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# pla notes

participatory learning and action

## Popular communications



October 2000

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# pla notes

participatory learning and action

*PLA Notes* (Notes on Participatory Learning and Action), formerly known as *RRA Notes*, is published three times each year in February, June and October. Established in 1988 by the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Programme of the **International Institute for Environment and Development** (IIED), *PLA Notes* enables practitioners of participatory methodologies from around the world to share their field experiences, conceptual reflections and methodological innovations. The series is informal and seeks to publish frank accounts, address issues of practical and immediate value, encourage innovation and act as a 'voice from the field'.

We are grateful to the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency who support this Series. There is no copyright on the material and recipients are encouraged to use it freely for not-for-profit purposes only (but with full reference to the authors and *PLA Notes* series). We also would like to acknowledge support from SIDA, DFID and NCLB.

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## Participatory development

A growing awareness of the failures of conventional development approaches in meeting the needs of resource-poor people has led to the exploration of alternative methodologies for investigating resource management issues, and planning, implementing and evaluating development activities.

Participatory approaches, such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), offer a creative approach to information sharing, and a challenge to prevailing biases and preconceptions about rural people's knowledge. Advocates of participation argue that the production of knowledge and the generation of potential solutions should be developed with those whose livelihood strategies form the subject for research.

The methods used range from field-based visualisation to interviewing and group work. The common theme is the promotion of interactive learning, shared knowledge and flexible, yet structured analysis. These methods have proven valuable for understanding local perceptions of the functional value of resources, processes of agricultural intervention and social and institutional relations. Furthermore, participatory approaches can bring together different disciplines, such as agriculture, health and community development, to enable an integrated vision of livelihoods and well-being. Participatory approaches also offer opportunities for mobilising local people for joint action.

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is an umbrella term for a wide range of similar approaches and methodologies, including Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), Participatory Learning Methods (PALM), Participatory Action Research (PAR), Farming Systems Research (FSR), Méthod Active de Recherche et de Planification Participative (MARPP) and many others. The common theme to all these approaches is the *participation* of people in the processes of *learning* about their needs, capabilities and visions, and in the *action* required to address them. The refinement and application of participatory learning and action in research and development is an area of special emphasis within IIED's Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Programme. Contact [sustag@iied.org](mailto:sustag@iied.org) for further information.



## The resource centre for participatory learning and action at IIED

The Resource Centre at IIED is an information delivery service, providing practical information and support on participation in development.

The Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) collection includes materials on all major aspects of participatory approaches (PRA, PAR, MARP etc.) from around the world, with an emphasis on Africa, Asia and South America. It includes more than 2,000 documents and features material in more than 10 languages. The PLA collection is also available on-line on our website at <http://www.iied.org/resource/>, and on CD-Rom.

The major participatory collections are kept up-to-date through direct collaboration with partner organisations, such as the Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action (RCPLA) network. This initiative brings together 15 organisations from Africa, Asia, South America and Europe who are committed to information sharing and networking on participatory approaches (for further information, see the RCPLA pages in *PLA Notes*).

The Resource Centre offers document delivery services, consultancy services providing technical advice on all aspects of information management, and is open to visitors by appointment.

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## PRA at IDS

PRA and other participatory methodologies are also a focus for the Participation Group at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK. This group of researchers and practitioners are involved in sharing knowledge, in strengthening capacity to support quality participatory approaches and in deepening understanding of participatory methods and principles. It focuses on south-south sharing, exchange visits, information exchange, action research projects, writing and training. Services include a Participation Reading Room with a database detailing materials held, which is also accessible via a website at <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip>

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## Guidelines for authors

The principal aim of the *PLA Notes* series is to share current experiences, critical perspectives and methodological innovations among practitioners of participatory learning and action approaches to development.

The Editors would like to hear of recent experiences and current thinking around participation, and are seeking frank accounts of experiences in the field (or in workshops) looking at the practical outcomes of participation and what can be learned from these. Articles considering issues of power in the participatory process and impact of participation itself, are particularly welcomed.

The Editors particularly favour those articles which contain one, or all, of the following elements:

- an *innovative* angle to the concepts of participatory approaches or their application;
- *critical reflections* on the lessons learned from the author's experiences;
- an attempt to develop new methods, or innovative adaptations of existing ones;
- consideration of the processes involved in participatory approaches
- an assessment of the impacts of a participatory process on the livelihoods of the target community.
- potentials and limitations of scaling up and institutionalising participatory approaches

Furthermore, the Editors encourage articles to be **co-authored by all those involved in the research or development project**. This ensures that everyone's contribution to the development process is fully valued and acknowledged.

### STYLE

Articles should be legible, preferably typed, with clear copies of any drawings that are to be included. The use of short sentences and paragraphs and simple language is encouraged. The Editors reserve the right to edit and amend articles for publication in *PLA Notes*.

### LENGTH

Maximum: 2,500 words plus two full-page diagrams. We particularly encourage short articles reflecting experiences that are 'hot from the field'. If references are mentioned, please include details but they should be kept to a minimum. Where used, reference should only be made to completed and published materials that are accessible to *PLA Notes* readers.

### PHOTOGRAPHS

These should have captions and the name of the author clearly written on the back.

### DISK CONVERSIONS

If you are sending a disk, we use Word 6 for Windows, but can read most other word processing packages. Please provide an original 'hard' copy of the printed article. Articles may also be sent to the Editors by Email. Please submit articles to:

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The editors encourage articles to be co-authored by all those involved in the research or development project. This ensures that everyone's contribution to the development process is fully valued and acknowledged.

### BE VISUAL!

We welcome visual accounts of experiences with participatory approaches. Please send us posters, drawings or cartoons for inclusion in *PLA Notes*.

Also, please send details of any relevant publications, forthcoming training sessions, and networks, which may be listed in the *In Touch* section at the end of the journal.

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# Editorial

Welcome to *PLA Notes* 39! First, we would like to thank all the readers who have taken time to complete and return the 3rd Readership Survey. There has been a great response with many very interesting and innovative ideas about how to move *PLA Notes* forward and we look forward to sharing these ideas and thoughts with you all in the future. For those who have not yet been able to complete their questionnaire, there is still time – so please do complete and return your questionnaire to us. Your views and opinions on *PLA Notes* are invaluable. We will be reporting back the findings of the readership survey in a future edition of *PLA Notes*, so watch this space! Second, we would like to apologise for the delay in the arrival of this issue.

## Theme issue

The special theme for this issue is Popular Communications, drawing on a workshop held at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) – UK, in May earlier this year. This workshop drew together a wide range of international development and community practitioners who use innovative popular communications media in their work. The most important theme was, not that people use a variety of both new and traditional media to communicate, such as for example, art, drama, poetry, video, photography etc., but that each person already has the capacity to communicate in a creative and innovative way. Each person has their own '*well of inspiration*' and such capacity is developed further through access to alternative ideas around communication. An important issue is to examine in which context popular communications can be used to engage with local people and bring the views of those who are generally excluded to a broader arena for sharing and exchange (this is illustrated in many of the stories presented in this issue). As Maurice Leonhardt points out in his article, '*Using video for squatters' rights in Phnom Penh*', their use of video was more as a tool for advocacy, rather than as a method of empowering local communities per se, as the editing, script writing and filming was predominantly done by Maurice's organisation (this was also due to time constraints), rather than by the communities they were working with. However, this does illustrate how popular media can act as a powerful mechanism to bring policy makers and local people together. It also emphasises the potential for both community empowerment through popular communications and for future work in this area to be developed by and with local communities.

This issue is guest edited by Joanna Howard and Patta Scott-Villiers. Jo Howard is currently working as a research assistant with the Participation Group at the Institute of Development Studies. Previously she has worked in Central America for six years with Coda International. Her work involved supporting processes of community organisation, participation and popular communications in both English and Spanish-speaking media. Patta Scott-Villiers is a member of the Participation Group at the Institute of Development Studies working on understanding and sharing different ways people communicate. She is a trainer and facilitator in participatory approaches and for three years she has helped organise the IDS participation information activities, which include a website and a resource centre. Before joining IDS, she worked for 14 years in various NGOs in Africa and Asia, including running a small NGO in Kenya and Somalia which focused on supporting traditional methods of participation, planning and communication.

## In this issue

As usual, this issue opens with a suite of more general articles. In the first article, Gregory Ira introduces a simple, participatory tool to assess water security and equity in rural coastal watersheds at the household level. Next, Janis Alcorn discusses how mapping with communities can be used as catalytic communication tools if created and used strategically. This is followed by an article in which Gavin Jordan and Bhuban Shrestha discuss a participatory Geographic Information System (GIS) with community forestry user groups in Nepal and the importance of 'putting people before technology' in order to make GIS a truly participatory process. Continuing the GIS theme, Giacomo Rambaldi et al. present participatory 3-dimensional modelling and show how, when combined with GIS technology, this technique can be used for participatory monitoring and evaluation with communities. Finally, Peter Ejautene Okiira of the Uganda Participatory Development Network (UPD-Net), also a member of the Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action (RCPLA) Network, presents a review of UPD-Net's annual meeting, where the theme was 'Sustaining Participation – what are the challenges?'

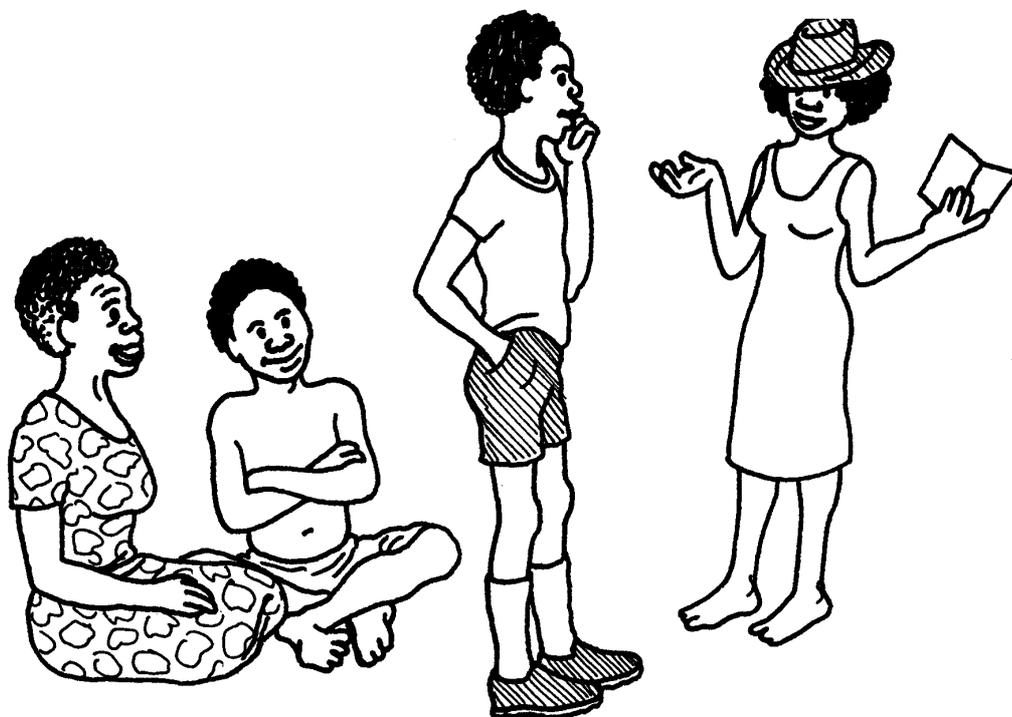
## Regular features

The *Tips for Trainers* section introduces an 'icebreaker' exercise when working in a bilingual context. This icebreaker has been used successfully in workshops held as part of the Common Property Resource Management in the Sahel project (IIED/SOS Sahel), where the main working languages are French and English. It aims to reduce inhibitions and increase confidence when working in a bi/multilingual environment.

Finally, the *In Touch* section at the back of the issue publicises new training courses, events, reports and other sources of information. The *RCPLA Pages* provide information and updates about the network partners as well as news from the recent Cairo workshop, held between 23rd- 30th September 2000.

## New features

As ever, we are always keen to hear ideas from our readers for new features in the *PLA Notes*. From the next issue onwards, we will be presenting a new information section, entitled *E-Participation*, which will specifically list information sources, websites, email discussion lists and other electronic products around participatory approaches to development. We would be interested to hear your views on this and any other features you might like to suggest (although we will also be referring to your suggestions from the Readership Survey). We look forward to hearing from you and particularly welcome any feedback you may have (as letters or emails) on the *PLA Notes* series. Happy Reading!



# 'Sharing the last drop'

## Household water security and equity in small coastal watersheds

1

Gregory C. Ira

### Introduction

For rural coastal residents in much of the Philippines and elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the image of a water-rich region is a mirage. There is a water crisis in Southeast Asia, one of the wettest regions of Asia, if not the world. It is not because of the occasional El Niño, but the result of the systemic degradation of water sources by growing numbers of increasingly water-hungry people. The scale of this water crisis in Southeast Asia is still unknown because most of the attention remains devoted to finding new water supplies from the few large basins in the region. Meanwhile, the majority of the population living in small coastal watersheds thirsts for cleaner and more accessible water.

In order to gain a better understanding of the local implications of household water security and equity in areas considered water-rich by national/international water indices, the Water Equity in the Lifescape and Landscape Study (WELLS) was developed. The study was designed by the author, supported by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and was implemented through the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) with local partners in the Philippines and Vietnam. The cornerstone of the project was the development of a simple, participatory tool to assess water security and equity in rural coastal watersheds at the household level, known as the Household Water Security Mapping Tool (HWSMT). The dual objectives of the study are to help local water user groups identify and address their water security conditions and to bring greater attention to household and micro-watershed level issues of water security and equity.

This paper details the rationale for the project, the steps in the use of the Tool and the initial lessons learned.

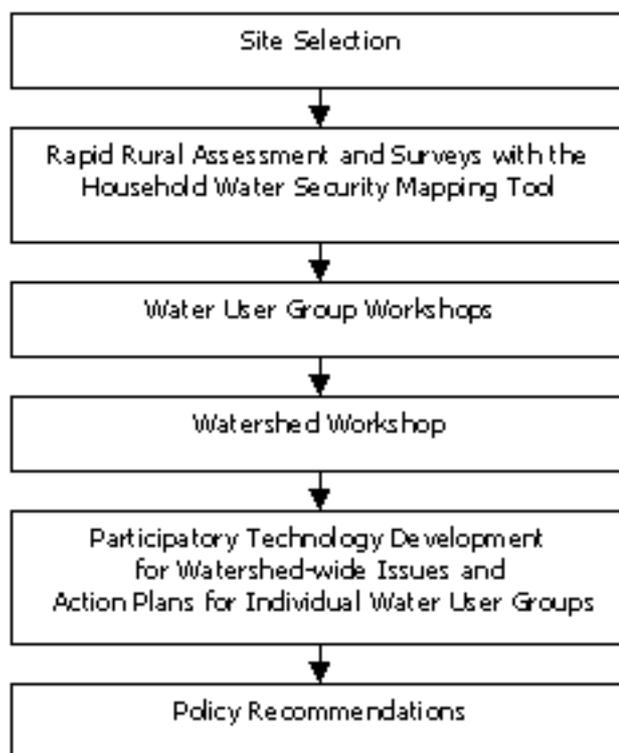
### Water equity in the lifescape and landscape study (WELLS)

In the far uplands of Sapu Masla, Philippines, residents spend an average of six hours per household per day collecting water. This daily ritual includes walking along a hazardous trail down to a spring and carrying heavy loads of water back up the trail to the households. In the same watershed, coastal residents drink from wells where water

is increasingly saline, discoloured and foul smelling. Many residents drink less than two litres per day, even in the hot summer months, while engaged in difficult physical work. All surface waters are potential sources of waterborne disease. Only a few kilometres away, a recent outbreak of cholera killed a number of residents.

The study called for short-term action research at two small coastal watersheds where local interests matched those of the project. Fortunately, two sites with pre-existing partnerships between the community and external support organisations for water resource management were identified. The first site, on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines, included relatively distinct coastal, lowland and upland areas. The second site, south of the mouth of the Mekong River, was deltaic in origin and therefore lacked the topographic diversity of the first site. After establishing partnership agreements, the study was integrated into the activities described in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Project Design



## Understanding household water security

The measurement of water availability has spawned a number of terms, such as 'shortage', 'scarcity' and 'stress', each with their own definitions. At the national level, these definitions allow broad comparisons between countries, but provide little useful detail for water resource management at the local level. At the household level, a more specific definition is proposed for water security. For the purpose of the WELLS project, household water security means *having sufficient access throughout the year to the minimum daily requirement of clean water to maintain a healthy life*. This definition has three main components that must be met on a year-round basis.

- **Quantity:** the volume of water consumed in the household for all uses. Previous studies suggest that the minimum volume of water consumed for all uses at the household for a healthy life is either 20 litres/person/day (households whose members bathe or do laundry at the source) or 40 litres/person/day (households that collect water for laundry and bathing)<sup>1</sup>.
- **Quality:** the biological and chemical nature of the water. The absence of equipment and skills for measuring even the most basic chemical and biological indicators in most rural communities required an alternative approach. The project team developed a relative measure of water quality: the users' perspective or 'perceived quality scale'. This approach emphasises informal indigenous classification of water and recognises three categories of water quality: 1) drinkable; 2) drinkable with obvious colour, taste or odour; and 3) known to regularly cause illness. It is important to note that quality is measured at the source, before any form of local treatment takes place, such as use of rock alum<sup>2</sup> or boiling.
- **Access:** the cost of water, measured by an examination of the time allocated for its collection<sup>3</sup>. The most common methods measure either distance or time to the source or sources. Time is generally preferred because it can capture additional constraints such as

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1 This does not mean, however, that households whose members bathe or do laundry at the source use less water. In fact, they probably use much more water and have a greater negative impact on water quality. Unfortunately, there is no practical way of measuring the amount of water used when bathing or rinsing laundry directly in the river. This distinction poses the greatest challenge to the tool.

2 Rock alum is a locally available substance commonly applied to the inside wall of large clay water containers prior to filling with water. The chemical (aluminum sulfate) increases the rate at which suspended particles clump together and fall out of suspension, thus 'clearing' the water. The process does not kill bacteria but may reduce their levels.

3 It is also a reflection of resource access. For example, an underground aquifer or a nearby spring on private land is of no value to a household that does not have the means or rights to access the resource.

terrain, collection and waiting. As with the other factors, establishing a minimum standard is somewhat arbitrary. Given that most rural households collect water some distance from the household two or more times a day, anything less than 15 minutes is likely to be uncommon. A minimum of 30 minutes per household per day was used as an initial minimum standard. Collection time is clearly related to household size.

## The household water security mapping tool

One of the reasons why household water security goes unnoticed is the lack of information at the household and micro-watershed level. Existing survey methods, such as municipal and provincial desk assessments of access and proximity to potable water, generate inaccurate, incomplete and locally irrelevant data. The author developed a simple, participatory assessment tool to generate a more holistic picture of household water security that can be understood and used locally. The household water security mapping tool (HWSMT) measures a number of factors affecting household water security.

- Number and types of sources.
- Quantity of water consumed per person per day.
- Quality of water sources.
- Accessibility (i.e. collection time).
- Gender roles associated with water collection.
- Water price (e.g. cash out costs).

The tool itself is a visual representation of the water path and can be easily understood and validated by the informant. A person familiar with local water use and units of measurement can successfully facilitate/administer the tool with as little as one day of training.

However, the household water security mapping tool is not a stand-alone method for natural resource management. It must be applied within the context of a longer community-based natural resource management effort. Therefore, the user of the tool should also have, or work with others who have, the following skills:

- an understanding of the factors affecting household water security (i.e. quality, quantity, access) and common minimum standards for each;
- an understanding of the units of measurement for each of the main indicators;
- basic community organising skills and familiarity with participatory research methods; and,
- familiarity with the volume of commonly used local containers and the ability to estimate water volume for uncommon container sizes.

## Steps

The entire household interview process usually takes 45 minutes, but can range from 30 minutes to over one hour. It involves three main stages.

- Stage 1:** developing a mutual understanding with the respondent about the purpose and process of the tool. This involves explaining or reviewing the rationale and background of the project, clarifying the focus of the discussion, explaining the uses of the information, determining the most suitable person(s) to interview, identifying a suitable place (and, if necessary, time) for the interview and answering any questions the respondent may have.
- Stage 2:** semi-structured dialogue between the interviewer and respondent. During this stage, the process focuses around three main themes: sources, paths and uses and is facilitated by a drawing, made by the interviewer, using direct inputs and validation by the respondent. The drawing (based on a simple template of a house) serves as a visual communication aid; a concrete and mutually understandable anchor to reduce ambiguities or confusion originating from oral communication alone (see Figure 2). This stage consumes the majority of the time and is the most complex aspect of the dialogue (see Boxes 1 to 3 for guidelines for the discussions). As mentioned above, the household water security mapping tool template consists of the outline of a house and labels for the three major areas: 1) sources, 2) uses, and 3) receptors. In addition, the template includes a table for background information (i.e. name, date, season, location in the watershed, etc.) and a summary of the data (i.e. quantity or litres/person/day; quality of best source; and access or minutes/household/day).

- Stage 3:** collection of additional background information, such as number of household members, current season, water treatment practices and 'cash-out costs' of water uses, such as water association fees or costs of running pumps.

The steps taken in stage 2 are listed in the following boxes in a suggested sequence that has been tested in the field and has been shown to produce the best results. No two interviews are the same and few if any follow these steps exactly as written. This sequence will help guide the dialogue, but flexibility and awareness are important in any tool of this nature. In summary, the interview will document, estimate and calculate various factors that affect household water security.

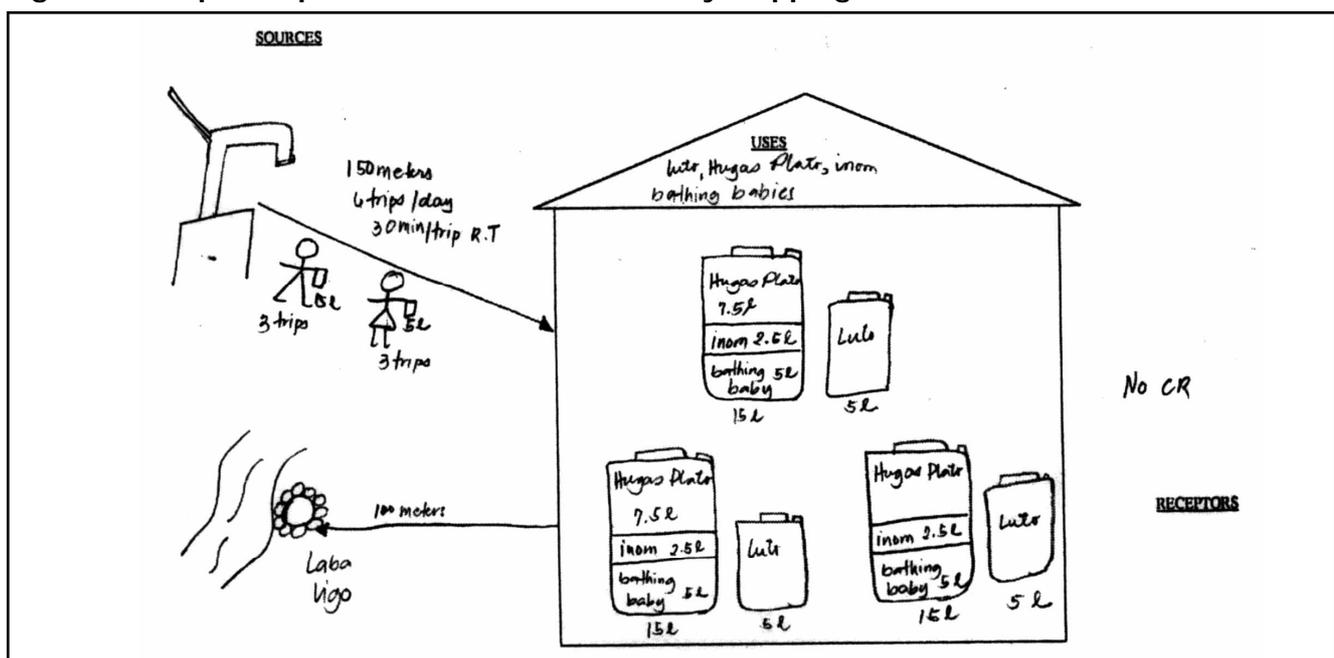
### Box 1 Sources

- Document sources.** Determine all the sources of water commonly used during the current season (local seasonality and other general background information should be determined at the community level during pre-survey Rapid Rural Appraisal activities, not described in this paper). Using simple symbols, draw these sources along the left margin of the map template (see Figure 2).
- Estimate quality at each source.** Water quality falls into one of three categories<sup>4</sup>, each with a corresponding symbol shown below:
  - a smiling face for drinkable water (score of 3)
  - a serious face for water with clear taste, odour or colour (score of 2)
  - a face with the tongue extended for water known to cause illness (score of 1)



<sup>4</sup> The quality of the source refers to pre-treatment quality.

**Figure 2 Sample output: household water security mapping tool**



## Box 2 Paths

3. *Assess general pattern of daily household water collection.* Before writing anything down on the map template, assess the general pattern of water collection in the household. This includes information on who collects water, the average number of trips per day and the duration of each trip, the size and types of containers used and the location of water use. This approach reduces the need for corrections that would commonly occur without it. For example, some trips that take place every other day may mistakenly be documented as daily trips or ignored completely. The location of water use (i.e. at the source or at the household) is important because it documents certain water uses that do not involve the transportation of water to the household.
4. *Document path.* Draw a line from the household to each source of water (Figure 2). The line is not intended to represent either distance or direction; it is simply an indication of the link between the household and the source. If water is brought to the household, place an arrow on the end of the line pointing to the household. If water is used at the source, place an arrow at the end of the line pointing to the source. If water is used at both the household and the source, place an arrow on each end of the line.
5. *Document collection.* Draw a stick figure of each person who collects water from this source, clearly portraying the gender and age (adult or child) of the individual collectors. Draw the number and relative sizes of containers carried by each collector. Immediately to the right of the stick figure, place a multiply sign (x), then the average number of trips that person makes per day. If a trip is made every other day, multiply by 0.5.
6. *Estimate one-way distances.* Estimate the one-way distance (in metres) to each source of water (when possible, validate this visually or by comparing travel time with the estimated distance). Below the line, write down the one-way distance.
7. *Estimate round-trip collection time.* Calculate the round trip collection time for each trip. This figure should include average waiting time if lines are common. Write this figure (in minutes) below the water path line<sup>5</sup>.
8. *Estimate quantity of water collected per trip.* Based on the size (i.e. volume) and number of containers carried by each individual per trip, estimate the total quantity (in litres) of water carried by each individual for each trip. If the volume is not indicated on the container, it can, with a little practice, be estimated to within a litre or two (depending on the size of the container).

## Box 3 Uses

9. *Assess the daily pattern of household water usage.* Discuss the various uses of water by the household residents inside and outside of the household. Introduce the main categories of water use and determine if others are needed. It is important to standardise the categories of water use. The categories adopted by the project include cooking (including food preparation); drinking; cleaning the house; bathing (infants); bathing (adults); laundry; sanitation (associated with urination and defecation); watering plants; livestock (drinking and cleaning); and other. At the same time, examine the methods of storing and treating water and disposal of grey water.
10. *Document water uses.* Write the main uses of water on the map template (in the space above the house).
11. *Estimate average daily allocation (consumption) per use.* This is the most difficult and time-consuming task of the household water security mapping tool, requiring attention to detail,

validation and triangulation. Start by calculating the total amount of water brought to the household each day (the number of trips times the quantity per trip). Determine if this amount of water is fully consumed on a daily basis.

- At this point, it is important to examine if water is stored in containers separate from those used in collection. If it is not, then begin by estimating the allocation of water consumed by each trip. To do this, draw a picture of the containers used in the first collection trip of the day. Ask how the water is allocated to different uses. Write the use inside each container drawn on the map. If a portion of a container is used for more than one use, then divide it with a line and indicate the separate uses, writing the estimated number of litres for each. For example, if two 20 litre containers are used and one of the containers is consumed for cooking and the other two split between drinking and washing dishes, then you would have cooking written in one container and drinking and washing dishes written in the second, with a line dividing the container in half. Be sure to draw the total volume of the container on the outside and the portion consumed per use next to the use itself on the inside. Repeat this process for the quantity of water collected for each trip.
- If water is transferred to a storage container, then determine the total volume of water in the storage container and the portions consumed for each use. In many cases, special containers will be used for specific uses. Water for laundry may be transferred to a large shallow basin; water for cooking will go to selected pots; water for bathing may go into a bucket; water for use in a toilet may go into a completely separate container and so on. These containers can also be used to calculate the total water consumed in a day for each use. If the portioned storage tank approach is used, draw the storage tank and estimate the portions. If the special use containers are used, then draw those containers. Always ask to see the containers used for storage or special uses<sup>6</sup>.
- It is not uncommon to go through either of these estimation methods and find that the sum of all allocations does not equal the total estimated amount of water collected. This could be the result of a number of different problems. First, make sure that all uses have been identified. Some of the ones commonly forgotten include water for sanitation purposes, water for plants and water for cleaning vegetables (cooking). Second, re-examine the allocations per use. As much as possible, speak directly to the specific users. If this does not address the discrepancy, re-examine the amounts of water collected and brought to the house. Another possible problem is the insufficient use of the drawing to establish clear communication between the interviewer and respondent. If the respondent does not fully understand what is being drawn, it is a good signal that the interviewer must put more effort into communicating the visual and verbal information.
- Display the total quantity of water collected on an average day on the map. This figure is then divided by the number of household occupants in order to arrive at the daily quantity of water consumed per person per household (litres/person/day).

<sup>5</sup> The assumption is that each collector travels the route in the same amount of time. If this is not the case, note individual times beside each collector instead of below the water path line. Collection times may vary as a result of waiting periods at certain times of the day and transportation methods of individual collectors (e.g. by foot vs. by horse). Due to terrain and the weight of full containers, travel time to and from the source is not always equal.

<sup>6</sup> Use your own volume estimates rather than a combination of your own and those of the user to reduce the amount of estimation error.

## Summarising and analysing the results

After completing each interview, the information derived from the tool is summarised and written into the table (see Table 1) on the top of the map template. For each household, the following information can be presented: quantity, quality, access, price, collector gender, uses, presence of sanitary toilet and presence of wastewater receptacle. This summary is helpful in identifying the range for each factor. For example, in one watershed, the range for quantity may be from 8-200 litres/person/day. Based on the indicators of water quality, quantity and access, each household's water security can be assessed using the information obtained from the tool. If any of the three critical indicators are not met (i.e. they are below some established standard) then the household is considered water insecure.

**Table 1**

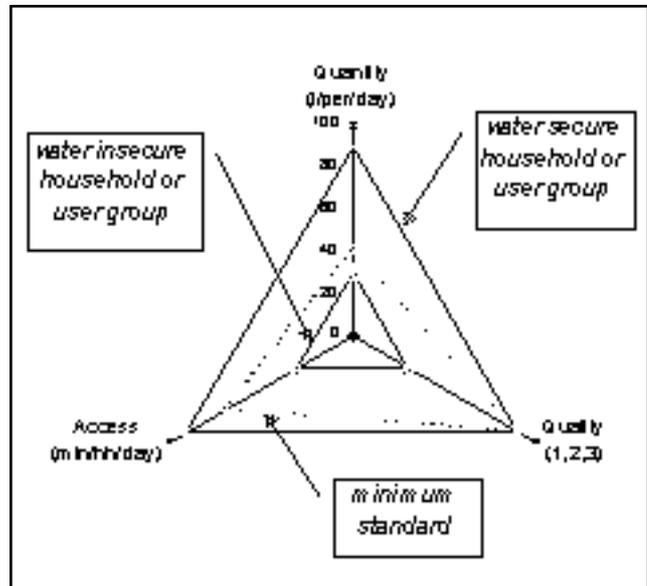
Location of household:		Respondent's name:	
Interviewer's name:		Date (season):	
Ecosystem or water user classification:			
Number of occupants:		Collection responsibility (male, female, both):	
Quantity (litres/person/day):		Quality of best source:	
Access time (minutes/household/day):		Price (cash out cost only):	

The information for each household can be presented on a simple radar graph. Each axis of the graph has an independent scale for each of the three or four factors measured: quantity, quality, access and, when possible, cost. The results for each factor are plotted on the appropriate axis. The plotted points are connected with a straight line to the next nearest axis. The results are either a triangle (quantity, quality and access) or a kite (quantity, quality, access and price) depending on the number of factors included. In addition, the minimum standards are also plotted on the graph. In this way, the household can be compared to the standards. Each axis is laid out so that the worst conditions are closest to the centre and the best conditions radiate outward. Therefore, the larger the triangle or kite, the better the water security (see Figure 3).

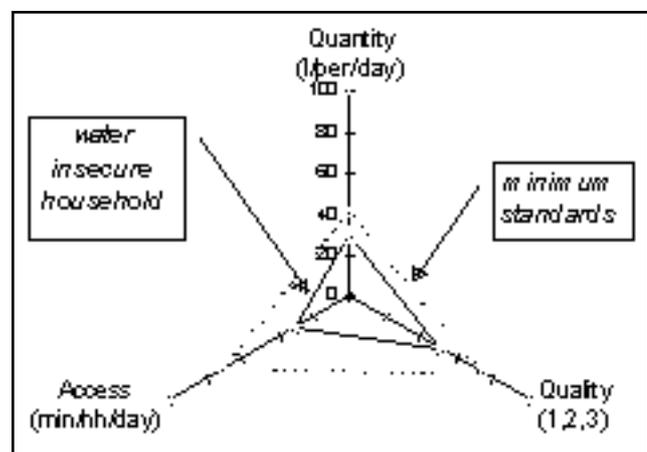
In order to examine the question of equity, it is necessary to compare the degree of water (in)security between households or water user groups (water user groups are determined based on a combination of location and water

use patterns). By plotting the results of two households or the average conditions of two water user groups on the same graph, an easy comparison can be made. This form of comparison, illustrated in Figure 4, is a powerful method of communicating priority needs to local development planners or decision makers.

**Figure 3. Household water security triangle**



**Figure 4. Comparing households or user groups**



## Strengths and limitations

### Strengths

- The tool emphasises the visualisation of information from and for the respondent.
- The tool is holistic, collecting information on the various factors affecting water security.
- The community easily understands and recognises the meaning of the outputs and results of the tool.
- The tool generates much needed household level information.

## Limitations

- The tool is of limited use when the sources of water are within the household. This is because collection is generally more frequent, erratic and involves small or no containers. Therefore, the precision of estimating quantity is reduced.
- The tool does not capture special or infrequent water usage. For example, if certain activities occur only once or twice a month, they are commonly not captured in the daily water picture.
- The tool does not capture differences in consumption within the household.
- A test for the reliability or precision of measurements (especially for quantity) by interviewers has not yet been developed.

## Lessons learned and policy recommendations

The Household Water Security Mapping Tool fills the need for a rapid, participatory and relatively precise assessment tool of household level water security. The tool examines three of the most critical factors affecting household water security: quality, quantity and access. By comparing the level of household water security among water user groups, inequities can be discovered. The information generated by the tool will empower households, will inform water resource developers and will guide the evaluation of new water supply projects. The discourse on global water scarcity continues without the benefit of systematically documented local information. The household water security mapping tool provides an opportunity to create a better picture of water scarcity. Instead of a painting made from broad strokes, this picture will be a mosaic of local realities.

The WELLS project has also facilitated local analysis of information, vision setting, action planning, skills development and linkages with external support groups. The greatest contribution has been providing each water user group with a better understanding of their own household water security profile. The profile is a simple snapshot of the actual conditions of the group in relation to international standards and to other water user groups in the watershed. This profile and comparison helped water user groups identify their limiting factors (quantity, quality, access or price) and develop a plan to address them accordingly. Short workshops were used to share information and establish consensus, identify priority concerns and establish a vision for the future. Financial and logistical support allowed selected community representatives to attend a field-based agroforestry-training programme to address one of the priority issues in the watershed. Additional follow-up technical assistance, provided by IIRR technical staff, ensured the application and extension of lessons learned. Finally, each water user

group developed a simple proposal to address a problem in their particular group and establish a watershed-wide co-ordinating mechanism. Project staff edit and endorse these action plans/proposals to local funding agencies.

The lessons learned from the project provide powerful support to a variety of policy recommendations. The completion of this linkage is a critical step in the overall learning agenda of the project. For further information on some of the key lessons and their corresponding policy recommendations, please contact the current project manager (see *Notes*) or the author.

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## Notes

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Janis B. Alcorn

## Introduction

Maps can work magic (see Box 1). They communicate information immediately. They convey a sense of authority. As a consequence, community-based maps empower grassroots efforts to hold government accountable. This mapping is not 'action research'; it is political action.

Over the past decade, I have watched and supported mapping practitioners' progress in different situations around the world. Whenever they come together, they

excitedly exchange ideas and share their problems. In this article, I share some practical insights with the hope that these will be valuable for isolated practitioners who want to try mapping but would like to learn from others' experiences.

Maps allow participation in arenas dominated by the maps of governments and corporations. Where democratic processes are weak, maps are good tools for challenging development projects that hurt communities. Using maps, community members can evaluate the impacts of an

**Figure 1 Section of Tagbanwa map from the Philippines showing the island of Coron with a chain of large lakes in the central mountains<sup>1</sup>**



### Legend

- Ancient Burial Grounds (off-limits to non-Tagbanwa)
- Caves with edible Swiftlet nests (protected area)
- Sacred Coral Reef and Ritual site of Shamans (*Panyaan*-home of mythical giant Octopus and *Kugtung* or Grouper)
- Communal Coconut groves
- Mangroves (protected)
- Fish Sanctuary (protected area)
- Village
- Burial Grounds (off-limits to non-Tagbanwa)
- Significant peaks
- Communal Bamboo groves
- Rattan area

### Note:

3 major coral reefs are included in the domain claim namely 1) *Talong Gesye* 2) *Talong Dakulo* and 3) *Natakakan*;

5 minor reefs are also included, these are: 1) *Talong Nga Taluan* 2) *Tristris* 3) *Talo ni Maning* 4) *Burundakan* and 5) *Coron Bahura*

<sup>1</sup> Symbols mark sacred reefs, fish sanctuaries, protected swift zones and protected mangroves under Tagbanwa customary law. The darkest line is the edge of their Ancestral Waters (Source: PAFID). The map convinced an international oil company to change its plans to put a pipeline through their reefs and led to inclusion of Ancestral Waters in the Indigenous Rights Act.

### Box 1 Why map?

Maps can:

- reveal areas where rights and responsibilities are cloudy;
- serve as evidence in courts of law;
- build consensus and mass support for policy reforms;
- renew local commitment to governing resources;
- promote community cohesion and self-actualisation;
- develop new links with administrative agencies;
- clarify rights over natural resources;
- promote cross-generational communication;
- renew cultural heritage; and,
- help control development.

imposed concession, for example, and weigh the costs and benefits of taking action to stop it. Armed with maps, they can demand accountability for the imposition of development (see Figure 1).

## What are the keys to mapping's magic?

The key guiding principle is that the mapping facilitator turns authority and decision-making over to the community so they can direct the map-making pencil's trace and the map's use.

Communities cannot afford to waste their energies on mapping that is not strategically planned. For the full power of maps to be realised, 'mappers' need to build a consensus-based goal and strategy for using the maps.

There are eight steps involved (see Box 2) and key questions that should be answered at each these stages.

At every step, the basic key questions are: WHO? HOW? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? and WHY? – the usual questions for any communication strategy. Because maps are political documents, the pre-eminent question is WHO? Who defines the map? Is it local consensus, decisions made by a local leader or an institution, or are decisions made by outsider NGOs, researchers, or government? Who takes the final decisions at each of the eight steps? While plans are important, everyone must remain flexible to adapt to new political circumstances and nurture spin-offs not envisioned at the start.

### Box 2 The eight steps in mapping

- Step 1. Initiation
- Step 2. Data needs identification
- Step 3. Training
- Step 4. Data collection
- Step 5. Data review
- Step 6. Final data compilation
- Step 7. Map production
- Step 8. Map use

## Step 1. Initiation and strategic planning

*What are the political costs and benefits of mapping and a map?* Step 8 – map use – must be considered at the earliest point. What purpose is imagined for the map or maps? What is needed to legitimise the map? Will bringing in a university, an NGO or a donor project give greater legitimacy? Which stakeholders must be involved directly or through consultation in planning the mapping? For example, if the purpose is to influence government, it might be useful to consult with the relevant government agencies early on about their technical assistance. In other situations, the government might make it illegal for communities to make their own maps, if they were informed early on and the strategic choice is to wait until the map is in hand to approach government.

*Who is the initiator, what is their primary goal, and how might that affect the project?* Communities should have the opportunity to evaluate a clear strategy for map use and a clear plan of map development, before agreeing to participate. This protects them from being bullied by an evolving process that they cannot control. If outsiders are initiating the mapping, it should be designed to give local communities the skills and knowledge to understand the process so they can control the decision-making at key steps. Local people know political pitfalls that outsiders can't know and they will have to suffer the consequences if the mapping stirs up opposition.

*Who will provide the technical assistance?* Is it best to allow outsiders/NGOs to carry out the process as a service? In cases where government has authorised NGOs to map claims in an established legal process, it may be best to allow mapping NGOs to perform this service. On the other hand, if what is needed is community organising for a prolonged effort to gain rights, or an intra-community dialogue about environmental issues, then one needs maximum involvement of community members.

*What is the social and political context for advocacy?* The mapping facilitators need to create links with other groups advocating for policy reform. Such groups have analysed the political openings and can provide information about those to local communities.

*How will use of the map be controlled?* New unimagined uses may arise later and even maps made with strong local guidance can end up being used without local knowledge or control – hence the need for prior consent from the community before use.

*How will the process be funded?* What entity will control the funds, how will it be held accountable, and how will it hold others accountable for completing their obligations to the project? What in-kind contributions will community members make?

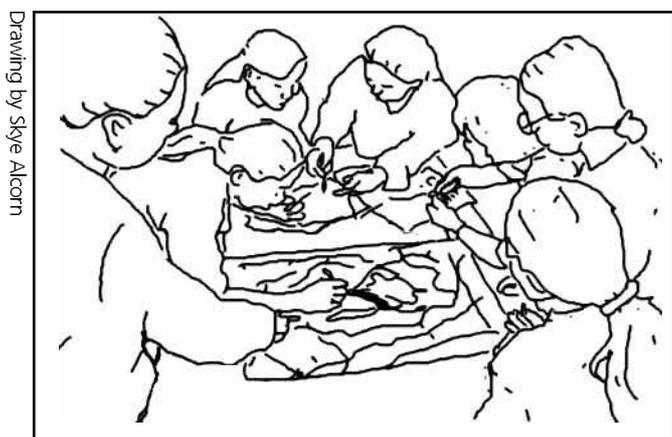
## Step 2. Data needs identification and choice of technologies

Different mapping technologies have been effective where people have used their cultural values in deciding what should be included on the map and in evaluating the consequences of trends identified by the map. The challenge is to select data sets that:

- reflect the values of the community; and,
- are relevant to the target audience.

Data needs and technology depend on the strategy and purpose of the mapping. The more complex and centralised the technology, the more likely that outsiders will control the process and the use of the product (Abbot et al. 1998). It is best to select the appropriate technology after deciding the goals and strategy and to be careful that enthusiasm for the technology does not alter the chosen strategy.

**Figure 2 Women mapping**



Regardless of the chosen technology, it is important to stimulate large group involvement (see Figure 2) so people can think together, share important knowledge and memories and debate relevant issues that, if left unresolved, will undermine the legitimacy of the map. Sketch mapping done with vines and leaves or with strings encourages group involvement.

Borders need to be confirmed through discussions with neighbouring communities or conflict may undermine the map's legitimacy. Families may want the borders of their private agricultural lands shown on the maps, but an alternative is to map only community borders and claim group rights.

Neighbouring communities may share access to forests, rivers or swamps for gathering, hunting and fishing. If so, maps with borders around larger regions that encompass a number of communities and their shared resources may be a good choice.

### Box 3 Options for mapping technologies

*Sketch maps* most often reflect the vision of local people. Many different sketch maps are usually drawn by community members during the initial stages in order to ensure consensus. Women, men, old and young — all need to participate. The maps communicate which types of data are viewed as important by community members. Where a mining company's map of an area would emphasise the locations of gold deposits and navigable rivers, the local map of the same area may show communities' sacred places, hunting zones, habitats of medicinal species, burial grounds, forests and agricultural lands, for example.

*Three-dimensional maps* are made by tracing lines from topographic sheets onto cardboard, cutting out the cardboard pieces and gluing them together. This type of map emphasises the landscape-level aspects of conflicting problems faced by a range of stakeholders.

*Global Positioning Systems (GPS) based computerised maps* fix positions according to global standards. Sketch mapping is used as an initial step. GPS units are used to mark locational points which are entered into a Geographic Information System (GIS) or other software programmes to produce professional-looking maps (cf. Eghenter 2000). GIS layers of plantation, mining and logging concessions overlain on lands of communities provide a powerful communication tool for advocacy. CorelDraw software is easier to use and can present information in less restricted ways than complex GIS software.

*Maps drawn by cartographers* capture community-based information in standard cartographic forms for production by government agencies or printing presses (cf Chapin & Threlkeld 2000). They rely on existing topographic maps to fix their positions.

### Step 3. Training

Training is essential so that data is comparable and legitimate. The community should be involved in designing the training because they can use the opportunity to determine whether the methods will meet their needs. The training itself should take at least two weeks to develop team trust.

Data collectors should use a set of key guiding questions to be sure that similar information is collected from each site. However, they need to feel confident that they can collect additional information that community members feel is important.

### Step 4. Data collection

If data collection is too fast, it can undermine the value of the map. It is important to ensure that the different perspectives and knowledge of different sectors of the community are included. Mappers must find ways to consider weaker user groups' points on equal footing with the communities' elites.

### Step 5. Data review

Data review provides an opportunity for mid-course corrections and promotes transparency of, and confidence

in, the process. It also enables the technicians to work with community members to verify the quality of the data. Midway sessions can include discussions about revising traditional rules, fines and enforcement mechanisms. Rituals and other culturally appropriate expressions of these values may be integrated into the data review step.

### Step 6. Final data compilation

How will final data compilation be managed? Who will review and approve the near-final product? It is important not to rush past this step.

### Step 7. Map production

Map production usually takes longer than anticipated. It will help if decisions about layout, acknowledgements and relevant text are made early on. These decisions should be reviewed near the end in light of community awareness raised during the process and in view of any political changes during the mapping process that might alter strategies and goals for using the map.

Whose names will be listed on the map and how should credit be given to donors and technical assistance? Political legitimacy is strengthened if the maps include the signatures of community members, as well as a place for officials to sign indicating their acknowledgement of the map.

What statement will be included on the map to prevent misuse of the map and to ensure that the community's intellectual property is respected? Many communities include a printed or rubber-stamped statement that the map can only be used with prior consent by some designated authority, such as the village headman, special committee or a trusted NGO. This statement will discourage people from using the map for purposes that were not anticipated by the community. Because users must seek approval prior to using the map, this gives the community an opportunity to prevent use of the map in situations where they do not want to be represented by that particular map. As community members quickly grasp when they start mapping, there are different maps for different purposes.

### Step 8. Map use

Strategies for using the map need to be reviewed whenever there is a new political opening. Who will use the map and who authorises its use? How will 'prior consent' be enforced? A clear process for revalidating the map and for authorising use of the map should be put in place.

Academic researchers can keep and use maps they helped to produce, as can donor agencies. When they use it, will the map still be accurate or will it misrepresent the community which has changed since the mapping?

## Cautionary note

New information flows are unleashed by mapping processes. This magic can be good and bad. NGOs, researchers and government agencies can provide critical information so that community-level decisions are informed choices. Yet the community-based mapping movement is prone to co-option by consultants and NGOs using the maps for their own ends, such as for project reports or proposals. This can have unforeseen political consequences to communities and short-circuit emerging civil society processes.

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## Recommended Reading

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# A participatory GIS for community forestry user groups in Nepal

## Putting people before the technology

3

Gavin Jordan and Bhuban Shrestha

### Introduction

There is an increasing interest in the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in a participatory context, with this development either causing alarm or being seen as providing a potentially valuable tool. The key reasons behind this have already been given in issue 33 of *PLA Notes* (Abbot *et al.*, 1998). This article explores some of the benefits and concerns of using GIS as a participatory tool, using a case study to provide real-life context. It is mainly concerned with key issues that have been identified during the work<sup>1</sup>.

### Background

Community Forestry is one form of 'social' forestry, geared towards the subsistence needs of local communities. Community forestry has more to do with people than trees and this has been reflected in an approach dominated by the social sciences. Participatory techniques have been the primary tool for obtaining community and resource information and participation, empowerment and facilitation of the fundamental objectives of the Forest User Group (FUG) – a village based forest management committee. Increasingly there has been a need for obtaining more quantitative information for forest management purposes. There are a number of reasons for this, such as examining community tenure rights and rights to resources, for conflict resolution purposes, to calculate sustainable yields of forest products and to improve the bargaining position of the FUG when meeting with the Forest Department.

These resource assessment information needs do not replace the need for social information, but extend the range of information that has to be collected, analysed and collated. Much of this information has a spatial component and GIS has been increasingly used for data management and analysis (see Box 1).

### A common problem with the use of GIS

District or National level studies often use GIS for mapping socio-economic indicators, commonly called 'indicators of development', although the people targeted for the

#### Box 1 What is GIS?

A GIS (Geographic Information System) is a tool for enabling mapping and spatial analysis to be performed for a variety of applications, including natural resource management and planning activities. It now refers almost exclusively to computer-based technologies that allow thematic layers of spatial information (such as forest distribution or population densities) to be overlaid, enabling relationships between the layers to be examined. GIS is viewed by some as an exciting development, as it allows spatial relationships for social, economic and natural resource issues, which were previously difficult to incorporate, to be examined. Others feel that GIS's quantitative, systematic, expert-centred and hi-tech approach make it inappropriate for much participatory and developmental work.

The key components of a GIS can be divided into a number of discrete technical processes.

- Data input
- Data management
- Data processing
- Analysis and modelling
- Data output

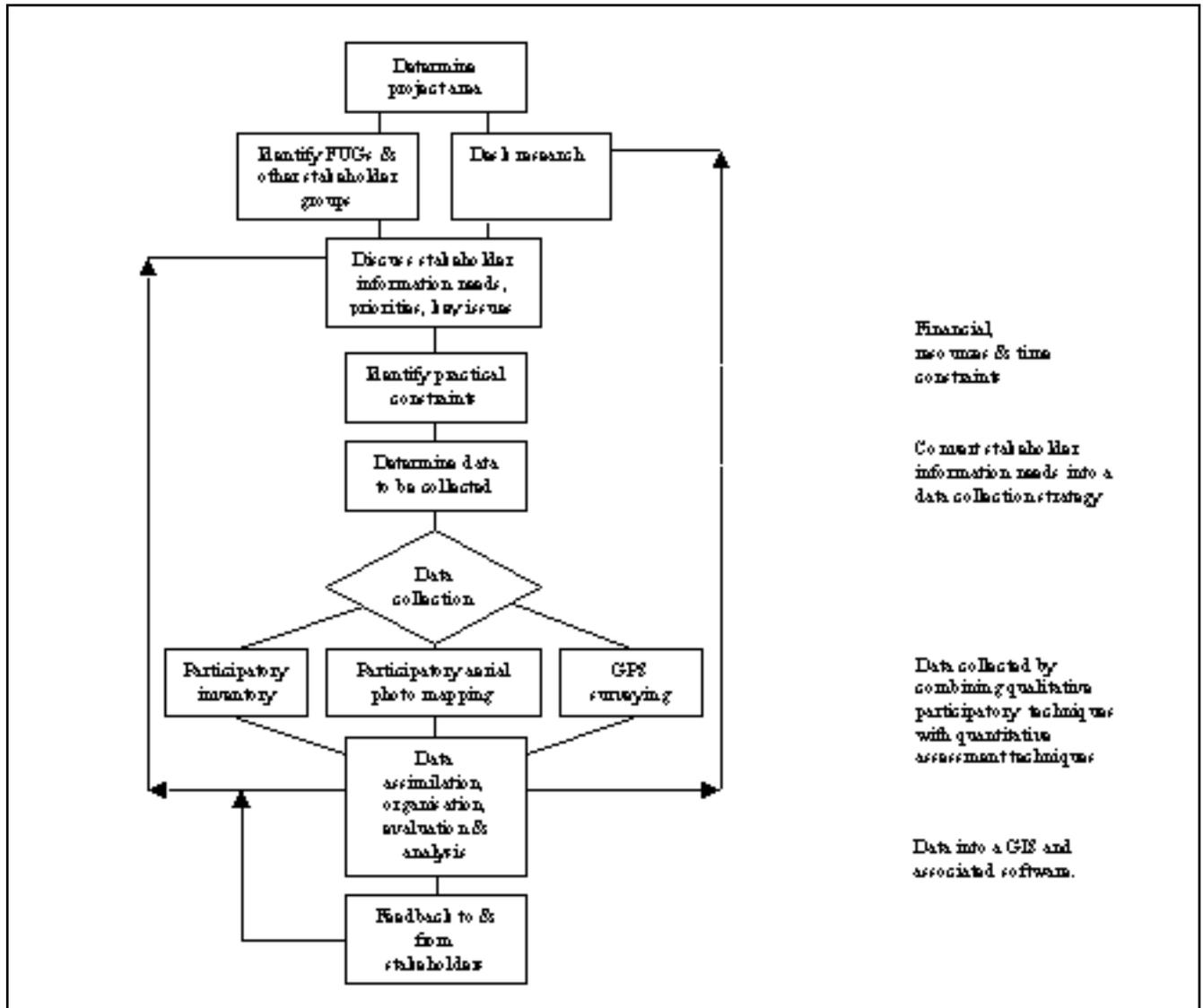
Increasingly, GIS is being viewed as more than just hardware and software and both data and people are now viewed as integral components of the GIS. This has to some extent addressed the concerns regarding GIS outlined above.

development process are entirely unaware of these indicators. Indicators are used for policy planning to identify both development priorities and geographic regions of activity. Therefore the 'developmental' role of GIS is often one of disempowerment of local people, involving a very low level of participation. It encourages the separation of the planning process from the people affected. There is little or no discussion with the FUGs and other villagers regarding what information would be useful to them and what information a GIS could provide. The GIS information is not *meant* for them. It is for the policy makers, planners and researchers.

The most charitable way of looking at this lack of participation associated with the traditional use of GIS in development work is to view GIS as enabling decision makers to correctly evaluate the required development input. But this is *putting the technology before the*

<sup>1</sup> Readers interested in specific methodology can find more detail in Jordan & Shrestha (1998) and Jordan (1998).

**Figure 1 A systematic methodology for a community forestry participatory GIS**



people. There is little or no consultative process with communities. Their needs have not been identified and the information gathered does not reflect their requirements. The old top-down development paradigm is being actively encouraged. An observation made nearly a decade ago for developmental work in sub-Saharan Africa still holds true today; most GIS applications are driven by a desire to demonstrate the technological capability rather than a desire for real life problem solving.

From the above, it can be seen that the main problem of using GIS for 'participatory' work is the way that the technology has been used. GIS has not been viewed as a tool in a participatory process, but as a technology in its own right, looking for an application. This illustrates one of the key principles of participatory GIS: to evaluate at an early stage what GIS *adds* to the participatory process.

## The study

Participatory GIS in the field of community forest management is still in its infancy and many issues still need identifying and evaluating<sup>2</sup>. Therefore a study was initiated in Nepal, with the aims of assessing the applicability and relevance of a Participatory GIS in this context. Initially, it was felt that a technical evaluation of GIS and the associated means of data collection were the most pressing needs. However, as the study progressed, it became apparent that a more process orientated approach was necessary. The focus shifted towards examining a systematic approach for participatory forest management. This combined the collection of quantitative, objective information and qualitative, subjective information in a way that was beneficial for the FUG.

<sup>2</sup> Abbot *et al.*, Participatory GIS: opportunity or oxymoron, pp27-34, *PLA Notes 33*, list some key outstanding questions for participatory GIS.

The methodology employed is outlined in Figure 1. It is interdisciplinary in its approach, combining the use of social science participatory techniques with geomatics technology and participatory assessment procedures. The methodology is at the interface between social approaches to community forestry and more traditional quantitative techniques to resource assessment. This is important owing to the increasingly demanding and diverse information needs for community forestry in Nepal. A greater emphasis has been placed on the means of collecting and disseminating information than the technical design of the GIS database, as it is believed that a Participatory GIS is fundamentally dependent on obtaining community needs, perceptions and ideas.

The above methodological framework was tested with five FUGs from October 1997 to May 1998. Owing to the participatory nature of the work, the exact methodology varied between FUGs, although the approach outlined above was followed. The initial participatory session with the FUG examined their specific requirements. These included:

- maps of the community forest for boundary dispute issues;
- inventory information to assist in planning sustained yield harvesting for commercial purposes;
- the sustained yield of fodder (grass, leaves and shrubs for stall-fed livestock);
- when they could start removing fuelwood; and,
- the general condition of their forest.

The information requirements were usually a combination of basic spatial information and management information; FUGs asked how best to manage their resource. This is where a combination of quantitative and qualitative information is essential. It is impossible to offer useful management advice without understanding the FUGs' requirements and usage patterns. Once the information needs of the FUG were established, the data collection process was developed. This was based around a participatory forest resource assessment. The resource assessment procedure contained one or more of the following elements: a participatory photo mapping session, a participatory inventory (always conducted) and a Global Positioning Systems (GPS)<sup>3</sup> survey of internal and external boundaries. Of these methods, perhaps the least known is participatory photo-mapping. This is similar in philosophy to Participatory Resource Mapping (PRM), but uses a large scale aerial photograph as a participatory tool. This has the participatory advantages of PRM, but greatly increases the spatial accuracy of information obtained.

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<sup>3</sup> GPS involves using a handheld receiver for surveying purposes. The receiver determines its exact position by obtaining positional information from a network of satellites. This allows rapid, accurate and relatively low cost surveying to be performed. The receivers range in price from \$150 – 4000.

Once the information was gathered, it was organised using a GIS and other basic software. Descriptive information obtained from the participatory research, such as indigenous management, FUG requirements and problems, was recorded. Inventory information was entered into a database and the spatial information was entered into a GIS (IDRISI, a low cost GIS with minimal hardware requirements). For a given FUG the GIS has:

- a geo-referenced boundary of the community forest, with the area of the forest (something that is in itself often unavailable for community forests);
- internal community designated boundaries;
- associated basic information, such as key species;
- the sustained yield;
- recommended management practices;
- community uses; and,
- the importance of spatial areas of the resource for the community.

For the FUGs, images and management information can be used to form the basis of a visual report/management plan which the FUG committee can use for its forest management. Initial work indicates that FUGs regard the maps as a tool that can help them in their negotiations with the Forestry Department. The FUGs asked to have the inventory information converted into basic management information, which allows them to participate in discussions with the forest ranger and the District Forest Officer (DFO).

This feedback is of critical importance: a Participatory GIS is there for its users, the participants. Some FUGs have been very satisfied with its role, but the evaluation process is not yet complete. It should be noted that although the initial evaluation was based on the ability to produce and organise data for FUG use, this is only one benefit. The participatory work involved in community consultation, obtaining resource information and the feedback meetings gave the FUG a sense of ownership and involvement with the process. This acted as an agent of empowerment, raising community expectations of what the FUG and individuals could achieve. These 'social' processes are felt to be of great importance and should not be ignored by concentrating solely on the technical performance of the Participatory GIS.

### Participatory GIS as a process

Whilst a Participatory GIS can produce information that is useful for the FUG, it can be viewed as extractive in nature, rather than achieving the PRA goal of utilising local peoples' analytical capabilities as well as their knowledge base (Chambers, 1994). This may seem academic, but it is important to note that any technology which requires data to be taken away for analysis rather than encouraging people to undertake their own investigations and analysis limits participation to some extent. This ties in with the consideration of whether GIS

is appropriate technology for participatory development work, where access to GIS is severely limited. Does the use of GIS encourage an alienation between participants and their information? Does it remove them from much of the decision-making process? If GIS is viewed as software and hardware, this could be a valid interpretation. But it is felt that a Participatory GIS should be a *process*; it starts with the public participation procedure and intrinsically involves feedback to, and from, the FUG. Decision-making should not be made centrally; the Participatory GIS should be a decision support tool for the FUG, providing information they can use for their management decisions. Although the software and decision analysis processes are outside the sphere of access of the FUGs, with associated problems (Harris *et al.*, 1995), it can be argued that the decision making process can be brought back to the FUG. This is a central issue in making a GIS genuinely people orientated.

### Representing village level reality

There can be a loss of detail when entering descriptive information obtained by participatory methods into a GIS. Qualitative information is not easily entered into a GIS and the rich social, economic and environmental fabric of resource management at a village level is impossible to replicate. A people-orientated GIS must have a capability for storing some of this descriptive information. This may not just be as textual and diagrammatic information; multimedia offers a variety of interesting ways to represent this more realistically. But it is important to realise that all the information will still not be obtained. What is necessary is to involve local people and incorporate their knowledge and decision making into the Participatory GIS. The task is not to capture and replicate all the village information, but to organise and present pertinent information that was not previously available, using the technological capability of GIS, to assist the FUG in their decision making.

### The need for participation

It is felt that a fundamental requirement for the use of Participatory GIS is having the emphasis on participation. This has been mentioned in the introduction, but this work illustrated the importance of this. GIS is a useful tool for enabling the participation and empowerment of FUGs, through providing them with increased information for decision making, but only if it is geared to their needs. The technical performance of the GIS, spatial accuracy and quality of output are all secondary to the need for a participatory approach. This can easily be forgotten, particularly as this is a reversal of the traditional GIS priorities.

### Conclusions

The use of GIS enhanced the participatory process in this work. It allowed quantitative and qualitative information to be combined, to provide resource management information that was both relevant to the communities' needs and detailed enough to determine sustainable yields. Whether a participatory GIS is going to benefit the participatory process needs to be examined at an early stage.

GIS has a somewhat justified poor reputation as a tool used in participatory development. A classic use of GIS is to map some arbitrary socio-economic indicator obtained from unreliable census information and use this to plan intervention strategies. But this is due to the misuse of GIS, not the tool itself. All the discussion points converge with the need to view a Participatory GIS as a systems-based process. The focus needs to be on participation. Major advantages and disadvantages of Participatory GIS are given in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 Participatory GIS: advantages and disadvantages**

Advantages	Disadvantages
If it is viewed as a participatory process, it can empower the FUG by involving them in the decision-making process and raise their expectations of information availability for them	But, if the participatory process is not well constructed, it can distance the FUG from the decision-making process
It can be used to effectively combine quantitative and qualitative approaches to community forestry and rural development in general	There is a potential to encourage the extractive collection of data
Maps, resource management information and other spatial data can be given to an FUG to aid with their decision making and negotiations without the need for them to have access to a GIS	There is an increased potential of the information being misused – if it is held centrally it could be used for unintended cadastral purposes for example
Information can be easily collated, analysed and returned to stakeholders	Can disempower disadvantaged groups, by not involving them in the participatory processes, effectively excluding them from the 'mapping' process
The appropriate level of information can be returned to stakeholders	Requires technology, knowledge of the technology, and encourages a centralised approach

As with any good participatory methodology, the focus has to be on the people, the participants. This has been the key problem with using GIS, as the focus has usually been on the technology. The following five points need to be concentrated on when developing a participatory GIS.

- Evaluate why GIS should be used, and what the use of GIS adds to the participatory process. If there is no defined need for it, don't use it!
- The participatory process (including the collection and dissemination of information) is more important than the 'technical' GIS issues. A good participatory framework and practices are fundamental.
- Concentrate on having the decision-making processes within the community. If information is taken away and put into the GIS, outputs should be used to enable the FUG (or other stakeholders) in *their* decision making.
- Consider who owns the information, how it is going to be stored, who has access, can it be used for purposes the participants may not want?
- Is there the infrastructure and institutional support to obtain participatory information, input it into a GIS, analyse it and return it to the participants in a way they can use it?

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# Adding the fourth dimension to Participatory 3-D Modelling

4

Giacomo Rambaldi, Marlynn Mendoza and  
Fernando Ramirez

## Introduction

This article focuses on Participatory 3-D Modelling (P3-DM), a tool which merges Geographic Information System (GIS)-generated data and peoples' knowledge to produce a stand-alone relief model. The model provides stakeholders with an efficient, user-friendly and relatively accurate spatial research, planning and management tool, the information from which can be extracted and further elaborated by the GIS. Regular updating of the model allows for monitoring change and for integrating the fourth dimension, time, into the system. Therefore, by combining 3-D models with GIS, it is possible to implement (participatory) monitoring and evaluation over large areas.

The 3-D modelling process and its output (the scaled relief model) are the foundations upon which participatory GIS can release its full potential.

## Background

In recent years there has been a strong drive towards integrating Geographic Information Systems (GIS) into participatory planning, particularly to deal with spatial information gathering and decision-making. A strong debate has sprung out of the concern that the nature of and access to GIS simultaneously marginalises or empowers different groups in society with opposing interests (Poiker T. and Sheppard E., 1995). After much debate and several workshops, what has formally emerged is:

- the need to define 'best practice', allowing for true participation in generating accurate spatial information;
- the importance of determining the 'added value' of using GIS and what the nature of participation should be;
- the need to place emphasis on detailed monitoring and evaluation of processes, methods, accuracy and outcomes;
- the fact that the use of GIS means that accuracy issues become important, which has profound implications for the classic spatial participatory tools such as participatory sketch mapping (Jordan G., 1999).

## Context

In line with the 1992 Earth Summit, the European Union and the Government of the Philippines<sup>1</sup>, initiated and co-financed the National Integrated Protected Areas Programme (NIPAP). This is a five-year (1995-2000) intervention aimed at establishing eight<sup>2</sup> protected areas within the framework of the Philippine protected area system. The system strongly supports the participation of local communities in planning and implementing policies and actions to conserve biodiversity. The challenge faced by the Programme has been how to give due weight to the interests of local communities in delineating protected area boundaries, identifying resource-use zones and formulating policies on protected area management.

## Visualising information

NIPAP started participatory research in 1996. Protected area dependent communities were introduced to participatory approaches in data collation, analysis and interpretation. Spatial methods, such as participatory resource mapping, were readily adopted, yet with reservations about 'translating' sketch maps into more precise, useable information. Experience has subsequently suggested that formal institutions tend to pay little attention to sketch maps.

In 1997, the Programme developed a method, called *Two-Stage Resource Mapping*. In this method, local stakeholders produced sketch maps which were transferred to topographical maps. Then, after community validation, the data was transferred to the GIS. Plotted data was then returned to the community for further validation and consultation on zoning within the protected area. While the method integrated people's knowledge with additional resource management information and returned the output to the communities, it was observed that the basic input – the participatory resource maps – was spatially confined to the social,

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1 Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

2 Mt. Guiting-Guiting Natural Park (Romblon), Mt. Isarog National Park (Camarines Sur), Mt. Malindang National Park (Misamis Occidental), Mt. Pulag National Park (Benguet, Ifugao & Nueva Vizcaya), (Palawan), Mts. Iglit-Baco National Park (Occidental and Oriental Mindoro), El Nido-Taytay Managed Resources Protected Area; Coron Island; Malampaya Sound Protected Land and Seascape, Taytay (Palawan).

cultural and economic domains of those who had produced them. Thus, in the case of protected areas and their buffer zones, covering hundreds of square kilometres and a number of different administrative units, the production of a sufficient number of community-specific sketch maps became unrealistic in both practical and financial terms. The Programme also acknowledges that the analysis was done far from the field. Communities were presented, after several months, with GIS outputs for their comments, rather than being provided with a tool enabling them to analyse the protected area locally from the onset. Committed to involving protected area-dependent communities in the planning process, the Programme was faced with the challenge of how to provide *all* stakeholders the opportunity to portray their domain as they knew it through an accessible medium.

## Making information tangible through participatory 3-D models

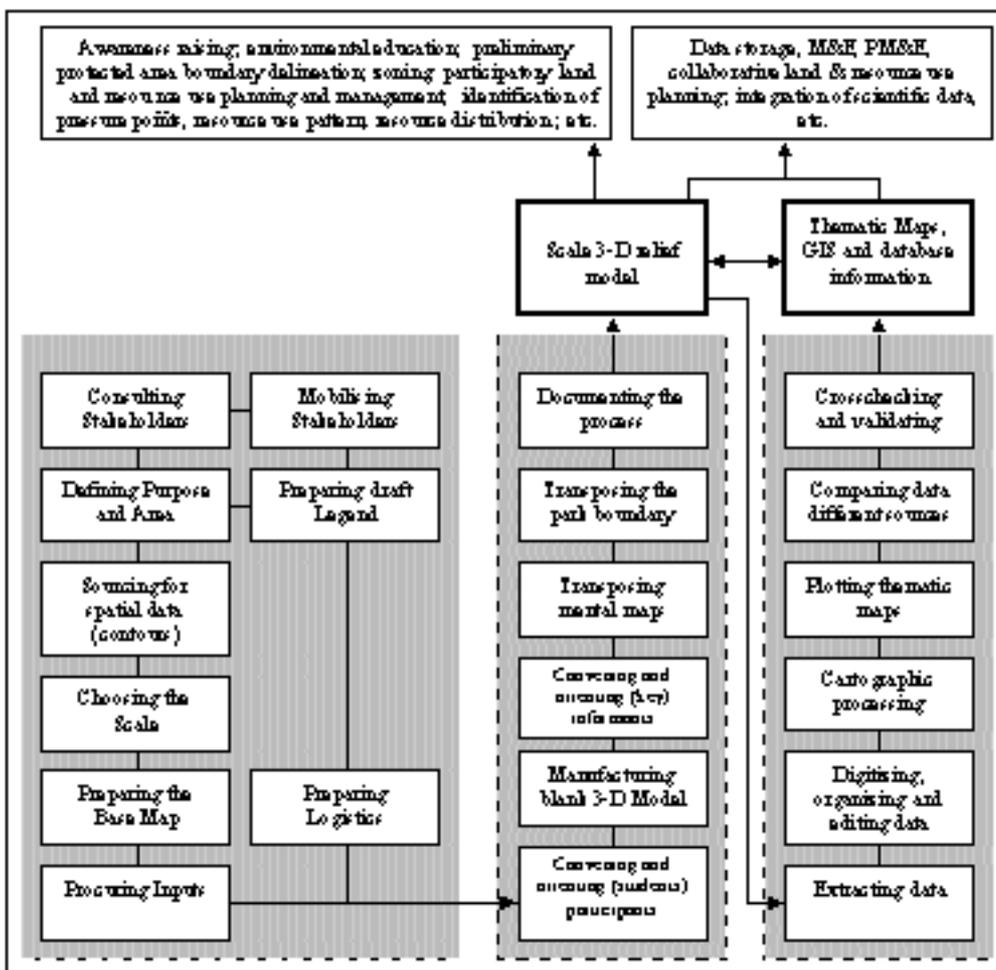
A solution was found through the collation and plotting of data on scale relief models through a process as outlined in Figure 1. The methodology is based on the integration of participatory spatial research tools and

scaled spatial information (contour lines) provided through a GIS. Stakeholders are consulted on their interest in the construction of a locally based 3-D model for planning, management and monitoring purposes. Then, the GIS produces a contour map at the desired scale (e.g. 1:10,000) including the protected area, buffer zones and other features of economic and ecological relevance. Materials for the model are provided and the community is mobilised for the phase where research, analysis and diagnosis are done sequentially. The first step consists of making the blank relief model. What follows represents the most important part of 3-D modelling and is based on the contribution of key informants and representatives from all stakeholder groups, who are involved in a voluntary capacity.

Women's participation is encouraged to accommodate gender-related knowledge and perceptions. A legend is prepared for the model and participants are briefed on the process of transferring their knowledge ('*mental maps*') to the blank model.

They are given pushpins, yarns and small labels, and asked to identify, locate and name in sequential order water

**Figure 1 The participatory 3-D Modelling process**



**Figure 2 Capitalising on women's perspectives**



courses, roads, mountain peaks, islets, trails, social and cultural features and other landmarks used to orient themselves when moving around their domains. This allows the participants to get a progressively deeper grasp of their whereabouts vis-à-vis the relief model.

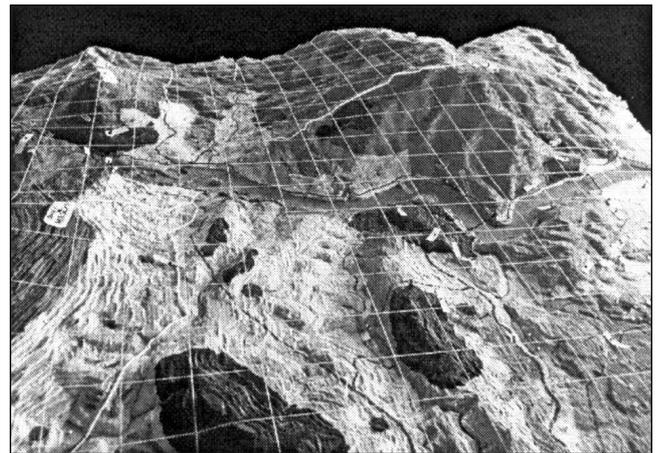
Participants are then invited to delineate, using coloured yarns, vegetation types, land uses, and other features (e.g. sacred areas, burial grounds, etc.) that they consider to be relevant.

The initial contouring of areas, by the use of yarns and pushpins instead of direct painting, allows participants to discuss the outlining, modify and mutually agree on single items of data. Once consensus has been reached, coloured paint is applied, appropriately coded. The process generates great momentum and animated discussions.

The process facilitates concurrent participation of men and women (see Figure 2), people from different neighbourhoods, social, educational, cultural and economic backgrounds. It allows for *on-the-spot* validation of the displayed information.

At this stage the relief model contains spatially defined detailed information on land use and land cover, settlements, communications, social infrastructure, sacred places and many other features. The output is self-contained and can be used as it stands for the desired analysis. Nonetheless, within the context of the Programme discussions centred on use of and access to resources located within a protected area could be initiated only after visualising the protected area's boundary. Then, GIS generated information is bought back into the process. Based on the outline of the source map, a geo-referenced scaled grid is placed on the top of the relief (see Figure 3). At the

**Figure 3 The geo-referenced grid is in place**



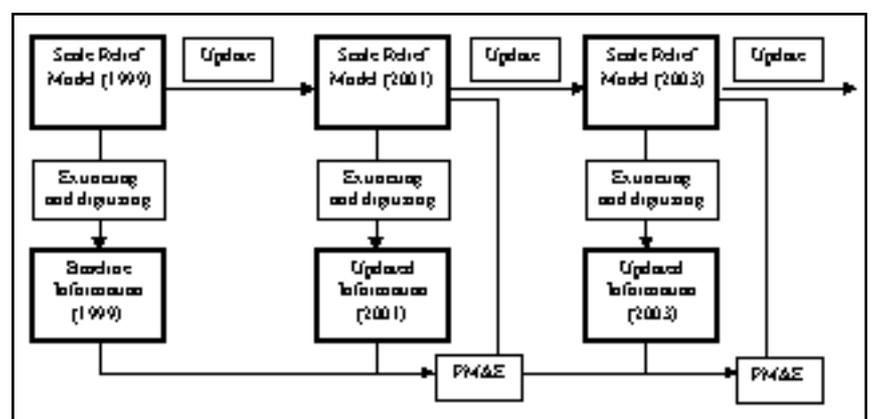
end of the exercise, the outline of the protected area boundary is visible to everybody. The relief model is now ready for being used for any type of discussion on resource use, distribution and access, for participatory problem analysis and for planning. However, the reader should never consider that a P3-D model is ever complete. Like any dynamic system, changes are constant and the model (like a GIS) can accommodate regular updating. Unfortunately a relief model cannot memorise past scenarios. This is the context where GIS 'adds value' and becomes a vital ingredient for Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E).

### Bringing-in the fourth dimension

Updated at regular two to three year intervals, a 3-D model allows for actual Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) as shown in Figure 4. This is based on the assumption that data contained in the model are updated and periodically extracted, digitised and plotted in the form of thematic maps.

In doing participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E), communities usually compare sketch maps, transect diagrams or other conventional spatial tools, produced at different times. However, this is weakened by the outputs

**Figure 4 How to combine P3-DM and GIS to implement PM&E**



not being geo-referenced and properly coded. 3-D modelling overcomes this weakness, because the basis – the relief model – is constant and the coding is clearly defined in the legend and embedded in the model.

### Linking people's knowledge to the Geographic Information System

In order to use the 3-D model for PM&E, the information has to be extracted and stored. In practice, whatever is displayed on the model is transferred to transparent, grid-referenced plastic sheets. Attributes (non-graphic information such as descriptions of land use etc.) are consigned to a legend. Plastic sheets and accompanying notes are handed over to the GIS, which digitises, stores and edits the data. Administrative boundaries are integrated and attributes are assigned to points, lines and polygons.

Experience has shown that 'pooled people's knowledge' merged with traditional spatial information (contours) is not only accurate but more up to date than that maintained in official circles (see Box 1). The physical outputs of the process are therefore two: the relief model and the GIS-generated maps. Both are permanently displayed within the proprietor community.

#### Box 1 Whose knowledge counts?

During P3-D modelling exercises, participants corrected information already mapped (e.g. 'these roads do not exist anymore', 'there is a road missing here' etc.). Indigenous people rectified the names of important landmarks appearing on official maps. People's knowledge proved to be more accurate and diversified when comparing land use and land cover derived from P3-D models with satellite interpreted imagery. For example:

- In the Cordillera (Luzon) large areas classified as *grassland* by JAFT/NAMRIA (1994), were portrayed as *vegetable gardens* and *rice fields*. Field verification confirmed the people's view.
- Participants in Rizal (Luzon) pointed out that an entire hill portrayed on the source map no longer existed due to rampant quarry activities. The model now reflects the real situation.

All models contain information not detectable through satellite imagery or aerial photography. This relates to all socio-economic and cultural features.

### The use of P3-D Models in protected area planning and management

As shown in Table 1, eight relief models have been constructed in the framework of the Programme. Five are confined to inland ecosystems, while those of the El Nido, Malampaya Sound and Mount Guiting-guiting include coastal and marine areas.

Protected areas listed in the table are distributed throughout the Philippines. In the construction of the 3-D models, remarkable differences have been noticed in terms of participation among different sites. Upland, indigenous people proved to be the most committed and knowledgeable in terms of natural resources, names of locations and distribution of traditional use zones. Farmers know the territory at walking distance from their farm, while small-scale fisherfolk would be conversant with coastal and marine areas stretching over tens of kilometres of coastline. Men would be conversant with fishing and hunting grounds, while women with the location of social infrastructure, households and farmland. Except for a few cases of dominant informants, no conflicts emerged between different groups.

Women's participation has been variable (see Table 1), depending mainly on local cultural norms, geographical coverage and location of the Protected Area. In Mount Pulag for example, where we registered the lowest level of female participation, society is typically male-dominated, families are large and women are busy with household chores and their vegetable gardens. To participate in exercises conducted over vast areas such as Mt. Malindang, El Nido and Malampaya Sound frequently requires that participants travel over long distances and are absent from home for some days, which a mother of young children can hardly afford. Urban centres located close to Protected Areas (Mt. Guiting-guiting and Mt. Isarog National Park), produced higher percentages of female participants, probably due to the greater freedom enjoyed by urban women.

Once completed, the models (and the GIS-generated maps) have been entrusted to the Protected Area Management Boards (care of one municipality) or to the concerned Protected Area Offices. All are used for the following:

- involving communities in developing management, zoning and resource use plans, and in geo-referencing their priorities, aspirations, concerns and needs;
- overall protected area planning, management and monitoring;
- conducting preliminary consultations on boundary delineation;
- monitoring the dynamics of settlements, infrastructures and access points vis-à-vis the protected areas;

- substantiating public hearings and planning workshops;
- introducing visitors to the area;
- teaching local geography and enhancing the interest of students and residents in the conservation and/or restoration of natural resources; and,
- identifying the distribution of selected species within the protected areas and their buffer zones.

### Box 2 A call for caution

P3-D models facilitate the selective pin-pointing of resources, households and other features. This feature can have positive and negative effects. Because of their accuracy, P3-D Models, alone or combined with GIS, turn local knowledge into public knowledge and conceivably out of local control. This can be used by outsiders to locate resources and development needs, or merely, to extract more resources, or to increase control from the outside. (J. Abbot *et al.* 1999).

Planners should be aware of these realities and be careful in applying this process. Thus, plotting endangered species, hardwoods, and other resources in demand on the black market, should be done with caution and invariably behind closed doors in the course of focus groups discussions. This sensitive information should be removed from the model before displaying it to the public.

It follows that maps produced on the basis of "pooled community knowledge" should be filtered in the interest of the community, by the people and with the people to fit a specific purpose and a selected audience.

## Lessons learned

Relief models are excellent visual aids capturing the ruggedness and details of the territory. Compared to data appearing on a planimetric map (e.g. contour lines), a relief model facilitates interpretation and understanding.

P3-D Models provide local stakeholders and official policy makers with a powerful medium for negotiation, easing communication and language barriers. Especially when dealing with relatively extensive and remote areas, P-3D modelling bridges logistical and practical constraints and facilitates public participation in land/resource use planning and management.

Considering that in most protected areas of the Philippines no boundary has yet been demarcated, relief models allow stakeholders to get a first time understanding of their location. This certainly facilitates the processes of boundary delineation and zoning, both activities otherwise characterised by heavy logistics and lengthy negotiations. In most cases Local Government Units (LGUs) become custodians of the models and the driving force for their regular updating. LGUs' interest in P3-D models is not limited to environmental issues. They see their use for infrastructure and tourism development, water delivery, land tenure, tax mapping and delineation of political boundaries.

**Table 1 Participatory 3-D models produced in the framework of the Programme**

Protected Area	Scale	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Active participants (no.)	Women's participation (%)	Working days (no.)
Mt. Pulag National Park (Benguet, Nueva Vizcaya and Ifugao)	1:10,000	360	75	19%	270
Mt. Isarog National Park (Camarines Sur)	1:10,000	480	101	28%	277
Mt. Malindang National Park, (Misamis Occidental)	1:10,000	1,176	119	21%	376
Pamitinan Protected Landscape (Rizal)	1: 2,000	17	93	52%	300
Mt. Guiting-guiting Natural Park (Romblon)	1:10,000	896	101	31%	261
Community-based Forest Management Area in the Buffer Zone of Mt. Guiting-guiting Natural Park	1: 5,000	10	10	30%	40
El Nido-Taytay Managed Resources Protected Area (Palawan)	1:20,000	1,968	70	23%	190
Malampaya Sound Protected Land and Seascape (Palawan)	1:20,000 (*)	3,016	87	23%	246

(\*) Differentiated scaling (1:20,000 horizontal: 1:10,000 vertical) has been adopted in Malampaya Sound to enhance the perception of slope.

P3-D Modelling has many positive edges, but it is a demanding process entailing initial (mandatory) and final (optional) services of a Geographic Information System, accurate procurement of supplies, thorough groundwork to mobilise participants, skilled facilitators, space for storage and display and caretakers.

Key-informants' knowledge can be successfully collated on relief models made at 1:20,000 or better at larger scales. It follows that the geographical coverage of a model is influenced by its final size. Reducing the scale, to, say 1:50,000, in order to cover larger areas limits accuracy and the ability of informants to internalise the model and to transpose their knowledge. A solution could be to produce a series of models – to be made and displayed at different locations – each one covering a portion of the desired area. Obviously this process would require more time and added financial and human resources.

Lastly, relief models are hard to move around. Digitising the information and plotting it on paper maps, which are easy to store and carry around, partially overcome this.

## Conclusion

In the context of the Philippines, Participatory 3-D modelling proved to be an extremely efficient community-based planning and management tool. With some additional improvements it may be viewed as 'best practice' for allowing true participation in generating accurate geo-referenced information. Combined with GIS, it opens the doors to collaborative planning and effective Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation.

Furthermore, the NIPAP experience illustrates that 3-D models produced through collaborative processes generate a long-lasting enthusiasm among participants and an enormous amount of information is collated and permanently displayed at community level, where it is readily accessible to all stakeholders, local residents and outsiders.

Participants and users get a 'bird's eye view' of their environment. This enhances analytical skills, broadens perspectives on interlocked ecosystems and helps in dealing with issues and conflicts associated with the territory and resource use. Because all stakeholders play

an active role in the realisation of the models, both administrators and communities easily understand the medium. A relief model makes information tangible, eases communication, helps bridge language barriers and increases the potential of all stakeholders to deal with their constituencies, central government and outsider institutions that are part of the concerned area. In the Philippines the integration of P3-DM and GIS is proving to be useful in the process of establishing and managing natural resources through a genuine participatory approach.

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# Sustaining participation: what are the challenges?

A review of the Uganda Participatory Development Network (UPDNet) annual meeting  
24th-25th August 2000

Peter Ejautene Okiira

The Uganda Participatory Development Network (UPDNet) is a member of the Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action (RCPLA) Network<sup>1</sup>. This article reviews a recent UPDNet workshop, held in August 2000, where members met to discuss the issues and challenges of sustaining a participatory process.

## Introduction

The Uganda Participatory Development Network (UPDNet), a loose network of organisations, institutions and individuals who are interested in promoting the use of participatory development techniques in Uganda, recently held a two-day workshop on the theme *'Sustaining Participation: what are the challenges?'*.

The workshop brought together about 100 participants from civil society organisations, government institutions and projects, local government, academic institutions and individuals, all of whom shared their experiences in sustaining participation and related challenges, through specific presentations, group work and plenary discussions. There were ten presentations that focused on three levels of sustaining participation; at organisational, community and policy levels.

The presentations and the ensuing discussions brought out a number of intriguing issues regarding sustaining participation, some broad areas being listed below.

- Limitations of the organisations
- Concepts
- The nature and process of participation
- The limits of participation – as one participant put it, *'by the time you are finished with your participation approach in your organisation, the poor are dead'*
- The involvement of stake holders

At the end of the two-day programme, participants summarised key issues and thoughts as follows.

## Best practice for sustaining participation

### *Work methods*

We almost all agreed that our own work methods had to be reviewed or enhanced to sustain participation. Key rationales are listed below.

- We must be participatory in our own organisations (participatory planning, management, managers being more transparent, being given challenging tasks etc.). We need to be participatory in all aspects of our work; furthermore, we need to build a culture of true participation.
- Identifying and involving 'beneficiaries' at all times and in all aspects of projects/programmes. This includes all those activities/processes that often happen without them at the outset (such as, for example, developing new ideas and initiatives and sharing budgets). Partners must own the agenda, both in terms of objectives and strategies to achieve these objectives and also in terms of phasing-out strategies discussed at the outset.
- Recognising the diversity of partner 'communities' and recognising that in Uganda, communities are not homogeneous: different people have different interests.
- Putting a premium on the utilisation of local resources, both material and human (this has implications on how we work, when we work with partners, flexible project planning horizons, etc.). Some workshop participants were arguing for abandoning the concept of 'project' altogether.
- Ensuring that, in all the above, there is enough time/space for reflection, learning and re-planning. Enhancing the capacity of the 'participants' to meaningfully participate, building learning opportunities and enhancing informed inputs by partners is part of this process.
- Flexibility and consensus: we need to create room for adjustments, and share, and make space for, different views while trying to resolve issues. We are all team players aiming at the same thing.
- Skills: participation is complex; we need good skills and political courage to facilitate processes that will be sustained and that challenge inequities.

<sup>1</sup> For further information on the RCPLA Network, please refer to the RCPLA Pages at the end of this issue.

## Defining and understanding participation

- We need to remember that participation is a continuous process; but may not be appropriate in all circumstances.
- Different situations demand different approaches to 'participation'. Participation should not be imposed: it should be 'optional' and 'democratic'.
- Participation should be sustained to a level which is compatible with the vision of the initiator/partner.
- Defining participation in terms of the actual benefits of participating.
- Remembering that participation requires time!

## Networking, forging alliances

- Networking at all levels
- Involvement of various networks, CBOs and government organisations.
- NGOs sharing experiences through workshops etc.
- Participation of all stakeholders can be realised.
- Integrate development activities into local government structures, accepting the benefits of sustainability as well as the challenges.
- Networking in terms of collaboration with NGOs/CBOs/Donors and holding workshops

## Controversial issues

During the workshop, certain important issues regarding the sustainability of participatory approaches were identified and discussed. Key outputs from the discussions were as follows.

*The rationale for participation:* We need to look further and deeper at why we embrace a participatory approach. Participation can be controversial. For example, there is a tendency to push participatory approaches among the communities with which we work, but often, our own organisations may not be run in a participatory way. We seem to place ourselves as community advocates by encouraging their participation. However, if we are more concerned with the industry that feeds us without commitment to the right conception and application of participatory approaches, we are exploiting the communities with which we work.

*Volunteering:* The key issue here is the offering of tangible incentives to community members participating in a voluntary capacity. In the long term this may affect the spirit of participating, i.e. people participating on a voluntary basis without remuneration, thus leaving a question mark on whether this involvement can be relied upon in the long term, hence impacting on the sustainability of participatory processes. The extent of volunteering is also a controversial issue, raising questions of incentives given to beneficiaries/volunteers and the like. How can their involvement be ensured, so that the

process of participation can be sustained? Regarding volunteer involvement from communities, is it a bad thing to give incentives (material or otherwise) to help sustain participation?. This returns us to the issue of whether the product or the process is more important.

*Working with others:* Government/NGO Partnership and transparency/accountability. Harmonising participation and the transaction costs.

*Defining participation:* What are its limits (if any)? Participation is good but needs to be guided and controlled to some extent. A key question is how participatory are participatory processes?

This review has been presented to share some key issues emerging from the UPD-Net workshop on Sustaining Participation. If you would like further information on the workshop, a copy of the workshop proceedings or further information on the work of UPD-Net, please contact the author at the address below.

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# They are shouting it whenever they can

## Beyond invited participation: the power of popular communications

Joanna Howard and Patta Scott-Villiers

*Lo estan gritando  
Siempre que pueden  
Lo andan pintando  
Por las paredes  
Que la ignorancia no te niegue  
Que no trafique el mercader  
Con lo que un pueblo quiere ser*

**They are shouting it  
Whenever they can  
They are painting it  
On the walls  
May ignorance not deny you  
May the merchant not trade  
What a people want to be**

From the song, *Por las Paredes*, by Joan Manuel Serrat

### Introduction

Participatory development has long drawn on music, theatre, art and poetry, the tools of popular communications, in work with communities. In many sectors, most notably in health, performance has been used for decades as a way of enlisting people in the projects of outside agencies. Frequently, the use of these and other media has served as a didactic device to impress on people the need to comply with certain kinds of behavioural change – from hygiene to immunisation, contraceptive and condom use. Since the 1970s, popular communications have been used as processes of analysis, to identify problems and seek ways to overcome them through community participation. From the use of picture codes in popular education, to the devising of skits to show everyday dilemmas people are struggling with, these media have proven to be a powerful means of making development more participatory. With the growing accessibility of technology, video, radio and the world wide web are increasingly used in development: both to promote messages and as a way of enabling people to articulate and analyse their situations.

Harnessed to the project of participatory development, indigenous and introduced media have a range of potential uses. Yet outside the frame of planned intervention and beyond the sphere of invited

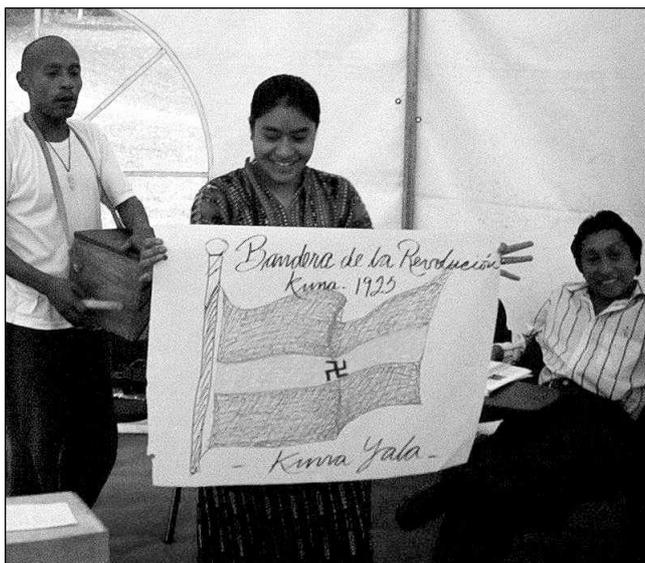
participation, popular communications have long served as a way in which people have voiced discontent and disquiet with the status quo, as well to affirm cultural identity, autonomy and self-expression. Masquerades were used, for example, in colonial Benin to ridicule the identity tags that the French forced their colonial subjects to wear. In Zimbabwe's second Chimurenga war in the 1970s, music played an important part in the *pungwes* that brought people together in the struggle for liberation. The banning, torture and exiling of writers, artists, theatre directors and musicians from countries where repressive governments saw them as a threat, is an indication of the power of popular communications for democratic transformation.

Drawing a distinction between participatory development, which encompasses *invited* forms of participation in processes of planned intervention and participation in development, which captures a much wider process of engagement in making and shaping positive change, is not to undermine the value of invited participation. Over the last decade, spaces for invited participation have widened with the increasing use of participatory methodologies in spheres of development that were once considered beyond the reach of popular engagement, such as policy. The use of indigenous and introduced media in these processes can lever open even more space, providing a way to enable people who are often silenced to gain a voice. Theatre, dance, song and poetry work in an entirely different way to the more cognitive processes that are often used in participatory development: tapping into people's lived realities, their emotions, their capacity for creativity and self-expression. Yet, we suggest here, this is only a small part of a much bigger role that popular communications plays. For, as with other forms of participatory development work, their use for development by well-intentioned facilitators represents something quite different to a more organic process in which people draw upon their own means and media in their own struggles.

In this Special Issue, we bring together a range of stories from people who work in the borderland between participatory development and participation in development. For some, popular communications provides a tool that can be used to stimulate reflection and action

**Figure 1 The popular communications workshop at IDS**

Photo: Peter Mozajski



within processes of planned intervention, such as development projects. As such, it becomes a means to give voice. For others, it is less about *giving* voice to people than about people using their voices to 'shout it wherever they can'. This collection of stories marks a pause for reflection in a longer process of drawing together stories and insights from a diverse group of people who came together in May 2000 at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in Brighton, UK, for a workshop on using popular communications for processes of democratic transformation. Around 60 people in total came from all over the world, bringing with them different and challenging experiences and opinions on using theatre, radio, video, music, plastic arts and other creative media in processes of social and political change. As Manuel Rozental, one of the workshop facilitators, put it:

*Popular communication is a statement of people's real existence and of their refusal to be manipulated and silenced. In this sense, it is a means for democratic transformation. Through popular communication, creative expressions of diverse cultural realities find their way to the walls, the performances, the music, the languages, the local community radios and television channels. People are sharing and exchanging stories and feelings about their identities and about the meaning of their lives, as they have been, as they are, and as they could and should be...*

### The 'well of inspiration'

At the workshop, anecdotes were swapped, email addresses exchanged, but so many of the inspirational stories that each participant had within them were left untold. And so the idea emerged of a *Well of Inspiration*; a collection of stories from experience from the participants, which could be shared amongst them and with other popular communications practitioners and activists.

The *Well of Inspiration* is a testament to individuals who have dedicated their commitment and creativity to democratic transformation. It brings together different realities; expressions of anger and hope. In this edition of PLA Notes, we bring you a taste of these stories, a first draught from the 'Well'. The stories take different forms: radio scripts, testimonies, anecdotes. They speak on different levels and across different dimensions of communication. For this reason, because of their diversity, the stories can be useful to us on many different levels; from practical examples of how to do something (like a radio phone-in) to providing pointers for thinking more deeply about why we do what we do, and what we really want to achieve, beyond getting through a day's work or meeting a project deadline. Some stories can be read as cautionary tales, '*don't embark on something like this without first taking into account...*'; others encourage perseverance, '*if something like this happens to you, don't give up...*'. Because they are stories of lived experiences, they are woven through and through with personal insight, reflection, revelation and emotion. They are stories by and for activists, spoken from the heart with courage, brimming with feeling and with the awareness that comes from reflecting on experience. As such, they offer a window through which to gain a glimpse into that experience – rather than a kit bag of popular communications techniques to borrow from.

**Figure 2 Popular communications comes from people's own culture**

Photo: Asif Muntir



### Sharing stories

The stories in this issue are about using different media for democratic transformation. But they are also about each person's own learning process. Each story is a unique piece of popular communication that tells us about a personal process and inspires us as we identify with their reactions to the obstacles and triumphs along the way. Things don't always work out and to persuade yourself that they do, or that they should, is to miss the point. We

learn from making mistakes: above all, we learn from taking risks, stumbling, getting up again and moving on. Working in the field of popular communications is a political act. It is about amplifying the voice of people whose voices have been ignored, silenced or repressed. It involves taking risks and a level of personal commitment and responsibility that adds up to practicing active solidarity with marginalised groups of people. And this involves other kinds of risks.

Mwajuma Saiddy Masaiganah tells her own story about confronting powerful local elites and the personal risks she took. We asked Mwajuma and other contributors to the 'Well of Inspiration' if they thought there was any risk involved in sharing their stories. She answered:

*I am happy to let it [my story] be a learning to others, for I know that with our bureaucratic systems in place, there are many others who meet or encounter same kind of problems but are scared to death to raise their voices to let the world know what is happening, for fear of repercussions that may follow. For me, I have sacrificed enough so for people's voices and struggle to be heard, I whole-heartedly give my consent for the story to be used.*

Luis Jamie Tello told us:

*I don't think we should think about the risks – it's only by taking risks that we are able to confront the status quo and bring about change. The Well can at least stimulate some reflection and there's always a chance that the results are greater and more fruitful for those who jump in and get wet... because that's what it's about, playing, gambling on the chance that you can do something, that the world can be different from the way the powerful tell us it is. So take up the risk and with it the challenge!*

For Luis, this collection is about deeper reflection than the idea of 'stories about what you do' might suggest:

*The Well is about stories that let us reflect on what people and organisations are doing. Sometimes, stories can be more like one-dimensional anecdotes that don't let you see the other dimensions like, how knowledge is constructed, or people's criteria for taking action... The Well should include **stories** that also **reflect**; and later on, also **profiles** or micro-biographies of people who are important in the area of Communications, and also **news** because it's also important to inform people about what we're doing, our achievements, the small struggles that unfold. What we can end up with is something enjoyable, highly interesting and up-to-date (I don't know if I'm being ambitious, but I'm trying to think about what I would like this Well of Inspiration to be!)*

Ideas for the 'Well of Inspiration' are developing and proliferating, as the process is an organic one in which participants from the workshop are invited to be part of a collective editorial board and shape the project as it progresses. Alfonso of *Proceso de Comunidades Negras* in Colombia and Vicky Appleton of ATD Fourth World in the UK suggest that the people who came to the workshop, as well as writing their own stories for the Well, could bring to it stories directly from people that they work with.

## Issues and themes

There are a number of key issues that emerge in the stories. Aloys Niyoyita is concerned with information for political change. He writes of his experience with radio as a medium for increasing people's knowledge and therefore understanding of situations and of people with different interests and priorities. Through this greater understanding, negotiation and peaceful resolution becomes possible. Mwajuma Masaiganah's is about opposing vested interests, and the personal risk involved. Naomi Alexander's is about alienation and the power of theatre to change this, while it also speaks clearly of the frustrations of trying to change policy. Some stories have numerous other stories embedded in them, like Ajaya Mohapatra's story from India. His own personal journey takes us via all sorts of colourful anecdotes and diversions and gives a flavour of the rich and chaotic experience of working with multiple media forms in Rajasthani villages.

## Identity, autonomy and recognition

Luis Jaime Ariza Tello's story, from Colombia, is about identity, autonomy and the right to self-expression. His experience of literacy training with indigenous and Afro-Caribbean peoples in Colombia leads him to understand the new technology available for popular communications as a means through which existing personal and community strengths can find new expression. By researching and creating their own literacy training materials, the people in Jaime's story were able to reaffirm their cultural identity, and restore the legitimacy of their communities' stories, folklore and traditions. Anna Blackman's story about teaching photography to street children in Vietnam is also about affirmation and identity, and about changing perceptions through communications. When she and the children held an exhibition of their photos in Saigon, '*people couldn't believe that the photos were taken by street children... it really proved what they were capable of... what the exhibition has managed to do is to change local Vietnamese people's view of street children*'.

Bárbara Santos's story about her work with street children, as a teacher of Theatre of the Oppressed in Brazil also describes how children challenged Brazilian perceptions of street-dweller 'glue-sniffer kids', but takes her story to a

deeper level. She talks of the difficulties she encountered and of the process of increasing her own awareness of what it means to be marginalised through spending time with the children. And for the young people involved in the theatre production, this medium became a way to challenge society's perception of them, and to demand recognition of their worth.

## Personal commitment

The personal commitment and involvement of the individual is another strong theme that permeates these stories. Mwajuma stepped outside her role of NGO worker and accompanied the villagers she'd been working with to go and confront the Prime Minister. She is aware that a facilitator isn't neutral, and that her commitment must be personal and political, not just that of professional duty. In contrast, the radio announcer in the story from Burundi by Aloys maintains an objective distance from the people with whom he interacts in order to allow their voices to come through.

These processes bring self-awareness, but also doubts and pain. Bárbara reflects on a situation when she took the street children she was working with into a bakery in Rio de Janeiro. As she tries to defend their right to be there to the owners, she realises that her own intervention as someone 'socially acceptable' further compounds the marginalisation of the children. Naomi's story from England reflects her personal commitment... and also her frustration. She recognises that the community theatre had an impact on people and achieved something positive, but also raised expectations that couldn't be met because of the constraints posed by the institutions involved. This tension between the storyteller's personal commitment and belief in popular communication and the wider societal constraints in some stories leads to positive change, and in others is marked by frustration, but with an increased understanding and awareness.

## Solidarity

These stories are a means of exchanging learning and providing solidarity across continents. Naomi, who works for the Scarman Trust<sup>1</sup> is involved with legislative theatre in Brighton & Hove. Their work, like Bárbara's was inspired by that of Augusto Boal in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He pioneered the use of theatre to change legislation – hence the name. Naomi says:

*It's useful being able to refer to what's going on in other countries, because it really adds legitimacy to what we're trying to do. You can say to people 'Look! They've done it in Rio, look, they've done it in Bangladesh, look, they've done it in Nigeria', and then it reawakens people to the fact that they don't just live in*

*this little tiny speck of a city in this huge planet, called Brighton and Hove, its absolutely tiny: they're part of a planet and there's other people doing similar things, with great effect, all over the world, and it's about saying to these politicians, 'Hey, wake up, what we're trying to do is going on everywhere', and its not that wacky, actually its quite effective.*

## Political transformation

All these stories are political, either on a personal level or in terms of policy and social change. Maurice Leonhardt's story is about getting the Prime Minister of Cambodia to talk to the people of the largest squatter community in Phnom Penh. Mwajuma and Maurice describe their experiences of lobbying government at the national level, while Ajaya and Naomi reflect on grassroots' interactions with local elites and municipal authorities. All our storytellers use popular communications to transform attitudes and perceptions; the attitudes of the public towards street kids in Rio or Saigon, the attitudes of men towards women in politics in Rajasthan, or the attitudes of local politicians, ministers and prime ministers towards marginalised groups of people in Brighton, Burundi, Tanzania and Cambodia. As Mwajuma puts it; '*without changing attitudes and behaviour in our institutions and without putting our own interests last, participation will be a dream*'.

Democratic transformation through popular communications is also about the years of commitment prior to the success stories. The technicalities involved, and the perseverance required, are often unrecognised and we can end up thinking that influencing policy is just a matter of getting the right information and knocking on the right doors. Maurice explains:

*It must be said that the video was merely the tool of presentation and that 5-6 years of hard work in forming the federation and its partnership processes with local government were vital ingredients in convincing the PM to engage with us.*

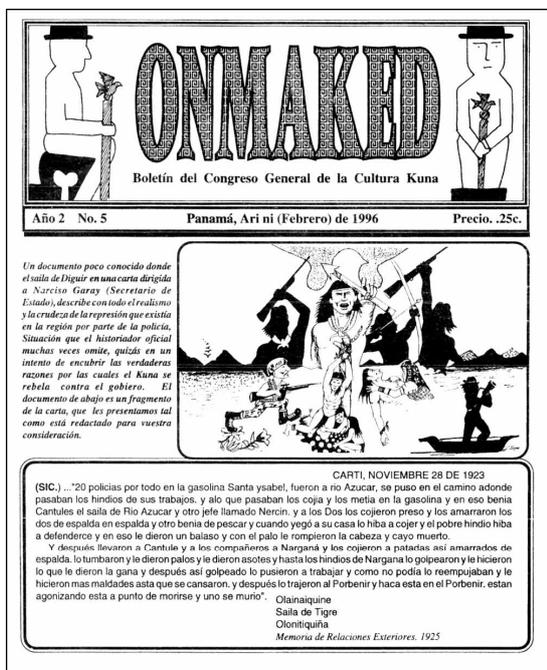
All too often it is precisely this complex, long-term, 'behind-the-scenes' process that is neglected in accounts of other methodologies, perhaps most especially PRA. In telling these stories of processes, then, a lot more of the realities of participatory work can be revealed. This in turn can help move us beyond the 'technical fix' approach to participation in which particular techniques gain a life of their own, beyond those who use them and the situations they use them in, and are attributed with the 'power' to bring about change. As the stories in this issue show, it is the personal engagement and long commitment of those who use these methodologies that is so crucial in making change happen.

<sup>1</sup> The Scarman Trust is a UK based organisation which seeks to promote active citizenship, social inclusion and social health throughout Britain.

## Past and future: the 'Montonera'

The IDS workshop has its own Popular Communications story to tell. Two participants, Williams Perez and Anelio Merry, came from the Congress of Kunayala in the south of Panama. At the workshop, they described the Kuna people's traditional form of bringing people together through the *Correo del Chasqui*, which was a form of roving community theatre that would travel to all the villages of the Kunayala people, and convene the meeting through the sound of drums, music, theatre, dance and other artistic media. The meeting that would then take place was called the *Montonera* and brought all the community together to discuss situations and decide on actions to be taken that were vital to the community. The *Montonera* is an open, inclusive space for the full participation in decision-making of the community.

**Figure 3 The Kuna people of Panama use popular communications to establish their history and identity**



The idea of the *Montonera* has inspired a number of people who were at the workshop to try to organise a *Montonera* next year (2001) on a continental scale. Its objective would be to promote and support processes of the construction of identity in black, indigenous and peasant peoples in the Americas, through communicative social action (*acción social comunicativa*).

The Latin American organisations would like to encourage or hear about similar initiatives in other regions of the world. In Latin America, Marco Esqueche of 'Teatro del Ritmo', a community arts organisation from Peru, is a leading force in this initiative. His theatre group hopes to

attend the IV Latin American and Caribbean Festival of Community Theatre in Cuba, in October 2000, where they will perform their play 'Entre Tablas y Cajones' and pass on the invitation to all the participants there, to the *Montonera 2001* in Panama.

## Making connections

The 'Well of Inspiration' is about recognising your own strengths through reading someone else's story. Each story will speak to us in different ways, according to our personalities, our levels of experience and awareness, and the particular needs we have that find resonance in the story. The Well is in itself, a process of practising popular communications and building solidarity. More than a collection of stories, it is about the relationship between us, as we interact with each other through the stories, and as we reflect more deeply about our own experiences. The stories speak to our humanity, challenge our conformity and inspire our respect.

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# The inky and talking people of the Pacific Coast of Colombia

7

Luis Jaime Ariza Tello

## FUNDACIÓN HABLASCRIBE – THE TALKWRITE FOUNDATION

The author of this story is a sociologist and social communicator and is the current director of the Fundación HablaScribe (Cali, Colombia), an organisation which has supported processes of popular communication in the south-west of Colombia for thirteen years, mainly with black and indigenous communities. These communities are marginalised and oppressed by government and mainstream Colombian society.

## Introduction

In March 1985, while I was working in a community in the South of the Pacific Coast of Colombia, I met Alvaro Pedrosa<sup>1</sup>, a civil engineer who had thrown himself into working on adult literacy and popular communications. He would travel to different communities and give all day workshops there. He would hand out linoleum plates and printing utensils to the people who came to the sessions, most of whom were school teachers from the area. Alvaro would encourage them to experiment freely with the material.

Without exception, the teachers among them would write their names, or the name of a friend or someone close to them. Some were bolder and drew pictures, but they almost always drew from models from books or the cover of an exercise book, or they drew objects that could be found in the same place. Nearly everyone was surprised to find that, when they put ink on the plate they had drawn on and they tried out printing the image, the pictures came out back to front on the paper. If they had written their name, the letters appeared as if reflected in a mirror, written from right to left, or 'back to front' from how they had originally drawn them. Also, the 'positive' image that they had drawn came out 'in negative' once printed on the paper.

Indeed, one of the first lessons we learnt using these printing games was that sometimes we need to know how to write and think 'back to front' if we want to get

<sup>1</sup> Alvaro Pedrosa García is a Founding Member of *HablaScribe* and is currently working with the Institute of Pedagogy and Culture of the Universidad del Valle, the most important academic centre in the west of Colombia.

certain results; for example, if we want the text to be legible, for the left and the right to be where we expect them to be and for images to come out 'in positive'.

I saw Alvaro again four months later, when I decided to go back to Cali, my birth place. I was desperately looking for work. I had thrown in my job on the Pacific Coast because I had ended up shut up inside the four walls of the office. The organisation I was working for had cancelled the funding for the research I was doing on the oral traditions of the black peoples of the region. One afternoon, Alvaro called to invite me to take part in an adult literacy project to be carried out in rural areas near the city. Three months later, we were presenting our proposal for a literacy programme for the whole of the Pacific Coast, a coastal strip that stretches almost 1,300 kilometres from the border of Panama to the border with Ecuador.

We called our project design, 'thinking back to front'.

## 'Thinking back to front'

First of all, we questioned the traditional idea of a literacy 'campaign', having studied the results of the campaigns carried out under the last two governments. These had been designed to 'eradicate' illiteracy across the entire country and millions of *pesos* had been invested in:

- publishing primers and manuals;
- the salaries and allowances of several thousand literacy teachers; and,
- the distribution of the books and transport of people to places far away from the town centres.

The campaigns were also too short, none of them was designed to go on for more than two years. From a practical viewpoint, they created huge problems for the labourers, miners, peasants, artisans and farmers who dreamed of finding a place for themselves in the culture of letters. Almost all of them worked between 10 and 12 hours a day, rose with the first rays of the sun, and went home at the end of the day exhausted and hungry, with little motivation to go to 'school' in a poorly lit classroom and sit at uncomfortable desks for two or three hours in order to take part in a literacy class. Finally, the materials that had been designed for the campaigns only showed

pictures of people from the cold and mountainous Andean region of Colombia and of their customs, their countryside and their buildings. The black peoples of the Pacific regions didn't recognise themselves in the stories that were told in the primers. Neither did they recognise the objects that appeared in the illustrations nor the words that those other Colombians used every day.

I could recall many other criticisms we had of those campaigns, but I will only add that the contents of the primers talked about things that had nothing to do with the daily concerns of the people. The government sought to 'educate' their citizens to increase their social participation and to strengthen democracy, but they only talked about laws and regulations, organograms and duties. Real life didn't come into these materials.

Facts confirmed our suspicions. In an official literacy institute in a village of the Pacific Coast, I found several boxes full of hundreds of primers falling apart from the damp, turned into nests for rats and cockroaches. In the latest literacy campaign, the government had invested in printed, radio and television propaganda, they had employed thousands of literacy teachers and published millions of primers, but it had been a failure.

Our project was to take up where the campaigns had left off. We reckoned that a literacy training process in a village would need a reliable source of printed materials, locally produced, that talked about things that local people were interested in and showed pictures that were useful to them. So we set to work in four villages and in each one we set up local publishing centres with manual printing presses and typesetting machinery, paper and ink and linoleum plates and printing tools.

We linked up with young people through the local schools, and we managed to get official recognition of their time spent working on our project as part of the time that students are required to spend in doing Community Service. We held dozens of workshops with the students, and turned them into reasonable typesetters or printers. We trained them to do a similar job with adults in the communities and in no time they came up with some really good results. They began to print images of objects, places and situations that were part of their communities' life, and so for the very first time in the Pacific Coast of Colombia, the people had a way of creating their own iconography. People wanted to print stories about their lives, about the history of their village. They printed tales, songs and poems that previously had only ever been circulated by word of mouth.

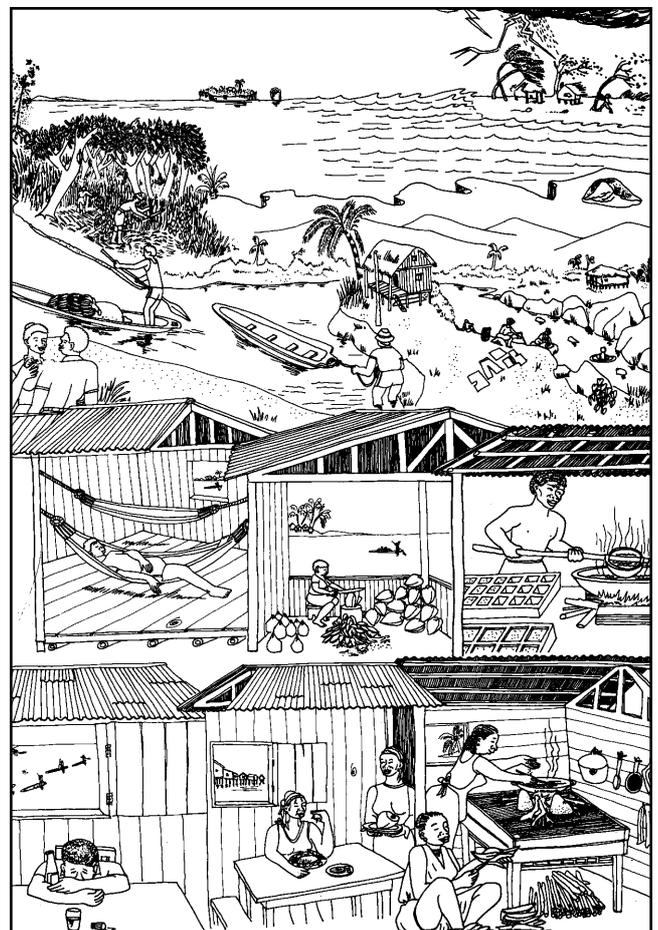
In the same way as the linoleum printing, the ink and paper method was replicated with many groups. People who came to the workshops began to call themselves 'the inky people' and this project, which was officially called

'Continued Adult Education', became known popularly as 'The Inky People of the Pacific Coast'.

A central feature of the success of the project was that *Fundación HablaScribe* (TalkWrite Foundation), which we had just set up, began to fundraise so that work that had begun in the communities could carry on, at the same time as starting up work in new communities. It was clear to the members of the training and support team, that we needed to develop our work with a focus on Social Communication. On the one hand this project was about creating conditions for printed materials to be designed, produced and circulated throughout the region and on the other, it had become clear that what was important about the literacy training was that it created possibilities to strengthen the ancestral cultures of the black and indigenous peoples of the Pacific; the former were descended from African slaves who arrived in America during the time of Spanish colonial domination, whilst the latter were decimated most terribly by these same 'conquistadores' and later were despised by the elites of the new Republic from the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Given that these regional cultures had a predominantly oral tradition, we needed to provide the local publishing

**Figure 1 The life of the inky people**



centres (*Núcleos Editoriales*) with equipment to record sound and graphics and to set up archive bases to support the processes of designing and producing the printed material. *Fundación HablaScribe* then designed some thematic research programmes and people in their own communities collected information on local knowledge and traditions. Some of the materials that came out of this research were of quite marvellous authenticity and beauty and were reproduced to embellish book-covers and community libraries. The local publishing centres of course also needed cameras and reporters' tape-recorders and we had some furniture designed that was suitable for keeping photographs, slides, subscribers' registration cards for each publication, posters, fliers; everything that the thematic research events gathered, or that the local publishing centres produced.

**Figure 2 HablaScribe at work**

Photo: Luis Jaime Tello



To support the literacy work, our production team<sup>2</sup> designed a manual which we called the 'Illustrated Dictionary of the Pacific Coast', which contained thirty pages of 25 x 35 centimetres. Each page introduced a word written in capital and lower case letters; an illustration of an object or situation that the word referred to, a '*copla*'<sup>3</sup> in which the word was used and a series of words that were either related or belonged to the same semantic field. Armed with this dictionary, the school students each visited five non-literate peoples' homes, and read the coplas to them, encouraging the families to develop reading and writing skills. At the same time, a literacy game was distributed (*Juego Alfanumérico*) which entertains people while they learn to recognise letters of the alphabet and put words and sentences together.

<sup>2</sup> I had realised that for this project to work, we needed to bring in some experienced and sensitive social communicators and so I called on three friends from the University: Aurora Sabogal, Jesús Alberto Valdés, and Alberto Goana. They formed the team that designed and produced the materials we used for the literacy training, which took about a year (I can explain why, but that's another story).

<sup>3</sup> The "*copla*" is a popular form of poetry used extensively in black communities of the Pacific regions of Colombia: it has four octosyllabic verses, which rhyme on the consonant. People use them to tell stories, to tell fortunes, to fall in love, to play, to sing.

Surprising results were achieved using these materials, for example, the fourteen adults who lived alongside a path on the banks of the River Mira, learnt the alphabet in only a month.

While this was going on, the publishing centres were producing reading materials for their readers. These publications told stories about the people of each place, about their agricultural practices, about the myths and legends of black cultures and about the laws and rights that need to be upheld.

The publishing centres also began to produce aural materials to complement the written texts and we needed to find funds to buy sound-mixing and editing equipment. Some villages experimented with radio broadcasts which they would send out for three or four hours on a Sunday afternoon, as a means of disseminating important messages to the community and also for broadcasting football matches and music. The project then became known as 'The Inky and Talking People of the Pacific Coast of Colombia'.

I'll have to carry on this story another time, as there's so much more to tell, and so many things that are worth remembering and sharing. For example, many of the local publishing centres became 'Foundations for Popular Communications and Education', many of which today have their own community radio stations and have contracts with the Colombian State to design and implement projects locally. We'll find the time, and the place, to tell these stories.

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# La Gente Entintada y Parlante del Litoral Pacífico Colombiano

# 7a

Luis Jaime Ariza Tello

En marzo de 1985, mientras trabajaba en una población al Sur de la Costa del Pacífico colombiano, conocí a Alvaro Pedrosa<sup>1</sup>, un Ingeniero Civil dedicado a la investigación sobre el tema de la alfabetización de adultos. Viajaba por varias poblaciones realizando jornadas de trabajo en las que entregaba planchas de linóleo y herramientas de grabado a los asistentes, la mayoría de ellos maestros de escuelas y colegios en cada localidad, y les proponía que experimentaran libremente con el material.

Los maestros, invariablemente, escribían su nombre o el de alguna persona cercana o amiga, y unos pocos se atrevían a elaborar imágenes, aunque casi siempre empleando modelos de libros o de la carátula de un cuaderno, o ilustrando objetos que encontraban en el lugar. Casi todos se sorprendían cuando entintaban la plancha que habían grabado y hacían una prueba de impresión, pues descubrían que las imágenes aparecían invertidas en el papel: si habían escrito un nombre, las letras resultaban como reflejadas en un espejo, impresas de derecha a izquierda, "al revés" de como se habían trazado inicialmente; además, la imagen "en positivo" que habían grabado se veía "en negativo" en el papel impreso.

De hecho, un primer aprendizaje con estos juegos de grabado fue que en ocasiones es necesario saber escribir y pensar "al revés" si se quieren obtener ciertos resultados: que los textos puedan leerse, que la izquierda y la derecha estén donde esperamos, que los dibujos salgan "en positivo".

Volví a ver a Alvaro cuatro meses después, cuando decidí regresar a Cali, mi lugar de origen, y buscaba desesperadamente un trabajo. Había renunciado a mi empleo en el Pacífico porque me encontraba encerrado entre las cuatro paredes de una oficina, ya que la entidad con la que trabajaba había cancelado los fondos para una investigación que hacía sobre la tradición oral de los pueblos negros de la región. Una tarde Alvaro me llamó para invitarme a participar en un proyecto de

alfabetización de adultos para zonas rurales cercanas a la ciudad, y tres meses después estábamos presentando una propuesta para un plan de alfabetización en toda la Costa del Pacífico, franja costera que se extiende por cerca de 1.300 kilómetros, desde los límites con Panamá hasta la frontera con Ecuador.

## Diseñamos el proyecto 'pensando al revés'

En primer lugar, cuestionamos la idea tradicional de realizar una "campaña" de alfabetización, estudiando los resultados de dos campañas que habían impulsado los dos últimos gobiernos del país: con ellas, se había intentado "erradicar" el analfabetismo en todo el territorio nacional, invirtiendo millones de pesos en la publicación de cartillas y manuales, en el pago de sueldos y bonificaciones a varios miles de alfabetizadores, en la distribución de impresos y el transporte de personas a sitios apartados de los centros urbanos. Las campañas, además, tenían una duración definida: ninguna de ellas estaba pensada para desarrollarse por más de dos años. Desde el punto de vista operativo, creaban un gran problema para los obreros, mineros, campesinos, artesanos o agricultores que se pretendía insertar en la cultura letrada: casi todos ellos trabajan entre diez y doce horas diarias, se levantan con las primeras luces del día, y regresan a sus casas fatigados, hambrientos, con muy poca disposición para asistir a una "clase" en un salón mal iluminado, sentándose en un incómodo pupitre durante dos o tres horas para atender una clase. Finalmente, los materiales diseñados para las campañas sólo mostraban imágenes de los habitantes de la fría y montañosa región andina de Colombia, de sus costumbres, de sus paisajes, de sus construcciones: los negros del Pacífico no se reconocían en las historias que allí se contaban, ni reconocían los objetos que se ilustraban, ni las palabras que esos otros colombianos emplean cotidianamente.

Podría recordar otros aspectos críticos que vimos en las campañas, pero sólo añadiré el hecho de que los contenidos de las cartillas hablaban de asuntos que nada tenían que ver con las preocupaciones diarias de la gente. El gobierno buscaba "educar" a los ciudadanos para la participación social y para la democracia, pero sólo hablaba de leyes y normas, de organigramas y funciones. La vida estaba ausente de los materiales.

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<sup>1</sup> Alvaro Pedrosa García es Socio Fundador de HablaScribe, y actualmente está vinculado con el Instituto de Pedagogía y Cultura de la Universidad del Valle, el más importante centro académico del Occidente colombiano.

Los hechos nos daban la razón: en una institución oficial de una población del Pacífico encontré varias cajas con cientos de cartillas desechadas por la humedad, convertidas en nido de ratas y cucarachas. La última campaña del gobierno había invertido en publicidad impresa, radial y televisiva, contaba con miles de alfabetizadores, había publicado millones de cartillas, pero era un fracaso.

Nuestro proyecto quería comenzar el trabajo en el punto en que lo abandonaban las campañas. Pensamos que para que haya un proceso de alfabetización debe garantizarse la circulación de papel impreso en una población, producido localmente, con los temas que le interesan a la gente, con sus imágenes, útil. Y propusimos trabajar inicialmente en cuatro poblaciones, creando en ellas centros de producción editorial dotados con imprentas manuales y fuentes tipográficas, con papel y tinta, con planchas de linóleo y herramientas de grabado.

Vinculamos a la población joven de los colegios, logrando que se reconociera su dedicación al proyecto como parte del tiempo que deben destinar para la prestación de su Servicio Social. Hicimos decenas de talleres y logramos que se convirtieran en aceptables tipógrafos o grabadores, los preparamos para que hicieran un trabajo similar con la población adulta de sus comunidades, y en poco tiempo obtuvimos resultados importantes: comenzaron a estamparse imágenes de objetos, lugares y situaciones propias de la vida comunitaria, y por primera vez en la costa del Pacífico colombiano había elementos de una iconografía propia; la gente quería imprimir historias de vida, relatos sobre el poblamiento de una aldea; se imprimían cuentos, canciones y poemas que sólo habían circulado por vía del lenguaje oral.

Como la experiencia con el linóleo, la tinta y el papel se replicaba con muchos grupos, quienes asistían a los talleres comenzaron a llamarse a sí mismos los "entintados", y el proyecto, que institucionalmente se conocía como de "Educación Continuada de Adultos" popularmente tomó el nombre de "Gente Entintada del Litoral Pacífico".

Un factor central para el éxito del proyecto radicó en que la Fundación HablaScribe, entonces recién creada, comenzó a gestionar recursos para asegurar la continuidad del trabajo en las poblaciones que se atendían, al tiempo que la ampliación de la cobertura hacia otras localidades. Estaba claro para los integrantes del equipo operativo de asesoría, capacitación y acompañamiento, que había que trabajar en la perspectiva de la Comunicación Social, ya que se trataba de crear condiciones propicias y adecuadas para el diseño, la producción y la distribución "acertada" de impresos en toda una región, y que lo importante de la alfabetización era la posibilidad de fortalecer las culturas ancestrales de las poblaciones negra e indígena del Pacífico, una

descendiente de esclavos africanos llegados a América durante el período de dominación colonial de España, y la otra diezmada atrocemente por los mismos "conquistadores" y luego despreciada por las nuevas élites de la naciente República desde comienzos del Siglo XIX.

Ya que las culturas regionales tenían una base predominantemente oral, se hizo necesario que los Núcleos Editoriales contaran con equipos de registro gráfico y sonoro para la creación de Bases de Archivo que sostuvieran los procesos de diseño y producción de impresos. HablaScribe, entonces, diseñó estrategias de Investigación Temática, mediante las cuales la población misma recolectaba información sobre saberes y tradiciones respecto a diversos temas, produciendo en ocasiones materiales de enorme autenticidad y belleza que nutrían los fondos de publicaciones y las bibliotecas comunitarias<sup>2</sup>. Por supuesto, dotamos a los Núcleos Editoriales con cámaras fotográficas y grabadoras de reportería, pero además, nuestro equipo diseñó un mobiliario adecuado para conservar en él fotografías, diapositivas, fichas de registro de suscriptores de cada publicación, carteles, volantes, todo lo que se recogía en las jornadas de Investigación Temática y lo que producían los integrantes de los Núcleos.

Para atender la alfabetización, diseñamos un impreso que llamamos el Diccionario Ilustrado del Litoral Pacífico, que contenía treinta hojas en formato de 25x35 cms., cada una de las cuales presentaba una palabra escrita con letras mayúsculas y minúsculas, una ilustración sobre el objeto o la situación a la cual hacían referencia, una copla<sup>3</sup> donde aparecía la palabra en uso, y una serie de palabras afines o pertenecientes al mismo campo semántico. Con este Diccionario, los estudiantes de los colegios visitaban cada uno cinco hogares en los que había personas iletradas y leían coplas, animando a las familias a desarrollar habilidades para la lectura y la escritura. Paralelamente, se distribuyó un Juego Alfanumérico, con el que la gente se divertía mientras aprendía a reconocer las letras del alfabeto y a componer palabras y frases. Con estos materiales se lograron resultados sorprendentes, como el

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2 En realidad, el Núcleo Regional de Asesoría, Capacitación y Acompañamiento de "Gente Entintada..." fue un equipo de trabajo que se constituyó para poder enfrentar los retos que planteaba nuestro proyecto inicial (de Alvaro y yo) en el Pacífico. Como entendí que valía la pena vincular a ese proyecto comunicadores con experiencia y sensibilidad en los asuntos sociales y culturales, no dudé en llamar a tres amigos de mis años de Universidad, con quienes había compartido diversas experiencias: Aurora Sabogal, Jesús Alberto Valdés, y Alberto Goana. Con este equipo se hizo el trabajo de diseño y producción de materiales para la alfabetización de los adultos en el Pacífico, una actividad que nos llevó cerca de un año de trabajo (en otro relato se podrá saber por qué).

3 La "copla" es una composición poética popular de uso extendido en las comunidades negras del pacífico: consta de cuatro versos octosílabos y rima consonante. La gente la emplea para contar historias, para hacer adivinanzas, para enamorar, para jugar, para cantar.

que catorce adultos de una vereda en las riberas del río Mira dominaran el alfabeto en tan sólo un mes.

Mientras tanto, los núcleos editoriales producían material de lectura para sus poblaciones. Contaban historias sobre el poblamiento de cada lugar, sobre las prácticas productivas de la población, sobre mitos y leyendas de la cultura negra, sobre las leyes y los derechos que debían defender.

Complementariamente, los núcleos comenzaron a producir material sonoro, y debimos conseguir recursos para dotarlos con mezcladoras de sonido y equipos de edición de audio. En algunas poblaciones se experimentaba con emisoras de parlantes, que hacían programas de tres o cuatro horas los domingos en las tardes, difundían mensajes de importancia para la población, transmitían partidos de fútbol o le ofrecían música variada a la población. Ahora el proyecto se conocía como Gente Entintada y Parlante del Litoral pacífico Colombiano.

Habría que seguir contando esta historia en otros relatos, porque hay muchísimos aspectos que vale la pena recordar y hacer conocer. Por ejemplo, muchos núcleos editoriales se convirtieron en Fundaciones de Comunicación y Educación Popular, varios de los cuales cuentan hoy con emisoras comunitarias y contratan con el Estado colombiano el diseño y la ejecución de proyectos para sus localidades. Ya tendremos tiempo y lugar para relatar sus experiencias.

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# A story to tell: 'hili li mama' meaning 'this mama...'

8

Mwajumah Masaihanah

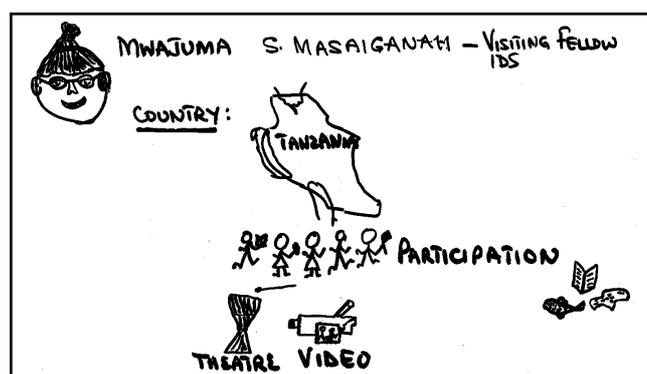
## Reflecting on the past – my journey to participation

My journey takes you back to 1985 when, for the first time, I involved myself in Participatory Action Research (PAR) with fisherfolk communities in Tanzania, focusing specifically on women. Back then, I used to do things the way I was told by higher authorities, taking directions or sending messages to communities, be they right or wrong, no questioning! Using PAR and video as a way of communicating changed my way of looking at things, doing things; created a special interest in me for women and community issues, developed in me a respect for communities and in totality, changed my entire life.

## A story to tell: 'hili li mama' meaning 'this mama...'

During my work with the communities in Mtwara and Lindi regions as a Rural Development Advisor and then as a Facilitator with the fisherfolk communities, we managed to learn from one another, create awareness in communities, create allies (even with politicians). This helped us to integrate with higher government authorities and lobby for policy changes. Our aim was to stop dynamite and other illegal fishing methods which claimed lives, left people maimed and threatened people's livelihoods. Nobody thought that we were doing the right thing because, to some people, banning dynamite fishing and taking measures to stop it was interfering with their trade. The dynamite traders and illegal fishermen could lose money by stopping the illegal deal.

**Figure 1 Mwajuma's portrait** (from the Popular Communications workshop at IDS, May 2000)



I will give just part of my life history working with bureaucrats and within bureaucratic systems, the hustles I encountered and how they helped shape my life.

I will narrate my story starting in December 1996, when I facilitated a five-day evaluation workshop with a group of fishermen in Sudi, Lindi district, as part of the RIPS<sup>1</sup> marine environment project. Our first meeting in Sudi village led to the Sudi declaration, which was made by fishermen and women from 12 coastal villages of Mtwara, Lindi and Kilwa districts. During this meeting they agreed to form a committee, called the Sudi Committee, to oversee the whole issue of marine environment protection in the area and raise awareness in all people in the area and at regional and national levels. This was to be done through mass meetings, leaders' (villagers') meetings, but using video as a medium of communication. This idea of using a video was just to start filming when we started the meeting and show back the video every evening of the day's workshop proceedings. This seemed to work, as people, villagers, came forward and volunteered to talk freely in front of the camera and expressed their concerns on the issue of dynamite fishing. This was because, first, video was new in these areas so it was a proud moment for the people to see themselves talking on film. Secondly, people had built trust in us and they knew that it would help us show their leaders what 'they', the people, say. Previously their fears were that whilst many researchers had been talking to them during the many meetings in their villages, all reports from such discussions were just put on shelves and nothing was done. The people were tired because these meetings benefited researchers and their bosses alone, leaving them with nothing.

So, using this kind of media, we assured them that their leaders would see exactly what they said without filtering the information. Therefore, we agreed with them that the Sudi Committee would use the video in their organised tours to create awareness. When we went back to the office, I happened to come across a report or a personal note written by my Chief Technical Advisor, Lars Johanson. It read '*...I have never seen in my life such great facilitation skills as displayed by Mwajuma in this*

<sup>1</sup> Rural Integrated Programme, funded by Finland and implemented with the Government of Tanzania

*exercise...*' From this, you can imagine how unbelievable it was for me and at the same time how good I felt. I developed and grew even stronger. But, this strength did not take more than four years before landing me into problems and friction with the Regional Authorities.

In January 1997, things started to turn really sour. After an evaluation workshop, the Sudi Committee, formed from the strengthened fisherfolk who had been at the workshop, agreed to meet and draft a constitution to start an NGO called 'Shirikisho' so that they could be independent to do things that concern their lives. In that meeting, one member reported that the situation in the neighbouring region of Kilwa was bad and had reached the extent that illegal fishermen had raised a flag on one of the islands stating, '*Kilwa Hakuna Serikali*' meaning '*There is no Government in Kilwa*'.

As we were also using media to put pressure on the government to change the policy, I told this story about Kilwa to a news reader on Radio One. The next morning it was like a hot cake, repeated in the headline news for about a day and a half. After looking for me the whole morning, the Kilwa police left a message that I should report to them. I reported but took along with me the Secretary of Shirikisho. In case something happened to me, then they should know and act quickly.

The police wanted to know why I had made such statements. I said yes, that I had and the reason was that the police were not doing their job. I said that this was highlighted in the evaluation workshop and that in ranking, the police were given zero in efficiency. I explained that I was only telling what people say. After long discussions, they agreed that they are having problems. In a way, it was getting difficult for them to perform their duties because the dynamite problem was an inside job. Then they said that it was the Police Commander that had instructed them to bring me to the police station. I said " *Yes, here I am and if only you put me in now, try it, you'll see what happens. The people will retaliate to your actions*". I told them we knew much more of what was happening than the police knew and if they wanted to get anywhere, they had to work closely with us. The first agony was over, but I knew I was being monitored.

We decided to record the whole process by video, even the follow up of what happened six months after the evaluation workshop. We made a video documentary and organised trips to visit the Regional Commissioners of Lindi and Mtwara; the Ministers of Communication and Works, Natural Resources and Tourism, the Environment (both in the mainland and in the Isles); the Attorney General and Agricultural and Industries Supplies Company Ltd.; and other companies which are directly or indirectly related to the sale or keeping of dynamite and natural

resources. During all these trips, we took video as a means of documenting the process. Many trips of the same kind were made to meet leaders like the then Prime Minister and Vice President who visited the area. In both incidences it was hard for us to get a chance to show them our video or talk to them, as nobody took us seriously. But in all occasions we did actually manage to provide these leaders with a video documentary called *Bahari Yetu Hatutaki* – meaning 'Not in Our Ocean'<sup>2</sup>.

In February 1997, during the parliamentary session, four Sudi members, plus myself, traveled to Dodoma to meet the Prime Minister, together with Members of Parliament (MPs) from the southern coastal area. To our amazement, they had talked to other members of parliament from the south and they had agreed that the problem did not concern only the coastal constituencies but the entire southern region, because that was their only source of protein – fish from the sea. So, the MPs received us as a team, and made plans to meet the Prime Minister (PM), Mr. Sumaye, the next day. In the morning we attended the parliament session as guests and in the afternoon, we had a very fruitful meeting. I went with the group from Sudi, not as a member, but to document the process. One of our aims was to document and make a video for the purpose of training and educating the masses and policy makers.

So, our meeting started with the current Minister of Regional Administration and Local Government, an MP from Kilwa, introducing the team to the Prime Minister. He said, " *Mr. PM, in front of you is a team of four members of the Sudi committee and a group of southern MPs who have come to see you on this issue. Seeing us here as a team, you should understand that we are fed up with the situation...*". The PM asked, " *You have said four members, but I can see there is one other person. Who is she?*". I introduced myself as a facilitator of the process and that I was only there to document what was going on using video and audio on behalf of the communities. During this meeting, the Sudi committee members gave the Prime Minister their video with documentation of the whole process and argued for him to take action, which he did! During this process we also asked for permission to film the meeting session and he permitted us to do so. We explained to him that it was important for the Association to document and that our final video would provide documentation of the whole process.

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<sup>2</sup> The Sudi Committee was strengthened by removing unfaithful members who were said to collaborate with dynamiters and replaced them with other stronger members. Among the twelve members was a woman called Mwanashuru who features very much in the video and who proved to be very strong and maintained her position in the committee. The title of the video is derived from her words of wisdom.

As facilitator of the process, I never contributed to the discussion in any way. I only documented the process. This group was empowered so much that they needed no outsider to speak for them. Generally the video had a big impact on people to come out and speak because holding the microphone was a way of empowering them and giving them a voice. It draws people nearer as they tend to believe more in what *they* say, rather than in what *we* say for them.

After listening to the team, the PM reacted by asking them whether they knew the people who were involved in illegal fishing. They said yes. He asked whether it was possible for them to give him names of all those involved and they said they would do that in a month's time, that he would receive the names.

The Prime Minister, Hon. Sumaye in his address to the team had the following to say: "*In any war of this kind, without sincere and genuine cooperation and commitment from the communities, it will not be easy for the government to succeed. But the government also has its part, which it must play, which must be done fully. But we citizens must do our part. I am quite sure if we had had this awareness for many years, this [the problem] would have without doubt been eradicated.*" .

When we went back, the villagers, through their village environment committees, brought in over two hundred names of suspected dynamite fishermen from Lindi and over three hundred from Mtwara. On top of each list they wrote 'siri,' meaning 'confidential,' because of the sensitivity of the issue and the risks involved in naming these people. I compiled this list, printed many copies, and gave them to the Chairman and Secretary of Shirikisho to sign. They gave them to the southern MPs, who took the list to the PM and to all the Government Ministers and Members of Parliament concerned.

After a couple of months, the PM visited Lindi with his list of dynamite fishermen. Going into villages, he checked with the crowds as to whether the list was correct. The crowds roared that it was true, that the people mentioned were doing dynamiting. Then the PM said that the Regional Commissioners would have to make sure that these people stop dynamiting or they would be taken to task. And when he went to office he wrote back to them officially. One Regional Commissioner said to another, "*Hili li mama ndilo limetushitakia. Lazima tumshughulikie!*" meaning "*It is this woman who has made us be taken to task, we are getting orders, we have to deal with her*". They were talking about me. Another arduous journey begins.

During the RIPS Steering Committee meeting the next day, the Regional Commissioner picked me directly. He said, "*I want Mwajuma to tell me, who told her to go to Dodoma*

*with the group and how did they get the money to travel? I want to know who approved them to get that money. I hope they did not use the money from the project. I want to know also, why are they using the Lindi RIPS office address? Who gave them authority? Do you think that you are going to stop dynamite fishing? After all this is a Mafia thing, how can you? That Mudhihir Mohamed who is helping you; he used to work in the President's office for a long time, why didn't he stop it? What is he going to do now?"*

I think that the Programme Co-ordinator did not expect him to talk like this in the meeting. He stood up to reply in my place, but I told him, "*I am going to take it myself, please sit down*". I told the RC that we went to Dodoma with RIPS money and that we followed all the normal procedures. The management committee, which comprises the two desk officers from the government side in the two regions, approved the trip and so the government was aware of our intentions. I told him that I was speaking on behalf of the people and that I had dual roles. I have a role to serve my organisation as a facilitator of a process, but also I have a role as a Tanzanian to safeguard the interests of Tanzania. And when I am working, I am observing those interests. I told him that I was wondering why he did not react to our first trip in 1994. Was it that nobody took action and that now the Prime Minister took action, they feel embarrassed? I said, "*I have done it as a facilitator and facilitation can bring negative or positive impacts depending on who is affected. And I did not regret for that, and I take the responsibility*".

I am proud for working so hard and risking my life and even I can bear having risked my children's lives. My 14-year old daughter was beaten up by thugs in front of the Regional Commissioner's residence, obviously organised by the same group who in the same night went to raid a dynamite armoury in Chipite, Masasi in Mtwara. It was done deliberately to derail my attention from them and she was hospitalised and has never come back to her normal self again. I was to lose my job. I decided then it was not time for me to work safely within the government system, the time was not yet ripe for that. But I am proud of all what happened, because the people were empowered to speak their minds. The government changed the policy and under the Civil Rights Ordinance, the army is keeping patrol of fishing in collaboration with the village committee members who are being changed every three months. This ends part of my story being told.

I have given this example, not that I want to accuse anybody, but I just want people, the government and the new generation to know that, without changing attitude and behaviour in our institutions and without putting our own interests last, participation will be a dream. People's empowerment will remain rhetoric to the last days of this

world (if there is any to come)! For our governments are still the same. Same! Same! Same! And for women, they should know that working as a woman, you are looked upon as '*Hili li mama...*'

During this period, we also used radio especially during our meetings and trips. We did ask for a radio reporter from Radio Kanda ya Kusini (Southern Zone Radio), and specifically Mr. Edward Kahurananga who was one of our good allies in this whole process from when we started. He used to broadcast every activity that the committee was involved in or regarding any information on dynamiting or dynamite victims that were reported to us during the whole period of the struggle. This also helped a lot in creating awareness to the community in Tanzania in other areas which had similar problems. This was also used extensively and was the reason (if you read my story properly) why I was called to the police station in Kilwa. The reason was that the authorities heard us attacking them through the media, that the people say '*the police are ineffective*'. So generally, popular media is of vital importance in people's empowerment if their voices are to be heard.

With the experiences above and the many others which I did not give here, I was moved to look critically at the issue of empowerment, participation, rights and what are the processes of government; laws, policies, acts put in place for us (its people). We need to look critically at whether these processes are benefiting the people of Tanzania in a way that protects their livelihoods and empowers them socially and economically. We need to analyse how and whether the current systems have offered women and the poor what they are supposed to offer, according to what is stipulated in government policies and regulations, for the benefit of the people and the country's benefit at large. And we need to always look at whether the voices of the people are heard in the democratic process.

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Aloys Niyoyita

## STUDIO IJAMBO

Studio Ijambo was set up two years after large scale massacres broke out between the two main ethnic groups in Burundi. In 1994 in neighbouring Rwanda the hate radio RTLM (Radio mille collines) and Kanguka news paper to name but two, had been used by politicians to pour oil on the fire of the Rwandan genocide. The same danger was threatening Burundi whose ethnic components are the same as in Rwanda. From 1994-96 several newspapers were publicly inciting people to commit violent acts against officials and ordinary citizens. A hate radio called Rutomorangingo owned by rebels and operating from an unknown location started airing programmes focusing on ethnic issues, furthering the already existing mistrust between the two Burundian ethnic groups. According to this radio, violence was the only means to overcome Tutsi domination of the Hutu majority, and the latter's historical humiliation. Studio Ijambo was therefore created to try to show people that there is an alternative to violence and that compromise can be reached through dialogue. Studio Ijambo journalists were the first to bring together Burundi's two big antagonist parties, Uprona and Frodebu, by inviting them to a series of round tables to debate matters of political substance. Some people say that this ground-breaking work helped the peace talks in Arusha to get going.

In our programmes we focus on issues of socio-political and economic interest which directly involve people in their daily lives. We try to portray what the common interests of people at the grassroots are. A joint team of Hutu and Tutsi journalists produce balanced news reporting for some foreign media like VOA, BBC, AP, AFP and Radio Ukwizera. The latter broadcasts programmes for Burundian refugees in camps in Tanzania. We believe that a lack of true and balanced information hinders peace between communities particularly in a situation like ours where rumours feed communal hatred and fear. Letting people talk about their daily problems and express their views on the transformation of society is what guides us in our reporting.

## The background

It's mid-March 2000, one year after the lifting of the total blockade imposed on Burundi by neighbouring countries following a military coup d'état on 25th of July 1997. This is the second military coup d'état after the one in 1993 in which the first democratically elected Hutu president was assassinated by some soldiers.

In a sub-regional summit on Burundi (Burundi is located between Eastern and Central Africa) two weeks after, neighbouring countries unanimously decided on an economic blockade against Burundi. In this context, the

standard of living has been decreasing drastically: prices of staple goods have increased, whereas peoples' incomes have continued to decrease.

Since then price of petrol has risen more than four times. For example, a litre of gas which cost 190 Burundi Francs in 1994 today costs 600 Burundi Francs.

The following radio programme was made in April 2000. After two months' speculation on oil prices by local businessmen, the government decided to raise the petrol price, for the second time in two months, from 470 Burundi Francs to 570 Burundi Francs. The story of how different people and sectors felt about this, is recorded through street interviews and studio discussions and presented here in radio programme format.

## The story

**Introductory jingle and the presenter's voice: 'What do you think?'**

**In the following fifteen minutes, Aloys Niyoyita will give you an opportunity to express your viewpoints.**

- **On those things happening to you and around you in your daily life.**
- **On those decisions made which concern you.**
- **You will also suggest what, according to you, would be a suitable answer to the issues.**

**Aloys:** *For almost two months now, gas stations are as if they are closed. Some look completely closed, and where the gas is said to be distributed, they only give a tiny amount of it (no one can have more than 20 litres). The reason to close stations as put forward by gas station owners was to urge the government to rise gas and gasoil prices. As a matter of fact the government council made public a new decision to change the gas price from 470 Burundi Francs to 570, and from 420 to 520 Burundi Francs for gasoil<sup>1</sup>. What do you think about the decision to add 100 Burundi Francs on gas and gasoil prices? To begin with, can you present yourself madame?:*

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<sup>1</sup> Gas – petrol; gasoil – diesel.

**Listener:** *My name is Vumiliya Tabu, I live in Bujumbura city in the district of Bwiza. In my opinion, before raising the petrol price, I think, it would have been better if they had waited until the country recovers normality, and people too. Now people are poor and there are no goods. Actually, for people like me who run a business, it has become difficult to find money to buy gas at such a high price of 570 Burundi Francs.*

**Announcer:** *The government says there is no other way around; in today's situation they have to rise the petrol price. According to you, are there any other alternatives you can suggest the government should take instead?*

**Listener:** *Before taking such a decision, the government should first consider peoples' income. Let's just consider the case of public sector workers, who don't have businesses and have little income. I think that before taking such a decision, the government should have increased these peoples' salary. If I were the government, actually, I would not have raised the petrol price. I would have considered the country's economic health in general and how people are, because the country has become very poor.*

**Announcer:** *But those who import petrol say that the price rose a lot in countries where they buy it.*

**Listener:** *Gas station owners must not compare how prices can rise abroad with here, because our countries are not equally rich. Our country is very poor due to war and now things have got worse because peasants aren't growing crops. You've seen yourselves how people in the hills are displaced. We do not have money now. Actually, they didn't need to raise the petrol price. You know one month before they had already increased it from 350 Burundi Francs to 470 Burundi Francs – I think they should have waited till people have money to buy petrol.*

**Announcer's voice:** *That was Mrs. Vumiliya Tabu. According to her, before taking the decision to raise the petrol price, the government should have considered first the state of people's incomes. Let us now listen to what transporters think about the decision, can you please introduce yourself to begin with:*

**Listener:** *My name is François Nsanzurwimo, I live in Kinama district. I am a bus driver. We see that the government has raised the price of petrol, but gas station owners do not want to distribute it. It would have been better if they increased the price and distributed it at the same time.*

**Announcer's voice:** *According to you, you have no problem with whether the price rose or not?*

**Listener:** *I see no problem in that, even if they raised it to 1000 Burundi Francs a litre, because if they raise it, we will raise the price for a ticket. If the government denies us the right to raise the ticket price, we'll park our cars... and people will walk or the government will give them buses to transport them. I see no problem; even if they put a litre to 2000 Burundi Francs... I see no problem in that. Because I compare what my bus does, and the profit I make. You can not let your car go on the street if you know you will not make a profit. Let's talk about the 20 litres that they give. It is not enough. Even if you stay in town, it isn't enough. What about those who are going up country? That is another problem the government needs to consider.*

**Announcer:** *You are a mini-bus driver; what do you think could be a satisfactory solution?*

**Listener:** *Now that they have raised petrol prices, they should distribute it as before; giving people the quantity they need when they need it. That would be fine for us private transporters.*

**Announcer:** *Nsanzurwimo François, according to you, raising the petrol price is not a problem at all as in return you will raise the ticket price. I talked to a taxi driver at the central market; Karuta Joseph, what do you think about the decision to raise the petrol price, as recently announced by the government?*

**Listener:** *The decision they have taken is not bad at all. The only problem is that even though they have raised the petrol price, we do not get it. Even though they raise it to 600 Burundi Francs if it is distributed as they used to without having to line up at the gas stations, it will be alright.*

**Announcer:** *According to you, the price matters less as long as you can be served as normal at the gas stations?*

**Listener:** *You did not get my point. You understand that we cannot work if a litre is 5000 Burundi Francs. If they make it 600 a litre it's alright, we can buy it, and as long as we can get it without having to line up at the gas stations, it would be ok! The government said that they will make lists of cars to be supplied at each station but they said we have a right to only 20 litres per two weeks! What can you do with 20 litres per two weeks with a transportation car? Better to get rid of it.*

**Announcer:** *You make two points: One, they have risen the price to 570 Burundi Francs, two, what they give is not enough, am I right?*

**Listener:** *It is a real problem. 20 litres per two weeks; it is incomprehensible to us transporters. It is as if we are wasting our time.*

**Announcer:** *Let's finish, you are a taxi driver what according to you can be a satisfactory solution for you transporters?*

**Listener:** *What we ask the government is that they can even put a litre of petrol up to 600, but consequently urge gas station owners to serve it as usual without making us line up. You understand that if you have to line up for two days without working when you have to pay taxes at the end of the month, something is wrong!*

### Transition (Studio Ijambo)

**Announcer:** *At the beginning, gas station owners closed their stations. They asked the government to raise the price per litre. They explained that countries which produce and sell petrol have recently decided to rise the price. Now a barrel was US \$11 but has now risen over an 8-month period to US \$30. The government has therefore decided to rise the price per litre to about 100 Burundi Francs. Still gas stations remain closed, and people wonder why there is gas shortage when the government has recently announced the decision to raise the gas price. We have a reaction, may you present yourself to begin with?*

**Listener:** *Yes, my name is Aimé Rwankineza-Uwimana, I am Hatungimana Company's commercial manager (it is a local gas station). It's true the government has raised the petrol price. But the petrol shortage prevails in the country, the quantity we have is not enough. In order to have enough petrol at the gas stations there must be enough petrol in the country. That is, even though the price per litre has been increased, it will take about a month to resupply the country with enough petrol and sell it normally at the gas stations. It will take a whole month. That is why even though the government has made public the decision to raise the price we did not distribute it immediately. But within a month, I think, we will be receiving some.*

**Announcer:** *Excuse-me Aimé, 100 Burundi Francs has been added to the former price; remember the price had already been raised a few months before, and you know that prices for all goods follow, whereas people's incomes do not. Don't you think it's too much?*

**Listener:** *Sure but people here have to know that when prices in foreign markets go up, that is something petrol dealers here are unable to control; that is why when prices abroad go up, we too have to raise them otherwise we won't be able to import. Let's talk about the price of a barrel. Within the last eight months, it has gone up from 11 to 30 U.S dollars. It is the first time we have such an increase. That is why if a barrel goes up again abroad, I am sorry but we will have to raise it again here.*

**Announcer:** *The news today is that in a recent meeting which was held on March 28th in Vienna, Austria between petrol-producing countries producing petrol, the latter accepted that they would increase petrol production by about 150,000 barrels per day. Production will be 1,700,000 barrels per day from April 1st. They also agreed to lower the price per barrel from 30 to 25 U.S dollars. Iran did not agree with the decision and Iraq is not concerned.*

### Transition (Music + title repeated in jingle 'What do you think'.)

**Announcer:** *David Niyungeko, you are the representative of the Transporters' Association. How do you react to the government's recent decision to raise petrol prices?*

**Listener:** *In our association, we think that the government has not been fair as they did not take into consideration our suggestions in the last meeting we had in January when they rose the petrol price, which triggered a strike. The government promised they would consult us next time before raising the price so that we could discuss the bus ticket price. We were very surprised to hear that they had decided to put up the price again.*

**Announcer:** *Do you mean the government also had to raise the bus ticket?*

**Listener:** *That is not my point. One of the points we agreed upon during our last meeting with the government was that next time they wanted to raise the petrol price they would convene a meeting with us to decide the next ticket price, as petrol and transportation are two inseparable things. However, the government has unilaterally decided to rise the petrol price again.*

**Announcer:** *Just to be clear; you are saying the government decided to raise the petrol price but did not as a matter of fact raise the ticket price, is that right?*

**Listener:** *What I am saying is that the government put up the petrol price. As far as the bus ticket is concerned, it would have been a matter of discussion between the government and us. But they decided to raise the petrol price before we had agreed on the bus ticket, so that the two could be increased at the same time.*

**Announcer:** *I am sorry to interrupt you, but public transport users say that they can't afford price rise these days and therefore that you should not raise the bus ticket price... hold on and listen to the following:*

**Listener:** *My name is Gatete Prosper, I live in Jabe district in Bwiza area. I am a civil servant. If I consider my monthly salary, this decision is another burden for us.*

*Because even before we were paying a lot of money and it was hard to make ends meet. Now I can foresee that following the petrol price rise staple commodity prices will also rise whereas our means do not follow.*

**Announcer:** *David Niyungeko, Gatete Prosper says that when bus tickets are risen, consequently, prices at the market place follow. However you know that as far as civil servants or other people are concerned, their means remain the same?*

**Listener:** *People have to understand us. We are not asking the government to raise the ticket price. What we want is that the government consider some of the harsh measures that prevent transporters from making a profit. You understand that it is not necessarily needed to rise the ticket price.*

**Announcer:** *Thank you Mr. David Niyungeko; we are running short of time this is the end of today's programme.*

*For our next programme: What do youngsters think about the idea of a general amnesty and former rebels joining the army as has been suggested by the new mediator in the Burundi peace process now on in Arusha? Rendez-vous next Thursday at the same hour.*

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Naomi Alexander

## The Scarman Trust UK

The Scarman Trust was founded by the former Law Lord Leslie Scarman in 1991 to promote active citizenship. Driven by the experience of alienation, poverty and exclusion of millions of people in Britain today, it pursues the goals of inclusion and social health. This implies the reform of institutions, policy, systems, attitudes, and culture, so as to better realise the potential, the 'Can Do', of all citizens. The Scarman Trust is a leading national organisation supporting grassroots social entrepreneurs, who want to change where they live and work. People are referred to as 'Can Doers'.

The practical approach of the Trust is captured in the phrase 'Can Do'. In an age where human capital is the key engine of growth and change, citizens are much more powerful than they imagine. Therefore, the Scarman Trust adopts a unique approach to social inclusion, where citizens who want to become more active in their community are given the resources, training, and support to enable them to turn their words into action. By promoting a risk-taking ethos and using simple, transparent and accessible procedures, the Trust's programmes involve those most excluded and vulnerable. The Trust works with authorities at all levels to gain recognition of communities' needs, expertise and potential.

Brighton and Hove Rocks was a project undertaken by the Scarman Trust in the cities of Brighton and Hove in the UK. It was a way for local people to be involved in setting priorities for government-provided health services. Poor people in Britain are not usually consulted on their preferences with regard to services or, if they are, their opinions are often ignored.

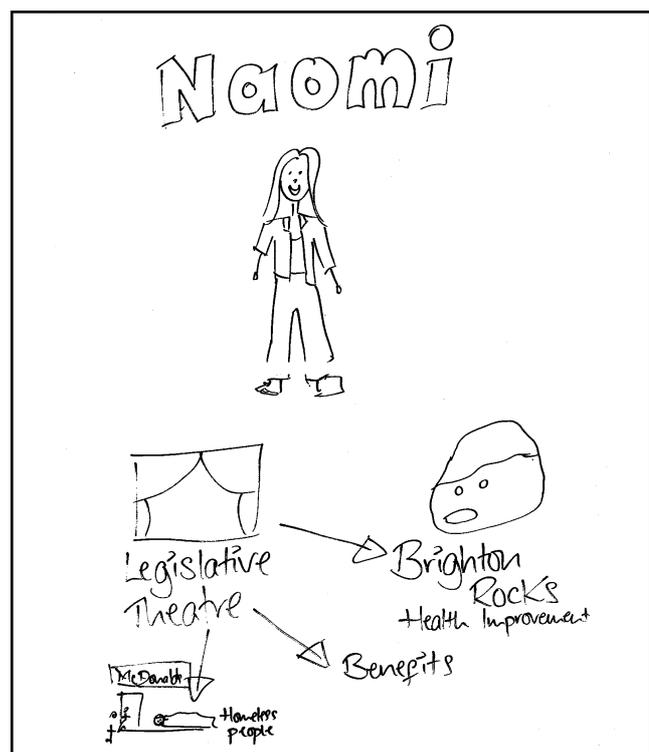
## Brighton and Hove Rocks

What's interesting about this process is that it was government-driven and that's a difficulty we all had with it from the word go. The fact was that the government had instructed every single health authority to write something called a 'Health Improvement Programme' or a 'HIMP' as people call it. They said that basically this programme has to address what the root social causes of ill-health in each area are. It is not only concerned with what the Health Authority is going to do to improve public health, what Social Services are going to do, what the Council is going to do, what private business is going to do, what the community is going to do etc., but it's also asking the Health Authority to take a lead on producing a document that shows how people are going to work together in partnership to narrow the gap between rich and poor and their health experience. This is a statutory requirement

that every health authority has to do. In principle, it's a great concept; it's absolutely right.

What happened was that the Health Authority for East Sussex, Brighton & Hove approached us to see whether we would take on the co-ordination for involving the community in identifying priorities for Brighton & Hove. We had a long think about it, because the Scarman Trust is about enabling people at the grassroots to have a voice in shaping policy on a local, regional and national level. We try to do that by getting people's issues on the table in a proactive way, because we believe that statutory authorities should be responding to the needs of local communities, rather than local communities responding to statutory authorities' need to consult, which very often just means ticking a box and saying, 'we've consulted' and then they do what they were going to do anyway. So we were quite sceptical about it, but in the end we decided that because it was a requirement, we would just

**Figure 1 Naomi's portrait** (from the IDS workshop, May 2000)



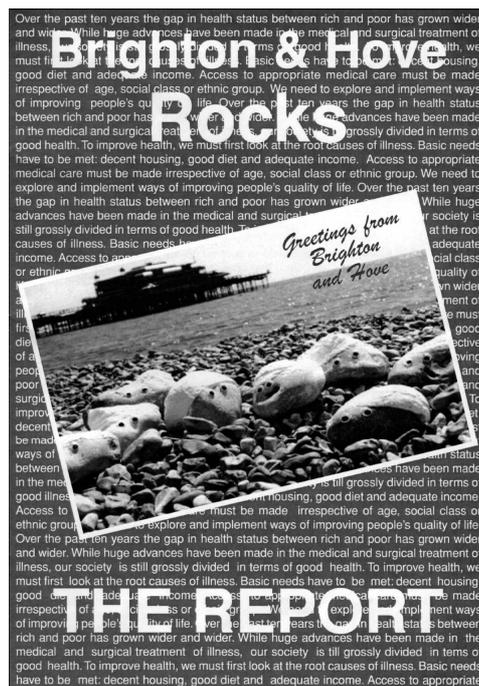
try and set it up as a process which would ensure that as an outcome, the maximum number of initiatives that were suggested by the community would actually be implemented.

So right from the beginning, we tried to plan ways of making sure that people in the statutory authorities did what they said they were going to do, so we could use the opportunity to model good practice, first by making sure it was enjoyable, relevant and explained to people in clear language and second, that people could understand what the point of it was and knew that they would get feedback about what had been done as a result of their involvement. We had to put in a tender for the work, so we put together a proposal and formed a multi-agency steering group of four or five different organisations that have close links with the communities across Brighton & Hove. The proposal we prepared was a good compromise: what we wanted to do originally was to run a series of events in different geographical areas with different communities or interest groups across Brighton & Hove but we didn't have the time or the funding to do that, so we decided to hold one centralised event. We invited people to the event by targeting around 1000 different grassroots organisations that we saw as 'gatekeepers'. We asked these agencies to invite people and that if they were going to send a member of staff to the event, it had to be a front-line worker and they had to bring one of their 'client' group along, i.e. someone from the communities they worked with.

About 300 people turned up on the day. We called it 'Brighton & Hove Rocks'. One main issue we had to contend with was how to make a Health Improvement Programme attractive to people! Well, you don't call it a 'HIMP' to start with! We tried to make it relevant to people; we made a leaflet and we took pebbles from the beach, stuck eyes on them and put a bandage round their 'heads' (see Figure 2). We tried to market the programme by putting these rocks in community centres and health centres all round Brighton & Hove, to attract attention to the leaflet. For the Regeneration Partnership, the Primary Care group, and the Health Authority and the local council, we gave the chief executives a pebble with a postcard attached to it saying '*Greetings from Brighton and Hove*', and on the back we put statistics from the health report about the gap between the rich and poor in Brighton and Hove and on homelessness in the area, etc. We were trying to raise awareness of, and interest in, what we were doing, by doing it a little bit differently.

On the day, we tried to make the event as interactive as possible. In the morning, we had 10 workshops with about 20 people in each, looking at the root social causes of ill-health in Brighton and Hove, which community initiatives would have an impact on those and what policy measures would have a positive impact on them. Then we

**Figure 2 'Brighton and Hove Rocks'**



put all the community ideas on the walls down one side of the hall with all the policy ideas down the other side. At lunchtime we had this roving video camera asking people what they thought about the day, what they thought about the Health Improvement Programme as a concept and how optimistic they were about change. We also had an interactive website, with a bank of computers there for people to sit down and type in what they wanted to say.

In the afternoon we did an experiment with legislative theatre with a group of people from different communities who we had worked with for about two months prior to the event. With them we brainstormed what they thought were the root social causes, or the *causes* of the causes of ill-health and, not surprisingly, they identified issues such as poverty, bad housing, lack of education etc. We spent a long time looking at those issues, and the people or characters that would experience those issues. Three people in the group were single mothers, so we ended up devising a play about a week in the life of a single mum who lives on a council estate, anywhere in Brighton & Hove.

The play started with her trying to get to her evening class; she's trying to get herself back on track, to be positive. A number of things happen that stop her from going to the evening class on that night; her childcare falls through, the electricity runs out and she hasn't got any money to charge up her key for the electricity meter, one of her kids is ill... This starts a chain of events over the week and, at the end of the play, the end of the week, she's at the doctor's with her son who's got asthma, and

she's got pains in her legs. The doctor just does what women in our group had experienced – he just said, *'What's wrong? Are you sleeping? Are you happy? Are you this, are you that?'* etc., and ended up prescribing her anti-depressants. At the end of the play, you just see her taking the anti-depressants and bursting into tears.

It was a really powerful piece of theatre because it reflected the group's reality and their experiences. We asked the audience to watch the central character and to think about what they could do collectively, as a community, to stop her ending up this way at the end of the play and what policy makers could do to stop this happening. Some brilliant ideas came out in response to the performance, but what was interesting was that the ideas resulting from the centralised event weren't as good. I think that a lot of the people that came to the centralised event were frontline workers who saw the woman in the play as one of their 'clients' and had a more protective attitude towards her.

We also did this play as a trial run in a pub on one of the council estates about two weeks earlier and the ideas that people came out with there were incredible, really spot on. People totally identified with this woman, ...it was really bizarre, and I wasn't quite sure how I felt about it. It was a big learning experience. At this pub, when the play finished and the music that the group had chosen, which was intended to be quite emotive, was playing, I walked out in front of the audience and there were four women in the front row who were in floods of tears. Before I started giving instructions about what to do next, I crouched down to talk to them, and they said *"that's my life – you've just shown us"*. But even though it had upset them, it was as if they also got strength from seeing it, it reflected their reality back to them. Then they sat and chatted about it, and started thinking about things that they could do. These were fairly active people from the community anyway. There were also some men at the back, propped up against the bar, who came into the social club every night for a pint after work. When we first walked in and started setting up they were going *"oh god, what's this, bloody theatre"* but by the end of it, they were going *"stop, this shouldn't happen! They should employ a local person to work on the front desk of a doctor's surgery"* etc, and were really engaging with the play. That was one of the most important moments for me, seeing the way people were engaging with it, people who might not go along to a normal public meeting, or even vote in an election, but just because they happened to be there, they engaged with what they saw as being quite real.

The workshop, and the theatre, were really brilliant – even a year on people still talk about them as being different and the people involved in the play said it had had a massive impact on them personally and had made them

stronger. They also had people they didn't know who had seen the play, stopping them on the streets and on the bus and outside the school gates, talking about what they'd seen and what they thought of it. But then we realised that we had to write a report, and we hadn't thought through precisely how we were going to do it. We had all these community and policy suggestions stuck all over the walls, and we'd asked people to stick red dots on those they thought were most important, so we started by counting all these dots. We wrote the report, but people have found it quite difficult to respond to, because there were issues around how many people do you have to get to a participatory event for it to be representative in some way, particularly if you are going to vote and prioritise issues. How many people from the general population have to be involved in that prioritisation before the people in power are going to say *'Well, OK, we accept your priorities'*. In fact, the response has been *'there are only 250 of you there and these priorities don't reflect ours, so we'll pick the ones that we think should be acted on'*.

The report has been received positively – it went to everyone who attended the event, and everyone on the steering group boards as well as all the local authorities. They've set up a 'Brighton and Hove Rocks' follow-up meeting, which happens every three months and which brings together the chief executive and the directors of the Primary Care group, the Health Authority, Social Services, the Regeneration Partnership board – in fact, all the agencies that have a duty to respond to the Health Improvement Programme. All these meetings are minuted (documented), and the results of the discussions go out to the 250 people on the mailing list that attended the Brighton and Hove Rocks event. We used this as a lever to encourage people to act on some of the suggestions.

Some significant things have been achieved since the event; it's encouraging. One thing is that £25,000 has been released as a fund to distribute small grants to community groups to set up some of the initiatives identified through the legislative theatre, such as for example, an organic food delivery scheme, or community organic farming in areas where the local shop is poorly stocked and overpriced. The £25,000 fund came about through these quarterly meetings and we pushed for it and told the other agencies what people in the communities were saying. The intention is for this fund to be increased and to use this as an annual budget for the project.

The highest policy recommendation was that community development should be recognised as the primary method or process of engaging with communities and some progress is being made. However it feels like it's taken a year to get £25,000, to get some small pots of money for communities to do things that they are doing anyway. Of course, £25,000 will help, but it's a drop in the ocean.

When you're working with communities that have been consulted to death and they never see any change, it's difficult not to be disheartened. There's a lot of cynicism out there. When you're working with that all the time, it's hard not to be sucked into it, but it's important to be positive, because there are so many amazing people in communities achieving so much against all the odds as well as some excellent individuals working within these monstrous big institutions who are committed to making things work. Someone said to me, "*they'll just tick the 'consulted' box and do what they were going to do anyway*" and in a sense, that's what happened. The Primary Care group announced that its priority for this year was 'Accident Prevention' and nowhere in the Brighton and Hove Rocks priorities has accident prevention been identified as a key issue. It is, however, one of the Government's top priorities so the Primary Care group had little choice. That was one of the really difficult things. What hadn't been made clear at the beginning of the process was that the government had already told the health authorities that they had to address heart disease, cancer and accidents and reach established targets, without any extra funds. Also that they had to involve communities in identifying their own priorities, but without any guarantee that there would be extra resources to address those priorities.

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## Lessons learnt

An important lesson I learnt, if I ever get involved in a top-down process again, was that we didn't get the authorities to clearly set the boundaries before we started. It is more effective in a top-down process if they can say, 'this is the issue, these are the powers that you have, and this is the amount of resources you have available'. I don't think we had that information and I would demand that information before embarking on a project like this in the future. Without the information, you're just raising expectations and enabling people to create a 'wish-list' of how the world should be, which can be nice and 'fluffy' but doesn't produce results in terms of a set of identified priorities within the given constraints. I think people are quite realistic and know that the world can't be the way they'd like it to be overnight, but if you give them a really clear set of boundaries and tell them, 'this is the bit we can change, because we have x amount of resources', in my experience, people are happy to accept or work within these constraints. We didn't have this and generated a huge amount of excitement. The government has responsibility for that, as well as us, because they initiated the process without allocating additional resources to implement the community-identified initiatives, which is a bit of an oversight on their part. I was part of that process too and I didn't identify it until afterwards, but then everyone involved in this is learning as they go along. I know I've learnt enough to know what I'd do differently in the future.

Maurice Leonhardt

## ACHR – The Asian Coalition for Housing Rights

Before the emergence of ACHR, there was no common forum or regular organising for NGOs, professionals and grassroots groups working in Asian cities to exchange ideas. This was despite an expressed need to share experiences, tackle the large problem of forced evictions in the region's cities, develop opportunities for organisations of the poor and consider their place in city planning. It was with these intentions in mind that ACHR was formed in 1988. Since then, the links between coalition members have matured, regional programmes have been formalised and ACHR has become recognised as one of the most important players in urban poor development in the region by international agencies and urban actors. The coalition is action-orientated, highly decentralised, and aims to provide an alternative model of urban development based on Asian realities and experiences.

## Introduction

We're new to video technology, but feel that as the cost of the technology comes within our range and the potential for use on the Internet and elsewhere becomes increasingly apparent, we should start experimenting with this medium so that when it becomes as omnipresent as email, we'll be in a good position to help put forward the voice of the urban poor in a way so as to maximise impact.

**Figure 1 Maurice's portrait** (from IDS workshop, May 2000)



We've had great success with our community-to-community exchange programmes across Asia. With video, we can supplement this process and allow more communities to actually 'see' what's happening with other poor communities in Asia. Where possible, participants (of our exchanges) go back to their country with an unedited, un-narrated video record of their exchange visit. Groups from Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Nepal and elsewhere have told us that this has been useful for them when they are giving feedback to their communities and others upon their return. The need to spin their own story as narrators also helps reinforce their learning; put them in a local context and language (and saves on translation as most grassroots participants do not speak English and in combined exchanges come from a variety of countries). Our feedback suggests that groups have found this type of 'documentation and presentation' easier and more productive than participants writing reports to be distributed and particularly for confidence building; 'seeing is believing', which is a big reason for exchanges. Often we've accumulated footage of sights, field visits and processes from previous exchanges and these can be inserted quickly before copies are given to participants.

In our travels through Asia and Africa as well, we also document (record) urban poor traditions and culture: working songs from Tibet; federation music from Africa; saving people's songs; traditional building and innovative techniques. The collection is small but growing. Often we document these processes for a very simple reason: 'It's really something magic, to lose it would be tragic'. Other times we can pass the footage around the region as a learning experience for others.

As we get to know more about the technology, we're able to use it in more diverse ways and respond quickly to requests for stories.

## For example...

In the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights we have been instrumental in establishing a Federation of savings groups in Phnom Penh since 1993. These groups are now operating in over 200 poor communities in Phnom Penh. We're in constant contact via email etc., and almost

monthly exchange visits between Cambodia, Thailand and India. During December 1999 and January 2000, we realised that the largest slum community was facing eviction threats from government under pressure to redevelop the land. In collaboration with local grassroots groups we re-surveyed the large site, checking previous detail on length of stay, family sizes, income levels, housing space etc. This is all the information needed to empower communities with sufficient information to negotiate either to remain on the site or to participate in a negotiated and acceptable resettlement plan. At the same time our 'Young Professionals Network' in Cambodia and Thailand worked together in Phnom Penh with the communities. The site was mapped previously by the community; they now made new maps, and discussed and drew up alternative solutions involving, among other things, land-sharing alternatives. They held community meetings to design alternatives and the Young Professionals (YPs) drew up the 'professional' plans.

In the following weeks, the Planning Department of the Municipality welcomed the YP and community alternative and we arranged for Planning Department staff to visit some similarly devised successful solutions in nearby Bangkok, Thailand. The Municipality welcomed the efforts, and the principle of land sharing as an alternative to removal was accepted as a good and feasible alternative for the city. The strategy was in line with one of our basic principles in negotiations – '*come armed with viable solutions – not demands*'. However in the case of Bassac (the largest squatter community in Phnom Penh) the municipality had little control as the plans for eviction were being directed from above, by people in national government. It was clear that we (ACHR) and the local federation of urban poor SUPF (Solidarity for the Urban Poor Federation) would have to influence government at a higher level than the friends we had already made in the municipality – as high up as the Prime Minister of the country.

Friends in local government told us that the preferred method for the Prime Minister to get an understanding of new influences was to have them explained via video. This was an attractive alternative to initial meetings and was more efficient for the Prime Minister in terms of time and convenience. Those who were to present it to him were also more confident of conveying our message via video. It must be said that the video was merely the tool of presentation and that five to six years of hard work in forming the federation and its partnership processes with local government (i.e. the content) were vital ingredients in convincing the PM to engage with us. So, the best way to do this, said local officials, was to make a short 10-minute video of the work we were doing involving partnerships with government organisations and slum communities. It would offer an alternative process to forced evictions of the poor from communities in Phnom Penh.

Within days we collected the footage taken over the past few years in Phnom Penh – by ourselves and by locals with whom we'd left a camera. How did locals end up with our cameras? The power equation between the poor and government planners is unequal. The role of professionals working with the poor in many ways is to aid the communities in redressing the imbalance. With this in mind we set up an Urban Resource Centre (URC) in Phnom Penh a few years ago to support communities in their surveys, house and infrastructure designs and in gathering information about the city that may affect communities of the poor. At the same time we (the ACHR Secretariat and others) were experimenting with video and up-graded our camera to a digital model. We gave the VHS camera to the URC in Phnom Penh to help document local urban poor processes.

All this meant that by the time we were ready to produce a video for the Prime Minister, we had a large store of footage of important events and processes over the past years. Together we made the video in 48 hours, and sent it to Phnom Penh for a Khmer language narration dubbed from English. From here it went to the Prime Minister Hun Sen. The PM immediately agreed to meet with the local SUPF and inaugurate a relocation site and, in the process, donated US\$200,000 to buy land for the urban poor as well as contributing \$2,000 a month to our UPDF (housing loan fund). The PM's support combined with the urban poor's savings contribution will act as a seed to attract funds from international donors. In another strategy borrowed through our exchange processes in Asia, we were able to make the PM an advisor to the UPDF and thus hopefully engage with him on a regular basis. We recorded the Prime Minister's inauguration of the new site on video and sent him an edited version, with thanks (stills of the inauguration are on our web site: <http://www.achr.net/hunsen.htm>).

**Figure 2 The Cambodian Prime Minister visits the slum dwellers' exhibition**

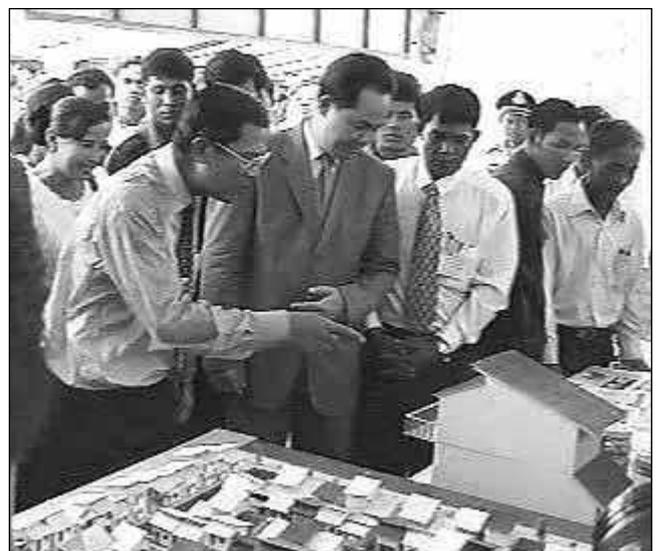


Photo: M. Leonhardt

## Participatory or popular communications?

While meeting with video activists from around the world at Sussex this year, it became quite obvious to me that our efforts in video so far, while having some good impacts, were far from 'participatory'. In terms of the theories of participatory video, perhaps we would have scored 3 out of 10. In the example above, the script was devised by me as was the editing and storyline. We only had a couple of days to put it together. I'm not suggesting it would have been more effective if it were a more participatory process (certainly it would have been good for the communities to be more involved in the whole production, in terms of their empowerment). But we're content with using various strategies to suit the time constraints and context and perhaps even the PRA purists would agree. It was great though to get more ideas on this important aspect at the workshop in the UK and we'll be experimenting in this direction over the coming months. We're already exchanging ideas and receiving advice from Lars and Verena at *Maneno Mengi Africa*<sup>1</sup> – a group we met at the workshop and at the front line of participatory video making.

With thanks,  
Maurice

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<sup>1</sup> Maneno Mengi is a small organisation with a large international network. Making use of the latest digital technology, they work with participatory media production and communication. Their purpose is to create new development practices that offer authorship to people whose voices are otherwise not heard. They can be contacted at: P.O. Box 3979, Zanzibar, Tanzania. Tel: +255 (0) 54 31952, E-mail: [maneno@africaonline.co.tz](mailto:maneno@africaonline.co.tz), website: [www.zanzibar.org/maneno](http://www.zanzibar.org/maneno).

# Pre-Election voters' awareness campaign in Rajasthan – a journey

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Ajaya Kumar Mohapatra

## PRIA – The Participatory Research Institute of Asia

PRIA is an international centre for learning and promotion of participation and democratic governance. It is based in New Delhi, India. For nearly two decades, PRIA has been promoting people-centred development initiatives within the perspective of participatory research. Strengthening popular knowledge, demystifying dominant concepts and promoting experiential learning and people's participation have been the basis of supporting empowerment of the poor and the oppressed in PRIA's work.

PRIA's mission is to promote people-centred, holistic and comprehensive evolution of society characterised by freedom, justice, equity and sustainability by:

- creating opportunities of sharing, analysing and learning among formations of civil society (in particular, people's organisations and NGOs);
- engaging in independent and critical analysis of societal trends and issues, development policies and programmes; and,
- enabling dialogue across diverse perspectives, sectors and institutions.

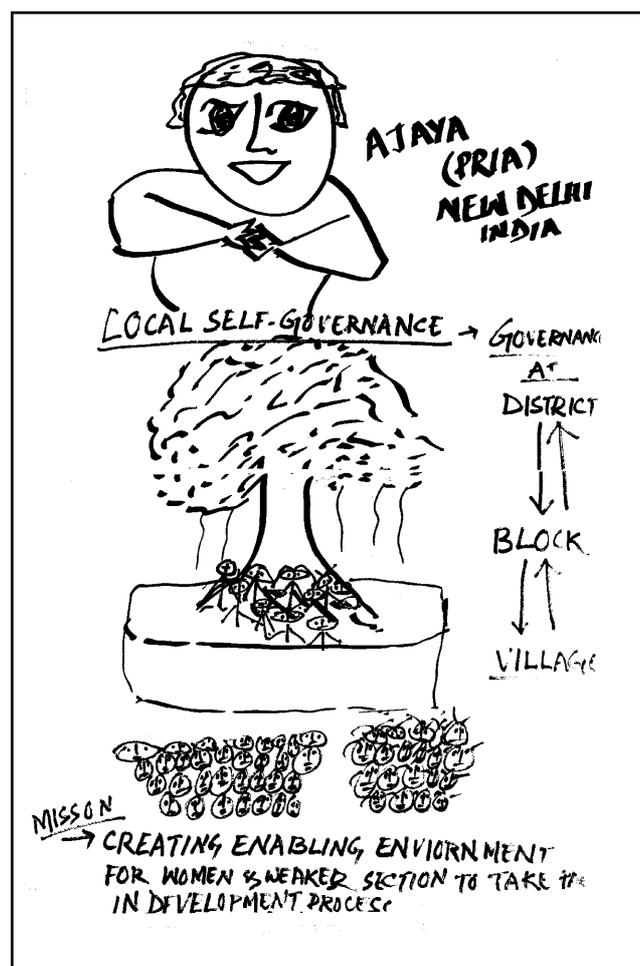
In 1999, PRIA embarked on a programme to increase citizen participation in governance through a pre-election voters awareness campaign.

## The pre-election voters' awareness campaign

We did this pre-election voters awareness campaign in Rajasthan, between January and February 2000, with our partner organisation 'Unnati' (which means 'development' in Hindi). I was co-ordinating this campaign in two districts, namely Jhunjhunu and Sikar. There has been a change in the constitution that says that women and the 'weaker sections'<sup>1</sup> of the community have to make up a particular proportion of the seats in local government bodies called the Panchayati Raj institutions. Many of these women and 'weaker sections' get elected for the first time, without any political experience and with little or no literacy. Most of these newly elected representatives are not aware of their duties and responsibilities, so most of the functions and responsibilities in the Gram Panchayat<sup>2</sup> are carried out by the spouses or male members of the family on behalf of the women Sarpanch<sup>3</sup>.

Against this backdrop, we decided to do a pre-election voters' awareness campaign focusing on women and the

Figure 1 Ajaya's portrait (from IDS workshop, May 2000)



weaker sections as well as other citizens in general. We wanted to help to make them aware of their duties and responsibilities, citizens' rights, how to vote and how to choose good leaders, so that when they got elected, they could do better work for the village and for the society as a whole.

1 'Weaker sections' is the Government of India's term for men and women who are poor or from minority ethnic groups. They call these ethnic groups scheduled castes and schedule tribes as there are special laws concerning their status.

2 Gram Panchayat is the institution of local self-governance at the village level.

3 Sarpanch is the chairperson of the Gram Panchayat.

## What do they think...?

We decided to use traditional forms of communication like puppet shows (*Kath Putli/Hast Putli*), folk theatre (*Kala Jatha/Nukad Natak*), song, dance, music, procession (*padyatra*) etc. These are forms of communication related to folk culture and scripts are based on local dialect and village realities. We found that there were some people working in the rural areas who knew how to use video, so we mobilised their support in making a video too. There's a situation I can tell you about, which is in Kasli village.

The Panchayat elections are a very political campaign and people sometimes think we're campaigning for the political parties, so before we start the programme, we invite people to hear what we're going to do and why we want to do this kind of programme. So when we entered the village, we started announcing the programme, and asked the people what they wanted to know about this programme.

They said that *'if you're trying to do this folk theatre, we're very interested in seeing it, but how are you going to show us about good leaders?'* We asked *'What are your criteria for a good leader?'* They told us what they thought; *'someone who is concerned about our problems, involves and mobilises the support of men and women in the development process', ('Jo hamare samasyaon ke prati gambhir ho, jo mahilaon ko gaon ke vikas mein sath leke chale, jo vikas karyo mein logon ka samil kare aur unke sahyog le')* they replied. They also said that the leader who is getting elected should work for the village and not for himself, not acquiring resources for his own house or his own family, but for the development of the village.

Secondly one member of the group also said, *'whoever gets elected should involve all the people in the village development, so that he/she makes participatory kinds of decisions', ('jo bhi jite, wo jarur gaon ke sabhi logon ko gamin vikas mein samil kare, ta ki wo sarb samatii se decision le seke').*

So the villagers told us what they thought a representative should do and what we should include in our folk theatre.

## My personal journey

I would like to share my experiences in the campaign, which I call my personal journey where I faced lots of challenges, risks, but also derived lots of hopes and aspirations from it. What are the challenges? What are the risks? Challenges, because when I started the project, I had little knowledge and experience of using participatory development communication in creating awareness but, at the same time, I love to work in new areas which are more challenging, therefore my expectations and hopes were high.

Back in November 1999, the team members within my organisation, PRIA, had a detailed discussion on how to prepare the printed materials such as posters, manuals and pamphlets. The task was very tough and I was assigned the responsibilities of getting the posters and pamphlets done within four days. I organised a meeting with colleagues who had prior experience in the field of campaigns. The meeting continued after midnight. *'How can we prepare the scrip for preparing audio cassettes, do the rehearsal in different languages, record and make more than 15 copies in different languages, where do we organise the Indian musical instruments like harmonium, tabla, dhol, jhanjhar, bansuri etc?'* Some of the colleagues felt that it was very difficult for them to do, even that it was beyond their reach, *'Bhaiya ye to bahot kathin kam he, apne bas ka nehin he'*. They also said that *'we have to prepare strategy for our own field areas, therefore we cannot spend much time with you'*.

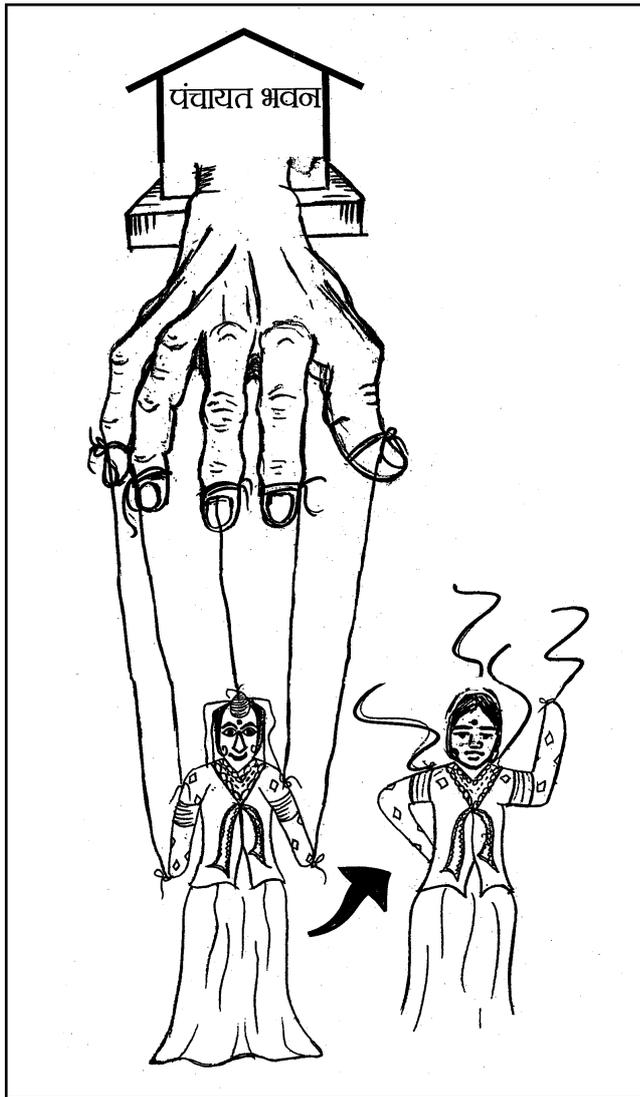
But this was not the end of the story; rather it was the beginning of taking up a challenge filled with risks working with a handful of people. With great determination, I motivated other colleagues and I must say in this process I found really committed colleagues who were ready to support this initiative and who were willing to take the risk with me. One of the people I am talking about is Dayal Bhat, from Nagor district of Rajasthan. He has his own organisation that has had lots of experience in such field awareness campaigns despite having fewer educational qualifications. What I am trying to say is that I found popular knowledge comes from one's own experience and learning-by-doing is more useful than the scientific or professional knowledge. He came forward and extended his support to work with me. This boosted my self-confidence in facing the Herculean task before us.

Next day he went to Nagor to bring some local artist from his own organisation and also arrange for musical instruments that we were to borrow for the campaign. On 5th January we focused on designing the poster. On that day an interesting incident took place. I was talking to the colleagues of Unnati regarding the design needed for the poster and where we would get the artist to do that. On the same morning, when I went to their field office, we bumped into an old colleague of Dayal's, an artist by profession but working with an NGO in Rajasthan, who was visiting Unnati for some other purpose. Taken by our enthusiasm, he decided to try his hand at our ideas. I explained the idea/concept to be developed in the design. The concept that needed to be put on paper (pictorially) is as follows. A woman, who is elected for the first time through reservation<sup>4</sup> was totally under the control of her

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<sup>4</sup> Reservation refers to the change in the Indian constitution that says that women and the 'weaker sections' of the community have a particular proportion of the seats in local government bodies 'reserved' for them to contest.

**Figure 2 Should we be puppets or act for ourselves?**



husband or other male members of her family who were supposed to do the work of Gram Panchayat on her behalf. This was shown like this: one masculine hand with strings holding a puppet in front of the panchayat bhawan (office of Gram Panchayat), in the second step she is struggling to release herself from the control of the masculine hand showing the strings broken and she's free (see Figure 2). Finally she proves herself as an effective leader by conducting meetings and convincing people, which is shown in the third step where she is talking to the villagers who are convinced by her approach. I explained to the artist and he asked me to show my hand as a model to start drawing the picture, but after some time he told me "you have very soft hand, so I am unable to draw a masculine hand, we need a real masculine hand" – ("yaar tumha ra hath bohot soft he, isse ek sakt hath ka tasbir banana muskil he, yehana par ek sakt hath ki jarurat ye"). We called the Driver, Haji Bhai, whose hand was masculine enough, the artist was happy with this and he drew the picture.

In the afternoon with the help of the local people and NGOs, we finalised the script for the audio cassettes using the local dialect, songs and lyrics. We rehearsed the show with all the team members, with the musical instruments. It took one and half days to get ready. On the seventh afternoon since we had first started planning, the team went for a recording, which took six hours to complete and another six hours to get 900 copies made. Within this period we also printed the campaign pamphlets and posters. And by the eighth afternoon, we had produced all the printed materials and audio cassettes and in the evening, these were distributed to the partners, local community groups working with us, who came to collect the materials from different parts of Rajasthan.

After the preparation of developing the script, we had a rehearsal for the puppet show, 'nukad natak' which involved almost 70 local people divided into five teams. Each team went to some of the villages for pre-testing to get an immediate feedback from the communities themselves. One of the key suggestions that came from these communities was that the programme looked more like a cultural programme, and the real message wasn't coming across. So we made some changes in the script and agreed them with the teams of local people.

### We start the programme

Finally we launched the campaign programme on 21st January, only 10 days before the Panchayati Raj elections. I would start my day at 7 am and end at around 2 am. The Jeeps (vehicles) used to come at 7.45 a.m., when the drivers (team members) would load the posters, pamphlets, Margdarshika (Manual), microphones and sound boxes on to the jeeps. It is interesting to point out that the drivers of the vehicles also became a part of the team. Their jeeps were hired for 13 days at a stretch. On the first day, they behaved like hired people without much input in to the team. Then in the evening, I had a meeting with the three drivers and explained to them clearly about the programme after that day's experience in the field. They asked questions regarding the programme and were finally convinced that its intentions were good. From the second day onwards, they were active facilitators in the process, through collecting and distributing all the materials and they started announcing with microphones to bring people together when we would enter the village. They would also pack food for other team members. They took responsibility for time management, reporting in the scheduled time. Moreover, not only did they play a major role in making the campaign effective but their motivation and commitment also inspired other team members to contribute towards the success of this effort.

One of the key components in this process to make it successful was due to the efforts made by the teams of

local people. Let me tell you the story of these team members, which is very interesting. There were five teams in total in the campaign process in Sicker District. In each team there were five members, 25 in total. Most of them were from a *Katchi Basti* (Slum), with thatched and mud houses with very poor living conditions. Most of them had educational qualifications up to 7th grade and belonged to Schedule Castes. But they have very rich experience in doing puppet shows, street theatre, song, dance, music etc. They have organised several campaigns related to family planning, health issues, social issues (like *Sati: when a woman sets herself on fire when her husband dies*) for the government and NGOs before, and therefore had much experience in this field. They took the initiative in preparing the script for the puppet shows and street theatre with the concept of voters awareness. They developed a very good script, which was widely appreciated by the people. Moreover, their performance and presentation attracted public attention and conveyed the messages. They used to dance in such a good way and with colourful costumes, attracting people and also in some cases involving people to dance with them in the programme. In between the dance and song, they would convey the messages to the people in a dramatic fashion. They were so motivated that they would do more than five programmes a day, starting from 9.30 a.m. until the evening.

In conducting '*Padyatra*' (foot processions), we invited about 500-600 students from the schools and they brought banners about good leadership, women's rights and fair democracy. We started the procession through the village. Before that, we took the tabla, harmonium, and other musical instruments on jeeps and went through the village and into the gullies, announcing the programme and asking people to come. All the children and villagers walked with us. Some of our team members did acrobatics, and one jumped through fire to attract people to join us. During the procession, over 1000 people joined in as we went, women included, which was unusual because of cultural taboos. We gathered at the 'chowpal', the platform where people get together for public events.

At the platform, we explained, using folk theatre, with song, dance and music, why we were inviting the people and how we were going to explain about the rights and responsibilities of common citizens, how to choose good leaders, what role the women could play in Panchayats etc.. We started the programme with the patriotic song – '*we are one; whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian, we all are brothers and sisters, the pride of nation is our pride, we stake our lives for its pride*' – '*Hum ek hein, hum ek hein; Hindu, Muslim, sikh, Isai; Apas mein hum bhai, behen; Des ki saan hamari saan, uske khatir jaan kurban*'. People enjoyed the music, dance, puppetry (hand and string puppets) and also received the messages. When

### Box 1 Mohini Devi

Mohini Devi is the '*Sarpanch*' (chairwoman) of Sonasar Gram Panchayat (village government) of Alsisar Block in Jhunjhunu District. She is a young woman in her late twenties and has been elected for the first time. She has studied up to higher secondary (XIIth Standard) and is well aware of her position as a *sarpanch*. She had support from her husband and in-laws to stand for the election who were very well aware of her calibre. They are proud of her courage in fighting against all the customs and social taboos, against which she turned the tide, such as '*ghoonghat*' (women covering their heads) under which she had to act as a *sarpanch*.

The first hurdle was that she cannot talk in front of her elders in the panchayat without taking off her *ghoonghat* or purdah for which she faced a lot of problems. But being a bold woman and backed by her family, she started to work without the *ghoonghat*. This was her first victory and she came out with flying colours, and from then there was no turning back. Initially she was under tremendous pressure from her relatives and villagers who were criticising the way she was working and blaming her for not devoting much time to her family and her in-laws. But she kept going, and within five years of her being a *sarpanch* she has done a lot of development work of considerable value. The remarkable change she has brought was organising women's groups to come and freely discuss their problems. Above all she has banned the consumption of liquor from the village due to violence against women. For this she took help of her fellow women and went to the District Magistrate's (administrative head at the district level) office and sat in *dharana* (protest) until her objective of banning the consumption of liquor was achieved. She got full support from the district magistrate for all the work she has done.

There were a number of men in the village who tried to distract her from her job by disturbing the development work she undertook, but she stood very strong in front of their vested interests and today, Sarpanches of Jhunjhunu district swear by her name. The men who opposed her at the beginning, now are praising her and trying to extend their support in all aspects.

we asked people afterwards what impression they had of the programme, it was the men who replied. They said that they liked the programme, but it was focusing more on women. "*You ask them to come out, but they should take responsibility for themselves, and if they come out, who is going to do their work in the house?*"

I explained that we were equally concerned about the men's problems and issues; "*...but just think that the government has given responsibility to women, at least 33% of women should come to the main platform to take on their responsibility, why can't you allow them to do so?*" – "*hum purson ke samasya ke prati utna he gambhir hein, par aap ye sochiye jab sarkar ne 33% arakan mahilaon ke liye rakha he, tub unko to age ana he pade ga, aur kaam samahalna hoga, to aap log unke kyon na madad kare...?*"

Some people accepted the fact that women should come out and shoulder responsibility in the affairs of the Panchayats but others did not and said that we couldn't

carry on with such messages in their village. We found this particularly the case of the politically influential people or people having influence through caste or class. After some time we changed our strategy slightly and aimed our programme at the men too and talked about gender. I shared some of the cases of some successful women elected representatives, who, in spite of many hurdles, proved themselves as effective leaders (see Box 1).

### It's a difficult journey...

I would like to share some of the difficult experiences we faced during the campaign. In some villages, people asked questions related to our political affiliation. In the village in Doodwa, in Dantaramgarh Panchayat Samiti<sup>5</sup> (Sikar), after we did the puppet show, one of the men asked me the objective of the programme and from where did we get the funds – *" aap ke is programme ka udesya kya he, khana se pesa milta he"* . When I explained to him the objectives, he was satisfied but kept asking about the funding part. I told him that we got funds from the Ministry of Rural Development – *" hum logon ko Ministry of Rural development se fund mila he"* . Then he started linking according to his own logic. *" Mr Mehria is the Minister of State for Rural Development and he is from BJP<sup>6</sup>, therefore you are campaigning for BJP"* – *" Yeh Ministry mein Meheriaji Rajya Mantri hein, jo ki BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) ke hein to aap bhi BJP ke honge"* . The reason was that this minister is the Member of Parliament from their constituency, so he thought we were doing this campaign for his party. I sat with him, as it was important for me to get the message across and I explained that we were not doing campaign for any political party, but for the benefit of the common citizens without any vested interest on our part. I showed him some of the literature and other people of the village also helped to clarify his doubts.

An incident happened when we entered the village Lalasi, where there were obstacles regarding our use of folk media, especially from the upper caste, political sections of the community. They obstructed our way into the village, wanting to know why we were doing the programme and we had to satisfy their demands before we could enter the village. They also ordered us to do the campaign in favour of their candidate or for their political party. We tried to convince them but failed. We agreed to show and convince them about the programme but we were not ready to do the campaign for their party. We refused and left the village.

Another similar incident happened in Jhunjhunu, when one of our team was travelling by jeep in Chidawa (a small

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<sup>5</sup> The local government at the intermediate level in between District and Gram Panchayat

<sup>6</sup> A political party

town) and was stopped by the police. They asked about the programme and when the team members explained the issues to them, they were not convinced and asked for a bribe. Even after the team members showed them the Government permission letter, they were still forced them to pay the bribe and ultimately they were told that if they didn't give money, then the vehicle would be stopped. So the team members finally gave them Rs.200/- to release the vehicle. The reason being that they didn't want to waste their precious time and activities. But it was not the end of our campaign here. We had a discussion with the higher authorities, along with our partner organisation, whose head is also a popular journalist. Finally action was taken against the officials who took the bribe and eventually the money was returned.

### What happened next

The puppet shows definitely changed peoples' opinions. The shows don't only entertain people, they also have a message. They give out different kinds of social and political messages. When we asked people what their reaction to the show was, we found that more than half the villagers had watched the programme and they said that they thought the puppet show and the poster we used were very effective. People (especially women) said that this poster was very appealing, that it had a very good message for women and it showed them what they had to do. They said; *" The government has given us the opportunity to do this so we have to come forward"* . In their informal discussions, collecting water or sitting together, they said they discussed these things and decided to take the initiative. The voting percentage for women turned out to be very high.

The women, irrespective of indifferent male attitudes and views, were very interested in the programme, since the folk media and other forms of communication had included examples of women views and experiences. For example, there was the case of a woman candidate who was elected representative and has proved herself to be a very good leader over the last five years. We developed her case study as a part of our folk media programme, and after seeing the programme, the voting percentage of women increased from 60% to 75% in the areas where we showed it.

So we found that all these different media, street plays, puppet shows, video, posters, pamphlets, song and dance etc., drawing on the real stories of the people, have all helped in providing space for the voices of women and the weaker sections of communities in the whole process.

As a result of this campaign, a nation-wide strategy has been developed by our organisation with other partners from different states to carry forward similar activities.

The process behind this campaign has provided a model for other states as well as many NGOs who started such activities in the state Panchayati Raj elections.

At last while concluding, I want to say that it's the beginning of a journey. It is the beginning of the process which is ongoing. I still remember the song which I used to read in my school days, written by the great poet Robert Frost:

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.*

Therefore, it is an incomplete journey. A lot still needs to be done to enhance participation and create awareness among the citizens who have to take their own decisions in shaping their destiny.

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An interview with  
Anna Blackman of Photo Voice  
Interviewer: Joanna Howard

## PHOTO VOICE

Photo Voice is an U.K. based non-profit organisation that works on participatory documentary and photography projects around the world. Photo Voice provides a platform from which people who do not normally have the chance to represent themselves to a wider audience can tell their stories. In viewing their work, we share their vision. The work of these groups is promoted through the internet, exhibitions, print media and publications. Photo Voice's current projects include 'Street Vision', a photography project for street children in Vietnam, 'Positive Negatives', a collaborative project with Christian Aid for HIV positive women in the Congo and 'The Rose Project', training refugee children in Nepal in photography.

Since Vietnam began to open up to Western style capitalism, there has been an ever increasing number of children living rough on the streets of the major cities. They are often despised by other city dwellers.

## The interview

*What kind of projects are you involved in?*

The first project that I did was a project in Vietnam working with street and working children teaching them photography as a means of expression and for raising awareness of street children in Ho Chi Minh City. That started in 1998 and has been going on for two years. Since we set up 'Photo Voice' at the beginning of this year I've been carrying on with that project, which is called Street Vision. This year I've been back to Vietnam to research a book on the street children projects and to continue to advise the projects and to see how they're going. I then came back to England and then went to America, where there was a Street Vision exhibition in Boston of 30 of the photographs from Street Vision, and this has raised quite a lot of money for the project back in Vietnam. Most recently I've been working in collaboration with Christian Aid in the Democratic Republic of Congo, working with a group of 15 women, primarily women living with HIV/AIDS. Again, this involves using photography as a means for them to express themselves, and to raise awareness of HIV and to try and combat the stigma that's attached to HIV in Kinshasa, in Africa and later in England as well when there will be an exhibition in December.

*What do you think that the successes and failures of Street Vision have been?*

It's been really successful – more than I ever imagined when I first went out. I just got a bit of money and had this concept for a University degree course, but it's really because of the way Street Vision has snowballed and the interest generated through exhibitions in Vietnam and from the children who've really enjoyed doing it, and the sponsorship that's come forward, it's just snowballed. I had no idea I'd be doing something similar two years later, so it's generally been a big success, though having said that, of course there are so many problems, like working with translators who sometimes get things right and sometimes get things wrong. The whole system of working within a culture you don't completely understand and with a government you don't completely understand is very hard, and the Vietnam Government hasn't made it easy a lot of times for the project to work.

*What happened when you first gave your students in Vietnam a camera?*

The first time I gave the street kids a camera – an automatic point and shoot camera – looking back on it, it was kind of inevitable – but we went out to do our first 'shoot' with street children in the centre of Saigon. They gravitated immediately towards the hundreds and hundreds of parked Honda motorbikes that you find everywhere in Vietnam (we were in this square outside the cathedral in the centre of Saigon) and so there were these street kids posing on the most expensive Chinese Hondas they could find. They just wanted pictures of themselves doing really exciting things, as they'd never seen pictures of themselves. And they wanted the photos to be something that was really far removed from their real life, so they were posing by these vehicles. I was watching this with general amusement, because the aim of this project was to document life on the streets, which is what it became, but I had to give them a lot of freedom just to take pictures that they wanted to take for their own personal use, to have, and to show their friends and to laugh over.

*How do people react to the photos your students have taken?*

It really depends on which project, but I'll give a couple of examples from Street Vision in Vietnam. The first exhibition was in a big Youth Culture house that a lot of people came to. There were some very individual reactions, but the overwhelming reaction was 'I cannot believe kids who live on the street took these pictures, I cannot believe they've only been learning for two months'. I think that's the strong thing about photography that it can be learnt very quickly and that everyone can take a picture that means something to their life and can be shared with other people to send them a message, and that came across quite strongly. But the main thing is that people couldn't believe that the photos were taken by street children, and somebody in Vietnam had actually given them the chance to learn and had belief in them that they could do something. It really proved what they were capable of. That was the best reaction – some people just looked at them out of general interest but what the exhibition has managed to do is to change local Vietnamese people's views of street children. Rather than being seen as a hindrance or incapable, or thieves, they started to see them as capable of something creative.

Pictures spark off something in people – they look at them and then they start to think more about the life of the people in the photos and that's the brilliant thing about photos; that they encourage you to ask more and more. Through that, people really get to understand more about their lives.

The reason we started to work on this was that we were doing research at university. It becomes so much easier to work with groups of people or to work with children when they have these photos to base their discussions on, and it becomes more animated, they talk more freely and forget themselves.

As for exhibitions, the one in America particularly was interesting. The main thing about Vietnam that everyone thinks is about the war, and when we held the exhibition it was the 25th anniversary of the end of the war. Many Americans are still hung up about the war and to actually show them photos taken by children who weren't even alive when the war happened, and the war doesn't even figure in their lives consciously, for Americans to see that other side of Vietnam, they found really interesting, and commented on quite a lot, as it was in stark contrast to a lot of the publicity about Vietnam going on at the time.

*What is your favourite photograph that one of your students has taken?*

One that has always stuck in my mind is from Vietnam. It's a picture a boy called Ching took and he's become a really

good photographer. It's a picture taken on a tarmacked playing field like a football ground in the middle of Saigon and it's of a friend of his, just standing in the middle of this football ground and the sun's going down. It's a beautiful time of day, and he's standing in a puddle of water from the monsoon rains, with his arms outstretched and balanced on one foot, like the Karate Kid pose, looking like he's about to take off. It's called 'Flying to Reach the Sun', and it struck me that it shows so beautifully that, although life is really hard for the street children, they have this freedom that they find really attractive and hard to leave and, in some cases, they've chosen that freedom over adults telling them what to do and they find it hard to leave. This photo shows that freedom, and the love that these kids for just roaming freely.

**Figure 1 Flying to reach the sun**



Photo: Ching, Vietnam

Another one from the project in the Congo, is a portrait that one of the women I was teaching there took, in black and white, of a Congolese woman. It's a full picture of her in a beautiful dress, and it shows this beautiful woman who has such strength, and looks like such a strong, bold, beautiful woman. The women I worked with are like that, they have HIV and they've been rejected by their families, but they are such strong, amazing women. Although it's only a portrait, for me it captures the dignity of those women.

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### CTO RIO – The Centre for the Theatre of the Oppressed in Rio, Brazil

Bárbara Santos coordinates the Centre of the Theatre of the Oppressed in Rio de Janeiro (CTO-Rio), founded by the playwright, Augusto Boal. The CTO-Rio has existed since 1986 and its principal objective is the democratisation of the cultural media, through the formation and diffusion of popular drama groups that replicate the methodology of the Theatre of the Oppressed throughout Brazil. It is CTO's wish that more and more people will use theatre like a language, facilitating communication and stimulating ever more varied discussion.

The Theatre of the Oppressed combines exercises, games and theatre techniques that try to de-mechanise the physical and intellectual practice of drama. The mechanical use of techniques, caused by the daily repetition of movements and actions, is dangerous. In practice, this lack of exchange of ideas and real interaction means our ideas become cemented into dogma.

There are a range of diverse techniques which all feature in the plays themselves. A real problem is dramatised, one in which both the oppressed and the oppressor fight for their respective wishes and interests. The weak and oppressed invite the public to get up on stage, replace the actors and through improvisation try to modify the original situation.

The main project of the CTO-Rio is Legislative Theatre. Community groups perform Teatro-Fórum, dramatising problems lived by these groups. After this there is a public discussion. The interventions of spectators at the meeting are minuted by CTO helpers (*curingas*) from the audience. Besides participating by acting on stage, the public can present suggestions in writing. All the ideas contained in the minutes are analysed by a team of legal experts who have the role of transforming them into judicial/legal actions or policy initiatives. The proposals elaborated by these legal experts, based on the ideas of the spectators, are presented to government ministers who identify themselves with popular causes.

### Introduction

Today I am the *Curinga*<sup>1</sup> of the Centre for the Theatre of the Oppressed in Rio. I graduated in 1981 and began a professional career in education, specifically teaching basic literacy skills to adults and children. I taught at public schools and specialised in working with students who had learning difficulties. These students were known as 'problemáticos'.

My classes went from being the worst to the best in a short space of time which the other teachers viewed with mistrust. It was easy: I researched what the kids could do well, what they really had learnt. Even if the content of this knowledge was below the level of what was necessary for the grade, at first I only tested my students on this knowledge, building their confidence and so their learning grew. Our results were excellent.

Their schoolwork, previously covered in red ink, identifying them as the weakest students, was now marked with blue, a symbol of the change. This was no farce, but a real expression of the level of learning of the group. The

<sup>1</sup> *Curinga*: literally meaning 'joker' or 'wildcard', this colloquial term refers to Barbara's multi-purpose function at the Centre as educator, manager, administrator, director and writer of plays and co-ordinator of a collective process of writing and directing drama.

Figure 1 Barabara's portrait (from the IDS workshop May 2000)



students' improvement partly led to changes in their manner and behaviour and partly to a change in the content and complexity of what they knew. The difference was that I presented these materials to more confident students and this again improved their ability to learn. The results would not have been so positive if the same subject had been taught to more humble students with lower self-esteem.

It was during this experience that I learnt, irrespective of circumstance, that as a teacher you must begin by

recognising the knowledge that people already have. Paulo Freire, the Brazilian Educator said that true education should open the eyes and ears before opening the mouth. Before you think you have everything you need to teach someone, you need to be conscious that you too have a lot to learn. When we understand that students have their own knowledge, and their own perception of the world, only then can teacher and student communicate.

During the course of my work since that time, I have accumulated lots of interesting stories to recount. This created the possibility of writing a book. Although this book does not yet exist, I will tell one story now.

## Figure 2 Innovative ways to tackle difficult issues

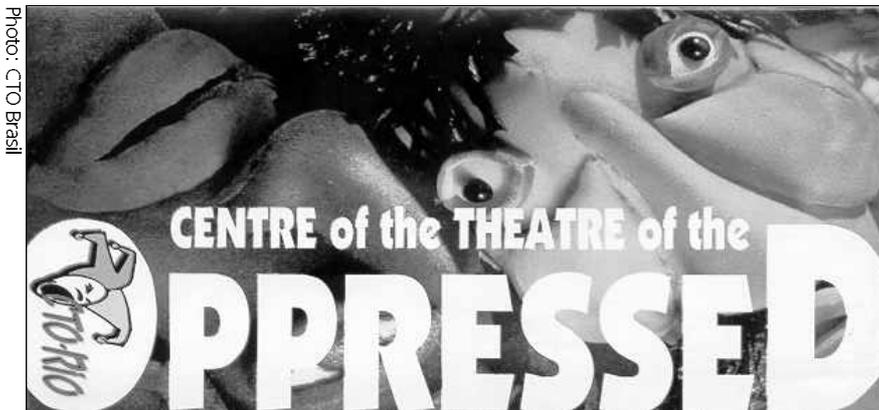


Photo: CTO Brasil

### The street children

In 1993, I was working with a theatre group formed for street girls and boys; poor young teenagers, the majority of whom were black, had never been to school, came from broken homes and had low self esteem. 1993, in Brazil, was a year of dramatic public revelations about street children and everyone had an extreme opinion one way or another.

Some people make the road their stage, a popular peoples' theatre. Unfortunately, in Brazil and especially Rio, many people live on the street. Some permanently, others on a casual basis. People who live on the outskirts of the city, for example, go to the centre to find work, but do not always have the resources to return home every night. For this reason they sleep on the street and return home only at weekends.

Children and teenagers also live on the street even though the majority do have some blood relatives. Some begin to live on the street in order to save the money they would have spent on a return ticket home, others decide to leave their homes because their family cannot survive unless they go, or they run from domestic violence. These children are loose on the streets perpetrating small crimes, getting beaten, doing occasional work or trafficking drugs.

With a bit of money and political will it would be relatively simple to resolve these problems. In Brazil there have been some successful experiences in cities that are governed progressively. We have enough wealth to guarantee that problems like these are solved, but unfortunately the distance between the rich and the poor is so profound and unjust that it is comparable to the distance between the developed and undeveloped countries.

### The theatre group

I formed a partnership with two other *Curingas* of the Centre of the Theatre of the Oppressed in Rio de Janeiro (CTO-Rio), Geo Britto and Olivar Bendelak. We managed to invite about 20 young people from the street to the centre to form a theatre group. They improvised and tried to show through drama what they thought about their lives.

At times, some of these youngsters simply vanished from rehearsals and I didn't know how to find them. It was not possible to send a telegram or telephone them to find out why they were not at the rehearsal. The only way was to trust in the work that we had achieved so far. The way was to wait for the magic of theatre to bring them back; that the desire to act and to say something though theatre would bring them back. During this process some left and did not return.

These were young people that were used to running away, abandoning projects, leaving things. They were young people who do not believe in the future, who live for the day, do not plan for tomorrow and fear ties. It is understandable, even natural not to want ties to people or places after so many ties have been broken and so many people have passed through their lives.

Despite all of this and after a lot of hard work, we put on a show. It was *Teatro-Fórum*, Forum Theatre, which is theatre with audience participation. It was about the harsh reality of one young person and his family. Without means of survival with which the family could depend on, he was forced to leave the house to work. He sold candy and sweets on the street and came to know a whole new reality. The play was shocking and the actors interpreted the story accurately, believably, vigourously.

Every time that we presented a play, the young people would underestimate the public's interest in seeing it. They thought that people were afraid of seeing them, the '*marginais*' (outcasts and pariahs of society, unacceptable people). They were always worried about how people looked at them, thought of them. They spoke of people



**Figure 3 Theatre of the Oppressed in action**

hating them, only seeing the *marginais* with eyes that did not believe they could change or be anything else. It was hard to hear these things, it was hard to convince them of the contrary, it was hard for them to believe otherwise.

After one presentation, we went into a bakery and two employees approached us to find out what was going on. I stepped forward, anticipating the humiliation the children were about to suffer. I did not realise that I was also humiliating the children. I confirmed for them that they would always need the intervention of someone who is 'socially acceptable' in order to be able to eat in a snack bar.

We bought what we wanted, but the children did not want to eat in the bakery. We ate in the square and for the first time I realised what it meant to be marginalised. They had just been stars in a play, it had been a success and they ate in the square. This was not a picnic, this was social exclusion. I was telling them that they had rights, but I could never guarantee when they could exercise them. Eating in the square that day brought home many things. It was an extremely political day.

In July of 1993, there was a terrible slaughter, where street children were assassinated by military police. The guards of the public order, that should have guaranteed public security, shamefully attacked defenceless bodies of boys sleeping on the porch of the Church of Candelmas, *Igreja da Candelária* in the *Chacina* area. This attack took place in the middle of the night in the most covert form possible.

The bodies of those young boys made the headlines of every newspaper in every country and the world received news of the slaughter. Protests, demonstrations, revolt. And what happened to the members of the Theatre group? They disappeared. They were afraid and did not come back for rehearsals. It was impossible to think about

the theatre. What was the use of making the theatre after that horror? Why should they have presented a show?

### Street children speak

In that same month of July, in the Brazilian Centre of Culture, the 7th International Festival of Theatres of the Oppressed (7<sup>o</sup> FITO) took place, with the participation of 12 national and 12 international groups, bringing together about 150 strangers, among them artists, journalists and academics. It was crucial that the group presented at this forum. It could have been in the form of accusation, protest and alerting people about this type of violence. Unfortunately, many people in the city agreed with what had happened. Many times, general violence had transformed victims into culprits and some people thought that the best way to eradicate poverty was by eradicating the poor.

We managed to reunite some of the young people and they agreed to bring back the others who had fled. The National Movement of Street Boys and Girls, in partnership with the CTO-Rio, co-ordinated the work, and did everything they could to support and guarantee the security of the young artists. Everyone returned.

### General rehearsal

Although some doubted whether we had the commitment to go ahead, we arrived on the day of the presentation at the Centre of Culture. It is a beautiful and luxurious building, situated close to the metro in the *Chacina* area. On the one hand, we were proud to be performing in such a beautiful area. At the same time, the proximity of *Chacina* was terrifying and intimidating, with memories of what had been and the type of things that the children there had been subject to. Nonetheless, being in the Centre of Culture offered lots of artistic activities which were provided free. Not one of the young people of the group had ventured in there before. They did not

imagine that they could participate in what was offered there. I remembered then that some of them used to sleep outside, on the pavement by the Centre of Culture or nearby in *Candelária*.

Finally we transformed ourselves into artists and prepared to begin the play. The stage, the costumes, everything was ready. We walked on stage and took our places. We had been forced to transform the drama into a cry of protest that was to be heard throughout the world. We hoped that the audience in that great theatre would understand what we were doing and that through our work, they would realise what had happened. It was a full house, a full-to-capacity audience of English, French, Canadians, South Africans, people from Burkino Faso and Mozambique, Puerto Ricans, Indians, Germans and many, many Brazilians covered the stairs and spilled over onto the floor. They all squeezed in to see the children act out their lives. The theatre made this happen for us and everyone saw it. At the end of the performance there was great applause.

There then arrived the moment of public participation. I was the *Curinga*, and had to record the debate and encourage spectators to mount the stage and demonstrate their alternatives to the problem presented by the group. It was easy. The public were mobilised and full of ideas. Various people went on stage and occupied the area of the oppressed, and became the street children. At every intervention the children themselves became stronger and more secure. They knew what was being said. They were politicised and they had politicised the audience.

The open forum session was about to end when a Brazilian woman, about 35 years old, a middle class professional, asked me: "*How did you manipulate these children? How did you train them to give these responses? These street children sniff glue and aren't capable of giving these responses...*". I was perplexed. Until that moment no-one had articulated such sentiments. I was just thinking of a reply, when I was interrupted by one of the actors in the group, Marcia, a young mother who had just given her baby up for adoption. She spoke without permission, without embarrassment, without thinking, and responded to the question. "*Bárbara did not make us respond this way! She does not know anything of life on the street, she is just a theatre teacher. All of our replies are from our own heads, we are not trained to tell you them!*". Marcia continued by saying that children who sniffed glue lost consciousness. Marcia asked the woman if she had ever sniffed glue herself and confirmed that she was not speaking from experience. I was moved and I realised that I didn't need to protect Marcia, that my role was to encourage her to believe in herself and support her so that she could open doors by herself.

At the end, before he left, one young person turned to me and said: "*Bárbara, thank you! This was the first time that I did something in my life that was worthwhile*". My eyes overflowed with tears and my heart exploded with happiness. It was not common to hear words of gratitude from that group. He said that he had done something for the first time that was '*worthwhile*'. He had understood the value of his work and was proud of himself. What he said to me then, made me understand the value of my work and he helped me to see how I could go on to make the Street Childrens' Street Theatre.

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Sou Curinga de Teatro do Oprimido e atuo na coordenação do Centro de Teatro do Oprimido do Rio de Janeiro – CTO-Rio, que é dirigido pelo teatrólogo Augusto Boal. Curinga é um artista com função pedagógica, um especialista em Teatro do Oprimido, capacitado para entrar em cena, ministrar oficinas e cursos de TO, dirigir espetáculos, escrever textos e/ou coordenar o processo de construção do texto coletivo e conduzir a sessão de Teatro-Fórum.

Sou formada em Ciências Sociais e comecei a atuar profissionalmente como educadora em 1981, especificamente com alfabetização de crianças e adultos e capacitação de professores. Fui professora de escolas públicas e me especializei no trabalho com alunos com dificuldades de aprendizagem, os chamados 'problemáticos'. Nas reuniões de professores, era muito criticada porque minhas turmas passavam de péssimas a boas em pouco tempo. Era simples. Eu investigava o que os alunos sabiam fazer bem, o que realmente tinham aprendido, mesmo que esses conteúdos estivessem abaixo do necessário para aquela série. Depois que descobria em que eram bons, dava uma prova só com estes conteúdos. Então, obtinha excelentes resultados.

O efeito era impressionante. Os alunos ficavam orgulhosos com seus próprios resultados e ganhavam auto-confiança. Os boletins, ao invés de só terem notas vermelhas, passavam a ter notas azuis também. Não era uma farsa, ao contrário, era uma expressão real do nível de aprendizado do grupo. A partir daí, conseguia mudanças expressivas de comportamento e, aos poucos, introduzia os conteúdos novos e mais complexos. A diferença é que eu apresentava os conteúdos para alunos mais confiantes, o que aumentava a capacidade de aprendizado. Se os mesmos conteúdos fossem ensinados para alunos humilhados e sem auto-estima, os resultados não seriam tão positivos.

Foi dessa experiência que eu aprendi a sempre, em qualquer circunstância, ter como ponto de partida o saber das pessoas com as quais eu ia trabalhar. Paulo Freire, educador brasileiro, dizia que um verdadeiro educador deve abrir os olhos e os ouvidos antes de abrir a boca. Antes de pensarmos que temos algo de fundamental para

ensinar a alguém, precisamos saber que temos muito a aprender desse alguém. Daí podemos dialogar, pois entendemos que nosso interlocutor tem um saber próprio, uma forma específica de encarar a realidade e uma visão de mundo.

O CTO-Rio existe desde 1986 e tem como principais objetivos: a democratização dos meios de produção cultural e à difusão do TO no Brasil, através da formação de grupos populares de teatro e de multiplicadores da metodologia. Queremos que cada vez mais pessoas usem o teatro como linguagem de comunicação e estímulo à discussão dos mais variados temas.

O Teatro do Oprimido é um conjunto de exercícios, jogos e técnicas teatrais que visam à desmecanização física e intelectual de quem o pratica. A mecanização é causada pela repetição diária dos mesmos movimentos e ações e pela falta do exercício prático de trocar idéias com outras pessoas e de relativizar os próprios pensamentos que, muitas vezes, se petrificam em verdades dogmáticas.

O Teatro do Oprimido é um arsenal diversificado de técnicas, entre as quais o Teatro-Fórum: a teatralização de um problema real, no qual personagens oprimidos e opressores lutam por seus respectivos desejos e interesses. Os oprimidos fracassam e o público é convidado a entrar em cena, substitui-los e tentar, através da improvisação, modificar a situação original.

O principal projeto do CTO-Rio é o Teatro Legislativo: a partir da organização de grupos comunitários de Teatro-Fórum, teatralização dos problemas vividos por esses grupos e discussão pública dos mesmos, através das apresentações teatrais. As intervenções dos espectadores são organizadas pelos Curingas do CTO-Rio em relatórios. Além de participar entrando em cena, o público pode apresentar sugestões por escrito. Todas as idéias apresentadas são analisadas por uma equipe de técnicos legislativos que tem a função de transformá-las em leis, em ações jurídicas ou em iniciativas políticas. Essas propostas são apresentadas a parlamentares identificados com as causas populares.

Trabalhando desde 1992 com grupos populares, acumulei

dezenas de estórias interessantes para contar. Creio que poderia escrever um livro. Enquanto o livro não existe, conto aqui uma delas:

Algumas pessoas fazem da rua o seu palco, como forma de democratizarem o teatro. Infelizmente, aqui no Brasil, especialmente no Rio, existem muitas pessoas que fazem da rua o seu lar. Alguns de maneira permanente, outros de forma eventual. As pessoas que moram na periferia e vêm para o centro em busca de trabalho, nem sempre têm recursos para voltarem para casa todas as noites, por isso dormem nas ruas durante a semana e regressam para casa apenas nos finais de semana.

Crianças e adolescentes também vivem nas ruas, apesar de a grande maioria possuir laços familiares. Uns começam a ficar na rua para economizar a passagem de volta para casa, outros resolvem sair de suas casas por causa da desestrutura familiar, pela necessidade de sobrevivência ou por causa da violência doméstica. São algumas centenas de crianças e jovens soltos nas ruas cometendo pequenos delitos, pedindo esmolas, fazendo trabalhos eventuais ou servindo aos traficantes.

Com algum dinheiro e com um pouco de vontade política seria relativamente fácil resolver esse problema. No próprio Brasil, existem experiências bem sucedidas em cidades administradas por governos progressistas. Aqui existe riqueza suficiente para garantir que problemas como estes sejam resolvidos, porque no Brasil a distância entre os mais ricos e os mais pobres é tão profunda quanto a distância existente entre os países desenvolvidos e os subdesenvolvidos.

Em 1993, eu trabalhava com um grupo teatral formado por meninos e meninas de rua, jovens adolescentes pobres, a maioria negros, com baixo nível de escolaridade, oriundos de famílias desestruturadas e com baixa auto-estima. Mais ou menos 15 jovens fazendo improvisações e tentando mostrar, através do teatro, o que eles pensavam sobre suas vidas.

As vezes, alguns desses jovens, simplesmente desapareciam dos ensaios e eu não tinha como localizá-los. Não era possível mandar um telegrama ou telefonar para saber porque faltaram ao ensaio. O jeito era confiar no trabalho desenvolvido. O jeito era esperar que a magia do teatro os trouxessem de volta, que o desejo de atuar e de dizer algo através do teatro os estimulasse a voltar. Nesse processo, alguns foram embora e não voltaram. Entretanto, a maioria sumia, mas depois voltava. Algo os trazia de volta.

Eram jovens habituados a fugir, a abandonar projetos, a deixar coisas por fazer. Jovens que não acreditavam em futuro, habituados a viver o hoje, a não planejar o

amanhã, a ter medo de se vincular. Compreensível, depois de tantos vínculos rompidos, de estarem sempre vendo as pessoas simplesmente passarem por suas vidas, era natural esperar que não quisessem se vincular a nada, a ninguém.

Pois bem, depois de muito trabalho, montamos um espetáculo de Teatro-Fórum sobre a dura realidade de um jovem e sua família. A falta de recursos para a família sobreviver obrigou-o a sair de casa para trabalhar na rua, onde novas realidades se apresentaram. O espetáculo ficou forte e os atores interpretavam com vigor e verdade.

A cada vez que íamos nos apresentar, os jovens desconfiavam do real interesse do público em assisti-los. Achavam que o público tinha medo deles e os olhavam como marginais. Estavam sempre questionando o jeito que as pessoas olhavam para eles, o que as pessoas pensavam deles. Diziam que tinham ódio, porque sempre eram vistos como marginais e que as pessoas não acreditavam que poderiam ser outra coisa na vida. Era duro ouvir aquelas coisas, era difícil convencê-los do contrário, era difícil acreditar no contrário.

Depois de uma apresentação, entramos numa padaria e dois funcionários se aproximaram para saber o que estava acontecendo. Me adiantei para protegê-los da humilhação previsível e não percebi que também causava uma humilhação, confirmando para eles que sempre precisariam da intervenção de uma pessoa 'socialmente aceita', para conseguirem permissão para lancharem numa padaria.

Compramos o que desejávamos, mas eles não quiseram lancharem na padaria. Lanchamos na praça. Pela primeira vez realmente tive a consciência do que significava ser um 'marginalizado'. Fizeram uma apresentação teatral, foram estrelas, fizeram sucesso e estavam comendo na praça. Não era um pique-nique, era exclusão social. Eu dizia para eles que tinham direitos, mas não podia garantir que pudessem exercê-los. Comendo na praça, depois de fazer teatro, entendi muitas coisas. Foi um dia extremamente politizador.

Nessa mesma época, meninos de rua foram vítimas de chacina feita por policiais militares. Os guardiães da ordem pública, os que deveriam garantir, no meio da noite, da forma mais covarde possível, descarregaram suas armas nos corpos indefesos de meninos que dormiam amontoados na calçada da igreja da Candelária.

No dia seguinte, os corpos daqueles jovens eram manchetes em todos os jornais do país. O mundo acordava com a notícia da chacina da Candelária. Protestos, manifestações, revolta... E os integrantes do grupo de teatro? Sumiram. Ficaram com medo. Não

vieram para o ensaio. Também como pensar em teatro diante daquele horror? De que serviria fazer teatro? Pra quê apresentar o espetáculo?

No Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil estava acontecendo o 7º Festival Internacional de Teatro do Oprimido (7º FITO) evento que contava com a participação de 12 grupos nacionais e 12 grupos internacionais, reunindo cerca de 150 estrangeiros entre artistas, jornalistas e estudiosos do tema. Era fundamental que o grupo se apresentasse. Seria uma forma de denunciar, protestar e alertar as pessoas em relação a esse tipo de violência. Infelizmente, muitas pessoas na cidade estavam de acordo com o que tinha acontecido. Muitas vezes, a violência generalizada transforma vítimas em réus. São essas idéias que fazem muitas pessoas pensarem que a melhor maneira de acabar com a pobreza é acabando com os pobres.

Conseguimos reunir parte dos jovens e eles concordaram em trazer os outros de volta. O Movimento Nacional de Meninos e Meninas de Rua, parceiro do CTO-Rio na coordenação do trabalho, deu todo o apoio, garantindo a segurança dos jovens artistas. Todos voltaram.

Ensaio geral. Dia da apresentação. Alguns duvidavam que poderiam cumprir com o compromisso. Chegaram ao Centro Cultural, prédio lindo, ambiente suntuoso, situado a poucos metros do local da Chacina. Por um lado estavam orgulhosos de entrarem num lugar tão bonito para se apresentarem. Ao mesmo tempo, a proximidade do local da Chacina os apavorava, os amedrontava, era como uma lembrança de quem eram e a que tipo de coisas estavam sujeitos.

Apesar de ser um Centro Cultural que oferece diversas atividades artísticas e de lazer gratuitamente, nenhum dos jovens do grupo tinha se atrevido a entrar naquele local anteriormente. Não imaginavam que poderiam desfrutar da programação oferecida ali. Fiquei pensando se alguns deles já não haviam dormido do lado de fora, na própria calçada do Centro Cultural ou ali ao lado, na Candelária.

Finalmente entraram e se transformaram em artistas. Figurinos, cenários, tudo pronto. Entraram em cena e ocuparam o palco. Tinham força, transformaram o espetáculo em um grito de protesto. Foram ouvidos nos quatro cantos do mundo. Acho que entenderam o que estavam fazendo e perceberam qual era a proposta do trabalho que realizavam. Casa cheia. Platéia completamente lotada. Ingleses, franceses, canadenses, sul-africanos, burquinabês, alemães e muitos, muitos brasileiros se amontoavam nas escadas, se espelhavam pelo chão e se apertavam para conseguirem vê-los representar suas vidas. O teatro fazia com que todos pudessem ver a realidade de forma amplificada. Ao final do espetáculo foram muito aplaudidos.

Como acontece na sessão de Teatro-Fórum, era chegado o momento do público participar. Eu era a Curinga, devia conduzir o debate teatral e estimular os espectadores a entrarem em cena e a mostrarem alternativas para o problema apresentado pelo grupo. Foi fácil. O público estava mobilizado e cheio de idéias. Várias pessoas entraram em cena e ocuparam o lugar dos oprimidos, ou seja, dos meninos de rua. A cada intervenção eles ficavam mais fortes, mais seguros. Sabiam o que estavam dizendo. Estavam se politizando e politizando a platéia. Já estava quase encerrando a sessão de Fórum, quando uma mulher, brasileira, mais ou menos 35 anos, classe média, profissional da cultura, me questionou: 'como foi o processo de construção dos personagens?' como você treinou esses jovens para terem essas respostas?' 'os meninos de rua quando cheiram cola não são capazes de terem essas respostas'...

Fiquei perplexa, até naquele momento, ali no Festival de Teatro do Oprimido, havia alguém que não acreditava na capacidade de produção e de articulação deles. Já estava me preparando para responder, quando fui bruscamente interrompida por uma das integrantes do grupo, Márcia, uma jovem mãe que teve um bebê e já havia autorizado sua doação. Ela tomou a palavra sem pedir licença, sem vergonha, sem pensar e respondeu às questões dizendo que eu não havia treinado resposta nenhuma, que eu não sabia nada da vida na rua, que eu era apenas a professora de teatro, que todas as respostas que eles deram saíram da cabeça deles, sem treinar. Continuou respondendo e disse que os meninos quando cheiram cola não perdem a consciência. Questionou a espectadora se ela já havia cheirado cola e afirmou que sabia o que estava dizendo por experiência própria.

Fiquei emocionada e me dei conta que não precisava protegê-la, que o meu papel era estimulá-la a acreditar em si própria e apoiá-la para que pudesse abrir suas próprias portas.

Ao final, um dos jovens virou-se para mim e disse: '*Bárbara, obrigada! Pela primeira vez eu fiz alguma coisa que preste na vida.*'

Meus olhos transbordaram de lágrimas e meu coração explodiu de alegria. Não era comum ouvir palavras de agradecimento dentro daquele grupo. Ele me disse que fez '*alguma coisa que preste na vida*'. Ele estava entendendo o valor do seu trabalho, por isso estava orgulhoso de si próprio. Ao me dizer aquelas palavras, ele me fez entender o valor do meu trabalho e me ajudou a perceber para quê eu fazia teatro de rua com meninos de rua.

**Bárbara Santos, Avenida rio Branco 179-6º andar,  
Centro Rio de Janeiro, cep: 20040-007, Brasil.  
Tel/Fax: +55 21 220 7940; Email: beta@domain.com.br**

## Pairing of proverbs to find your partner

### Introduction

This is a variant of a well-known introductions exercise used as an 'ice-breaker' to introduce participants to each other in workshop settings. It was 'invented' at the 1999 annual workshop of the regional action-research programme on the 'Shared Management of Common Property Resources in the Sahel' project, jointly undertaken by SOS Sahel/GB and the Drylands Programme of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

### Objective

To break down language barriers and initial feelings of embarrassment between workshop participants not all speaking the same language. The game pairs participants by different language group (English–French) and, once paired up, gets them to interview their partner as best they can and then present him or her back to the rest of the workshop.

This game works best when there are participants from two language groups in roughly equal numbers.

### Materials

Paper, markers and two containers (bowl, box, hat, etc.).

### Steps

#### Preparatory phase

- Prior to the workshop starting (i.e. the evening before), discretely ask roughly half of the participants from both language groups to give you a proverb from their country, area, home town, etc.. Insist on those that are unusual or funny. Do this in a way which makes them think you are just interested in proverbs.
- You need one proverb per two participants. For example, if there are 20 participants you will need 10 proverbs. Collect more proverbs than you need in order to have some choice.
- From the stock of proverbs, choose an equal number of proverbs from each of the two language groups and

write them down in their 'original' language on a piece of paper. Fold up these papers and mark clearly in shorthand the language in which it is written (e.g. FP = French proverb; EP = English Proverb). In the example of 20 participants, you will have five proverbs in English and five in French.

- For each of the proverbs chosen, identify an 'action' that could be mimed to illustrate the proverb. Write this action in the **other language** on a piece of paper, fold and clearly label in shorthand (e.g. EA = English action; FA = French action). Again, in the example of 20 participants, you will have five actions in English and five in French.
- Put all the English Proverb and English Action slips in one container and all the French Proverb and French Action slips in another container.

#### Workshop phase

1. At the start of the workshop, or at the moment when you want the participants to get to know each other, explain that you will be doing an introductions game with a difference.
2. Ask all English-speaking participants to choose one slip of paper from the English language container and the same for the French speakers. Beforehand, you will have ensured that you know who are the English and French speakers and that the numbers are equal. This may require asking some people who are bilingual to accept to be one or other language group for the purpose of the exercise.
3. Ask each person to read his/her piece of paper in silence and not to comment on it.
4. Now explain the game.
  - All those people with a slip of paper coded EA or FA should rise and come to the front of the workshop. All the others with EP or FP slips of paper are to remain seated.
  - Explain that those in the front of the workshop have instructions to mime a specific action which illustrates a

specific proverb held by a seated person who is in the other language group.

- Explain that those people with the 'miming actions' have to act them out while those with the 'proverbs' have to identify which of the mimes matches their proverb.
- Once they have identified their partner, they should spend 10-15 minutes interviewing each other with a view to presenting back to the main group.

5. Ensure that everyone understands what is expected of him or her and why and then ask them to begin.

## Our experience

It sounds very complicated, but in effect it is quite easy and proved to be a very successful exercise in pairing up people with someone speaking a different language to his or her own. Laughter was the essential ingredient in breaking down people's inhibitions in expressing

themselves in a language they do not usually use. Below are the proverbs we used at our annual workshop.

- He who walks heavily always steps on big spines (Niger)
- When two bulls fight, only the grass suffers
- When you see an elephant, you don't kill him, you kill his shadow (Sudan)
- If a woman were an axe, she could not crack a head (Sudan)
- Too many cooks spoil the broth (Britain)
- Les fesses d'un bon berger sont maigres (Mali)
- Meme le lait de la vache noir est blanc (Niger)
- Là où le berger chase le lion on le deloge (Niger)
- Quelqu'un qui suivre deux routes sera perdu (Sudan)
- Un main ne se lave pas (Niger)
- On ne peut pas razer la tete d'un absent (Mali)

**Ced Hesse, Drylands Programme, IIED, 4 Hanover St., Edinburgh EH2 2EN, UK. Email: [ced.hesse@iied.org](mailto:ced.hesse@iied.org) and Pippa Trench, SOS Sahel/GB, 1 Tolpuddle St., London N1 0XT, UK. Email: [pctrench@eggconnect.net](mailto:pctrench@eggconnect.net)**



# Notes

# Notes



Welcome to the *In Touch* section of *PLA Notes*. Through these pages we hope to create a more participatory resource for readers of the *Notes*, 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 the point-of-contact 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 should 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: *PLA Notes*, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Programme, IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD, UK.  
 Fax: + 44 (0)20 7388 2826 Email: [sustag@iied.org](mailto:sustag@iied.org)

***PLA Notes* is published in February, June and October.  
 Please submit material two months before the publication date.**

## Books and Reports

### The participatory process for supporting collaborative management of natural resources: an overview

Andrew Ingles, Arne Musch and Helle Qwist-Hoffman  
FAO; Forests, Trees and People, 1999

This concise publication provides an overview of how to promote people's participation in the management of natural resources, with a particular focus on collaborative management systems. The report provides a background to the principles of collaborative management and participatory methodologies, then suggests how participatory processes can support collaborative resource management. It is a valuable resource for all those engaged in issues around collaborative management of natural resources. This document is also available on-line at [www.mkeonginfo.org](http://www.mkeonginfo.org) and is part of a new set of materials on participatory processes currently being developed by the Community Forestry Unit of FAO.

For further information, please contact: **The Senior Community Forestry Officer, Forestry Policy and Planning Division – Forestry Department, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy.**  
**Fax: +39 06 5705 5514; Email: [ftpp@fao.org](mailto:ftpp@fao.org)**

### Participatory development in Kenya – lessons and challenges, volume 1.

ISBN – 9966 9689 0 3

Drawing on the rapid spread, both at local and global levels, of participatory approaches, this volume presents critical reflections on the challenges and concerns facing participatory development in Kenya. Through five case studies, we are presented with experiences and challenges faced by practitioners of participatory approaches in Kenya. This also has taken steps to redress the imbalance of documentation written by people from developed countries and to provide more Kenya-specific case studies. Contact: **Participatory Methodologies Forum of Kenya (PAMFORK), PO Box 2645, KNH Post Office, Nairobi, Kenya.** Tel/Fax: +254 2 716 609;  
**Email: [pamfork@nbnet.co.ke](mailto:pamfork@nbnet.co.ke)**



### From the Roots Up: strengthening organizational capacity through guided self-assessment

Capacity Building, Field Guide 2. World Neighbors

This practical new field guide is designed to help NGOs and community groups recognise their own potential, identify issues for programme and organisational development and decide for themselves what actions to take. The guide

provides an overview of organisational capacity-building and contains information about practical participatory methods aimed at improving the effectiveness and sustainability of organisations. Other chapters look at documentation and analysis, exercises for optimising group dynamics, prioritising tasks and how such tools can be used in bigger contexts. For further information, please contact **World Neighbors, 4127 N.W. 122nd Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73120-8869, USA.** Tel: +1 405 752 9700; Fax: +1 405 752 9393; Email: [order@wn.org](mailto:order@wn.org); Website: [www.wn.org](http://www.wn.org)

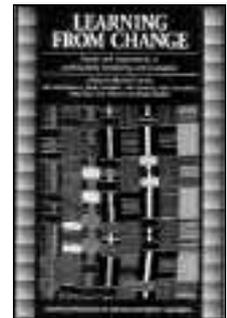
### Learning from change – issues and experiences in participatory monitoring and evaluation.

Edited by Marisol Estrella, with Jutta Blauert, Dindo Campilan, John Gaventia, Julian Gonsalves, Irene Guijt, Deb Johnson and Roger Ricafort.

ISBN 1 85339 469 6

This publication explores the use of participation in monitoring and evaluation of programmes through bringing together a broad range of case studies and discussions between practitioners, academics, donors and policy makers. Through this, it looks at conceptual, methodological, institutional and policy issues in participatory monitoring and evaluation, highlighting the challenges and benefits of the approach. Divided into sections, Part 1 provides a general overview of participatory monitoring and evaluation whilst Part 2 presents a range of case studies illustrating the diversity of contexts in which PM&E is being applied. Part 3 raises key issues and challenges arising from the case studies and proposes areas for future research and action.

For further information, please contact: **Intermediate Technology Publications, 103-105 Southampton Row, London, WC1B 4HL, UK.** Tel: +44 (0) 20 7436 9761; Fax: +44 (0) 20 7436 2013; Email: [itpubs@itpubs.org.uk](mailto:itpubs@itpubs.org.uk); Website: [www.oneworld.org/itdg/publications.html](http://www.oneworld.org/itdg/publications.html)



### Reaching the parts... community mapping: working together to tackle social exclusion and food poverty

ISBN – 1 903060 125

This report brings together the results of the Community Mapping Project in which local people used participatory appraisal techniques to analyse their food economies in communities in the UK. The report presents case studies from the project, showing how food poverty affects people in different ways and how food problems can be solved within communities. It presents community action plans and a selection of methods that were used in the project, along with some recommendations and conclusions around issues of food security in the UK context, and demonstrates a wide

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range of lessons for other people interested in community mapping.

Please contact **Jacqui Webster, Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, 94 White Lion Street, London, N1 9PF, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 20 7837 1228; Fax: +44 (0) 20 7837 1141; Email: sustain@sustainweb.org; Website: www.sustainweb.org**

**Transforming bureaucracies – institutionalising participation and people centred processes in natural resource management – an annotated bibliography.**

IIED/IDS

ISBN 1 899825 61 4

Large-scale participatory natural resource management programmes often include national governments, large NGOs and donor agencies as major actors. Such organisations are constantly challenged to become flexible, innovative and transparent by the scaling up of participatory processes to include more people and places. Through an action-oriented research project, the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) examine the dynamics of institutionalising participatory approaches and people-centred processes for natural resource management. This bibliography includes 390 references on particular themes, including gender and organisational change, policies for participation and methods for institutional and impact analysis.

For further information, please contact **The Bookshop, IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London, WC1H 0DD, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 20 7388 2117; Fax: +44 (0) 20 7388 2826; Email: bookshop@iied.org; website: www.iied.org/bookshop**

**Participation in poverty reduction strategies: a synthesis of experience with participatory approaches to policy design, implementation and monitoring**

Rosemary McGee with Andy Norton. IDS Working Paper 109, May 2000.

ISBN 1 85864 304 X.; ISSN 1353 6141

The purpose of this report is to review the experience to date in applying participatory approaches to macro-level policy formulation, implementation and monitoring, with a view to supporting country-led facilitation of inclusive participation in the Poverty Reduction Strategy process. A wide range of participatory experiences are reviewed, ranging from research initiatives, aid co-ordination processes, budgetary analysis and donor country strategies. The document presents significant challenges to be overcome and emphasises the need for a learning approach and internal institutional change, as the participatory reduction strategy develops.



Contact: **IDS Publications Office, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, Brighton, BN1 9RE, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 1273 678 269; Fax: +44 (0) 1273 691 6471; Email: ids.books@sussex.ac.uk; Website: www.ids.ac.uk/ids/publicat**

**Learning together – the agricultural worker's participatory sourcebook.**

Susan Stewart

ISBN – 1 886532 10 9

Learning Together is a manual for people working in agricultural development to help them incorporate participatory training into their work. It is structured in terms of training-related issues and organised around four sections: how adults learn and the most effective training methods for them; a step-by-step guide to the training schedule; important issues in livestock and agricultural training and a reference section.

The book can be purchased through **Heifer Project International, PO Box 808, 1015 Louisiana Street, Little Rock, AR 72202/2815, USA. Tel: +1 501 907 2600; website: www.heifer.org**

**Rural appraisal: rapid, relaxed and participatory**

Robert Chambers

Translation in to Hindi 1997

As part of its work to make more information concerning participation available in other languages, the Institute for Participatory Practices (PRAXIS), India, in conjunction with ActionAid, has translated the publication, *Rural Appraisal, Rapid, Relaxed and Participatory* by Robert Chambers, into Hindi.

PRAXIS is also a member of the Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action (RCPLA) Network which aims to share information on participation and which has identified translation as a key issue.

To obtain a copy of the publication or for further information on the work of PRAXIS, please contact the **Institute for Participatory Practices (PRAXIS), 12 Pataliputra Colony, Patna 800013, India. Tel/Fax: +91 612 262027; Email: praxis@actionaidindia.org**



## Programmes/projects

**MELISSA Programme – Managing the Environment Locally in Sub-Saharan Africa**

This programme is a joint partnership between the European Commission, the World Bank and the Swedish/Norwegian Governments. Launched in 1996, the programme aims to assist local governments and communities improve their living and environmental conditions through capacity development,

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knowledge sharing, partnership development, networking and participatory projects.

For further information on the work of the MELISSA Programme, contact: **Dr. Ousseynou Eddje Diop, Regional Co-ordinator, World Bank – MELISSA, Pretoria, South Africa.** Tel: +27 12 349 2994; Fax: +27 12 349 2080; Website: [www.melissa.org](http://www.melissa.org).

## Workshops and training courses

**Promoting participation in community development – models, methods and best practices.**

November 30th – December 3rd, 2000  
Knoxville, Tennessee, USA

This workshop is aimed at practitioners, researchers and community development workers who want to integrate public participation in community development projects. Running over 4 days, this workshop will focus specifically on models, methods, tools and best practices for promoting participation. The workshop will provide a forum for presentation of tools and models that have been tried and tested in a variety of contexts and will also facilitate small group discussion sessions. Plenary discussions will look at areas such as participatory monitoring and evaluation.

Contact: **The Community Partnership Center , c/o PPCD Workshop 2000, 410 Aconda Court, Knoxville, TN 37996-0645, USA.** Email: [ahebert@utk.edu](mailto:ahebert@utk.edu)



**A-Week: Participation in local development**

11th – 15th December 2000

The Netherlands

This is an intensive five-day course aiming to introduce participatory approaches and their use in local development. Participatory approaches introduced will include: Rapid Appraisal of Agricultural Knowledge Systems (RAAKS), Participatory Technology Development (PTD), Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Theatre for Development amongst others. Particular emphasis is given to the role of the development worker as a facilitator. For further information, please contact the **Agromisa Foundation, PO Box 41, 6700 AA, Wageningen, The Netherlands.** Tel: +31 317 412 217; Fax: +31 317 417 178; Email: [agromisa@wxs.nl](mailto:agromisa@wxs.nl)

**International Training Course on Systemic Approaches in Participatory Forest Management**

5th – 16th February 2001. West Bengal, India

This course will provide participants with a focus on participatory forest management, through looking at participation as a process, interventions in participation,

institutionalisation processes and ecological/economic analysis in participatory forest management. There will also be a field work component.

Contact: **Professor S. B. Roy, Course Director, Indian Institute of Bio-Social Research (IBRAD), 3A Hindustan Road, Calcutta –700 029, West Bengal, India.** Tel: +91 33 464 3105/7370; fax: +91 33 466 6554; Email: [ibrad@giasc101.vsnl.net.in](mailto:ibrad@giasc101.vsnl.net.in)

**MSc/Diploma course in Childhood Studies**  
University of Edinburgh, UK

The University of Edinburgh is offering a new interdisciplinary postgraduate degree in Childhood Studies, in which the rights of children are taken as a central theme. The course seeks to provide the opportunity for students to develop skills in consultation work with children and young people in a participatory way.

For further information and an application form, please contact **Administrative Secretary, Graduate School of Social and Political Studies, Old Surgeons' Hall, High School Yards, Edinburgh, EH1 1LZ, UK.**

Tel: +44 (0) 131 650 6323; Fax: +44 (0) 131 650 2390;

Email: [Soc.Sci.GradSchool@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Soc.Sci.GradSchool@ed.ac.uk). Website:

[www.ed.ac.uk/social\\_policy/chindex.htm](http://www.ed.ac.uk/social_policy/chindex.htm)

## Resource Centres

**The Development Resource Centre (DRC)**  
New Zealand

This resource centre is an independent, non-profit organisation which provides information, education and training on development and global issues. Based in New Zealand, the DRC organises training courses and seminars around participatory approaches and provides a regular update of new training opportunities and resources concerning participatory approaches.

For further information, contact **The Development Resource Centre (DRC), Sixth Floor, Rossmore House, 123 Molesworth Street, Wellington, Aotearoa, New Zealand.** Tel: +64 4 472 9549; Fax: +64 4 472 3622; Email: [drc@apc.org.nz](mailto:drc@apc.org.nz) Website: [www.drc.org.nz](http://www.drc.org.nz)

**Participatory Avenues website**

[www.iapad.org](http://www.iapad.org)

This website aims at sharing progress in visualising people's knowledge regarding integrated conservation initiatives. The site encourages the adoption of participatory methods for mapping and land use planning to improve community-based natural resource management, provides a range of grassroots-based research, planning and monitoring tools and promotes the diffusion of Participatory 3-Dimensional Modelling as a tool to merge people's knowledge and traditional spatial information.

For further information on the site, please visit [www.iapad.org](http://www.iapad.org)

# RCPLA Network

In this section, we aim to update readers of activities of the **Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action (RCPLA) Network** ([www.rcpla.org](http://www.rcpla.org)) and its members.

For more information, please contact the RCPLA Network Steering Group:

- **Fernando Dick**, Dirección de Programas de Investigación y Desarrollo (DPID), Universidad Núr, Casilla 3273, Ave Cristo Redentor no 100, Santa Cruz, BOLIVIA. Email: [participa@nur.edu](mailto:participa@nur.edu)
- **Helen Kitavi Magolo**, Participatory Methodologies Forum of Kenya (PAMFORK), Jabavu Road, PCEA Jitegemea Flats, Flat no. D3, PO Box 51582, Nairobi, KENYA. Email: [pamfork@nbnet.co.ke](mailto:pamfork@nbnet.co.ke)
- **Paul Mincher**, IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD. UK. Email: [paul.mincher@iied.org](mailto:paul.mincher@iied.org)
- **Rabi Chitrakar**, Nepal Participatory Action Network (NEPAN), Batule Ghar, Dilli Bazar, Kathmandu, NEPAL. Email: [nepan@mos.com.np](mailto:nepan@mos.com.np)
- **Emad Morris**, Centre for Development Services, 4 Ahmed Prasha Street, Garden City, Cairo, EGYPT. Email: [cds.lrc@nearest.org](mailto:cds.lrc@nearest.org)

Welcome to the latest news and updates from the members of the RCPLA Network. At the time of going to press, all the members of the network were busy at the RCPLA meeting, held in Egypt from 23rd – 30th September 2000. This event was very important in defining the network's activities and focus over the next few years. Some key issues arising included maximising the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for exchanging information about participatory approaches, the issue of documentation from the grassroots levels, regionalisation, resource centre management and fundraising for information related work. The outcomes of the workshop will be presented in a future issue of PLA Notes.

In the meantime, on to some of the activities that the RCPLA Network members have either been involved in or are planning for the future.

## The Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR), Philippines

IIRR, in conjunction with its Learning Resource Centre, is offering the following training courses for October – December 2000.

- Development and management of a training programme – October 2nd – 27th 2000
- Gender in programme management – November 6th – 4th 2000
- Farmer led extension – November 13th – December 6th 2000
- Community-based integrated watershed management – November 20th – December 8th 2000.

IIRR's courses are aimed for development managers and others involved in development work and focus on a

mixture of class and field experience and the use of participatory approaches. For further information on any of the above, please contact the **Education and Training Department, IIRR, Y.C. James Yen Center, Silang 4118, Cavite, Philippines.**

**Tel: +63 46 414 24 17; Fax: +63 46 414 24 23;**

**Email: [etd.iirr@pworld.net.ph](mailto:etd.iirr@pworld.net.ph)**

## The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) – UK

The website for the Participation Group at IDS has been redesigned and updated, including putting increasing amounts of information produced by the Participation Group in full text on the web. The latest edition of their newsletter, the *Participation Page*, is available at the site on-line or in hard copy by request and looks at the issues around Popular Communications, drawing from the workshop held at IDS around this subject earlier this year (see Howard and Scott-Villiers, this issue). With the onset of autumn, the next phase of the group's participatory research is starting with key themes being the deepening of quality and sustainability of participation, as well as gaining a better understanding of its meaning, applications and contributions to the development process. Two new programmes of related work are also starting, the first looking at participation and local governance and the second looking at citizenship, participation and accountability.

All materials produced by the Participation Group at IDS are also available, along with many others, in the PRA Reading Room. For further information about how to access these resources, please contact **Jane Stevens, IDS, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, BN1 9RE, UK.**  
**Email: [JaneS@ids.ac.uk](mailto:JaneS@ids.ac.uk)**

## Uganda Participatory Development Network's annual workshop

UPDNet held their annual workshop in August 2000 on the issue of '*Sustaining Participation – what are the challenges?*'. This interesting theme brought together a wide range of practitioners from a variety of different organisations involved in participatory development in Uganda. Please see the review of the workshop by Peter Okiira earlier in this issue.

## Dirección de Programas de Investigación y Desarrollo (DPID), Universidad Núr, Bolivia

The host organisation of the Bolivian Resource Centre, located at Nur University's Department of Programmes and Research (DPID), which is also the co-ordinating body for the National Working Group on Participatory Methodologies (GNT-P), has just completed a project related to strengthening the National Dialogue process in Bolivia. The goal of this project was to experiment with different approaches for strengthening the participation of local people in the design of national poverty reduction strategies. The project, funded by DFID and UNDP, involved a series of case studies in different regions of Bolivia which aimed to strengthen the capacity of local people to participate in the process, to understand the obstacles which prevent effective participation by differentiated groups (gender and ethnic), and to pioneer the use of techniques which emphasised defining the roles and responsibilities of different actors in combating poverty.

Given that the main goal of the project was to generate learning about how to best engage local people in these national planning processes, we are producing a series of reports of the different case studies, a video, and a CD ROM which we hope to share with other organisations around Latin America and the world. The Resource Centre will be in charge of this documentation and dissemination process and has been developing a web-based technology which will make it possible for individual members in Bolivia and others around the world to both access and post documents related to the topic of participatory governance and policy work.

The Centre is also seeking to build its library and database of information related to participation in national policy processes and building the capacity of local people to make these processes work for them. We would invite everyone to send us materials and information from your own countries regarding these topics. You can visit our working web site at: <http://desarrollo.nur.edu>. For further information on DPID, please contact **DPID, Universidad Núr, Casilla 3273, Ave Cristo Redendor (av. Banzer), no. 100, Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Tel: +591 3 363939; Fax: +591 3 331850; Email: [participa@nur.edu](mailto:participa@nur.edu) Website: [www.nur.edu](http://www.nur.edu)**



# Other Publications from the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods (SARL) Programme

## Gatekeepers Series

The Gatekeeper Series, published by the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods programme, highlights key topics in the field of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management. The aim is to provide an accessible and informed briefing on major policy issues to an institutional and individual readership, comprising decision-makers within international agencies, development banks, national governments, universities, research institutes and NGOs throughout the world.

The Series is published 3 times a year and includes 91 papers to date.

Subscriptions to the Gatekeepers Series are free of charge to Southern individuals and organisations.

Subscription prices for OECD countries are as follows:

Individual	One year – <b>£25</b> or <b>US\$40</b>	Two years – <b>£45</b> or <b>US\$72</b>
Institutional	One year – <b>£75</b> or <b>US\$120</b>	Two years – <b>£140</b> or <b>US\$224</b>

The Gatekeeper Series is currently funded by SIDA, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

The Series editors welcome contributions of papers on key or emerging themes, especially from authors in the South. For further details of how to submit a paper, please contact the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Programme at IIED.

Previous topics include:

Sustainable intensification

Integrated land and water management

Biodiversity

Farmer participatory research

Organisational learning and institutional change

Agricultural policy reform

Livelihood security and agrarian change

**For further information on the Series and a subscription form, please contact Holly Ashley, Subscriptions Administrator, the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), 3 Endsleigh Street, London, WC1H 0DD, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 20 7288 3117, Fax: +44 (0) 20 7388 2826 Email: [subscriptions@iied.org](mailto:subscriptions@iied.org) Web: [www.iied.org/agri/gatekeep.html](http://www.iied.org/agri/gatekeep.html)**

## Discussion Papers

The SARL Discussion Papers present work-in-progress and preliminary findings from the SARL Programme and its collaborators. The Discussion Papers offer food for thought about the livelihoods of rural people who are affected by ecological, economic and social and political change, and about the factors that affect the emergence and spread of sustainable agriculture and rural revitalisation. They are designed for a diverse audience of researchers, practitioners, planners, policy makers and educators.

### **Participatory Monitoring and Impact Assessment of Sustainable Agriculture Initiatives: an introduction to the key elements. By Irene Guijt, SARL Discussion Paper 1. June 1998**

This document is a practical, methodological introduction to setting up a participatory monitoring process for sustainable agriculture initiatives. It explains why interest in participatory monitoring is growing, introduces several key concepts and identifies steps in developing a monitoring system. Price £13. Available in English (order no: 6139) forthcoming in Portuguese.

### **Changing Views on Change: participatory approaches to monitoring the environment. By Joanne Abbot and Irene Guijt, SARL Discussion Paper 2. June 1998**

This document reviews participatory approaches to monitoring in the context of tracking biophysical changes in general and specifically, of projects focusing on environmental regeneration. It explores the entire monitoring process focusing around a central question: What is the role of different stakeholders in each of these stages? Price £13. Available in English (6140), Portuguese (6140P) and Spanish (6140S).

For further information about the SARL programme, contact [sustag@iied.org](mailto:sustag@iied.org)

## Other publications and ordering

For details on ordering any of the above or to get information on other IIED publications, please contact the IIED Bookshop ([bookshop@iied.org](mailto:bookshop@iied.org)) or visit the Bookshop web pages (<http://www.iied.org/bookshop>).