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Tips for trainers: What is PRA? A participatory learning game

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This game is based on the 10 Myths of PRA written by Ian Scoones (see pages 17-20 in this issue of *PLA Notes*). Often trainees have a notion of what PRA is through reading, or through popular ideas portrayed in the literature. In this game participants are asked to read 10 statements about PRA, all of which are myths, and to decide whether they are true or false.

- **Objectives**

To break the ice and get people listening to each other.

To create a common understanding about what PRA is and is not.

- **Preparation**

Write each myth on a card. You will need as many sets of these cards as there are groups. Each group will need some way of designating a 'true' zone and a 'false' zone. For example, people can draw circles on the ground, or use large sheets of paper.

- **Time**

Allow 30 minutes for the group discussions, and another 30 for the feedback session.

- **Procedure**

1. Divide participants into at least two (preferably four or five) groups of 3 to 6 people.
2. Give each group a set of cards. Ask them to discuss the statements, and then divide the cards into 'true' and 'false' piles. If appropriate, groups can compete with

each other or against the clock to complete this task.

3. When the groups have piles of 'true' and 'false' statements, ask one group to list which cards they have in their 'true' pile. For each card, ask if any other group has the same card in their 'false' pile. In each case where groups have different opinions about a statement, ask them to argue their case until all participants are convinced the statement in question is false.
4. Discuss each statement in turn until all the common mistakes made when conducting PRA have been discussed. During the game participants should develop an understanding of good PRA practice and will gradually realise that all 10 of their statements are myths.

- **Comments**

This exercise is most suited for groups which have some knowledge, however limited and theoretical, of PRA. Interestingly, the 'experts' in the group often place many myths in the 'true' category. During the course of the discussion they come to realise they can also learn from the newcomers.

Source: Rachel Hinton, pers. comm