encouraging. Almost all the participants have used PRA methods in their work for a wide range of applications.

There have been a number of training programmes conducted by NGOs such as ACCORD and FORUD. In addition a number of short orientation programmes have been organised by MISR for government ministers and senior bureaucrats. Some programmes involved training and orientation of Resistance Committees (RCs) at three and four levels. One of the districts has also organised a workshop for its officials. The Ministry of the Environment is keen to organise a workshop for senior level forestry officials at the district level. In short, the participants have tried to gain more experience as trainers and there are a number of new potential training opportunities in Forestry as well as the development sector in general.

On the research front, the team from Makerere University has tried out a number of participatory methods in their existing research programmes. They have also used these methods in the first stage of the research programmes funded by FTPP. They are aware of the problems faced and are trying to find

approaches to overcome them. They hope to include aspects of PRA in the students' work, and may also incorporate them into the curriculum.

One aspect of PRA which has proved difficult to imbibe is self-critical awareness, as this is related to the performance evaluation mechanisms in these organisations. Criticising oneself can be taken as a sign of weakness, but this is inhibiting growth in learning through analysis and reflection.

Sharing of experiences through attending one another's training programmes is also not happening to the extent necessary to develop a functional network, although there have been some exchanges where the existing budgetary provisions in the project allowed it. Sharing of material also needs to be streamlined - there is no defined responsibility or budgetary provision for photocopying or posting of these documents to different members in Uganda.

### Issues for future follow up and networking in Uganda

The participants discussed the future role of the network in the next three years and the support required if this role is to be achieved. As a result of this discussion, and including my own impressions, the following recommendations were made:

#### Organisation of workshops

- Organisation of a second national workshop for a second group of trainers made up of foresters (UNDP funds available), government district administrators, other academic institutions and NGOs. This could be facilitated by the

participants of the first training programme and would help to expand both the pool of trainers and the scope of PRA, and thus aid in broadening the existing network. It would also create a better environment for using participatory methods in the planning of district programmes. However the creation of local training materials and audio visual aids would have to precede the organisation of the training programme.

- Organisation of regional workshops in selected regions with a mixed group of officials from government departments, local politicians (RCs), NGOs, extension staff and other local institutions like churches and schools. These would help to integrate efforts and develop mixed teams at a regional level. It was felt that this should concentrate on the regions and districts (12) which have recently been decentralised. In the long run, this will assist with the setting-up of regional networks which might be more effective.
- Facilitate exchange visits within Uganda so that the trainers can gain knowledge of different regions and develop more intensive and qualitative experience. In addition, exchange visits could be arranged for key trainers to go further afield - to East Africa or India - to gain experience from other regions of the world.

### Production and dissemination of training materials

- Sponsor training of some members in editorial and documentation skills to enable production of good quality training material and research papers.
- Production of training materials and training manuals specific to Uganda, and the development of audio visual material for this purpose. A committee has been set up to accomplish this and will first work out the production of the manual based on the exercises done in the first workshop.
- Set up a Resource Centre at Makerere University with photocopier, computer and training equipment such as overhead

projector, slide projector and eventually video recording. This would become a resource centre for institutions organising training programmes.

- Serve as a dissemination centre for all FTTP and other publications to the institutional members.

### Encouraging wider use of PRA

- Help members and others to develop research proposals incorporating participatory methods for other donors and the FTTP.

All the suggestions made by the participants are interesting and merit attention. Some of them are important in the short run, while some could be taken up on a long term basis. However, some suggestions have higher financial implications than others, and thus would require external support. For some of them, finances could be mobilised from the existing resources of the institutions.

### • Ethiopia

A PRA workshop for participants from the Ministry of Natural Resources (national, regional and district levels), Almaye University, the Soil and Water Conservation Research Centre and FARM Africa (an NGO) was organised at Nazreth from the 21st to 29th May 1993. The workshop exposed the participants to PRA methods for involving communities in preparing a village resources plan.

However, since about half of the participants did not have the capacity to become trainers (they were very inexperienced and had been selected by virtue of their never having attended a training programme before), the objective of developing training capacity among existing trainers has not been achieved significantly.

Following the field-based training, the participants made suggestions for the follow up action needed by each organisation. It is very important in training workshops to leave sufficient time for the thorough development

of these action plans. The following suggestions were made.

### Ministry of natural resources

- Use seminars to inform Ministry bosses about what they had learnt, and the use of PRA in their activities.
- Incorporate PRA into their present work and train field workers and their extension staff in community forestry and soil and water conservation.
- Prepare development plans jointly with communities in future and seek finances for them.
- Ensure that the development plans prepared by the communities in the two field exercise villages, Shakla Fabrika and Olda Dama are followed up and implemented through an action programme. In addition they would also take a similar approach for development planning in one of the remote villages in a different province.

### Research organisations

- Organise training programmes in order to change the attitudes of experts.
- Review existing methodologies being tried out for participatory research in Ethiopia and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses through a research project.

### Almaye University

- Revise the project proposal submitted to FTTP incorporating the participatory methodologies learnt during the workshop.
- Organise a training programme for other researchers at the University.
- Integrate PRA into the research and training activities of the Farming Systems Research (FSR) Division in the University.
- Develop training material for teaching and other training activities and disseminate this material to organisations willing to use it.

- Organise similar training programmes for the officials of the Ministry of Agriculture.

### FARM Africa

- Use PRA for development planning in three new projects being initiated this year.
- Develop methods to enable farmers to conduct their own research.

### Short-term follow up

Action was also decided for the short-term. This included organising a follow up workshop in the next six months for those participants who have used PRA (after ascertaining their performance through a pre-workshop survey). It was also decided that the field exercises from the first training programme could be written up by a steering committee composed of participants. This would serve as a manual for future participants, and could be coordinated and published by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

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