

66

participatory learning and action

Tools for supporting sustainable natural resource management and livelihoods



Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) – formerly *PLA Notes* and *RRA Notes* – was established in 1987, to allow 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’.

The *PLA* series is 25 years old this year and at this important milestone and with the drafting of its new strategy, IIED is taking stock to look at *PLA*’s legacy and future direction, and the series has now been put on hold. Over the past year, the *PLA* team and other colleagues from IIED have been carrying out an internal consultation on the future of *PLA* and we are now awaiting the findings from an external evaluation, which has been exploring future options for the series. The review may present options on appropriate publication models – it may also recommend that *PLA* be discontinued. Final decisions will be posted on the website towards the end of this year at: www.planotes.org

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Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is an umbrella term for a wide range of approaches and methodologies, including Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), Participatory Learning Methods (PALM), Participatory Action Research (PAR), Farming Systems Research (FSR), and Méthode Active de Recherche et de Planification Participative (MARP). The common theme is the full participation of people in the processes of learning about their needs and opportunities, and in the action required to address them.

In recent years, there has been a number of shifts in the scope and focus of participation: emphasis on sub-national, national and international decision-making, not just local decision-making; move from projects to policy processes and institutionalisation; greater recognition of issues of difference and power; and, emphasis on assessing the quality and understanding the impact of participation, rather than simply promoting participation. *Participatory Learning and Action* reflects these developments and recognises the importance of analysing and overcoming power differentials which work to exclude the already poor and marginalised.

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Foreword

When I first joined the International Institute for Environment and Development more than 25 years ago, I found myself on the 3rd floor of Endsleigh Street in the next door office to Gordon Conway. It was the best place to be, as there was a great buzz around the promise and practice of participatory methods. Gordon, Jenny Rietbergen-McCracken and Jules Pretty would return from the field having spent an invigorating fortnight in Tigray, or in Senegal, hanging out with farmers, and walking the landscape with them. Many of such field visits involved Robert Chambers, who has inspired so many of us to trust our instincts and turn established assumptions on their head.

Reading through the early issues of *RRA Notes*, there is a freshness and energy bubbling up, seeking to test out new ways of learning and understanding how to engage a more bottom-up process of decision-making and development. The methods and approach firmly rooted analysis at the level of the people who actually plan and manage fields and land-

scapes on a day-to-day basis. It helped put 'experts' in a better place, and legitimised a different way of working.

It was also an approach whose time had come in many different regions. In the Sahel, for example, where I had been working since 1980, I had been intrigued by the very beautiful coloured maps showing different landscapes and pasture types produced for government and development agencies. The most elegant of wallpapers, I couldn't quite understand how you might use them in practice, since the people actually taking their herds north and south had no access to these maps and relied on a very different information system. After the droughts of 1983–4, there was much discussion about the future of the Sahel – many experts considered that it would be better to move people to higher rainfall coastal regions and abandon this large dry region. Many farmers and herders had not been waiting for such instruction, but had been moving into southern Mali and northern Côte d'Ivoire for generations. But there were

many who stayed behind, and evidence showed that they were managing their patchy resources with remarkable ingenuity, despite the uncertain rainfall.

The 'participation' rhetoric was taken up across the Sahel, with donors pushing the idea of *gestion des terroirs* (management of village lands) but no-one really knew how to do it. So it was lucky that a group of Sahelians led by Bara Guèye from Senegal and Mathieu Ouédraogo from Burkina Faso built a network to train trainers in RRA methods (known in French as *méthode accélérée de la recherche participative* (MARP)). This body of people has been central to the spread of locally driven decentralised management and control of land and natural resources that has offered such promise across the Sahel – most recently in the various greening the Sahel initiatives now documented.

After 25 years of publishing *PLA*, we have decided to take a break. We are reviewing its achievements over the last quarter century, celebrating the multiple and diverse impacts, and thinking about next steps. Clearly, the space *PLA* has occupied is of huge importance – offering space for shared learning, strengthening local power, legitimising local expertise and decision-making. We are reviewing the best means to work on this agenda, engage a wider audience and make trans-

parency, accountability, tools and tactics central to whatever follows *PLA*. We are examining new forms of communications technology, and asking what others are doing in this space. We'll come back to you with our proposals for next steps as soon as we can.

As we take a break from publication, I would like to pay a particular tribute to the three co-editors Nicole Kenton, Holly Ashley and Angela Milligan. They have played an enormously important part in bringing *PLA* to where it is today, creating a vision and plan for each issue, and nurturing the many contributors. I must also thank all our contributors and subscribers, and especially the guest-editors, the Strategic Editorial Board and the International Editorial Advisory Board. We are also very grateful to the donors who have supported the series over the years, in particular the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the UK Department for International Development (DfID), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and Irish Aid, which has enabled us to provide free copies to many individuals and organisations around the world. We'll be sure to let you know how we plan to move ahead once the evaluation is done.

Camilla Toulmin

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Editorial

Welcome to *Participatory Learning and Action* 66. As Camilla Toulmin, IIED's Director, mentions in her Foreword, we are putting the *PLA* series on hold after this issue, pending the outcome of an external review. The *PLA* series is 25 years old this year and at this important milestone and with the drafting of its new strategy, IIED is taking stock to look at *PLA*'s legacy and future direction.

Since the series started in 1988, *PLA* has seen an explosion of participatory approaches and methods, developed in a wide range of contexts. It has often led the way in bringing together experiences around a particular theme or issue (see Box 1 in Chambers, this issue), as well as reflecting developments in thinking about power and difference, governance, citizenship and rights. It continues to be in high demand on paper and online, with significant downloads. Feedback shows that the material is both relevant and practical. *PLA* 65, for example, on

*Biodiversity and culture: exploring community protocols, rights and consent*¹, was used to guide the development of Brazil's first biocultural community protocols (BCP) under the Nagoya Protocol, and to support the Convention on Biodiversity's capacity-building workshops in developing countries. The Spanish version was used for capacity building in Latin America.

PLA's collaborative capacity-building writing and editorial process, which brings together authors and editors from diverse fields to learn from each other and develop skills for critical analysis and reflection, is – as far as we know – unique, and has brought together a growing network of collaborators with the series.

Over the past year, the *PLA* team and other colleagues from IIED have been carrying out an internal consultation on the achievements and future of *PLA* and we are now awaiting the findings from an

¹ See: pubs.iied.org/14618IIED.html



Nicole Kenton presents her 'river of life' at the RCPLA workshop in Cairo, 2008. The tool allows participants to reflect on personal experiences and influences that have motivated them in their personal and professional life (see also Moussa, 2009; 2008).



Photo: CDS

Photo: David Ngige

Angela Milligan writing up guidelines developed by participants for peer review during the writeshop for *PLA 61 Tales of shit: community-led total sanitation in Africa*. As far as we know, the *PLA* writeshop process is unique. Read more in 'Let's write! Running a participatory writeshop' (Milligan and Bongartz, 2010).

external evaluation. The evaluation may present options on appropriate publication models – online or print – or it may recommend that *PLA* be discontinued. Final decisions will be posted on the website towards the end of this year at www.planotes.org. We thank all of you who have given your time to be interviewed, and/or complete online surveys during the evaluation process.

As this will be the last issue of *PLA* in its current format and with its current co-editors, we would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all those involved with *PLA* since it began its life as *RRA Notes* a quarter of a century ago. In particular we would like to thank Robert Chambers and Michel Pimbert, who have been unfailing supporters during our co-editorship. We would also like to thank all those who edited special theme issues of *PLA*. Without exception, they were hugely dedicated, putting in far more than their allotted hours to produce some really ground-breaking issues. Our international editorial board have read hundreds of articles and provided invaluable

insights and feedback despite their busy schedules, and for this we are truly grateful. One of our longstanding board members, Bardolf Paul, reflects on his time as a *PLA* editorial board member (Box 1, right).

We would like to acknowledge the support of DfID in producing this issue, together with IIED's frame funders – Irish Aid, Danida and Sida – and all those who have supported the production of *PLA* over the years, including translations into many different languages and multimedia editions.

We would also like to include a special mention of Andy Smith and Denise Bell, our designers (www.smithplusbell.com), for their calm and organised presence and their tolerance of our moving deadlines, and also Regina Doyle, our cover illustrator, for her patience and creativity. When we produced our 50th issue in 2004, Regina sent a vivid representation of the challenges (and joys!) of working with us.

Last, but definitely not least, we would like to thank all of you who have contributed to, subscribed to and read the



Box 1: Reflections from a PLA editorial board member

As a neophyte in the development field in 1989–90, direct exposure to experimentation in southern India with the PRA methodology had a profound impact on my thinking and on the future direction on my work and career in the years following. It therefore was a great honour to be invited onto the Editorial Advisory Board of *PLA* in 2006. Because I tend to work in fairly remote and isolated areas, it provided an opportunity to plug into the mainstream of thought and action in the field of participatory practices, and to provide comments and insights from my own experience in working with this development approach and philosophy. As a result, I felt much more connected with current practices and thinking, and felt I was making a wider contribution to furthering participatory practices.

**Bardolf Paul, Executive Director, Yayasan Tambuhak Sinta², Indonesia
August 2013**

series during our time as editors of *PLA*. We hope that you will continue to find a way to share and learn from each other's participatory experiences.

About this issue

It is fitting that we start *PLA* 66 with some reflections from Robert Chambers, who as one of the pioneers of PRA/PLA approaches, was instrumental in launching *RRA Notes*, with other colleagues from the Institute of Development Studies and IIED.

We then move on to the articles for this issue, which have all been submitted by you and cover a range of contexts, with an emphasis on sustainable natural resource management and livelihoods. We would like to say a huge thank you to all the authors who worked with us on

² For more information about Yayasan Tambuhak Sinta, see our In Touch section.



Photo: Holly Ashley

During the writeshop for *PLA 64 Young citizens: youth and participatory governance in Africa*, Holly Ashley ran a session on practical writing skills. This was later developed into a booklet providing guidance for *PLA* contributors (Ashley, 2011).

their articles and also to those whose articles we have been unable to publish due to time and space constraints.

We also include a short introduction to the Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action (RCPLA) pages, providing some reflections and thoughts on ways forward for *PLA* from the perspective of RCPLA network members including Tom Thomas, from Praxis India, and colleagues from the Centre for Development Services, Cairo.

Articles in this issue

Our first article is on participatory three-dimensional modelling (P3DM) and its capacity to mirror and address community needs, and this theme is reflected in our cover image. **Antonella Piccolella, James Hardcastle and Jimmy Kereseka** describe the cases of Chivoko and Boe Boe in the Solomon Islands. Although extensive work has been dedicated to the advantages of P3DM, limited effort has been made to provide evidence of its multifaceted impacts or identify the factors underpinning its effectiveness. Combining P3DM with good facilitation generated community-led and commu-

nity-controlled processes, with benefits that went beyond project boundaries. These ranged from ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change to sustainable natural resource management, from women's empowerment to sharing cultural heritage. The P3DM exercise also became a critical tool for rights-based advocacy.

The 1992 southern African drought was the region's worst drought in living memory. By the time the drought ended, famine had been averted – but how? In our second article, **Christopher Eldridge** describes how he and the late Saiti Makuku investigated the responses of low-income rural people to the drought. While travelling in Zimbabwe, the author realised that villagers were already responding to the drought in various ways, long before significant quantities of relief food began to arrive. However, their activities went largely unrecognised, partly because they were many, small and varied and so were not supported during the relief effort. The study used a modified form of scoring, within a livelihoods framework, which revealed how famine was averted largely by the activities of

those whom the drought most severely affected. Although the drought happened over 20 years ago, there are lessons that we can learn today from this experience.³

The third article, by **Lisa van Dijk, S.K. Pradhan, Murad Ali and Ramesh Ranjan**, looks at community-led action in India to improve animal health and work practices, and the development by the community of a participatory animal welfare needs assessment tool. It describes its success and its scaling up from village level to associations and eventually union level. Working animals support the livelihoods of millions of rural and urban families throughout the world and the loss of an animal can cause major stress to families. Yet the role and value of the working animal is still overlooked by government and non-governmental organisations, because their services are mainly focused on improving the health and husbandry of livestock that produce milk, meat, eggs or wool, and working animals do not produce a visible output – their productivity is in their body energy. They play a variety of important roles, including providing a primary source of income by transporting people and goods, supporting agricultural activities and reducing some of the labour and burden, which impacts positively on women in particular, as they are able to spend less time on household tasks and take up opportunities of other employment.

Tom Rowley describes a participatory natural resource management project where community representatives used Google Earth imagery to precisely identify key resources on a global reference grid. Participants were able to navigate the satellite imagery with ease and lead the collection of data to reflect their priorities.

This allowed local knowledge to be described precisely, and therefore more useably, in digital maps. Iterative cycles of the mapping process and exploration of satellite imagery encouraged deeper consultation of local knowledge, generating a fuller description of key resources and usage patterns. The local knowledge mapped has been used to design byelaws and inform planning for the management of resources central to local livelihoods and the local economy, particularly in a context of increasing climate variability, such as the drylands of Kenya and Tanzania.

Govinda Prasad Acharya and **Pramod Jaiswal** examine how the Kamaiya, a former bonded-labour group in Nepal, have campaigned to uphold their rights of access, use and control of community forests, using participatory methods such as Reflect circles to analyse their situation and converge on consensus within the group. More than eleven thousand Kamaiya have now become members of local community forest user groups (CFUGs), even managing around 40 community forests on their own. Many have also been elected to leadership roles on CFUG executive committees. These groups now produce ginger, turmeric and herbs and have started agro-forestry cooperatives. The Kamaiyas' use of indigenous knowledge, unity and participation has also led them to establish community schools, training centres, nurseries and cooperatives.

In the next article, **Jindra Cekan** describes a drought-rehabilitation and resilience project in Niger, focused on restocking women's sheep, building mixed-use wells for communities, improving forage storage and transhumance. The author carried out baseline

³ When reviewing the proportional piling method and participatory methods in general, Christopher writes that it became apparent that aspects of them reflected certain fundamental principles of human psychology. According to Christopher, advances made in the understanding of these principles have contributed to a revolution in the behavioural sciences over the last 40 or so years, and this revolution has paralleled the participatory revolution in the last few decades. For more information, download and read the discussion paper which accompanies this article (Eldridge, 2013).

and final evaluation studies with the target communities, combining qualitative participatory and quantitative gendered budget analysis. The results, such as rises in income, were interesting, but also unexpected, such as the impact of water provision on women's incomes and decreased household violence. There are some interesting lessons for practitioners focused on increasing community resilience.

Our next article is co-authored by **Peter Kayiira Byansi, Paul Bukuluki, Janet Seeley, Pontiano Kaleebu, Leslie Nielsen, Kidega William, Simon Sigirenda, Kalinda Jimmy, Rebecca Nabbose and David Walugembe**. They reflect on their experiences as a multidisciplinary team, using participatory methods to research HIV/AIDS prevention in fishing villages in Uganda. Several of them were born and raised in fishing communities with professional training in social and medical anthropology, behaviour change communication, health and social work. Coming from backgrounds that participants identified with helped to break down communication barriers and build trust. A blend of PLA methods and ethnographic approaches proved invaluable in conducting research with fishing communities, and would be with other vulnerable or high risk populations.

John Rowley with Marilyn Doyle, Susie Hay and the Participatory Practitioners for Change (PPfC) members outline the ethical issues facing them in their participatory practice. The article discusses the statements of principles and good practice put together by the members to describe what kind of participatory work they hope for in their work. This article tells the story of these repeated attempts to describe better participatory work and to define the ethi-

cal issues of participation and asks if clear definitions can be widely approved and applied. Can we define ethical standards for participatory work or do practitioners have to struggle with the ethical issues in each different piece of work?

Next, **Viviana Fernández Prajoux** describes the process of community engagement in two urban redevelopment projects located in an eastern commune of Santiago, Chile. The first proposal was for a shopping mall, and the second to enclose a public park. In both cases, the community rejected the project proposals, since they were not given any opportunity to participate in the planning process. The community groups' ability to organise and to engage other actors made it possible to stop these proposed developments, and hopefully this action will have an impact on future decision-making processes in the commune.

In our final article, **Bernward Causemann and Eberhard Gohl** describe the activities of a collective of about 50 northern and southern NGOs that have developed tools for participatory impact assessment. The tools have been used by communities to define, measure, monitor, review and analyse progress towards their own social, economic and political targets.

We hope that you enjoy reading the collection of articles in this issue of *PLA*. We look forward to the next chapter in the history of *PLA* and to continuing to be part of a growing network of individuals and organisations promoting and practicing participatory learning and action. Please continue to share the rich resource of articles from our complete back issue collection: www.iied.org/download-participatory-learning-and-action.

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From rapid to reflective: 25 years of *Participatory Learning and Action*

by ROBERT CHAMBERS

In her Foreword to *PLA 50 – Critical reflections, future directions* – the first editor of the series, Jenny Rietbergen-McCracken, remembered its birth in a workshop held in IDS in 1988. At that time we were all excited by the evolution of RRA (rapid rural appraisal). She wrote:

... the idea of sharing notes from the field was discussed. The question was – who would coordinate, edit and disseminate an informal 'RRA' journal? All it took was an expectant raising of Gordon Conway's eyebrows, a quick nod of my head, and the Sustainable Agriculture team at IIED had taken you on!

At that time we had no idea of what we were starting or that *RRA Notes* would evolve into *PLA Notes* and then into *Participatory Learning and Action*. Nor could we have imagined the scale or scope of the contribution these would make. The list of titles speaks for itself (see Box 1 overleaf). The content has kept pace with the expanding range of participatory methodologies,

and has reported and disseminated innumerable innovations, and inspired adoption, adaptation and creativity in turn. The impact has been immense.

This is now a time for celebration and thanks to those who brought all this about: those who managed and edited these 66 issues – initially Jenny Rietbergen-McCracken and Jules Pretty; then Irene Guijt, John Thompson, Ian Scoones and Jules Pretty; then Joanne Abbott and Laura Greenwood; and finally Angela Milligan, Nicole Kenton and Holly Ashley, together with all the guest-editors of themed issues. This is, too, a time to recognise the vision and commitment of those in the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the UK Department for International Development (DfID), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and Irish Aid, who realised the key role that the series could and did play in the evolution, diversification and spread of participatory approaches and methods and who have been champions in providing support. And thanks must go too to IIED for

Box 1: List of PLA themed issues

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55 Practical tools for community conservation in southern Africa	42 Children's participation – evaluating effectiveness	20 Livestock
54 Mapping for change: practice, technologies and communication	40 Deliberative democracy and citizen empowerment	19 Training
	39 Participatory communications	16 Applications for health
	38 Participatory processes in the North	15 Applications of wealth ranking
	37 Sexual and reproductive health	13 Proceedings of the February 1991 Bangalore PRA trainers workshop
	35 Community water management	11 Proceedings of a local level adaptive planning workshop, London
	34 Learning from analysis	7 Proceedings of second joint IDS/IIED RRA review workshop
	33 Understanding market opportunities	

having provided a home for 25 years for such an outstanding journal. With all its issues now permanently accessible on the Internet, it will remain as a lasting jewel in the crown of IIED.¹

Much from the past can and will continue to inform and inspire: the semi-structured, evolutionary interviews and conversations of RRA, so in tune now with the complexity concept of emergence; the versatility and power of the visualisation of agro-ecosystem analysis and then its empowering transformation in the group mapping and diagramming of PRA; the inclusive versatility and diversity of PLA as a broad umbrella term, hosting a cornucopia of participatory methodologies and their combinations.

Let us see this moment now as a fertile opportunity: a pause for breath, for rethinking, for seeing new needs and opportunities, and for visionary champions and funders to come forward. Let all who are committed to participatory approaches and methods be proactive to ensure that this hiatus in publication will be no more than a brief interlude. Let us make this a seminal period that will give birth to and nurture a reincarnation in a new and fitting form. For participatory innovations continue to proliferate. The needs are there. The niche is there, crying out to be filled.

Forming and framing this niche, much is new. Change is ever faster. Our digital age has opened up a wider range of participation:

- methodologically, with participatory

¹ For a full list of back issues – all free to download online – visit: www.planotes.org

geographic information systems (PGIS),² mobile phones³ and the like;

- creatively, with accelerating innovation in developing countries (as with M-Pesa and Ushahidi, both born in Kenya);^{4,5} and
- socially, through the connectivity increasingly of many poor people.

Complexity theory resonates with participation, and the two together promise countervailing alternatives to the excess of top-down targets and linear determinism which have increasingly dominated so much development practice.

In 1988, we were energised and enthralled by the sense that big things were happening and about to happen. Now in 2013, as change accelerates, we are swept along faster than ever we were 25 years ago. All over again, I have a similar sense of

imminent innovation. More than ever we need learning and unlearning, and keeping in touch and up-to-date, not least with the realities of poor and marginalised people; and we need ways of communicating and sharing which fit our age.

Certainly, let us take this last issue of *PLA* as a cause for celebration of all that has gone before. Let us use this space for standing back, seeing where we are, what we have, and what we need. Let us be vigorous and creative in seeing what needs to be done and in making it happen. Let us see how we can follow *PLA* with new initiatives to realise more of the huge potential that participation and participatory methodologies have to make our world a better place. For the need and opportunity are not less – but more – than ever before.

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² See e.g. *PLA 54 Mapping for change: practice, technologies and communications* (Rambaldi et al., 2006).

³ See e.g. Samii (2009) in *PLA 59 Change at hand: Web 2.0 for development*.

⁴ M-Pesa ('M' for mobile, 'pesa' is Swahili for money) is a mobile-phone based money transfer and micro-financing service for Safaricom and Vodacom, the largest mobile network operators in Kenya and Tanzania.

⁵ Ushahidi is a non-profit technology company that specialises in developing free and open source software for information collection, visualisation and interactive mapping. See: www.ushahidi.com and also Ory Okolloh's (2009) article in *PLA 59 Change at hand: Web 2.0 for development*.

The multifaceted impacts of P3DM: experiences from the Solomon Islands



by ANTONELLA PICCOLELLA with JAMES HARDCASTLE and JIMMY KERESKA

Introduction

Literature on the tyranny of participation underlines that community-based development is promising but inevitably messy, difficult, approximate and unpredictable in its outcomes (Cleaver, 2001). These studies legitimately caution against treating participatory processes as acts of faith. However, they may have overlooked the value of open-ended processes where participants are the principal actors.

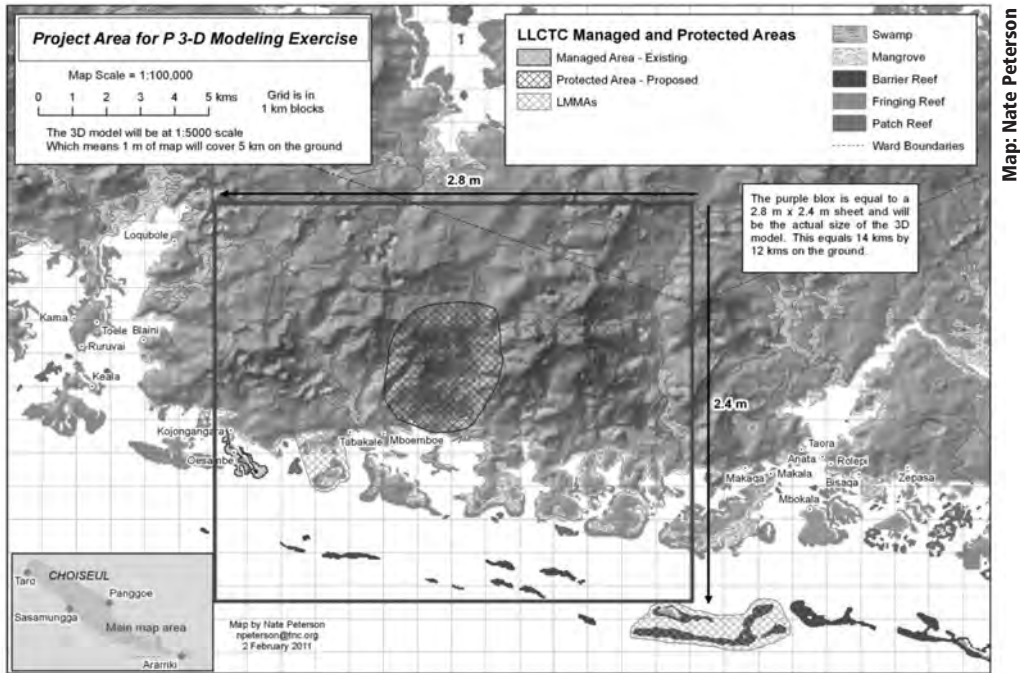
This article uses case studies from Boe Boe and Chivoko in the Solomon Islands to show that participatory three-dimensional modelling (P3DM) can achieve both intended objectives and unintended positive outcomes. The democratic character of the method – combined with durability, flexibility and a sense of ownership – both serves community needs and ensures that processes are not dictated by an outside agenda.

The article first provides a project background and outlines the participatory methodology adopted. The results are then explained in light of the distinctive charac-

teristics of P3DM combined with a respect for principles of good practice.

Background

Both Chivoko and Boe Boe are small coastal villages of around 50 households, located in Choiseul Province (locally named Lauru) in the Solomon Islands. Choiseul is one of the more remote provinces of the country, with an undeveloped mountainous forest interior. There are few roads and its communities are mainly connected by boat. As a traditional Melanesian society, both villages are male-dominated with customary land ownership and traditional institutions. Villagers depend on reefs, mangrove ecosystems, forest and bush gardens for their livelihoods. In the last decade they have faced increasing environmental and development challenges, including the depletion of natural resources, commercial logging and, more recently, proposed mining developments. The threat of climate change is beginning to further undermine social and environmental resilience.



Map: Nate Peterson

Boe Boe, Solomon Islands.

Boe Boe is along the coast and the sea erodes it. It is part of a very steep mountain and people do not know where to go because it is not fit enough to build houses. It is quite dangerous having the village down there, and the mining company up there, and the sea coming up. We do not know where to go (Winifred Pitamama 2012, personal communication).

In 2007, the villagers of Chivoko won a high-court injunction against a logging company with support from the Lauru Land Conference of Tribal Community (LLCTC), an indigenous organisation which represents the interests of customary chiefs and their communities in Lauru. In 2009, with financial support from Swiss-RE insurance, LLCTC worked with the community to create a participatory 3D model to clearly define their customary boundaries, and explore alternative land

uses for the forest. Following the success of the Chivoko P3DM, in February 2011 the LLCTC facilitated a P3DM in Boe Boe with Partners With Melanesians (PWM), a Papua New Guinea-based development organisation.¹ The P3DM exercise was conducted alongside other participatory activities including participatory video, household surveys and shoreline walks, based on the idea that local communities can valuably contribute to adaptation decision-making.²

The method

In both cases, experienced facilitators assisted students and community volunteers to build a cardboard, three-dimensional model of their land (see Box 1). After construction, village informants started to visualise their local spatial knowledge using paint, yarns and push-pins, and developed the legend. Both

¹ The P3DM was part of the project Building the Resilience of Communities and their Ecosystems to the Impact of Climate Change in the Pacific, coordinated by James Hardcastle. It was funded by the Australian Government (AusAid) and implemented through The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

² For more information, see Rirmae and Hardcastle (2011).

Photo: Javier Leon



Boe Boe villagers building their participatory 3D model.

Box 1: Participatory three-dimensional modelling (P3DM)

P3DM is a spatial visualisation method falling under the umbrella term of participatory geographic information systems (PGIS). It consists of a community-based mapping method which integrates local spatial knowledge with data on land elevations and sea depth to produce stand-alone, scaled and geo-referenced relief models. Its core objective is to add value to traditional knowledge and facilitate grassroots influence in policy-making. Once the model is completed, a geo-referenced grid is applied to facilitate data extraction and/or import, digitisation and plotting. The possibility of exporting to and importing data from GIS provides a bridge between technical and community-generated knowledge.

models provided a platform for discussing each community's challenges and identifying locally appropriate solutions.

In Boe Boe, as a parallel process, a geographic information system (GIS) expert developed a digital elevation model (DEM) of the village. This was used to groundtruth features on the model and illustrate 'what if?' scenarios of sea-level rises of 50cm, 100cm and 200cm. The purpose was to show the exact elevation of the village above mean sea level and what areas risked being submerged with a projected sea level rise of 1m by 2100 or 2m, for example in the extreme case of

Photo: Javier Leon



Finalising the three-dimensional model in Boe Boe.

tsunami (Javier Leon, personal communication 2011). There was an open discussion around the participatory 3D model, comparing the DEM scenarios to actual experiences of high tides and storm events. In some instances, the community challenged the DEM scenarios, identifying the presence of near-shore rocks, an

exposed reef area and mangrove forest that would provide a buffer against the predicted inundation. The combined use of the digital model with the relief model, expressing the community's perception of risk and landscape change, allowed a real-time integration of science with local knowledge.



Box 2: Interviews on the impact of the P3DM exercises

In Boe Boe, Antonella Piccolella conducted one-to-one in-depth semi-structured interviews with community members during a workshop in Honiara, May 2012.³ It was organised by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), TNC, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and PWM. The workshop raised awareness on the potential use of P3DM in climate change adaptation and shared lessons learnt by its direct protagonists. These interviews completed information obtained previously from project staff during remote one-to-one interviews, shortly after the modelling exercise.

In Chivoko, both James Hardcastle and Jimmy Kereseka revisited the community in July 2011 as part of the P3DM project evaluation. Both participated in both the Chivoko and Boe Boe P3DM exercises and were very familiar to the community. They discussed the impacts and implications of the exercise with key informants during brief, semi-structured interviews.

exercise and one year after the Boe Boe one, show that P3DM contributed to community resilience across a broad range of development and local governance issues (see Box 2).

Climate change awareness

In the context of climate change, a three-dimensional map is very useful since phenomena such as sea-level rise, coastal erosion, floods and landslides have a vertical dimension. In Boe Boe, rising sea levels were already apparent. A base map dated 1992 showed an island that the elders remembered but which was now under water. The P3DM stimulated an important process of self-realisation, providing an alternative to conventional awareness-raising programmes.

Strengthening resilience

Ecosystem conservation

In both cases, the P3DM emphasised the key role of watershed forests, mangroves and reef conservation in strengthening local resilience. Before the model was created,

A multi-purpose and open-ended process

The P3DM exercises were specifically framed around key issues (forest management in Chivoko and adaptation to climate change in Boe Boe). But interviews, conducted two years after the Chivoko

³ I conducted the interviews in Honiara as a follow-up to my Master's thesis 'Participatory mapping for adaptation to climate change: the case of Boe Boe, Solomon Islands'. I was keen to hear feedback from community representatives and learn more about the impacts of the P3DM activities which took place the year before.



Photo: Javier Leon

Coastal landscape and marine protected areas on the Boe Boe participatory 3D model.

trespassing on marine and terrestrial protected area boundaries was common since their extent was not precisely known. Visualising the small terrestrial protected area in Boe Boe also provided evidence that it needed enlarging. In both cases, participants discussed the reasons underpinning conservation and the conditions under which this status could be suspended.

Natural resources management

On the Boe Boe model, villagers identified mangrove areas for sourcing shellfish, wood for building materials and other resources. The women said they had already noticed a significant depletion of natural resources. Due to rising sea levels, they were harvesting edible shellfish in more remote locations. Once gathered around the model they also discussed over-harvesting and the need to adopt more sustainable practices.

Now when they go for harvesting, they just take what is needed (Winifred Pitamama 2012, personal communication).

In Chivoko, the Solomon Islands Development Trust provided training in community forestry and eco-forestry techniques and zoning to support the local export of sustainably harvested timber. The model is used to plan these activities with a minimal impact on the forest, the associated watershed values and ecosystem services.

Relocating and diversifying economic activities

The model has become an important visual support for reflecting on land use patterns. In Boe Boe, villagers realised that the need to relocate and rethink their economic activities was inevitable. Although independent from the P3DM, the Natural Resources Development Foundation, a local CBO engaged in sustainable forest management, now organises regular training to encourage alternative small income-generating activities including raising poultry, crop diversification and bookkeeping.

Transmission of knowledge

Not many people have gone into the bush to see how their land looks like. It is a chance for them, especially for women and children, to know what resources they have in the bush. They started to talk about the village sites, why they had to move from the middle of the mountains down to the sea... They started to convey those stories (Gideon Solo, 2012, personal communication).

P3DM also facilitates learning about natural and cultural heritage. The participatory process favoured storytelling about sacred sites, which was important for those who did not know the stories or could no longer access those places. Information generated around the model also showed the importance of nature in Melanesian culture. For example, some fishing grounds were traditionally protected for spiritual reasons. Creating sustainable fisheries would strengthen livelihoods and protect cultural heritage.

The community also decided which information was confidential and would not be incorporated in the model, to avoid expropriation by outsiders. Traditional burial sites were not marked on the models, but their existence was temporarily added or pointed out during discussions. Cardboard and paint models allow for such alterations and temporary changes over time.

Giving voice to women

The P3DM process enabled people from different ages and genders to work together. Both gender groups affirmed their roles in society through the visualisation of locations where they perform their activities. According to Winifred, a teacher involved in the process, the P3DM in Boe Boe was especially important for women, who usually spend all their life in the village, working in the gardens and looking after their families.

Women look at the model and get the idea that this is our place, we should care about our place rather than giving it to the logging companies to spoil our lands. We should keep all these things for ourselves, for our children (Winifred Pitamama, 2012, personal communication).

Rights-based advocacy

The clear visualisation of customary boundaries in Chivoko reinforced the community's legal claims against the granting of a commercial license to a logging company. The success of this conservation effort helped to implement the Lauru Protected Area Network.

According to the Natural Resources Development Foundation coordinator, knowledge generated through the P3DM in Boe Boe has also encouraged active participation in decision-making in the village, by promoting villagers' self-confidence and pride, in contrast to the sense of fatalism and victimisation typical of top-down approaches to development.

Just a few weeks ago we had a public hearing during an environmental impact assessment for a proposed mining project. People from the government and consultants from overseas came to present a report. They showed a lot of pictures during the presentation. 'We will be drilling this point, we will be drilling that point...' Because of the knowledge from the model, people have a say (Ringo Kodosiku, 2012, personal communication).

The external environmental impact assessment experts were astonished by such an active civil society, and as a result, the Boe Boe community won an extension on the deadline to submit their comments on the report.

They were very surprised, because this is not the first place where they did this



Illustration: Regina Faul-Boyle

While presenting a report on a proposed mining project, external environmental impact assessment experts were surprised by the community's detailed engagement in the discussions.

public hearing. They have done it in other villages but with different reactions. They normally only have to spend a couple of hours there, but in our village they had to stay overnight (Ringo Kodosiku, 2012, personal communication).

Although their opposition may not prevent the mining project, the community has secured the complete 'lock-out' of areas they identified as culturally and environmentally important. This clearly reveals the potential of P3DM for rights-based community advocacy.

Considerations and lessons learnt

The success of these projects involved a combination of the unique characteristics of P3DM with a respect for the basic principles of good practice.

Advantages of P3DM

P3DM stands out because of its democratic character. Everybody felt free to contribute regardless of their position in society. The limited eye contact and lack of verbal dominance, typical of hands-on group work, allowed participants to feel at ease. The presence of an external entity

Photo: Javier Leon



Although Ellen Taquevala had never seen a map before, she could show where Boe Boe was relocated to during the Second World War.

(the model) enabled people to talk to the model rather than directly confronting each other. Building a model is also fun and engaging, helping to breach the rigid hierarchies governing traditional Luru society. Participants worked deep into the night and from early morning, and it became more and more exciting as people started to recognise their homes, schools and gardens.

Participants clearly identified with the model. Cognitive psychologists explain this due to the third (vertical) dimension, which stimulates memory. A two-dimensional map looks the same from any direction. With a three-dimensional model, what you see varies according to your position. This implies processing a bigger amount of data. The third dimension offers more hints to memory (Rambaldi, 2010). Moreover, the tactile experience is part of the learning process of many indigenous cultures. Ellen Taquevala (74 years old), despite not having seen a map before, recognised her environment

and accurately described how Boe Boe village was relocated from the hills to the coast during the Second World War. Chief Kiplin of Chivoko also described to the younger generation the layout of the pre-war settlement in the hills.

The model belongs to the community and is kept in a public place. It can be updated and applied to any community issue presenting a spatial dimension. It is a repository of precious information, which can be unexpectedly useful, for example during discussions on the proposed Boe Boe mining project.

Good practice

Whose problems? Whose solutions?
Whose knowledge counted?

In both Chivoko and Boe Boe, despite the different project entry points, the P3DM resulted in a much more community-led and community-controlled planning and discussion process. The completed models were given to the chief and, through the chief, to the community. Implementing



Photo: Javier Leon

Chivoko's villagers gather around the completed P3DM model.

project activities were directed by the community with a clear reference to the discussions around the model, supported by other participatory activities. Villagers became actors while outsiders were catalysts and co-learners. Many other internal activities and decisions are still assisted by the model, and conversations with villagers confirm their sense of continued community ownership.

One main limitation was having too little time to discuss community issues in a more structured way. After an initial hesitation, participation in small self-selected groups happened naturally without the need for planning or forcing villagers' involvement. There was a free flow of people in the room where the model was being made. However, the informal unfolding of the process increased the frequency of conversations being interrupted. This made it harder to capture different stories and perspectives.

More time should have been allocated to

collecting and reflecting on information emerging during the P3DM exercise. Having separate discussions for different community groups would have given women greater opportunities to speak up. But the immediate need to capture information – dictated by project-driven timeframes and the short-term presence of external facilitators – should not undermine the pace and interactive process at the local level.

The P3DM project was not an isolated activity, but part of other ongoing initiatives with both TNC and local partners such as LLCTC. All parties could speak Pidgin, which also significantly helped.⁴ Trust was built with time, transparency and respect. Cultural sensitivity and an awareness of community problems strengthened the communities' positive involvement. For example, most meetings were in the evening, to avoid interference with the villagers' regular daily activities. This showed a respect for community timeframes and commitments.

Conclusion

It is hard to predict the multifaceted impacts of a P3DM exercise. But the experiences of Chivoko and Boe Boe confirm the capacity of P3DM for generating community-centred processes. How the model is used is determined throughout the participatory process and is adjusted as community needs evolve. So while the model projected the impacts of logging and climate change in line with project objectives, it also became the focal point for discussing alternative livelihood strategies. Other welcome but unplanned impacts included its use for rights-based

advocacy, its impact on women, and its cultural value. The models proved to be compatible with customary Melanesian societies and able to transcend their rigid hierarchic structures. The facilitation team demonstrated respect and cultural sensitivity throughout, and the leadership and intermediary role of the LLCTC and the endorsement of the village chiefs paved the way for a fruitful community engagement. The open-ended nature of participatory mapping, the unique characteristics of P3DM and good facilitation all contributed to the achievement of outcomes beyond project expectations.

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⁴ Solomon Islands Pidgin English is the variety of Neo-Melanesian spoken in the Solomon Islands. Pidgin is an English-based language with a limited vocabulary and simplified grammar, which was developed as a means of communication between groups that do not have a language in common.

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Making the invisible visible: how was famine averted in Southern Africa?

2

by CHRISTOPHER ELDRIDGE

Background

The 1992 Southern African drought was the region's worst drought in living memory. It affected around 86 million people in the region. In 1985, famine had followed a severe drought in the Horn of Africa. It seemed that famine might also follow the current 1992 Southern African drought. This was the mental map¹ I took with me when I moved to Zimbabwe in 1988 from Sudan, where I had worked during the 1985 famine, and initially, I was the 'prisoner of my experience'.²

In 1992, I was country director in Zimbabwe for Save the Children UK (SC-UK). We were already providing relief aid in two districts in Zimbabwe which were badly affected by the 1992 drought, Binga and Kariba. But while travelling in these

districts as the drought took hold, it became clear to me that villagers were already responding to the drought in various ways, long before significant quantities of relief food began to arrive. However, their activities seemed to be overshadowed by our relief operation, one of the largest ever mounted.

By the time the drought ended, famine had been averted – but how? To answer this question I organised a study on the drought (Eldridge, 2002).³

Making the invisible visible

What does not happen is often as important as what happens. But it is not so often investigated. Moreover, when research is carried out, or when major policies and programmes are being drawn up, people

¹ Mental maps are explained by Koger and Winter (2010). Mental models in the context of climate change are discussed by Tschakert and Sagoe (2009) in *PLA 60 Community-based adaptation to climate change* (Reed *et al.*, 2009). See: pubs.iied.org/14573IIED.html.

² We tend to make decisions based on information that is easily available, such as from personal experience, rather than seeking facts and figures that are really relevant. As personal experience is generally much more 'available' than e.g. research or news reports, this has been termed the 'prisoner of experience' principle (Gardner and Stern, 2002).

³ I carried out the original study after the drought, while head of Save the Children UK's regional office for southern Africa (1995–98). It involved 936 households in 72 villages in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

and organisations without communicative power or political and economic power tend to be overlooked.

The study addressed both these issues. I aimed to answer the question: why was there no famine in southern Africa following the 1992 drought? I also aimed to understand the impacts of the drought on those whom it most affected – small farmers – and to investigate their responses to it from their perspective. These aims were linked, and I discuss the connection between them in the conclusion.

A livelihoods framework

I carried out the study within a livelihoods framework. The study focused on the ‘activities’ element of livelihoods, because its main purpose was to investigate the responses of low-income rural people to the drought. I designed the study, in mid-1995, with the late Saiti Makuku.⁴ Together with three research assistants, we field-tested various participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methods in a Zimbabwean village. We found that a modified form of proportional piling (Chambers, 2002; Sharp, 2007) was best able to capture both the effects of drought on rural livelihoods, and villagers’ responses to drought (see Box 1). It was our

principal method, though other PRA methods were also used.

We used community mapping to obtain a household listing, and to identify the main features of each village studied. We asked key informants to group the households into three wealth categories: rich, poor and middle. Within each category five poor, five middle and three rich households were randomly chosen. We discussed the effects of the drought and their responses to it, using the modified scoring method described below. This method was used to develop a visual framework for the discussion. The approach was repeated with separate groups of men, women, children and older people in the rich and poor wealth categories.

Additional research assistants with previous experience of rural work were recruited and attended a 10-day training course, led by Saiti Makuku. Twenty-four villages were selected in each of three countries: Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia.⁵

The investigation was carried out in each village by a pair of research assistants: one to guide villagers through participatory scoring, the other to record the accompanying discussion. They were supervised by Saiti Makuku in the first village they visited.

Box 1: Proportional piling

Proportional piling is a semi-quantitative method for determining community priorities. Circles drawn on the ground or pictures drawn on cards represent problems. Participants are then asked to pile pebbles or beans in proportion to the importance of the problem. Using a fixed number of beans makes the technique more reproducible. Proportional piling is more quantitative than simple ranking because it allows for greater gradation of emphasis, e.g. a significant problem may receive almost all the beans, while the second most important may receive only two or three. This type of drastic difference would not be evident in a simple ranking exercise. Adapted from: tinyurl.com/fao-proportional-piling

Developing and discussing score-tables

General approach

By the end of the pilot phase, we settled on the following general approach. We grouped rural livelihoods into six main categories: obtaining water, obtaining food, generating income, expenditure, livestock and crop production.

Because the main aim of the study was to investigate villagers’ responses to the drought, we focused on activities. This activity-focus was achieved partly by framing.⁶

⁴ Saiti Makuku worked with the Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources (SAFIRE) throughout Southern Africa, particularly in his home of Zimbabwe, but also in Malawi, Mozambique and Namibia. Saiti was one of the first PRA trainers in Southern Africa and was instrumental in promoting participatory approaches within the region.

⁵ Selection was purposive: the villages selected were in low-rainfall areas.

⁶ Framing is discussed in sections 1 and 2 of a discussion paper which accompanies this article (Eldridge, 2013).

How questions are framed (worded and presented) can significantly influence the responses to them. For example, we were interested not only in changes in food sources, but in the activities involved in these changes, so we discussed with villagers changes in how they obtained food. This activity-focus also facilitated a ‘causes’ and ‘consequences’ questions discussion (see below).

We broke each livelihoods category down into 5–8 sub-categories. For example, food was broken down into staples (grain, maize-meal and tubers), vegetables and fruit, meat and fish, wild foods and groceries. For a few sub-categories, we did a further breakdown with villagers. For example, ‘Obtaining staple food’ was broken down into obtaining food from villagers’ own production, purchases, food for work and drought relief, exchanges and gifts (see Table 1). This showed how the ways in which villagers obtained food changed during the drought.

Proportional piling: developing a score-table

During the initial introductions in each village, smallholders were asked whether 1992 was in fact a drought year and, if so, which year could be regarded as a baseline: which year was approximately ‘normal’ in terms of rainfall? All villagers chose 1991 as a reference year.⁷

The items in question (in a category or sub-category) were then listed vertically on flipchart paper, using words and/or symbols. We added three columns for 1991, 1992 and 1993. The following points refer to the ways in which villagers obtained staple food, but they are gener-

ally applicable. They can best be followed by reference to Table 1 and 2 (for staple food sources and for expenditure). For simplicity, the tables do not show the 1993 scores.

- We gave villagers 60 small stones (or seeds).⁸ We asked them to distribute them to show how much of their food came from each source in 1991.
- Once this column was complete, we asked villagers to compare the scores ‘vertically’, to see if they approximately reflected the relative amounts obtained from each source. They could change the scores if they wanted.⁹
- Once they were satisfied, they wrote the score on the paper. This formed a visual and publicly visible record, which could later be used for cross-checking.¹⁰
- We then drew a second column for 1992 and repeated the process.
- This time, for each item in turn, we asked them if they wanted to change the number of stones to reflect the change in food sources between 1992 and 1991. If the latter was lower, as it usually was, we asked if this approximately reflected reality. If not, they could change the individual scores.
- We then drew a third column for 1993 and repeated the process.

What the resulting score-table illustrated

This method produced a score-table which enabled the villagers, and the research assistants, to see in visual form:

- all the items in each category (or sub-category);
- their ‘weighted importance’, as perceived by villagers, relative to each other (a verti-

⁷ See section 2.2.2 ‘Anchoring and adjustment – the use of a memorable reference point’ of the discussion paper (Eldridge, 2013).

⁸ We settled on 60, because we usually used 4–6 sub-categories, with an average of 10–12 stones for each. We found that more than 60 tended to be confusing – fewer than 60 did not provide enough sensitivity.

⁹ Comparison by participants is an important feature of participatory methods: it is a powerful means of generating information and insights, largely because it reflects a basic principle of behaviour. See ‘Cross-checks’ below, and the discussion paper, section 2.2 (Eldridge, 2013).

¹⁰ The visual and publicly visible nature of participatory methods reflects a basic principle of behaviour, and helps account for their effectiveness and popularity. See also the discussion paper, sections 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 (Eldridge, 2013).

Table 1: Changes in how staple foods were obtained during the 1992 drought

	Poor households		Rich households	
	1991	1992	1991	1992
Own production	38	3	89	7
Purchases	42	53	11	56
Drought relief/food for work ¹¹	12	18	0	21
Exchange	5	3	0	6
Gifts	3	4	0	5
TOTAL	100	81	100	95

Table 2: Expenditure changes by smallholders during the 1992 drought

	Poor households		Rich households	
	1991	1992	1991	1992
Grain and maize-meal	29	52	15	36
Other food items	14	6	17	15
Agriculture/livestock	6	3	11	11
Education	14	7	12	12
Health	5	2	6	6
Transport	3	4	3	4

Box 2: The score-card results

Table 1 shows that the total amount of food obtained in 1992 fell for both rich and poor households, but especially for poor households. Comparing scores vertically with each other and with the total shows the relative importance of each item.

In both years, the poorest households in this district bought more staple food than they produced. But they bought even more in 1992 – almost two-thirds of their staple food. Rich households also increased their purchases of staple food in 1992. But scoring shows that they were able to buy more food than poor households, who were also forced to make more and deeper trade-offs: they spent less on education and health (and agricultural inputs), whereas rich households spent less mainly on household items.

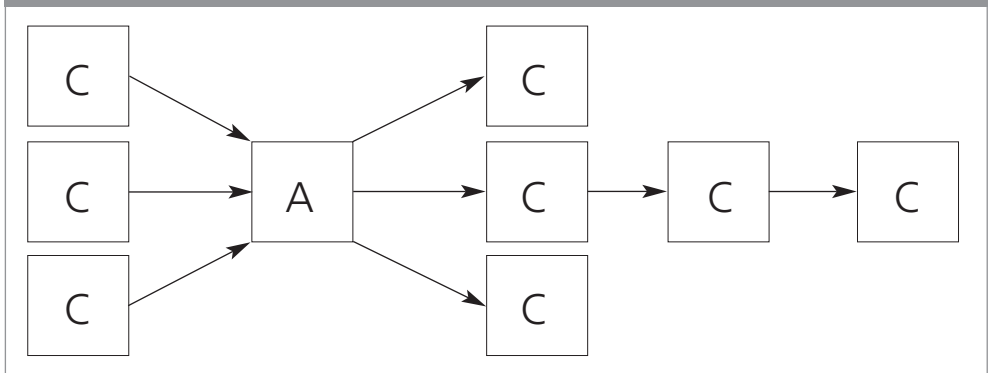
These facts would not have been revealed by simple

ranking. Scoring is a richer source of information, as long as it is accompanied by 'holistic questions', which can trace how one change in activity ripples through the fabric of rural livelihoods.

This difference shows how the scoring method can also reveal the difference between **accessible** and **accessed**. Education and health services were just as accessible during the drought as before. But poor households accessed them less than in 1992 (and less than richer households), because they had less time and money to spend on these services. Discussions revealed that some poor children dropped out of school during the drought due to lack of money for local fees, hunger, and the need to help their families obtain food and cash. This brief discussion illustrated the need to ask **causes** and **consequences** questions repeatedly when discussing score-tables.

¹¹ 'Drought relief' refers to food distributions which were not tied to food for work (FFW) projects.

Figure 1: The 'activity-burger' diagram



cal comparison) in any given time period;¹² and

- how each item changed between time periods (a horizontal comparison).

For each item, the change (if any) in its score illustrated three aspects of change (as perceived by villagers):

- the direction of change: increase, decrease, no change: a horizontal comparison;
- the approximate order of magnitude of change, if any: a horizontal comparison; and
- the change, if any, in the relative importance of each item: a vertical comparison.

The score-table provided a visual representation both of the links between various aspects of livelihoods, and of how the links changed over time – in this case, as a result of villagers’ responses to drought. It also provided a visual framework for a form of semi-structured discussion.

Discussion: interviewing the table

Villagers were then asked various questions about the score-tables. Some answers to these questions emerged while villagers were developing the score-tables – scoring them prompted unsolicited comments. It was therefore necessary for one of the two research assistants to note down key points during scoring (as well as during the

discussion which followed its completion); the other oversaw the scoring process.

There were two main types of question.

Questions about details:

- Who? What? Where? When?
- How much? How often? How?

Questions about causes and consequences (or ‘C’ questions):

- About the causes of the changes, if any, in the item in question (usually an activity in this study, for example, changes in how villagers obtained staple food). Why did this happen?
- About the consequences of changes, if any. What happened as a result?

In training, we emphasised the need to ask the two ‘C’ questions several times: there is often more than one causal factor (or reason or influence) at work when someone does something, or when something happens. Similarly, there may be more than one consequence of a particular activity (or event). This is further discussed below.

We showed an ‘activity-burger’ diagram (above) showing a given activity sandwiched between one or more causal factors and one or more consequences. We also asked villagers what support they would want, if drought struck again, to help improve their responses.

¹² ‘Weighted importance’ differs from ranked importance. It shows the proportional contribution of any one item to the total. For example, in the food sources score-table, a ranked order for 1992 would show that purchases and own production were respectively the largest and second largest sources of food for poor households, but would not reveal the large difference between their contributions.



Photo: Christopher Eldridge

I took these photos during a follow-up study in Malawi in 2004. A woman and her daughter have been cutting down trees to sell for firewood. It illustrates a relatively effective but environmentally damaging response to drought.

Iterations: cross-checks and additional information

We repeated the above sequence with individual households in three different wealth categories and with different groups of women, men, children and older people.

There were three main purposes of these iterations:

- to investigate how the effects of the drought and the responses to it varied according to three variables (wealth, gender and age);
- to obtain more specific information; and
- to cross-check (see below) information and some conclusions.

Cross-checks

Several kinds of cross-checks were used to check the results:

Within a given score-table

A given score in 1992 could be checked in two directions: by comparison to its score in 1991, and by comparison to the scores of other items in 1992.

Between different score-tables

We could see (by comparison with those recorded on flipcharts) if an increased score for obtaining food from purchases was reflected in an increased score for expenditure on maize-meal.

Between groups

For example, some details provided by men could be checked with those provided by women, children and older people.

With information provided by key informants

This included key informants outside the villages: e.g. teachers, health workers and agricultural extension workers. For example, if villagers said that some children had dropped out of school, we checked this with a teacher.

With official data

One advantage of carrying out the study retrospectively was that we could refer to reports published shortly after the drought ended by government ministries, the

Photo: Christopher Eldridge



Southern African Development Community (SADC), research institutes (e.g. the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP) and donors such as the UK Department for International Development (DfID, or Overseas Development Agency as it then was).

Issues

Consequences – several kinds

When discussing the consequences of villagers' responses to the drought, we sometimes found it useful to distinguish between three types (or combinations) of consequences:

- a single consequence;
- two or more parallel consequences; and
- one or more sequential (or knock-on) consequences.

These differences are illustrated in the activity-burger diagram and by the changes shown in the two tables.

Support questions

During the discussions it emerged that some household responses to the drought were:

- relatively effective but environmentally damaging (e.g. cutting down trees to sell for firewood);
- non-environmentally damaging but relatively ineffective or very time-consuming (e.g. gathering and selling wild foods).

In the support/policy discussion, it would therefore have been useful to focus on support/policy suggestions which would promote sustainable livelihoods in ways which were non-damaging, cost-effective and time-effective.

The psychological basis of proportional piling and other participatory methods

Following the study, it turned out that proportional piling has a psychological basis: it reflects certain deeply rooted modes of thinking, decision-making and behaving. Moreover, participatory methods in general also have a psychological basis.¹³

¹³ When reviewing the proportional piling method and participatory methods in general, it became apparent that aspects of them reflected certain fundamental principles of human psychology. Advances made in the understanding of these principles have contributed to a revolution in the behavioural sciences over the last 40 or so years, and this revolution has paralleled the participatory revolution in the last few decades (Cornwall and Scoones, 2011). See the discussion paper (Eldridge, 2013).

Challenges

Data volume and linkages

This approach generated a large volume of varied data, partly because of the many linkages between different livelihoods activities, and partly because of the cross-checks used. These issues would need to be addressed during the pilot phase of any new project.

A holistic, networked mindset versus a linear mindset

It is easier to act your way into a new way of thinking than to think your way into a new way of acting.¹⁴

During training, we did not focus enough on developing the ‘mental maps’ which the research assistants needed to navigate through the many issues which the score-tables generated, thereby rendering the intricate latticework of rural livelihoods more visible. Research assistants initially focused only on a few aspects of the score-tables, and did not ask enough ‘causes’ (why?) and ‘consequences’ questions, even though it had been emphasised during training. This was rectified during the follow-up visits by the trainer, but it would have been better to practise this issue during training.

Conclusion

For learning from past experience, reflecting on what does not happen is often as important as reflecting on what happens. Additionally, reflecting on things that are

often not measured (for example, activities) may be as important as those that are (outcomes, for instance). In the case of the 1992 Southern Africa drought, both these omissions were linked.

The primary aim of this study was to address the first issue: why did the 1992 drought not result in famine? But in so doing, it was also necessary to address the second: the activities of villagers in the areas struck by the drought appeared to have helped prevent famine. However, their activities had not been adequately investigated, partly because they were many, small and varied. The second issue was addressed by developing a modified form of scoring, within a livelihoods framework. This method revealed how a given response could have consequences that rippled through the fabric of their rural lives. By applying this method repeatedly, with variations, the first question was answered: famine was averted largely by the activities of those whom the drought most severely affected.¹⁵

The second omission led to a third: because the activities of villagers went largely unrecognised, they were not supported in effective ways. It appeared that, in most cases, they were not consulted during the planning phase of the 1992 drought relief operation. But consultation is not enough if it does not reflect the reality of what people actually do, or the inter-related nature of their activities and the consequences of their actions. Through these interactions, they also relate to, and so influence, each other. These relationships are captured by a term which,

¹⁴ Jerry Sternin, co-founder of the Positive Deviance Initiative (in Pascale *et al.*, 2010).

¹⁵ Within the limits of conventional emergency programmes, the 1992 relief and rehabilitation programme, one of the largest and best coordinated ever undertaken (Clay *et al.*, 1995), was a success. It was especially important during the months before the 1993 harvest. Nevertheless, famine in Southern Africa in 1992–3 was averted largely by the activities of those most severely affected by it, particularly in the 6–9 months before significant quantities of relief food began to arrive. However, the context was also important: there was no conflict in the worst affected countries, governments generally reacted responsibly, if belatedly, and donors were unusually responsive. This article focuses on the use of proportional piling to investigate changes in villagers’ activities in response to the 1992 drought. The original country reports set these activities in the context of drought relief programmes by governments and NGOs, and suggested a number of policy recommendations for future drought relief operations.

appropriately enough, is used in Southern Africa. According to Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu (2013),

The methods used in this study reflect the African concept of 'Ubuntu'. This means that a person is a person through other people.

The social networks of villagers interconnect with the natural networks of the ecosystems on which we all, in rich and poor countries alike, ultimately depend. It was their activities within these networks, not just their actions as isolated individuals, which enabled the villagers of Southern Africa to survive the worst drought in half a century.

It is now over 30 years since Amartya Sen (1981) began his celebrated book with this observation:

Starvation is the characteristic of some people not having enough food. It is not the characteristic of there not being enough food to eat.¹⁶

It is also almost exactly 30 years since Robert Chambers (1983) drew attention to

the need to 'put the last first' in his seminal book on rural development. Since then, Chambers has been a leading advocate of participatory methods, which not only help put the last first, they also make the invisible visible. One reason the poor usually come last is because, from the perspective of many of those who make the decisions which affect them, they are invisible people, doing invisible things with invisible results. A modified version of proportional piling helped to make visible the many and varied ways in which 'the last' in the region's rural areas were first in one crucial respect: they responded to the drought months before relief food finally arrived.

Their activities suggest that Sen's opening observation might be amended to read: 'starvation is the characteristic of some people not **obtaining** enough food.' Fortunately, their resilience and resourcefulness in 1992 enabled them, if not to thrive, then at least to survive. Unfortunately, their poverty meant that they had to make trade-offs. They survived in the short-term, but at the cost of compromising their livelihoods and degrading some of the natural resources on which their livelihoods depended.

¹⁶ In *Poverty and famines: an essay on entitlement and deprivation* (1981), Sen argues that famine occurs not only from a lack of food, but from inequalities built into mechanisms for distributing food. See also Devereux (1993), and Devereux and Maxwell (2001).

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Sustainable animal welfare: community-led action for improving care and livelihoods

3

by LISA VAN DIJK, SK PRADHAN, MURAD ALI and
RAMESH RANJAN

Why does the health of working animals matter?

Working animals – horses, donkeys, camels, bullocks and yaks – support the livelihoods of millions of rural and urban families throughout the world. Assuring good animal health and husbandry reduces a family's livelihood vulnerability and increases their coping abilities. But unlike livestock that produce milk, meat, eggs or wool, working animals have no visible output and their productivity is not usually measured (invisible) in the analysis of agricultural production (see Box 1). Consequently, the role and value of working animals is often overlooked by the international development sector and policy makers. Yet the loss of a working animal, or the cost of treatment for injuries and disease, causes major stress to the livelihoods of households who are dependent upon them.

Box 1: The roles of working animals

Working animals are animals that pull or carry goods or people. They play a variety of roles:

- Providing a primary source of income by transporting people and goods for a fee. For many landless people, working animals are the main source of income and seen as more reliable than alternatives such as daily wage labour.
- Supporting agricultural activities such as ploughing and transporting feed or water for livestock, and providing essential access to markets by transporting agricultural products.
- Reducing the labour and drudgery of daily domestic household tasks, particularly collecting water and firewood by women and elderly people. Using working animals reduces the time spent on domestic activities and provides women with an opportunity for income generation.

Here, we describe our work with The Brooke India, a charity dedicated to improving the lives of working equine animals (horses, donkeys and mules) and the communities who depend on them.¹

¹The Brooke is an international animal welfare organisation with country offices across Africa, Asia and Latin America. Since 2001, The Brooke India has been working with animal-owning communities directly and partner organisations in four states: Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh. The Brooke India now works with 10 direct and 20 partner units in 30 districts in eight states.

Over the last seven years, The Brooke India has made a gradual transformation from providing primarily curative veterinary treatment towards a preventative approach. We are promoting community-led action to improve animal care, management and work practices while also building the capacity of local veterinary and animal health providers to manage emergency cases. Our aim is to create collective responsibility within the community to sustainably improve the care of working animals – while reducing the vulnerability of households whose livelihoods depend on them.

How The Brooke India's approach evolved

The Brooke India began operations by delivering free animal treatment from clinics at fixed locations in Delhi, Hyderabad and Jaipur. This required a high input of veterinary doctors' time and focused on primary and first aid treatment. However, the number of equine animals treated was relatively low and the approach created dependency among their owners, who began to expect free services and inputs.

Based on successes in other sectors, we decided to use participatory approaches to enable animal-owning communities to analyse the health and husbandry of their animals and make sustainable welfare improvements. In 2006, we recruited a number of community development specialists and trained all staff in participatory methods. We moved from service delivery at fixed locations to a more village-based approach, attending emergency calls at the owner's home or work. We also established district unit offices with managers with development sector experience, moving from mainly veterinary technical staff to a multidisciplinary team. We replaced educational sessions with community meetings and engaged working animal owners by adopting and adapting a variety of PRA tools, such as village mapping, seasonality analysis and

matrix ranking. The animal owners developed action plans for their particular village and identified solutions for working animal problems such as adequate rest and good nutrition.

Using these tools gave owners and stakeholders an awareness of their animals' welfare – but field experience showed that the most important health and welfare issues of working animals were still not being addressed. Field staff saw limited action by the owners and clinical records showed repeated cases of wounds, dehydration and eye, hoof and skin problems in animals from the same location.

We realised that our major challenge was how to change the mindsets of the animal-owning communities from being recipients of The Brooke's curative services to adopting their own preventive practices. To do this, the district teams started to search for a participatory methodology which would put the animals' needs and feelings at the centre of analysis.

Piloting participatory animal needs assessments

Our teams decided to initiate a pilot project, aiming to develop an effective participatory process to engage animal owners in 40 villages with about 650 animals. This was gradually increased to 78 villages with 1335 animals.

Together with the community, each district unit designed a process. The welfare needs of working animals vary widely depending on context. Because of this, the animal needs assessment process is very specific to each community. So our teams were given the freedom to test whatever the community came up with, because the most important outcome we sought was community action. Our teams used a large variety of PRA tools and several have been adapted, focusing on the environment, work patterns and welfare needs of draft and pack animals. Where we identified gaps, novel tools were developed (see Box 2).

Box 2: The participatory process: steps and tools

Step 1: Building rapport and forming animal owner groups

Purpose: to understand the community better, gain trust in each other and create an atmosphere ready for change.

- (i) Building a rapport with the animal-owning community
- (ii) Forming and strengthening an animal owners' group

- Tools**
- Mapping
 - Daily activity schedule
 - Gender activity analysis
 - Historical timeline
 - Animal welfare snakes and ladders game
 - Dependency analysis
 - Credit analysis
 - Seasonal analysis

Step 2: Shared vision and collective perspective

Purpose: to identify common animal welfare goals within the group.

Identifying issues relating to:

- (i) the livelihoods and working systems of animal owners
- (ii) the lives of working animals
- (iii) animal-related service providers and resources

- Tools**
- Mobility map
 - Venn diagram
 - Daily activity schedule
 - Gender activity analysis
 - Seasonal analysis
 - Gender access and control profile
 - Changing trend analysis
 - Animal welfare and disease mapping
 - Animal disease Venn diagram
 - Daily activity schedule of the animal
 - Dependency analysis
 - Animal body mapping
 - Animal welfare practice gap analysis
 - Animal-related service and resource mapping
 - Mobility mapping
 - Pair-wise ranking
 - Matrix scoring of animal-related service providers
 - Cost-benefit analysis of animal-related service providers

Step 3: Participatory animal welfare needs assessment (PWNA)

Purpose: to look at the present welfare status of working animals, by bringing the animal itself to the centre of the group's analysis.

- (i) Analysing how animals feel and what they need for their well-being
- (ii) Generating a list of animal-based and resource-based indicators for welfare and agreeing how they will be scored
- (iii) Observing animals and recording their welfare status

- Tools**
- Matrix ranking animal welfare issues
 - 'If I were a horse'
 - How to increase the value of my animal
 - Animal feelings analysis
 - Animal body mapping
 - Animal welfare practice gap analysis
 - Animal welfare transect walk

Step 4: Community action planning

Purpose: to move the group from their new awareness of animal welfare issues towards individual and collective action for improvement.

- (i) Prioritising welfare issues important to working animals and their owners
- (ii) Root cause analysis of welfare issues
- (iii) Preparing a collective plan of action to improve the issues

- Tools**
- Pair-wise ranking
 - Matrix scoring or matrix ranking
 - Historical timeline
 - Three-pile sorting
 - Animal welfare story with a gap
 - Problem horse
 - Animal welfare cause and effect diagram

Box 2 (continued)

Step 5: Action and reflection

Purpose: to facilitate the group to implement their community action plan, monitor it regularly and reflect on their findings and experiences together.

- (i) Implementing and monitoring activities in the community action plan
- (ii) Participatory monitoring of animal welfare changes, creating a cycle of reflection and action

Tools

- Pair-wise ranking
- Matrix scoring or matrix ranking
- Animal welfare transect walk
- Problem horse, pre-post analysis
- Animal welfare cause and effect diagram

Step 6: Self-evaluation and gradual withdrawal of regular support

Purpose: to assess the longer term impact of the group's efforts, see positive changes in animal welfare and reflect on issues which may need continuing support.

- (i) Self-evaluation
- (ii) Gradual withdrawal of regular support

Tools

- Changing trend analysis and before-and-after analysis
- Group inter-loaning analysis
- Success and failure stories

Photo: Ashok Kumar, The Brooke India



Self-help group members in Hiranwada village doing the 'If I were a horse' exercise, Muzaffarnagar district, Uttar Pradesh, India in 2009.

Figure 2: Practice gap analysis done by Sona-arjunpur villagers, Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India in 2007

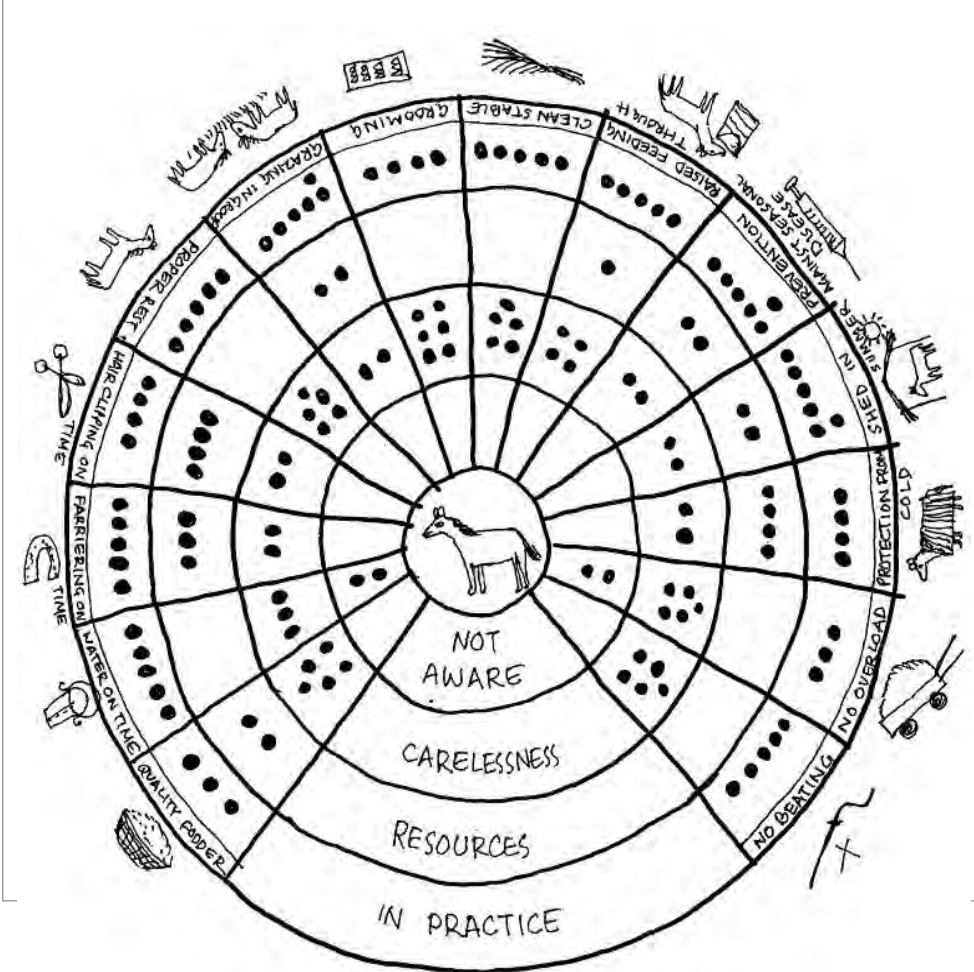


Illustration: Amitabh Pandey








They did not understand why researchers had included or excluded certain animal observations from the assessment and therefore had no ownership of the process. Owners did not agree with some parameters used for the assessment and some were suspicious about recording observations of their animals without fully understanding what was happening. We realised that an animal welfare needs assessment methodology had to be developed with the owners' full involvement.

The PWNA tool is the basis for a group-based reflection and action process

in which the community itself identifies health and husbandry risks and assesses the physical signs and behaviour of the animal related to these. Based on this assessment they agree on collective and individual action to improve their animals' health and husbandry. The process is based and builds on local people's capabilities and wisdom. The process is dynamic and cyclical and, although PWNA provides a rough framework for each community, the detailed action and reflection process differs regarding tools used and timeframe.

Figure 3: Example of a PWNA traffic light chart

○-GOOD ⊙-MEDIUM ●-BAD

Body Parts	Indicators	Umar	Islam	Zahi	Emad	Awad	Sayed	Mena	Walia
 LEGS	Twisted Hoof	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Swelling Hind	⊙	○	○	○	○	○	●	●
	Foot Canker	○	●	○	○	●	○	●	●
	Injury/Wound	●	○	⊙	⊙	●	○	●	●
	Lameness	○	●	○	○	●	○	●	○
	Stiff legs	○	○	○	○	●	○	●	⊙
 EYES	One Eyed	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Whitiness of Eye	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	⊙
	Tears	⊙	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Wound	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	●
 EARS	Cut or Broken	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	●
	Dumb	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●
	Droppings From Ears	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Fever	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
 MOUTH	Teeth for Age Determination	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Flat tongue	○	●	○	●	○	○	○	○
	Like Snake	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Cut	⊙	○	○	○	○	○	○	●
	Swallowing	○	●	⊙	○	○	○	○	●
	Hair round on fore head	○	⊙	⊙	○	○	○	●	○
 BACK	Wound	○	●	○	○	●	○	●	●
	Equal back	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○
	Broken bone	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
 TAIL	Wound	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Fatty	●	●	○	○	○	○	●	●
	Maggots	○	●	○	○	○	○	●	○
 STOMACH	Ribs	○	⊙	●	○	●	○	○	○
	Wound	⊙	●	○	○	○	○	●	●
	Big belly	○	⊙	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Low fat	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

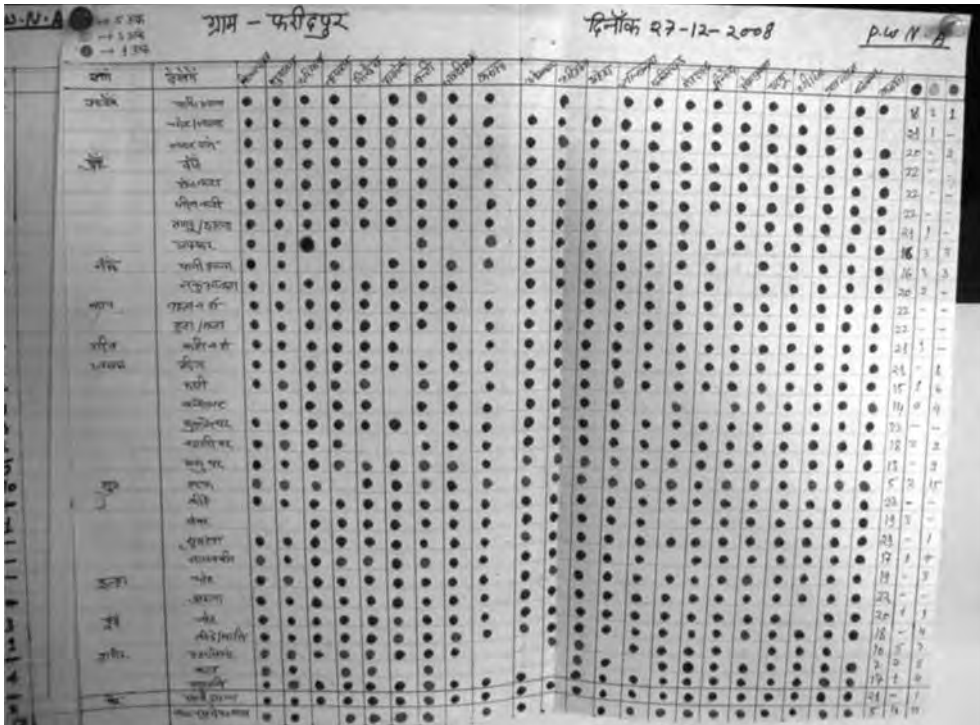


Photo: Rampal, The Brooke India

Traffic light chart from Faridpur village, Aligarh district, Uttar Pradesh, India in 2008.

The basis of PWNA is either the ‘If I were a horse’ tool (Figure 1) or the practice gap analysis tool (Figure 2). These tools help the group to:

- identify the needs of working animals;
- analyse how far those needs are met by their owners and other service-providers;
- analyse the effects on working animals when their basic needs are not fulfilled; and
- identify visible signs (animal-based indicators) against each need.

The tools move owners from looking only at animal-related resources and services, to looking at the animal itself and what this tells them about its welfare. For example, in Khanjarpur village, a group of owners solved the problem of persistent withers wounds in their horses. Through the PWNA action and reflection process they found a mismatch between animal size and saddle design.

In the practice gap analysis, the reasons for not fulfilling the animal’s expectations

are analysed in more depth. It forms the basis for developing indicators of good and poor welfare in a format that enables animal owners themselves to assess animal welfare. Figure 3 and the photo above show a traffic light scoring system developed by an animal owners’ group for assessing indicators.

The innovations were inspired by the holistic worldwide view analyses tool developed by Ravi Jayakaran and published in an earlier issue of *Participatory Learning and Action* (2007). After several members of our team saw the circular visualisation of this tool they adapted it to create a centre of analysis with the animal in the middle, and they found that many communities found it easy to understand and use.

Overview of the participatory process

Step 1: Building rapport and forming animal owners groups

Step 1 brings the animal-owning community together, building confidence in their

ability to bring about positive change and mobilising interested partners for action. These include animal owners, users and carers, local organisations and influential individuals such as the village chief or teachers. We start forming groups of animal owners through entry point activities such as initiating a savings group, or mobilising a community-led tetanus vaccination. At this stage, group members identify a local leader whom they call *ashwan mitra* (equine friend).

Step 2: Shared vision and collective perspective

Step 2 aims to create a shared perspective of the group's own situation by analysing:

- their livelihood and working systems;
- the lives of their animals and current health and husbandry practices; and
- animal-related service-providers (such as local health providers, farriers, cart makers, medical stores and feed sellers) and resources (such as feed, water, grazing, shoes, harness and medicines) available within their community.

Step 3: Participatory animal welfare needs assessment

The next step looks specifically at the present health and husbandry status of working animals, by bringing the animal itself to the centre of the group's analysis. The group builds a common understanding of its welfare, based on the animal's needs and feelings. We enable them to recognise how aspects of good and poor health and husbandry are expressed in an animal's appearance and behaviour. To do this, our teams developed specific tools such as 'If I were a horse' (see Figure 1). The group summarises issues into animal-, resource- and management practice-based indicators in a format that enables owners to assess an animal's welfare themselves. The group decides on a scoring system and criteria for each indicator, usually a traffic light indicator (red for poor, yellow for moderate and green for good welfare or no welfare prob-

lem). Owners assess all the animals in the village or area using a transect walk technique, checking animal welfare against the list of indicators agreed. The traffic light chart and its summary give a clear picture of the welfare of individual animals and of the resource and management issues affecting the group (see Figure 3).

Step 4: Community action planning

The group then discusses and analyses the traffic light charts, identifying and prioritising the issues important to working animals and their owners. The group conducts a root cause analysis of the prioritised issues and makes a time-bound action plan for individual as well as collective action for improvement.

Step 5: Reflection and action

The fifth step aims to facilitate the group to implement their community action plan, monitor it regularly and reflect on their findings and experiences together. The group critically appraises the performance of both the individual members and the group as a whole. These positive, constructive appraisals translate action into learning, which in turn translates into

Box 3: The Brooke India's programming approach

- Building the problem-solving capacities of communities who own working animals by fostering a participatory community-led process.
- Forming and strengthening functional local community self-help groups.
- Promoting group savings and establishing federations at district/block level.
- Improving the accessibility, availability, affordability and use of local resources and service providers including farriery (horse shoeing), harness-making, cart-making, feed and fodder.
- Enhancing the capacity and use of local veterinary services to provide accessible, acceptable, available and affordable treatment for working equine animals.
- Promoting use of and increased access to other development schemes by the animal-owning communities.
- Sensitising wider society to the value and role of working animals.



Photo: Ashok Kumar, The Brooke India

Practice gap analysis done by Rajpur Khampur villagers of Baghpat district, Uttar Pradesh, India in 2009.

further action. The group repeats the transect walk at regular intervals to assess the result of their actions and agrees on new actions. In this way, the process becomes a cycle of action and reflection.

Step 6: Self-evaluation and gradual withdrawal of regular support

In the final step, the group assesses the longer term impact of its efforts to improve working animal welfare after 12–18 months and at the end-point (3 to 4 years) before initiating the phase-down process. This enables group members to see positive changing trends in working animal welfare and reflect on any issues which may need further action. During this phase, our community facilitator agrees with the group how much external support the community will need in future.

Reflecting on The Brooke India's experiences

In 2008, we shared the process with six new local partner NGOs in central Uttar

Pradesh. These partners have long-standing experience of working with deprived communities and with their help the participatory process has developed even further into our current programmatic approach (see Box 3). For example, a key strategy is forming welfare self-help groups (WSHGs) for empowering members of marginalised equine-owning families. These are groups of 10–20 men or women – irrespective of caste – who usually live in the same village. They come together with a commitment to improve the welfare of their animals through collective action. The binding force behind such groups is the opportunity for group credit and savings.

Since 2011, The Brooke India field teams also cluster groups at block level using meetings and workshops with representatives of individual groups. These associations can take action which would not be possible for groups acting in isolation, addressing issues related to services, transportation fees, availability

Photo: Sughar Singh, The Brooke India



A self-help group conducting an animal transect walk, assessing the animal and its living environment, in Khanpur village, Meerut district, Uttar Pradesh, India in 2009.

of credit and resources. Many of the animal-owning communities are marginalised groups and the federations provide them with a stronger voice in society.

Our initial desire to work in a more participatory way with working animal owners led to a process of institutional learning and change, which also brought many challenges. Recruiting community specialists (recent university graduates in social sciences) and conducting PRA training for veterinary teams did not lead immediately to a change in attitude for our field teams. Although the teams were required to use a bottom-up approach in their work, initially there was a lack of clarity on the approach and insufficient practical field support, which the teams needed to work with the animal owners effectively. Also, senior management was not confident that using participatory tools would improve animal welfare. However, the positive results of the pilot brought about policy changes at management level and a radical change in staffing

and operation of the district units. Local, multidisciplinary teams were recruited with solid practical experience in working with communities at village level.

Regular reflection and learning workshops with field staff were crucial for developing the process and tools. It allowed us to learn what worked and what did not, and inspire and give recognition to our field staff. Sharing was encouraged within and between the district teams, providing a mechanism for peer influence. These sessions also provided senior managers with an informal monitoring system and triggered staff to continue their search for appropriate tools and methodologies for community-led action.

The evolution of these animal-centric tools over the years has also created radical changes in community analysis and motivation for action. The legacy of providing free treatment for animals over many years led to huge challenges for the field teams. But while the new approach



Photo: Sughar Singh, The Brooke India

Animal owners in Khanpur village documenting their assessment using a traffic light monitoring chart.

involves short-term costs (e.g. effort, time, money or productivity), it is already resulting in longer-term change for animals and their owners. During the pilot project, field teams learnt that improvements in welfare were only seen when the owners identified and analysed the animals' needs themselves.

Through debate and cross-checking using animal-based welfare indicators, issues are clearly highlighted so that animal owners are motivated to develop action plans to resolve them. The teams also discovered that the collective nature of the process is essential, as group observation of each member's animals created peer pressure to act.

Using these tools is a process of mutual learning, between the animal owner groups

and between owners and The Brooke field teams. Providing veterinary services at a certain place and time is a fairly controlled process. It is much more complex to work with animal owners at the community level and address working animals' welfare from a more holistic livelihood perspective. This requires using multidisciplinary teams where the community facilitator plays a key role, having less control over field teams as working hours are not fixed, and a completely new way of monitoring activities. For example, we found that treatment records could no longer capture the nature of the work, or the direct result of the teams' efforts. This was a major change in how The Brooke India operated and involved changing the attitude of veterinary technical staff who believed that only veterinary interven-

tions could improve working animals' health and welfare. Intensively involving veterinary staff in action and reflection workshops and visits to showcase successes in the field has limited their resistance, but has not removed it completely.

In terms of sustainability, the community action and reflection process is currently used in 2687 villages, 2624 brick kiln communities and 242 tonga stands communities in 30 district units distributed in eight states. Several of these groups are now doing PWNA action and reflection processes without field team support. The welfare groups have federated into 48 associations in the past year, and about 36 have adopted the process of conducting PWNA in all villages once or twice a year. These assessments are based on common parameters decided democratically by all members of the welfare groups.

Final thoughts

The Brooke India sees working animal welfare as integral to people's livelihoods. It is one of the many development challenges that individual families face. Our approach contributes to creating more resources (assets) and opportunities at

household level to improve their livelihoods as a whole, and there is increasing evidence that this approach works. For example, an analysis of the expenditure of savings of 1300 equine welfare self-help groups shows a direct benefit to the animal as well as to the family: 54% of savings are used for purposes such as veterinary treatment, animal feed and cart repairs, while 46% are used for household expenses such as children's education, payment for weddings and funerals, and other domestic needs.

Many animal health and husbandry problems have been solved through this community-led process: in all communities, we have seen less animal mortality and morbidity, fewer and less severe wounds, better body condition of animals, fewer hoof-related issues, and many more changes. Communities have also been able to address chronic or persistent welfare problems.

Finally, although the PWNA action and reflection process has been developed and tested mainly in and with communities owning horses, mules and donkeys, we believe that the tools can also be adapted for use in improving the health and welfare of general livestock.

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The collective action process and further adaptations and methodological innovations are documented in a field guide for community facilitators called *Sharing the load: a guide to improving the welfare of working animals through collective action*. Practical Action Publishing in association with The Brooke, January 2011. Please contact: kimberly.wells@thebrooke.org for the English printed version. Also available in French, Arabic and Spanish from The Brooke website www.thebrooke.org. Please contact one of The Brooke India authors of this article for the Hindi version. See our In Touch section for more details.

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Participatory digital mapping in arid areas of Kenya and Tanzania

4

by TOM ROWLEY

Background and context

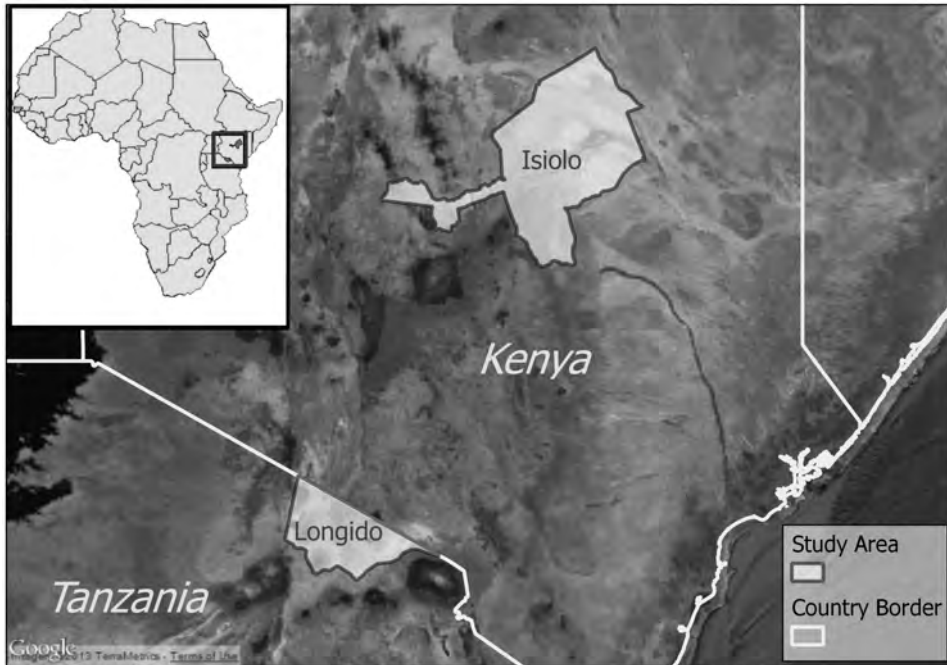
Pastoralists have long used their extensive and detailed knowledge of arid and semi-arid environments to maximise livestock productivity and minimise asset loss (Krätli and Schareika, 2010). Scattered and variable rainfall, characteristic of arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs), means that pasture, particularly grasses, are available in different places at different times. Because the nutritional quality of plants changes during their growing cycle, the availability of nutritious pastures in the ASALs is also variable and constantly changing because of the uneven rainfall. Different soil types with different fertility characteristics, different plants species with different nutritional qualities, and different topographical features, such as gullies and depressions where water may concentrate, add further complexity. The nutritional profile of ASAL rangelands – particularly in the rainy season – is highly variable and ever changing.

Yet this is not a constraint for pastoralists. Indeed, it is a resource. Pastoralists

positively exploit the ever-changing concentration of nutrients in ASAL rangelands, particularly during the rainy season, by moving their animals to those areas where the pastures are at their ‘nutritional height’. They provide a higher nutritional diet to their animals than if they remained in one area. Livestock mobility is the principal strategy used by pastoralists to maximise livestock productivity under conditions of environmental variability.

Livestock mobility and secure access to a wide range of pastures are, however, increasingly threatened by a range of other competing activities including the spread of arable farming, conservation enclosures, new settlements, population growth, mining and trophy hunting. This steady encroachment and alienation of pastoral resources over much of East Africa has seriously undermined pastoralism as a livelihood and economic system, contributing to increasing poverty, land degradation and conflict in many pastoral areas.

Poor understanding by policy makers and planners of pastoral production strate-

Figure 1: Mapping study areas

Satellite imagery showing the Kenyan-Tanzanian border and first-level administrative boundaries – Longido District and Isiolo County are highlighted.

gies and how pastoralism (compared to other land uses) contributes to local livelihoods and the wider economy partly explains the failure of policy and planning to enhance pastoral mobility and protect the rangelands. The inability of pastoralists to articulate the deep knowledge they have of their environment and how they carefully manage natural resources to generate wealth and prosperity in a sustainable manner compounds the problem.

The mapping processes discussed here help to close this communication gap by enabling pastoralists to demonstrate – in a ‘language’ understood by policy makers and planners – their extensive understanding of ecological processes and their impacts on livestock and people, and thus the logic behind their livelihood strategies. With this improved understanding, there is the potential for governments to

recognise and support pastoralism as a viable and productive livelihood and economic system. This paper describes the use of Google Earth (GE) images to support the mapping of natural resources by local people in Longido District in northern Tanzania and Isiolo County in northern Kenya. This project is being carried out by IIED in partnership with the Ministry of State for Development of Northern Kenya and Other Arid Lands, the Tanzania Natural Resource Forum, local government authorities and other local actors, with the support of the GeoData Institute of Southampton University in the UK. The work is being implemented within the context of two broader projects (see Figure 1) seeking to strengthen local government planning in support of adaptive and climate-resilient drylands development.¹

¹The projects were: Mainstreaming climate change adaptation in drylands development planning in Tanzania (2010-12). Funded by DFID, CORDAID and GORTA; Supporting local climate resilience through innovative district funding and social protection mechanisms in the drylands of Kenya (2012-13). Funded by DFID and CORDAID. See: www.iied.org/drylands-pastoralism

Photo: Alais Morindat



A group of men explore the distribution of key resources for livestock rearing in Longido. The perception map is made on the ground using marks in the dust and stones.

The need for accurate mapping

Pastoralist's tenure of land and resources in ASALs depends on being able to define them accurately. Traditional livestock routes, water resources and pastures are not officially described or recognised in maps or spatial planning. These resources are vulnerable to loss or fragmentation because of competing activities.

Participatory mapping has long been used to consult the knowledge and perceptions of community groups (see e.g. Rambaldi *et al.*, 2006). But it often produces perception maps,² where map scaling and styles are inconsistently improvised during the consultation process. For this reason, transferring results to other contexts outside the workshop setting is difficult, as the scale and style are incompatible. Perception maps often require explanation before they can be understood by those who did not produce them. Any

comparison with other maps is inherently qualitative and vague as no distances or positions can be objectively measured without accurate scaling.

Specifically, one key limitation of participatory mapping is transferring perception maps (often drawn on the ground or paper and not necessarily to scale) into formal decision-making processes where accurate maps are required, for example to pass a byelaw. Paper maps may be very powerful in their immediate setting – but it is very hard to use such maps in other contexts. Different contributors may use different icons to describe the same type of feature and no objective verification of map features on the ground can be performed without the scaling and accuracy provided by the grid systems used in formal maps.

Digital maps have a built-in coordinate system, referencing locations which corre-

² A map drawn from people's perceptions, without coordinate data and therefore not necessarily to scale.



Photo: Tom Rowley

Using paper flipcharts to create a perception map in Kinna ward, Isiolo.

spond to a global reference grid, so they can be linked to maps used in other formal systems. This provides a means to define the absolute positions and importance of key natural resources which can more precisely inform management decisions. A coordinate system also provides a geographically precise basis from which to discuss natural resource management. This makes the outputs of participation in mapping more universally useable and user-friendly. Making local knowledge more useable can result in better management outcomes, for example land-use byelaws that refer unambiguously to specific locations that were pinpointed by the resource users themselves.

The need to make maps at an appropriate scale and focus

Pastoralists use resources which are spread over vast areas that vary in productivity and value within and between years. Depending on the type of pastoral system,

and the prevailing conditions with respect to pastures, security or market opportunities, pastoralists may travel considerable distances with their livestock to access pasture and water. Pastoralism therefore requires mapping on a range of different scales ranging from a settlement-level scale for the planning of domestic water to a wider ecosystem scale for the planning of livestock mobility corridors between wet and dry seasons. Conventional planning in the ASALs, particularly at local government level, usually occurs within specific administrative and/or political jurisdictions such as a village or a district and usually does not extend to capture the full spatial extent of pastoral livelihood strategies and movements that may cross numerous political and ecological boundaries.

Unlike farming, the transient use of resources by pastoralists, which often leave no physical mark on the environment (e.g. the seasonal use of different pastoral

Photo: Alais Ndiangoya



Participants geo-referencing key natural resources in Longido.

areas), makes it hard for outsiders to identify specific pastoral land-use strategies. It involves no habitat conversion, no hard boundaries or any privatisation of the land. It is far easier, and possibly politically expedient, to identify and therefore map private land holdings within well-defined political boundaries than it is to recognise the more diffuse and ever-changing usage of the Commons. To identify pastoralist resources, maps must be made at the ecosystem scale, at which this system operates. This could also help support the management of mobile grazing wildlife populations, which could make it easier to obtain political support for such planning tools.

Project workshops

During the project, several large workshops were held to discuss natural resources and land management with a range of stakeholders in both Isiolo and Longido. The workshops both introduced the project and

identified important issues and features to include in the resource maps.

Following a quick exploration of the satellite imagery to orientate participants and pinpoint the location of the workshop, participants led the collection of digital data from the satellite images from Google Earth (see Figure 2, step 2). Google Earth was projected onto a large wall with the original paper perception maps hung next to them. Participants could navigate the imagery and indicate key resources, or their indicators, with a long stick. For each feature a digital marker – an icon, a line or a polygon – was used to show the correct position and extent. Placing these digital markers allowed us to transfer points of interest from the paper maps into a geographic information system (GIS), producing coordinates that pinpoint the locations in a way that can be independently and objectively verified (see photos and Figures 3 and 4). This process of geo-referencing local knowledge to a coordinate

Figure 2: The mapping cycle

Step 1. Participants begin with exercises listing the kinds of resources to map out and why. The chosen types of features are mapped out on sketch maps.

This produces perception maps showing the relative positions of natural resources using pen on paper or marks and objects on the ground.

Step 2. Google Earth is projected onto a wall next to the perception maps from step 1. Participants locate key resources or their indicators from the satellite imagery and place an icon to show their precise location.

This produces the coordinates that pinpoint the locations of natural resources in a manner that can be independently and objectively verified.

Step 3. Participants add attributes to the different types of natural resources that have been mapped out so that they can be more fully described.

This allows fuller descriptions and analysis of natural resources and management issues. Spatial and attribute data can be added by several groups and pooled on one map, allowing more cross checking, detail and area coverage.

Step 4. Spatial data from Google Earth is merged with the attribute data recorded in Excel. GIS maps of the study area are produced with the attributes embedded and participants' choices of basemap, icons and colour schemes.

This transformation allows all the data collected to be shown on a single, easy to interpret platform that allows processing, printing, sharing and analysis.

Step 5. Feedback of the map to groups who provided data, local government and other interest groups. Data is returned for participants to evaluate and validate the maps and to reach consensus between the various groups.

This allows the maps to be returned for validation, cross-checking and styling according to the wishes of those who provided the data, building trust as well as more refined, readable and validated maps.

Step 6. Cycles of learning and feeding back results (repeat steps 1–6) are used to refine the maps, broaden participation and reach consensus, to a point of diminishing returns where no more is added and participants are satisfied that the maps are complete.

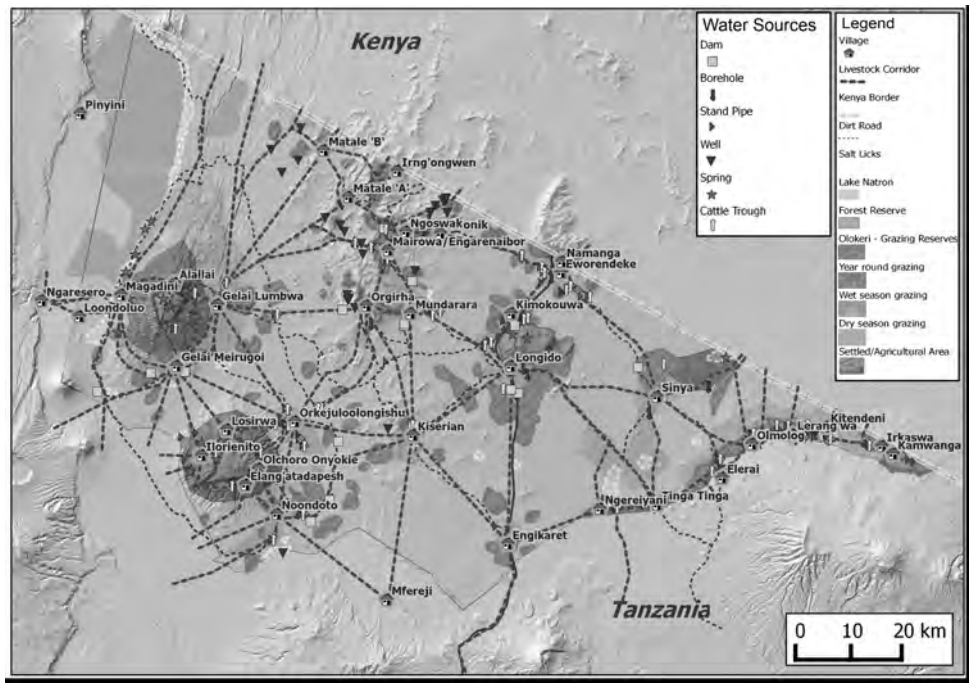
Repeated cycles of learning can build richer maps, trust, and be used to refine the mapping process, evolve priorities for the usage of the maps and discuss underlying natural resource management issues.

Step 7. GPS marks for contentious features, those undiscernable from, or newer than, the satellite imagery and those which demonstrate the accuracy of the map must be collected on the ground.

This provides specific troubleshooting for hard to find points of interest along with a more general validation of the maps accuracy by checking and marking the locations of key features on the ground.

NB, this is an idealised sequence. In reality it is useful to remain flexible. For example, collecting GPS marks for key features before a feedback session, and using feedback workshops to gather and standardise attribute data were found to be helpful.

Figure 3: Overview of Longido District, showing pastoralist dynamics, natural resources and infrastructure.



system is what allows the resource maps to be produced to scale.

Qualitative and quantitative data describing the attributes of these key resources was also collected, for example the capacity of water sources and the plant species characterising different grazing areas (see Figure 2, step 3). This was compiled in an Excel spreadsheet using an ID numbering system that corresponded to the features mapped out in Google Earth. The two data sources were later merged into file formats for use in a GIS, with the attributes of natural resources embedded into the spatial data describing their locations. We chose to use Quantum GIS (QGIS) for this post-processing, as it is a free, open source platform that is far easier to share and handover than a commercial package requiring thousands of dollars per year to use.

Data showing the different seasons in which pastures are grazed and the major livestock routes connecting them was also

collected to allow the maps to reflect the patterns of access to these resources. These dynamics are important as they reflect the mobility that generates resilience in mobile resource tracking across ASAL regions.

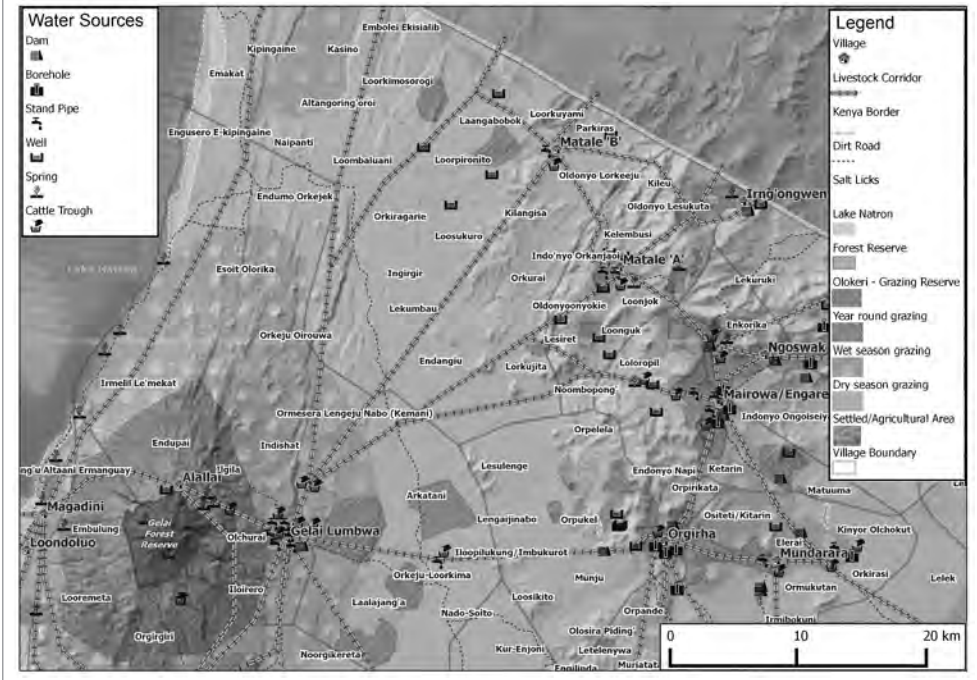
Cycles of learning about the study area from community groups, digitally capturing local knowledge and feeding back the results were used to more exhaustively explore the potential of the satellite images, GIS and local knowledge (see Figure 2, steps 4–6). The workshops included regular feedback sessions to return the data to those who provided it and to thoroughly cross check the results as they were pooled together from different groups. Regular cycles of contact and learning also helped to build trust and encouraged the sharing of information on sacred sites and previously unknown gemstones, for example. These feedback sessions were also used to develop better methods, discuss the implications and usage of the map, and to evaluate the project.

Photo: Tom Rowley



Participants geo-referencing key natural resources in Isiolo.

Figure 4: Longido map sub-section, showing Engenaibor ward with water point icons and the names of grazing areas.



Digital markers taken with handheld GPS on the ground were used to verify the map accuracy and pinpoint hard-to-find locations, for example those under clouds on the satellite imagery (see Figure 2, step 7). This verifies the location of any outstanding contentious features and more generally the precision of the map and the knowledge used to make it. It is worth noting that this is a fairly idealised cycle and that in reality it is useful to remain flexible, for example, collecting GPS marks for key features prior to feedback sessions and using feedback sessions to gather and standardise attribute data.

Geo-referencing for objectively verifiable maps

Physical maps have been extensively used to support community group consultation and development planning (see e.g. *PLA 54* Rambaldi *et al.*, 2006). However, perception maps that are not to scale tend to have limited power when transferred out of the context in which they were created. Making maps that describe the dynamics of nomadic lifestyles, and which remain applicable in other contexts, is difficult. Google Earth provides an important 'bridge' that can allow local people to make maps in an objectively verifiable coordinate system. This helps to overcome the difficulties of using the results of participatory information-sharing by making the outputs more useable and transferrable. It is also worth mentioning that bringing local knowledge to bear on digital mapping in fact also brings significant advantages in the cost, speed and relevance of digital data collection.

Using imagery to build richer maps and record attributes

Exploring local knowledge on land and natural resources in a workshop setting can be more stimulating, non linear and

Box 1: Using mobile phones for participatory data collection

In one ward, a notable improvement to participation and the quality of data collection was employed by participants. Several features important to livelihoods were newer than the satellite imagery and could not be located. Participants found they could map these precisely by quickly visiting them by motorbike and obtaining coordinates with GPRS-enabled mobile phones they were carrying.³ These were then entered into the computer so the features could be displayed in their correct locations. This was exciting in terms of the level of uptake and commitment to the mapping process it indicated, the precision it allowed and the manner in which it demonstrated the strength of local knowledge. When the coordinates were entered manually, the points of interest did not jump far from their previously estimated positions. The steady uptake of this kind of technology and the possibilities it offers could have exciting implications for ownership, monitoring changes and building more robust, ground-truthed maps.

productive with satellite imagery and a terrain model available for the participants to explore (Figures 3 and 4). Using GE projected onto a large wall allows more stimulating and interactive approaches that lead to richer maps with more features and detail. In Longido ward, Longido district, 36 water points became 142 water points during the digitisation process. This explosion of observations and available detail requires some careful facilitation. For example, this apparent abundance of water is misleading as further questioning revealed that at any given time a large proportion of them (28.5% of all Longido's water points at the last workshop) were not working. This was due to a range of factors, for example the reliance on rainwater recharge, broken pumps or disturbance by road building or elephants. Watching the features build up on the satellite imagery as they are pointed out gives some instant feedback which provides some immediate cross-checking of inputs within the group and the means to explore issues as they emerge.

³ General packet radio service (GPRS) technology is integrated into certain mobile phones. GPRS is a cellular networking service that supports WAP, SMS text messaging, and other data communications.

The digital platform being used to capture data also allowed observations on the attributes of features being mapped to be recorded and embedded. As people put features onto the map they also described the characteristics of these features. For example, a water point would be mentioned along with its capacity, the water quality, extraction method, access conditions and whether or not it currently functioned. Similarly, different types of grazing area were described according to the seasons they are used in, their physical features, and the species of plant that are usually present. In Isiolo, different soil types were used to differentiate pasture types, for example chalk (*boji*) and black cotton (*malbe*) that were clearly distinct in the satellite imagery. An inventory of plant species totalling over 200 was given to further describe different grazing areas along with data on wildlife concentrations. These descriptions and data can be captured during the mapping process adding considerable richness to the map and allowing deeper analyses of the systems they describe.

As the map develops in front of the group, it tends to bring about a sense of ownership and pride in the map that is produced. This was often seen to encourage further participation.

Strengthening community voice at local, national and international scale

Making more accurate maps for stronger advocacy

Accurate digital maps can be independently verified and therefore gain more traction. This can allow them to act as a more effective 'loudhailer' – amplifying the impact of community voices at all levels. Using arguments referenced to a coordinate system can bring evidence-based local knowledge to bear on planning and decision-making in a way which is much more difficult to discredit and ignore.

Pooling local knowledge onto a single platform
Capturing information onto a digital plat-

form allows several groups to contribute independently to the same map. This allows cumulative improvements to be made to the level of detail and cross-checking in the map, and to the extent of its coverage. The digital platform allows different groups to add information concerning the areas they are interested in and easily make sense of one another's contributions. This is not always the case for paper maps where more explanation is usually required. Some paper maps produced in a specific context can be difficult to understand and virtually impossible to use when taken out of context.

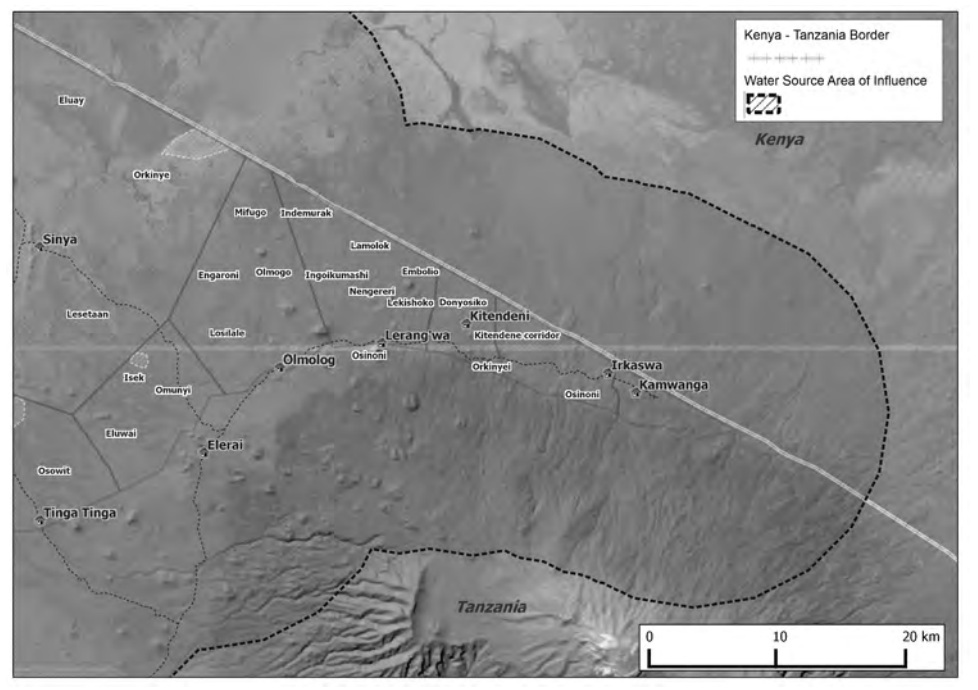
Mapping based on GE images still requires the facilitator to be proactively inclusive and take account of who has taken part in the process and seek out those have not yet been able to contribute. However, the images and data are readily understood and this makes it much easier to include the views of different groups as they take their turn to add their observations.

Making maps with flexible scale

Pooling local knowledge also allows an appropriate scale for examining natural resources to be evolved as the patterns of usage emerge. As well as building a grand overview, digital mapping allows zooming into specific areas and selective presentation of data so that participants can work on small subsections of an area, or on specific issues. Currently our maps are constrained by political boundaries but we can clearly see cross-border issues emerging. For example, the water made available at the foot of Kilimanjaro clearly has a sphere of influence covering a large portion of Amboseli and many major cattle routes connect these areas across the Kenya-Tanzania border (Figure 5).

Demonstrating the power of local knowledge
As mentioned previously, the robustness of community perceptions can be demonstrated using digital maps. This can be achieved by directly measuring the accuracy of perceptions against the imagery, by

Figure 5: Fifteen-kilometre buffer zones around cattle troughs in Longido, showing their influence on pastures in Kenya.



ground-truthing with handheld GPS and also by simply comparing the paper maps from early in the mapping process with the digital maps they later produced (Figure 6). This, along with the detailed attributes describing features of the map, can be used to evidence how highly developed and necessary this knowledge is for survival. Maps made in this way are very swiftly and accurately produced in a manner that is compatible with other spatial planning. This allows comparison of different planning efforts, the overlaying of different maps and potentially, where appropriate, the formation of arguments that reconcile mainstream planning with customary land-use reasoning and priorities (Figure 6).

Critical reflection

Handing over of maps and mapping tools

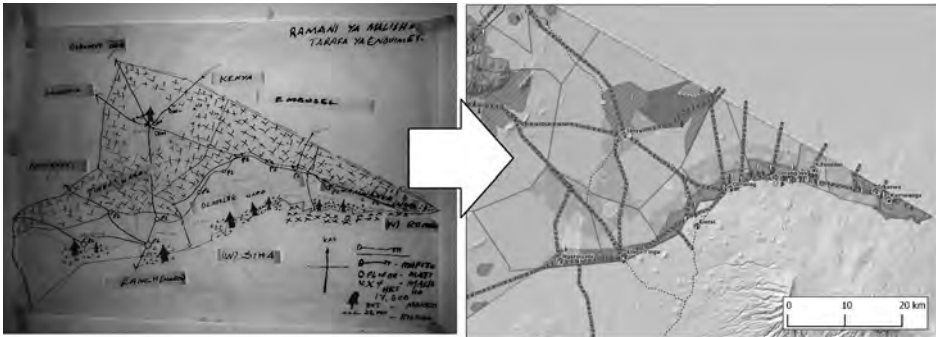
It is critical to return the maps to those who participated in building them. However, the introduction of technology such as laptops and GIS makes this harder to achieve.

Some local actors were able to take data sets for Google Earth and portable document files (pdf) maps onto their laptops. Local governments also have capacity to take custody of, and in some cases use, the digital data. Leaving maps at the village level currently relies on the ability to print paper maps. In Longido, 33 A3 sheets were printed, cropped and stuck together to achieve this. In Isiolo, six A0 sheets were used. A greater reliance on technology means that the facilitator's paradox of being in control of something that needs handing over is intensified by this increased reliance on technology.

Technology and developing mapping styles

It may seem unexpected that people with little or no experience of digital technologies can make use of GE images but uptake and use was very quick. This is particularly due to the ability to explore a 3D terrain model which provides a side-on view showing elevation of familiar features, helping

Figure 6: Comparison of perception maps and geo-referenced digital maps shows the accuracy of local knowledge in terms of distance and direction.



participants to orientate themselves.⁴ We found that all groups would respond very quickly to a warm-up exercise finding and marking their current location in the workshop. Once this 'we are here' point had been zeroed in on, participants rapidly oriented themselves and began to take control of the interactive exploration of the study area. Most groups started by adding major landmarks before fleshing out the details in between. Some groups used mountains, some rivers and some roads as reference points for doing this. Other groups added all levels of detail, methodically moving away from the starting point, the location of the workshop. Allowing participants to drive exploration of the areas was very important but slightly different mapping styles emerged as a result.

Some groups were also vocal on how they wanted the maps to look. Fortunately, we came across no conflicting opinions and were able to use the styles of the groups that were vocal on this issue e.g. blue for live-stock routes, red for arable farming areas and so on.

The management of the process by which the images are projected and manipulated is crucial to the success of the mapping exercises and a great deal depends on the quality of the facilitation. As with all

participatory methods, the tools are not as important as the approach and principles being followed in the facilitation. Digital mapping is just a recent addition to the processes which contain something of a paradox for the facilitator who has control of a process that they in turn want to hand over to other people.

Making use of maps

Mapping itself does not infer or affect pastoral community group resilience. Rather it is a tool for communicating the local knowledge that, when given room to be applied, can engender resilience in pastoralist communities. It is hoped that the benefits of mapping local knowledge can be brought to bear on the activities of other rangeland users who would otherwise displace and disregard the dynamics of pastoral land use. However, the production of a map is several steps away from its use by politicians to mediate competitions over land and resource access. Validation of maps by community groups and local government, empowering local government and customary institutions to make use of them to form appropriate planning and public good-type investments, seeking legal advice and legal action over gazettelements to protect key areas, and generating will at the

⁴ See also Piccolella *et al.* (this issue) for a discussion on how the third (vertical) dimension stimulates memory. 'A two-dimensional map looks the same from any direction. With a three-dimensional model, what you see varies according to your position.'

national level not to override local governance are required for mapping to have impacts on livelihoods on the ground.

Gender

The pastoralist societies we worked with were quite male dominated, especially in relation to issues of long-distance herding and territory. In all but the locations and attributes of domestic water sources, men's contributions were overriding. However, we observed that in workshops that were facilitated or attended by powerful women, all the women present contributed more. Collecting separate data for men and women's groups and using a digital platform to later overlay them would be interesting. This conforms to findings in other forms of mapping where men and women often produce quite different maps when working separately. However, maps based on Google Earth images can easily be used to re-combine different maps, and the maps of one group can easily be shown to the other on the same background.

Valuable lessons

Cross-checking throughout

As the data was built up on the projector screen it allowed participants to see the map emerging from their individual contributions. This allowed instantaneous cross-checking throughout the collection of data. It was also helpful to use the measuring tool, a flexible scale bar that can measure distances from the image in kilometres, particularly when zooming in and out, to keep participants orientated and allow better cross-checking within each group. Measuring distances, for example to triangulate the location of a new point in relation to other known points or to measure the breadth of a grazing area helped generate accurate data. Also, participants often became interested in checking the accuracy of their knowledge against the ruler tool and seemed to enjoy verifying their knowledge of distance and direction using the satellite imagery.

Cycles of learning

As well as feeding back results within workshops, returning the data once it had been processed in a GIS allowed participants to improve the maps considerably. Presenting the data over a different base-map and with clear icons helped participants to reinterpret their maps and provide amendments and additions. Some groups preferred a base-map made from the original satellite image but in black and white to allow the data in colour to stand out. Others preferred solely using elevation data with a shading effect to highlight the topographical relief of familiar features. Cycles of consulting local knowledge and then processing and presenting the data built trust as well as richer maps. Having gone through three cycles of collecting mapping data and feeding back the results in Longido, a piece of paper describing a sacred site and two important gemstone seams was given to the facilitators. This highlights the importance of returning data to the groups that provided it and cross-checking the digitisation process both within and between groups.

The emergence of power issues – Longido

We found during the cyclic learning and feedback sessions that community groups had limited knowledge of certain types of features that were only partially or inconsistently added to the maps. When trying to prompt participants to offer better data for these areas of interest it became clear that we had stumbled across an area where local knowledge was inadequate. The types of features that could not be reliably mapped from local knowledge were all land-use gazettelements designed to support foreign interest in the study area, specifically activities focused on wildlife and rare mineral resources.

There were four distinct categories of land-use planning in which local people and institutions had limited knowledge and involvement: tourism, hunting, conservation enclosures and mining for gems and other

rare earth minerals. Planning around these types of features occurs at the national level and is often at odds with planning at the district level. This could be due to the more international stakeholders invested in these types of land use, their interactions with national-level actors, and a difference in focus between government planning levels concerned with national versus local-level economic performance. Promotion of tourism and mineral exploration can support formal commercial economic processes at the national level, though this is at the expense of performance in the local economy. This is exemplified by the risk that, in this context, creating mining towns, lodges, farms, hunting blocks and reserves that limit or disrupt mobility (though beneficial to high-end, national/international-level economic processes) will seriously undermine resilience in the local economy, causing hardship, conflict and land degradation.

This highlights a paradoxical tension between bottom-up and top-down planning which results in incoherent, duplicated and often inappropriate spatial planning. Local government in the ASALs who are more directly accountable to local people aim to support stable and productive livestock-keeping as the dominant economy and welfare support to their most numerous and most vulnerable constituents (United Republic of Tanzania, 2009). This requires protecting the integrity of the Commons and empowering customary institutions to continue to practice sustainable, dynamic natural resource management on a large scale. However, overriding planning at the national level tends to cater for those invested in the fragmentation (e.g. conservation enclosures, villagisation⁵, or privatisation) and liquidation (hunting, mining, full-scale habitat conversion) of natural resources (Figure 7). While this paradoxical promotion of welfare at the district level and commerce at the national level remains politically and

logistically expedient in terms of spatial planning, local governments and customary institutions will remain subjected to gazettelements under their feet resulting from decisions made over their heads, and which they have little information on.

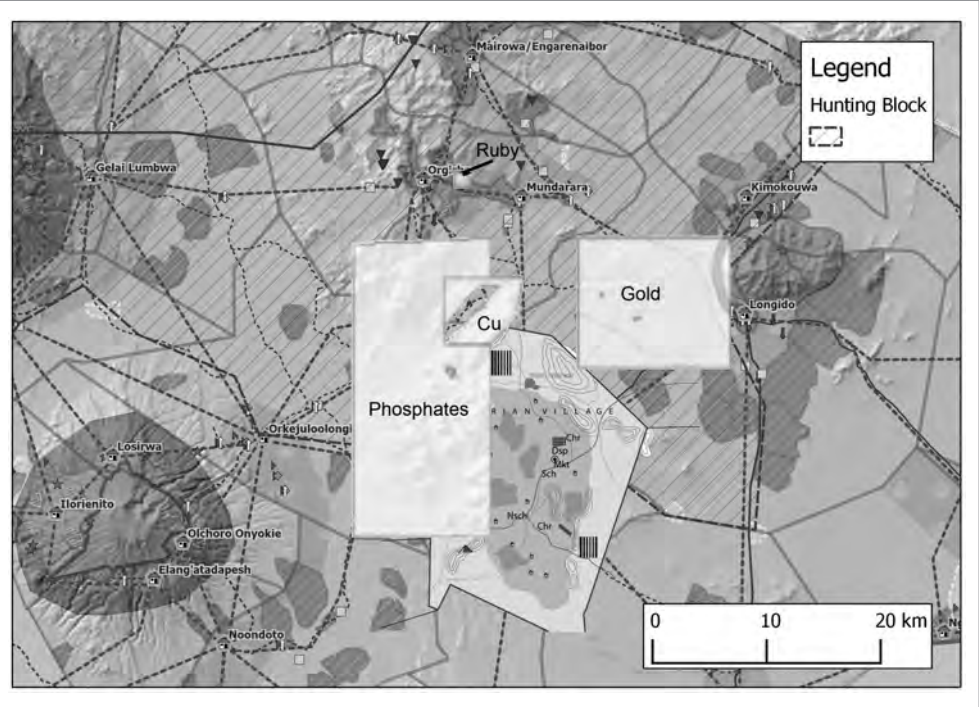
Commerce and welfare need not be diametrically opposed as there are many parallels between livestock-raising and rangelands wildlife management. Assets in both sectors are characterised by the breeding and predation of large, grazing herbivores and that need to migrate in order to optimise their access to water and nutrient. Some of the disparity in local- to national-level government agendas could be reconciled somewhat by acceptance of the common dynamics of pastoralism and the ecology that supports wildlife conservation and tourism, both major drivers of foreign investment in the study areas. Wildlife-focused activities could also in the long term be supported by appropriately defined, ecosystem-scale rangelands management designed to preserve dynamic stability in large, resilient and flexible ecosystems. However, this will only be possible if stakeholders in tourism can be persuaded that preservation of ecosystem integrity and complexity rather than the isolation and monopolisation of small, valuable areas is the way forward in the long term.

Conclusions

Mapping using digital technology in conjunction with local knowledge is still relatively new in East Africa. But it is showing early promise – not only from a technical perspective (e.g. accurate, efficient, cheap and transferrable) – but also as a tool to empower communities and bridge communication gaps between citizens and their government. Participation in mapping the land generates some ownership of the maps and the land management issues they describe, mobilising community group engagement in these issues. The process

⁵ Villagisation is the (usually compulsory) resettlement of people into designated villages by government or military authorities.

Figure 7: Pastoralist dynamics with a sample of hunting, mining and villagisation gazettements overlaid.



also can encourage government agencies to visit and engage with their constituents who can now use maps to provide more communicable and coherent ways of articulating their land-management knowledge and priorities. Maps in a digital platform can also be directly compared, allowing planning and management issues to be clearly crystallised, and perhaps more easily resolved.

At the time of writing, work is on-going in Longido and Isiolo, where the maps described in this paper will be used to support decision-making on public good-type investments to build local adaptive capacity to climate variability and change. Plans are being finalised to extend and up-scale the work to neighbouring counties and districts in Kenya and Tanzania respectively. As the size of the area mapped increases towards the landscape scale, a more comprehensive overview of pastoral dynamics, cross-border effects and natural resources distributions can be provided,

resulting in an increasingly powerful tool. Monitoring systems for updating the maps and handing over of ownership are being put in place with some capacity-building required to support this. Legal advice is also being sought on how to use maps to pass byelaws protecting key resources and preserve the mobility required to access them.

We plan to make the maps available online as well as disseminating printed 'atlas' type maps where electricity and computing do not allow the data to be shared directly. To achieve better hand-over, uptake of ownership and ongoing monitoring of changes we must further explore how to make the maps into interactive tools to support adaptive management and decision-making by using techniques such as crowdsourcing data to develop a community of users and contributors around the data, adding and using updates in real time.

Some challenges stem from the need to hand over digital technology, though

uptake is advancing rapidly e.g. the spread of GPRS-enabled mobile phones (Box 1). Another challenge will be harmonising spatial planning activities between different stakeholder groups and local- and national-level government planning departments. The communications gap between pastoralists and other stakeholder groups and managers can be bridged using

maps to convey the copious and pertinent data contained in local knowledge in a precisely verifiable and more widely applicable form. However, the capacity and will of government to accommodate pastoralist knowledge and reasoning in the mediation of land management issues will determine the success of landscape-scale rangelands management in the long term.

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Prejudice and participation: claiming rights to community forests in Nepal

5

by GOVINDA PRASAD ACHARYA and PRAMOD JAISWAL

Introduction

The Kamaiya are a former bonded-labour group in Nepal, who have excelled in managing community forests while improving their livelihoods through community agro-forestry initiatives. Following their formal liberation by the Nepalese government in 2000, each household received Nepali Rupees 10,000 along with forestry land. Yet until recently, the Kamaiya were accused of being the ‘architects of deforestation’ by powerful local landlords – who were themselves involved in illegal logging and attempting to deflect attention from their activities.

In reality, the united Kamaiya understand very well the pros and cons of deforestation. Despite this local opposition, more than eleven thousand Kamaiya have become members of local community forest groups, even managing around 40 community forests on their own. In this article, we examine how the Kamaiya have campaigned to uphold their rights to

access, use and control community forests and how they have used participatory methods to analyse their situation and converge on consensus within their groups.

Background

The Kamaiya live mainly in five districts of western Nepal: Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur. In this article, we describe how the freed Kamaiya have gained access, usage and control over community forests, based on the experiences of the Kamaiya from Shivnagar in Tikapur municipality, Kailali. This settlement consists of 520 households built by the Kamaiya after their formal liberation and with a population of 3300 it covers 700 *katta* of community forest.¹ We highlight the constructive and innovative forest management techniques used by the freed Kamaiya and how they have improved their livelihoods as a result.

We also discuss how a variety of local and international organisations established

¹ 1 katta = 3645 square feet.



Photo: Devendra Pratap Singh

Members of the community at the Freed Kamaiya of Shivnagar settlement drying turmeric.

Reflect circles to create an enabling environment where the Kamaiya could discuss their issues locally (see Box 1).^{2,3} At the same time, NGOs and government established informal education classes to empower and sensitize the Kamaiya people to their rights of access to resources and information. A strong sense of solidarity amongst the majority of the Kamaiya and their institutions, collaborating with local civil society organisations (CSOs) and forming networks such as the Freed Kamaiya Society (FKS) helped in mass conscientization and formed the basis for their success.⁴

Combined with advocacy for pro-poor policy and governance, and with the support of local CSOs, the Kamaiya were able to claim their rights.

Liberation and rehabilitation

The bonded-labour system existed in western Nepal for many years. Under the Kamaiya system, people without land or work were given loans by landowners. In exchange, they were bonded by indebtedness and had to work for the landowner to pay off their debts. Exorbitant interest rates were charged, and whole families were

² Organisations included ActionAid, MS Nepal, GIZ and the UK Department for International Development (DfID) through its local partners Radha Krishna Jana Sewa Nepal (RKJS), Forum for Awareness and Youth Activity Nepal (FAYA Nepal), Backward Society Education (BASE), Nepal National Social Welfare Association (NNSWA), Samudaykolagi Ban Batbaran Manch (SBBM), Society for Participatory Cultural Education (SPACE), Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC) and Group for International Solidarity (GRINSO).

³ Reflect is an approach to adult learning and social change and forms the backbone of ActionAid's reflection-action process. ActionAid has a new strategic approach to change. It integrates approaches such as Reflect, Participatory Vulnerability Analysis (PVA), Societies Tackling Aids Through Rights (STAR), Economic Literacy And Budget Accountability for Governance (ELBAG) and other participatory methods into a single, coherent rights-based process for conscientization and empowerment (ActionAid, 2012).

⁴ According to Paulo Freire, conscientization is 'the process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action'. Freire developed an approach to education that links the identification of issues to positive action for change and development. See more at: www.freire.org/conscientization/#sthash.hm3UzwWB.dpuf

forced to provide slave labour for years – sometimes for generations.

Following pressure from Kamaiya organisations like Freed Kamaiya Samaj, Kamasu, Kamaiya Mahila Jagaran Samaj, NGOs (including ActionAid International Nepal and its local partners), human rights organisations, some political parties and the media, the government of Nepal finally abolished bonded-labour and the Kamaiya system in 2000.

Under the Kamaiya Labour Prohibition Act (2001), each family was supposed to be given 5 *katta* of land and Nepali Rupees 10,000 (around 70 GBP) following liberation. But in practice, the former Kamaiya are still awaiting these allocations and fundamental services such as health and education are lacking.⁵ Many Kamaiyas were also forced out of their homes by their ex-landlords to live as squatters, with no access to shelter or any means of making their livelihoods.

Gaining access to community forests

The majority of the freed Kamaiya belong to the Tharu community, who depend heavily on the forest for their livelihoods. Before liberation, the Kamaiya were permitted access to the forest on their landlord's behalf. At the same time, they were able to make a small living from the few forest resources they were able to access for themselves. But following liberation, they found that access to community forests was restricted to members of forest user groups, from which the Kamaiya were excluded.⁶

Because they had not previously been given access to the forest for their own purposes, the Kamaiya were unaware of these community forestry policies which denied them access to essential forest resources. Community forests, access and

Box 1: The Reflect approach to adult learning and social change

Reflect is a diverse and innovative approach to adult learning and social change, inspired by Paulo Freire and developed by ActionAid. It is used by over 350 organisations in 60 countries and has been used to tackle a wide range of issues, from peace and reconciliation to community forestry and holding governments accountable.

The Reflect approach links adult learning to empowerment. Having begun as an approach to adult literacy, Reflect is now a tool for strengthening people's ability to communicate through whatever medium is most relevant to them. Reflect creates a democratic space which strengthens people's ability to speak for themselves at all levels.

Although Reflect projects are diverse, they all focus on enabling people to articulate their views: the development of literacy and other communication skills is closely linked to the analysis of power relationships. Groups develop their own learning materials by constructing maps, calendars, matrices and diagrams or using drama, storytelling and songs to capture social, economic, cultural and political issues from their own environment.

While members of a Reflect circle learn the basics of literacy, they are also learning how to access information or demand services more effectively. Reflect circles often strengthen people's dignity and self-confidence, as well as having an impact on improving health practices, children's education and local community organisation.

Source: www.actionaid.org.uk/about-us/reflect

control were discussed in the Reflect circles established in the settlement, including forest-related policies, and how they affected the Kamaiyas' livelihoods. Reflect members shared their problems and used a resource map to identify forest resources and seek possible ways to gain access to community forests. During discussions, they became familiar with the Forest Act and the concept of community forests, which aims to ensure that forest resources remain sustainable and are available for the benefit of local people (Yadav, 2004).

⁵ In 2004, frustrated by the lack of government support, the Kamaiya began a land-grab campaign, capturing 700 *katta* of land in Kailali district. It was following this that local landlords began to blame the Kamaiya for deforestation. To combat these claims, the Kamaiya began a new campaign in a neighbouring community forest, using roadblocks to waylay illegal timber smugglers.

⁶ Introduced by the Nepalese government, a community forest is an area of national forest handed over to user groups for the development, protection and utilization in the interest of the community.



Photo: Man Bahadur Dangri

Focus group discussion with ex-Kamaiya in Shivnagar.

Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) are groups of people residing around forest vicinities that are entrusted to manage, conserve and develop forest resources and utilise forest products. The CFUGs are actively and decisively involved in whole range of community forestry processes. They are responsible for preparing the constitution and management plans for the community forests, and handle all issues arising from managing the forest. Members consist of forest users from nearby settlements and the groups elect an executive committee, with elections typically held every one to three years. It is also mandatory that there are equal numbers of male and female members in CFUG groups.

Learning about community forests motivated the Kamaiya to understand policy provisions and demand their forest rights by becoming CFUG members. But in practice, they found that they had almost

no influence on major decisions about the forest, such as where to fell timber or selling wood. They understood that without representation on the executive committees, they would be unable to influence planning and decision-making processes around forest use. This would ultimately hinder claiming their rights to the forest.

Demanding representation on user group committees

This second phase of their struggle for forest rights brought great changes to the lives of the Kamaiya. They began discussions in settlement and group meetings about the importance of having representation on forest user group committees. They tabled their demands and also discussed them with influential local individuals such as teachers, political party representatives and members of the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN).⁷

⁷ FECOFUN is a formal network of CFUGs dedicated to promoting users' rights. Its rationale is to strengthen the role of users in policy-making processes. Since 1995, it has grown into a social movement with about 8.5 million forest users. Any CFUGs organised under the 1993 Forest Act of Nepal can become general members and any other grassroots forest user groups (such as leasehold forestry groups, religious forestry groups, buffer zone and traditional forest management groups) can become elementary members. Of more than 15,000 CFUGs and other community-based forest management groups in Nepal, approximately 13,000 are affiliated with FECOFUN.

Meanwhile, Reflect group members were supported by development partners (including ActionAid) to visit the district forest officer (DFO). The DFO has the authority to register community forest user groups. The Kamaiya tabled a demand for forest ownership near their settlement, referring to the provision of community forest user groups under the 1994 Forest Regulations and their reliance on the forests for their livelihoods. As a result, the DFO surveyed the forest near to the Kamaiya settlement, the Janahit Mahakali Community Forest in Kailali, and registered it in the Kamaiyas' name.

Following this success, the Reflect members were inspired to register other community forests, and an advocacy group was formed at community level. The group consisted of Kamaiya, Valamansa (traditional Tharu community leaders) and female community health volunteers. The advocacy group registered another 16 community forests on their own, using the

knowledge they had developed through the Reflect process on forest policies and rights. The advocacy groups also organised an application registration campaign. The idea was for individual Kamaiya to write a formal letter to CFUGs requesting that the groups consider them as potential new members. Now the Kamaiya are members of 449 community forest user groups from five districts, including 26,378 households. There are over a thousand freed Kamaiya (nearly half of whom are female) on the boards of 189 CFUG groups.

The campaign succeeded not only in increasing the membership of Kamaiya in community forest user groups. It also resulted in Kamaiya individuals being voted onto community user group committees by dozens of CFUGs during their individual general assemblies. This was because the Kamaiya had shown that they were strongly committed to preserving the forests, by demonstrating model management practices in their own community

Photo: Sher Bahadur Basnet



Selling agro-forestry products made by the Shivanagar Agriculture Cooperative.



Members of the community at the Freed Kamaiya Settlement of Shivnagar collecting turmeric.

forests (for example through agroforestry, forest conservation and combatting illegal smuggling).

Taking on leadership roles

The next step for the Kamaiya was to advocate for election to leadership roles on the executive committees, since people in these positions are responsible for the overall management and decision-making related to the use of forest resources, distribution, benefit-sharing and pro-poor target plans and programmes. The Kamaiya began by lobbying at CFUG group meetings and general assemblies, and have since put forward nominations for proportional representation on CFUG committees close to Kamaiya settlements.

To date, a total of 1073 hectares of forest have been handed over to 43 community

forest groups led by the freed Kamaiya. Nearly 7000 freed Kamaiya have become forest users in these community forest groups and are now benefiting from the resources, earning approximately 8 million Nepali Rupees (just over US\$83,000) to date. They also cultivate vegetables, herbs, turmeric and maize on the open land inside the forest and in 2008, the inhabitants of the Shivnagar Freed Kamaiya Settlement established its agriculture cooperative to support savings and credit, community farming and market management for agroforestry products (Box 2).

By the end of 2012, a total of 317 freed Kamaiya in five districts had been elected to leadership positions. Among them were 73 chairpersons, 89 vice-chairs, 61 secretaries and 69 treasurers. These elections have played a vital role in ensuring the



Photo: Sher Bahadur Basnet

Box 2: The Shivnagar Agriculture Cooperative

The Shivnagar Agriculture Cooperative was established in 2008 to support savings and credit, community farming and market management for agro-forestry products:

- The cooperative has 157 members (60 woman) with a market management sub-committee, a spice management sub-committee and a working committee.
- The working committee has 7 members (3 women).
- The spice management committee makes and packages turmeric powder from community-farmed turmeric.
- There are 15 savings groups, each with 25–30 members.
- With their profits, the Kamaiya have established a primary school for 85 Kamaiya children. Eight Kamaiya students have since completed secondary school.
- Two Kamaiya women are serving as female community health volunteers (FCHV).
- With support from the government, 5 water pumps have been installed for herb farming.
- Tikapur Hospital now provides free health services to Kamaiya.

meaningful participation of the freed Kamaiya (see also Box 3).

Lessons learnt

Undoubtedly, an enabling state policy environment is a prerequisite for social transformation. It helps citizens to amplify their voices, bring their issues to the mainstream development arena and systematically claim their rights. However, to translate policy into practice, there is strong need for understanding, ownership and collective action. Rights holders must make a conscious effort to claim their rights over resources otherwise policy will not be implemented effectively.

Similarly, in this neoliberal age, the role of civil society organisations and the need for clear social accountability is also very important. Here, CSOs supported the Kamaiya not only in demanding their

Box 3: A personal reflection on the successes of the Kamaiya

The government failed to provide us with land for a long time after liberation and the resettlement declaration, so we were compelled to capture the land. Generally, we settled on open land near the jungle. The forest smugglers blamed us as architects of deforestation, as forest capturers, smugglers, and destroyers to displace us from there. That created great problems, so we became a united raised voice against the blame put upon us. We also coordinated with forest user groups and requested a share in the responsibility of caring for the forest. Some groups accepted our request [...] After getting authority we [were] able to catch the smugglers and handed them over to the committee many times. We had whole night duty in a rotation. It's provided plenty of evidence that the persons who blamed us are the ones who carry out such illegal activities [...] We are now registered and are conserving forests in five districts. We are also represented on the [CFUG] board at decision-making level.

Shyam Prasad Dagaura, district member of Freed Kamaiya Samaj, Kailali and Chairperson of Shivnagar Agriculture Cooperative Limited

liberty, but also in helping to empower them to claim their rights. The popular Reflect approach was an important participatory tool in this respect, helping the Kamaiya to understand the context of current forest policy in Nepal. It helped to facilitate mass conscientization and solidarity and to form advocacy campaigns for pro-poor policy and good governance.

Conclusion

For the Kamaiya, the forests are inextricably linked with their livelihoods, income generation and employment. Having

access to forests has given the Kamaiya formal power: both economic empowerment and political participation in decision-making bodies.

Transformation is not easy, but it is possible. Although unjust power relations exist in every community, true transformation can occur when this imbalance is addressed through conscious effort. Organisation, mobilisation, empowerment, solidarity and continuous effort led to the liberation of the Kamaiya and enabled them to claim their rights to access the forests on which they depend.

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Increasing women's incomes, increasing peace: unexpected lessons from Niger

6

by JINDRA CEKAN

Introduction

In 2005, Niger experienced its worst food crisis in a decade. It was caused in part by a severe drought and a fall in food production (Sánchez-Montero, 2006). Agro-pastoral communities were among those most affected. To survive, the majority were forced to sell their livestock at below cost price in order to meet their nutritional needs.

As a result of the drought, in 2005 Lutheran World Relief (LWR) received funding from the Gates Foundation for a two-year drought-rehabilitation project in Niger, largely because of their sustained partnerships with local NGOs in the field. The Lutheran World Relief Pastoralist Survival and Recovery Programme (ARVIP) took place in 2005–2007 with the evaluation in 2008.

ARVIP focused on restocking women's sheep, building mixed-use wells for communities, improving forage storage and transhumance among 500 agro-pastoralists in 10 communities in Dakoro, north of Maradi, Niger. It was designed by LWR staff with pastoral expertise to focus

on recovery among pastoral/agro-pastoral ethnic groups of Fulani, Hausa, Tuareg and Tagamawa.

Our team conducted both baseline and final evaluation studies with partners, staff and the communities, combining qualitative participatory approaches and quantitative gendered budget analysis. We found expected, interesting results such as rises in income – but interestingly, there were other unexpected positive results.

This article discusses the unintended impacts and describes interesting programming and methodological lessons for practitioners focused on increasing community resilience. It also describes how we triangulated data using both qualitative and quantitative tools, enabling us to learn about gender-differentiated expenses.

Project activities

There were four project activities to improve people's food security:

- Three–five sheep given to the women of 500 households.
- Wells built in five of the communities.



Photo: Jindra Cekan

An arid millet field, outside Paphel, Maradi district, Niger. This photo illustrates the food insecurity of the people: one short-term drought and agriculture is decimated. During the project, the minimum walking distance to a working well was two hours each way.

- Animal forage stocks given to half of communities.
- A community transhumance discussion between pastoral and farmer leaders and the local government.

In addition, we experimented with *habanaye*, a traditional livestock restocking practice where wealthier families pass on adult animals like goats or sheep to poorer and vulnerable family members and keep the young. LWR adapted it to pass on animals to communities outside of the clan.

ARVIP distributed over 1108 sheep to 605 women (worth almost FCFA 18 million/USD 43,000), built five community wells and rebuilt one, and put in six community animal feed-banks. We also had an especially transparent organisational development impact on community processes. For example, working with the

LWR field staff the community used participatory process to decide on the criteria for redistributing *habanaye* livestock, targeting the poorest and most vulnerable households.

Although we evaluated all four activities, this article focuses on findings from the animals and wells. These had the largest impact on women's empowerment especially. After being trained in PLA approaches, our team spent five days in each community for the baseline and final studies, with men and women, representatives of poor and better-off households, and management committee representatives.

PLA methods and processes used

We conducted focus group and gender-disaggregated household interviews across all ethnic groups, as well as transect walks and seasonal calendars. Seasonal calendars were vital to enable us to understand the livelihood cycles into which the new livestock, fodder banks and wells fitted. We used transect walks to discuss conflicts over natural resource constraints and competing livelihoods, for instance conflicts between farmers and herders or between different ethnic groups over livestock grazing. During the evaluation, we also innovated combining qualitative discus-

Box 1: Evaluation questions

- Has the project enhanced 10 local communities' resilience after their food crisis in 2005?
- Are communities more food secure and are these activities sustainable as a result of ARVIP?
- What were the results of the project activities of *habanaye*, livestock feed-banks and shared wells?
- Were these projects effective in helping communities to recover from this food crisis and withstand future ones?
- Were the activities participatory and what can we learn from this process to strengthen activities elsewhere?

Table 1: Restocking five poor women's households

Recipients	Animals owned before 2005 crisis (goats)	Animals sold during crisis	Animals born from ARVIP's <i>Habanaye</i> (sheep)	Young male sheep sold	Result
A	2	2	2	0	2
B	0	0	3	2	1
C	0	0	1	0	1
D	0	0	1	0	1
E	0	0	3	1	2
Sum	2	2	10	3	7

sions and quantitative budget exercises with men and women from different income categories. Topics included wealth differences, seasonal household budgets and income changes, de-capitalisation and coping strategies.

By having gender-separate discussions with the communities, we were able to make useful comparisons with what each group taught us. It helped us to triangulate data and learn about gender-differentiated expenses. It was also very helpful to learn across quantitative and qualitative tools, which is not always done concurrently. For instance, the budget tool was done verbally with male heads of households of wealthy, middle-income and poor households. The uses of funds qualitative tool was used with women's representatives from the same kinds of households.

Throughout, the women were our main focus. The project aimed to improve food security, access to water and household food consumption (a key province of women) while generating income for women directly (traditionally seen as more of a male activity). By comparing responses from men and women, we found that among some key respondents, due to project activities women's household incomes rose from 5% to 25% – a staggering proportion in these subsistence households.

Results: animals as income

Over 600 of the poorest families (out of a population of 6,150) across 10 communi-

ties benefited from the new sheep shared using the *habanaye* method. Pastoralists depend on rainfall for pasture and so seasonality determines their income. Having more animals and access to water improved their food security. However, the project not only helped herders restock their herds. It also newly capitalised some women who had no animals even before the crisis of 2005, and were therefore chronically vulnerable.

We chose a group of very vulnerable recipients of the first *habanaye* cycle to interview. One flaw in our evaluation was that we presumed that the drought had affected everyone in the same way, and that all poor households (accounting for 80% of the population) had lost animals. But when we evaluated the results we realised that some had previously had no animals at all. Talking with five women who were the most vulnerable in one community, only one had owned any animals (two goats) before the crisis (see Table 1). These animal gains were attributable to ARVIP.

We then did a ranking budget analysis with women who had sold 1–2 rams which had been passed to them. This confirmed the expenditures in Table 2. Ideally, such tracking of income and expenses should be done across years, with groups of pastoralist men and women, to track long-term impact. However, this was beyond the scope of our two-year project.

We also analysed how much income men and women spent on food, clothing,

Table 2: Uses of proceeds from the sale of young rams in FCFA (10 women, 8 men)

Recipients	Food	Clothing	Spices	Domestic	Animal Food	Ceremonies	Buy Animals
Women							
1	9,000	6,000	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	15,000	0	0	0
3	15,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	3,000	2,000	0	10,000	0	0
5	15,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	0	2,000	3,000	10,000	0	0	0
7	11,000	1,000	0	8,000	0	0	0
8	0	5,000	0	10,000	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	20,000	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	20,000	0	0	0
Men							
11	12,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	5,000	0	0	15,000	0	0	0
13	4,000	4,000	0	0	4,000	2,000	8,000
14	6,000	4,000	0	0	2,000	2,000	6,000
15	6,000	4,000	0	0	4,000	2,000	4,000
16	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	7,000
17	12,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	10,500	0	0	0	0	0	0
	115,500	29,000	5,000	98,000	20,000	6,000	25,000
%	39%	10%	2%	33%	7%	2%	8%
Total: 298,500							

spices, livestock, animal feed, domestic expenses and ceremonies. Interestingly, nearly 40% of respondents bought food (although men outnumbered women 2:1). Nearly all of the women bought domestic/household items (e.g. pots and pans, beds, dishes, often for their daughters' dowry) while men invested in animal feed, ceremonial expenses and purchasing new animals. But while the evaluators and staff expected large repurchases of female sheep, this was never mentioned by the women we asked. Instead, only four out of six men we interviewed did so on behalf of their wives. Our findings also showed that sheep were not just used to bolster savings or for food as the donor and LWR had expected. They were used to cover a wide variety of household expenses such as purchasing household items or providing dowries,

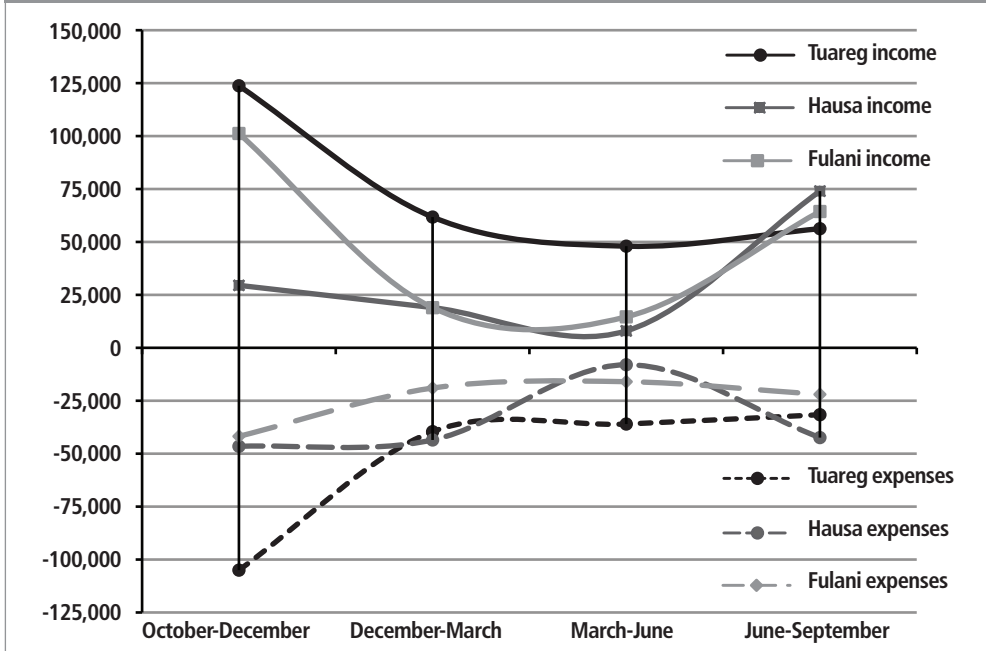
many of which were short-term and were not about fostering future resilience.

How does this fit into overall household income? Figure 2 shows average expenditure and income per family. While FCFA 10,000 is not a gargantuan amount for women to bring into the family via the sale of a ram, it could make a large percentage difference for household income, especially during the hungry periods of Dari and Rani.

It was difficult for the same people to participate in both the baseline and final evaluations as many pastoralists had not returned in time for the evaluation, although we interviewed as many as we could (around 20%).¹ But even so, the results showing cash income and expenditures highlighted the value of ARVIP inputs. The seasonal calendar (Table 3 overleaf) illustrates the typical household

¹ We delayed our return to match the previous year, but even so, the pastoralists stayed away longer than expected thanks to finding better pastures further away.

Figure 2: Income by ethnicity and seasonality in the 10 ARVIP communities (roughly 30 male respondents)



budget for the Fulani of the Paphel community. Data was gathered among groups of men and women separately (around 60 respondents).

Seasonality was a key factor, as usual. Approximately the same number of animals was sold in Rani and Damana seasons. But the difference in incomes was due to terrible terms of trade, e.g. a tenth of the income for the same animal sold during Damana as during Rani.

In addition, for 90% of the population, their basic nutritional needs were met in only three to four months of the year. The most vulnerable had to develop survival strategies for a staggering eight to nine months, including rural employment (land clearing, harvesting and field preparation), selling wood and straw, and migration. And during the 2004–2005 food crisis, most pastoralists were forced to sell their animals at below cost price. So any positive change in households' incomes, such as those generated by women, was key.

Participants told us that as a result of *habanaye*, few people in 2008 had to resort

to survival strategies, even though 2007 was a bad year for rainfall. ARVIP's inputs supported such resilience. The evaluation found that among respondents, incomes rose as a result of project inputs (e.g. wells and feed-banks – well-fed animals sell for more money). In fact, men in two communities estimated that animal values had increased by 40% and their individual household incomes by 25% since 2006. They sold rams from the first *habanaye* cycle just before and during Dari and Rani – both times of great vulnerability.

A key lesson was that highly vulnerable communities need multiple resources. ARVIP provided animals, water and feed to boost female and even male livelihoods. Women play a major role in the daily management of pastoralist family income. Sheep and goats are generally owned by women, who always have rights to the milk. In some cases, however, once the milk is sold, the men take responsibility for that money. Other women, mostly the poorest without animals, sew mats, gather wild berries and sell straw instead.

Table 3: Typical annual budget in Paphel community

Seasons	Kaka Oct – Dec	Dari Dec – Mar	Rani Mar – Jun	Damana Jun – Sep
Budget line				
Income (in FCFAs)				
Sale of animals	125,000	44,500	305,000	22,500
Rural employment and masonry	0	0	33,750	12,500
Watering at wells	0	0	1,500	0
Millet harvest	45,000	0	0	0
Total income	170,000	44,500	340,250	35,000
Expenses				
Millet purchases	125,000	0	150,000	0
Animal feed purchases	0	0	155,000	0
Ceremonies	33,000	750	500	1,000
Clothing	12,000	0	18,000	0
Medicine	0	0	12,000	1,200
Rural labour	0	0	0	20,000
Total expenses	170,000	750	335,000	22,200
Cashflow	0	43,750	4,750	12,800

In ranking exercises with both genders, all ranked *habanaye* sheep loans as the most important and wells second. The animals distributed to these women had a special impact. Women in both communities said that thanks to ARVIP, more income meant they could feed their families better.

Results: wells for time, peace and prosperity

Thanks to the new wells, women also had more time to generate an income. The wells had been well-sited due to community participation and provided sizeable improvements in water access and time savings to 400 households. One woman said Paphel's well was 'like a river'. For instance:

- Before the well, the Tuareg of Dogon Daji-Paphel drew water around 8km from their settlement. It took 10 hours to water their animals. Now it takes 10 minutes.
- Women had much more free time available thanks to greater water availability. They estimated that before they could only use 4–5 20 litre cans a day. Once the wells were installed, they could use 6–10 cans per day, saying 'Now we are available during the day, not just at night.'

Women told us universally that 'they had a lot more time' for other activities. For instance, some men noted that their wives had time to make lunch rather than spend the day waiting at the faraway well. Women reported finally being able to bathe themselves and their children as well as wash their clothing, improving both their well-being and their confidence in their appearance. New mothers had daily access to warm water for bathing during their two months in quarantine after giving birth: a rare luxury.

Potentially the greatest – and least expected impact – is in terms of time savings and how that translated into income and peace. According to the household budget exercise from Zongon Kuzuru, this had a large impact on several vulnerable households. And just as important were the reported decreases in gender violence and greater inter-generational peace and inter-ethnic harmony (see Box 2). Some women told us they were no longer beaten by their husbands because of their new incomes and personal cleanliness. They also reported that their relationships with their mother-in-laws had improved (thanks to being able to make

Photo: Jacques Ahmed Hlaibi



Standing with the leader of the Peulh community in Zongon Kuzuru, Maradi District, Niger. He was one of the more affluent pastoralists Jacques Hlaibi and I interviewed during the budgeting exercises with both men and women. Women and their livelihoods are often invisible, which this project changed.

them tea using water from the wells). Several people mentioned less conflict – both at the wells (between community members) and between herders and the more settled agro-pastoralists. In fact, there were a number of other gender-parity and community harmony impacts, all unexpected:

- Women repeatedly told us that now that they owned their own animals, their husbands respected them more. A separate Tufts University's Feinstein assessment, this participatory evaluation and project staff found this was true in all 10 communities.
- Project staff described how men and women sat far apart during the initial meetings. But during the final meeting in Koundumi, they sat together on the same mats, indicating an impact across genders.
- Similarly, other community members said they had got to know one another during community sensitisations. Now even different ethnic communities e.g. attended each other's baptisms and ate together. Paphel residents told us that the four communities in Paphel (dark and light Tuaregs and dark and light Peulhs/Fulanis) were closer as a result of the joint activities. This was true in other communities too: Kadogo

(Tuareg, Fulani and Hausa), Marafa (Tuareg, Fulani and Hausa) and Azagor (Tuareg, Tagamawa).

- During other Gates-funded project research, four communities said they were more highly respected because they had received three different inputs at the same

Box 2: Women's feedback on the impacts of water access

- 'Today even a baby can go to the well alone for water while before, people could go five days without even a simple wash because of the lack of water... so we have improved health.'
- 'Actually in one hour one can fill six jerry cans. This helps us make houses out of mud bricks and granaries from the same bricks instead of woven grass.'
- 'Water is so present – children complain less of thirst.'
- 'This time-saving has led to income increases by women doing animal purchase, fattening and resale, mat-weaving and sale, wild food and straw gathering.'
- '[Because we are clean] women are more valued and respected by our husbands, and the management committees are also more highly respected in the communities.'
- 'The herders use wells to ensure they're watering their herds, and it has led to a decrease in conflicts between farmers and herders.'
- 'The costs of watering one's animals have decreased – from FCFA 35,000 in other communities' wells to 2,000 per family per year for this well.'

Box 3: Time-savings equal income-generating activities

Two wives we interviewed used the time they saved weaving mats. They could produce two mats in one week compared to one mat in three to four weeks in 2005. Now over 35% of total family income comes from selling mats (compared to less than 5% before).

time. Importantly, each community also received recognition from the state, thanks to the project.

- The community as a whole owns the well (rather than an NGO or the landowner).
- Zongo Kuzuru and Paphel management committee members said that now they knew committee members from the other 10 communities, they greeted one another on market days and shared news, indicating an impact across communities.

Next steps/learning

The two main issues we faced were time and sustainability. Our advice to the Gates Foundation and LWR is to extend such projects for 3–5 years. Funds were only available for 18 months for the project head and two field staff. The project ended too soon to draw any long-term conclusions. Though without field staff, LWR's project officer and ARVIP's project head extended their project work without funding, which

they felt was imperative to see the second *habanaye* cycle through and to monitor the sale of the animal feed during the May 2006 close of the project. They also supported the well management committees as the wells had only been completed in July 2007. There was also a need for a longer evaluation to see whether and how communities continued reconstitution themselves. We needed more time to see the results of our project at community level, and while the communities still needed management support. Changing perceptions of women's roles also takes time, as does peace.

How could LWR repeat this project? A key principle of LWR is 'accompagnement', an equal partnership with communities: one that incorporates monitoring and evaluation at the community level in an on-going process throughout the project. Monitoring and evaluation should be a self-directed process, where communities determine the indicators and therefore what information should be monitored and evaluated. It should also use dialogue as the means for achieving our best community development outcomes, assume community leadership and decision-making throughout process, and prioritise participation.

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Reflections on participatory HIV prevention research with fishing communities, Uganda

7

by PETER KAYIIRA BYANSI, PAUL BUKULUKI, JANET SEELEY, PONTIANO KALEEBU, LESLIE NIELSEN, KIDEGA WILLIAM, SIMON SIGIRENDA, KALINDA JIMMY, REBECCA NABBOSA and DAVID WALUGEMBE

Introduction

In this article, we reflect on our experiences as a multidisciplinary team applying participatory learning and action methods to research HIV/AIDS prevention in fishing villages in Uganda. Our team included people born and raised in fishing communities with professional training in social and medical anthropology, behaviour change communication, health and social work. Because of our backgrounds, we were able to break down communication barriers and build trust with participants, facilitating discussions on issues that are socially sensitive and challenging deeply held beliefs and norms.

Background

HIV prevalence in Uganda is estimated at 7.3% (MoH *et al.*, 2012). But a recent study in the Lake Victoria basin fishing commu-

nities found a prevalence of 22% (Opio *et al.*, 2011), while previous studies estimated it to reach up to 30% (MAAIF, 2005; Asiki *et al.*, 2010). Yet these communities are not being reached effectively by existing health and AIDS services. Fishing and fish trading are mobile occupations and people may be absent from their homes when HIV counselling, testing, education and sensitisation services are available (Mojola, 2011; MoH and ORC Macro, 2006).

From July to September 2009, our multidisciplinary team conducted participatory research in six fishing communities in Lake Victoria at four landing sites and two islands in Wakiso and Mukono districts (see Box 1).¹ Our objective was to explore innovative, community-appropriate and gender-sensitive ways to reach those at risk of HIV infection and engage them in HIV prevention research.

¹ The research was done by the Uganda Virus Research Institute's International AIDS Vaccine Initiative HIV Vaccine Programme (UVRI-IAVI) in partnership with Africa Social Development and Health Initiatives (ASDHI), a local community-led organisation that is currently implementing HIV/AIDS and community development activities in the fishing communities of Ssi-Bukunja sub-county, Buikwe district in Uganda. The research was funded by The Wellcome Trust UK. See: UVRI-IAVI HIV Vaccine Programme: www.iavi.orug and Medical Research Council MRC/UVRI Research Unit on AIDS: www.mrcuganda.org



Photo: Peter Kayira Byansi

Ssenyi fish-landing site, Lake Victoria where the Africa Social Development and Health Initiatives offices are located.

Box 1: Our multidisciplinary research team

Our team had two team co-leaders, Peter Byansi and Paul Bukuluki. Peter Byansi grew up in a fishing village and is trained in both social development and health. Paul Bukuluki is a medical anthropologist who grew up by the River Nile and now works in fishing communities. Six research assistants (three women, three men) have experience in HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health (Rebecca Nabosha, Ismail Ddumba Nyanzi, Jimmy Kalinda, Arthur Musasizi, Daphine Kasiwa Ntege and Easther Nassonko Kavuma). Four are from the Africa Social Development and Health Initiatives (ASDHI) and have a fishing background.

Our team worked in partnership with two researchers from the Medical Research Council/UVRI Research Unit on AIDS and staff from UVRI-IAVI (Janet Seeley, Pontiano Kaleebu, Leslie Nielsen, Kidega William, Simon Sigirenda and David Walugembe). Pontiano Kaleebu is a researcher from MRC/UVRI and trained in medicine and immunology while Janet Seeley is a social anthropologist. Leslie Nielsen (UVRI-IAVI) is trained in project management, and Simon Sigirenda in social science, while Kidega William and David Walugembe are trained in health services management and communication/public relations respectively. The UVRI Scientific and Ethics Committee and the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology granted ethical clearance for the research.

Methods and processes

Two weeks before the research, we (team leaders Peter and Paul) visited two of the research sites and observed people going about their activities. Our aim was to assess which research methods would be appropriate for working with most-at-risk individuals or groups. We also identified key contact persons and groups to work with in identifying and selecting participants.

Informal conversations with fisherfolk, local leaders and women and men living and working at these sites revealed that there are individuals, structures and networks that act as gatekeepers who could positively or negatively influence the research. First we needed to identify and engage with these gatekeepers, including community leaders, boat and net owners, landlords, peer networks and informal local leadership structures in different ethnic groups.

Most gatekeepers help to mobilise participants to link with a research team.

However, some wield power and influence which may impact upon people's agency. For example, some gatekeepers monitor and enforce government fisheries policies and guidelines. Some provide employment. Others own or control landing sites or camps on islands. When gatekeepers endorse a research intervention, individuals may feel obliged to participate for fear of compromising their security, tenancy or livelihoods. Gatekeepers might also try to control the process, for example by influencing our research team to work with certain groups and not others. These visits also revealed that daytime-only research would miss crucial information from individuals and groups such as fisherfolk, sex workers, fish driers, barmaids and restaurant workers. In addition, most fisherfolk are busy and may prefer not to talk to a researcher in their free time.

At this point, we made two key decisions. The first was to make full use of our team members with a fishing background, interacting with the communities by helping to sort nets or mend boats. Secondly, we decided that our research team would spend four days at one of the research islands, to experience life there first-hand. This was a key strategy for encouraging participation and learning more about the context and relevant issues. It enabled us to build rapport with gatekeepers and community members and helped to allay suspicions. Gatekeepers could express feelings, opinions and information without feeling threatened or undermined. Both gatekeepers and community members also felt comfortable discussing who speaks for whom. For example, we learnt that men and husbands often speak for communities and wives respectively. We sought to identify and understand such power dynamics by deliberately reaching out to those that would be silenced.

We divided into three sub-teams, each with a member with a fishing background. Our assistants were trained in the use of

PLA methods. Research tools and checklists were pre-tested at Ggaba, a large landing site near Kampala, and throughout the preliminary analysis. To improve the quality and relevance, the checklists were refined to build on learning from the communities. Supervised by the team leaders, the research assistants helped in the participatory data collection processes and so were well informed about community issues.

Community participation in our research took the form of 'cooperation' and 'co-learning' (Kanji and Greenwood, 2001). Cooperation is 'where local people work with outsiders to determine priorities; the responsibility to direct the process lies with outsiders'. Co-learning is 'where local people and outsiders share knowledge, create new understanding and work together to form action plans'. We chose this approach so that participants could reflect and share their own ideas on how to effectively reach them, use terms that related to their realities and experiences, and identify community resources for communicating HIV prevention messages and HIV prevention research.

PLA methods were important in enriching our understanding of fisherfolk's experiences, behaviour, sub-cultures, power structures, cultural and socio-economic dynamics. It helped us to understand how these relate to HIV prevention research, HIV risk, and vulnerability in most-at-risk individuals and groups. Approximately 220 people participated in the research, including commercial sex workers, fisherfolk, boat and net owners, young people, business men and women, motorcycle (*boda boda*) transporters, lumberjacks, wood-loaders, restaurant, lodge and bar owners and workers, religious and local leaders, and staff from civil society organisations working in the research areas. The participants were aged between 15 and 49 years old.

Using PLA methods helped to create knowledge, construct new meanings and

mobilise community capacities to cope with and transform their situations (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995). We used a variety of methods, including Venn diagrams, seasonal calendars, causal linkage diagrams, pair-wise ranking and scoring, brainstorming, social mapping and key informant and focus group discussions. Informal conversations, in-depth interviews and participant observation were mainly used during interactions with people sorting nets, women drying fish, and in restaurants, bars and venues such as video halls (known locally as *bibanda*) and trading centres, markets, landing sites and sports fields. Informal conversations and interviews took place spontaneously while we were observing or joining in activities. In-depth interviews were used with commercial sex workers and their selected clients.

We held separate PLA sessions for different groups of female and male adults and youth (aged 15 to 30). Community members and researchers carried out on-the-spot preliminary analyses of emerging themes and issues. This helped to triangulate and validate the results and ensure community ownership and understanding. Representatives from these groups then presented the results to other community members at the different data collection sites. Copies of social maps were left in the community with the session leaders. The research team also facilitated discussions and provided feedback from informal conversations, in-depth interviews and participant observation. These meetings helped community members to enhance their knowledge of the drivers of HIV, discuss community-appropriate communication approaches and identify HIV service gaps. Crucially, they were also able to ask questions about the little-understood concept of HIV prevention research.

Lessons learnt, critical reflections and analysis

We used a range of methods to build trust and unravel realities, meaning and perspectives. We gained insights into people's day-to-day lives and behaviour, and made comparisons between different groups.

Using appropriate communication channels

Some methods, such as informal discussions, allowed people to open up about culturally sensitive or potentially stigmatising issues, which they may have been reluctant to share in group settings. For example, in focus group discussions (FGDs), people said they preferred to receive information on HIV and HIV prevention from local, cultural/ethnic and religious leaders. These channels are targeted by health and AIDS information seminars and other service providers. However, informal conversations revealed that information is not always effectively passed on to others via some of these channels.

Religious leaders were perceived as moralistic and stigmatising in their communication approach about HIV and AIDS. Other local leaders were said to be seeking monetary gains and the prestige associated with NGO training and research, rather than to learn and share information. Instead, participants suggested alternative interpersonal communication channels. These included community events like funerals and weddings and individuals such as traditional healers, peers, friends, *sengas* and *kajjas*.²

These communication issues had not been mentioned in the earlier group discussions. Further discussions revealed the social and culturally constructed relationships that at times impede open discussion of deeper issues. We were able

² *Sengas* and *kajjas* (paternal aunts and maternal uncles) hold a special place in Baganda culture as sources of information, particularly about sex and marriage (Sengendo et al., 2001; Muyinda et al., 2003).

to explore these relationships and discuss the perceived use, effectiveness and reliability of using such communication channels to reach most-at-risk individuals and groups.

These informal conversations and interviews revealed some significant issues that shed more light on HIV risk and vulnerability. Women shoulder the biggest burden of HIV in Uganda. During group discussions and key informant interviews, people said that HIV risk was primarily driven by casual, commercial and multiple sexual relationships with people of unknown HIV sero-status, and that women's involvement in casual and multiple sexual relationships was motivated by the need to make money. However, informal conversations revealed other underlying reasons, such as the need for sexual satisfaction, companionship, support, security and love. Some women, for example, said that sex was a means of getting someone to talk to, share their problems with and/or protect them from other men. Unfortunately, they said, such men were rare, which is why the women changed sexual partners. Other women said they were driven into multiple sexual relationships to seek revenge and/or find solace from abuse they face at home.

Our research communities said that intimate partner violence was common, often sparked by jealousy over infidelity. These are sensitive family matters that participants felt unable to share during FGDs or other group PLA activities for fear of being ridiculed or shunned. Most Ugandan cultures forbid discussing such matters in public. The methods we used provided a safe space and enough time for people to share their thoughts, concerns and realities.

Working with a multidisciplinary research team

Having a multidisciplinary team with knowledge of HIV and communication and facilitation skills was instrumental in

asking participants the right questions. Our team members with a fishing background were able to brief the rest of us about the life and culture of fisherfolk. We went into the field with the right attitude, ready to listen and respect local people and their knowledge. Camping at one of the research islands, helping with community activities, playing football or just sitting talking with people helped with genuine communication. Participants were particularly open with those of us with a fishing background, who they felt understood their way of life, culture and realities. These approaches allowed participants more time to talk and for us to listen.

Having a team with men and women was also an advantage, but it was not without risk. Some male participants were drawn to the women on our team, while some women participants focused on the men, perhaps hoping to find a new partner. However, both men and women appreciated having someone of their own gender to talk to about HIV, treatment and other health issues such as sexually transmitted diseases. This gave us opportunities to discuss their experiences, perceptions of HIV risk and vulnerability, and participation in HIV prevention research. Health matters requiring treatment, consultation and counselling were referred to UVRI-IAVI partners, The AIDS Support Organization (TASO), Entebbe Hospital, and clinics supported by Marie Stopes Uganda.

Benefits of using participatory approaches

Using PLA methods enabled us to discover that issues around gender, ethnicity and social position inevitably create differing realities, conflicting perspectives, interests and needs. To effectively uncover and mediate such conflicts, researchers must be adequately briefed and trained in participatory research, competencies and attitudes. PLA methods also enabled different participant groups to express and share their knowledge and realities, such

as sexual abuse. With their permission, we shared their anonymous stories with others during later community dialogues. This raised awareness of the problem and showed how abuse contributes to the spread of HIV. Discussions on the social maps showing key community resources (e.g. the TASO and UVRI clinics located near the study sites) revealed that some people had not known of their existence but were keen to take advantage of such resources in future.

Community mobilisation

Importantly, the PLA methods showed people that they can gather data, analyse and use it to plan and develop context-specific solutions. Using the results of the research, UVRI-IAVI engaged study communities to plan and implement innovative communications outreach activities. Through their respective leadership structures, communities were involved in mobilisation, providing venues for activities, identifying community outreach teams and providing feedback. Communities identified and selected community peer leaders who were then trained by UVRI-IAVI. Community peer leaders led the process of sensitising communities and engaging them in discussions about HIV and HIV prevention research. Activities included the use of music, dance and drama, community dialogue, sports and painting boats with HIV prevention messages.

Community members realised that the participatory research had influenced subsequent interventions. This helped to build their confidence in mobilising their own capacities and participating in decisions and activities that affect their lives. Sustaining activities is still a challenge, but the fact that communities have started to use their potential to influence and share in planning and implementing community

interventions is a sign that the empowerment process is taking place.

Developing HIV prevention strategies that communities can relate to

Our final lesson is related to people's understanding of HIV prevention research and the chronic lack of consistent HIV and health services in the study communities. At the time of our research, people understandably knew little of HIV prevention research. UVRI-IAVI and MRC, with the support of the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership, were conducting a three-year fisherfolk study in some of the study areas.³ To them, the concept of HIV prevention research seemed both complicated and the preserve of scientists. By using participatory research methods, we realised that community members were more concerned about the lack of health and HIV/AIDS services. They only understood HIV prevention research within the context of increasing their access to HIV prevention, treatment and care services. If they are to stimulate systemic social change, HIV prevention research strategies need to integrate other programme elements and service provision, and involve developing partnerships with informal networks of ethnic/traditional, religious and opinion leaders and also decision makers at different levels.

In response to the health and HIV service gaps identified by the study communities, UVRI continues to work with service providers such as TASO, Entebbe Hospital and Marie Stopes Uganda to address these gaps. These organisations offered services in some communities before the research, but now their services are more sensitive and responsive to community issues and concerns, and involve community structures in planning and implementing interventions.

³ This is a two-country study mapping the prevalence of HIV and tracking its transmission among individuals in the lake-shore towns and island villages in Uganda and Malawi.

Photo: UVRI



A boat painted with an HIV prevention message, Kigungu fish landing site, Entebbe, Lake Victoria.

Conclusion

Complementing group methods with informal conversations and participant observation helped bring to the fore latent issues that people were reluctant to discuss in public. Using trained researchers from fishing communities that participants identified with helped to break down communication barriers and

build trust, and facilitated the sharing of issues that participants perceived to be both sensitive and challenging. A blend of PLA methods and ethnographic approaches such as participant observation proved invaluable in our research with fishing communities, and would be with other vulnerable or high risk populations.

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Can we define ethical standards for participatory work?



by JOHN ROWLEY with MARILYN DOYLE, SUSIE HAY and the Participatory Practitioners for Change (PPfC) member

Introduction

This article discusses the attempts over the last ten years of a small group of people in the UK to outline the ethical issues facing them in their participatory practice. The people involved are members of a network called the Participatory Practitioners for Change (PPfC).¹ The group formed around common concerns about the quality of work carried out in the name of participation.

The PPfC members have developed statements of principles and good practice that describe the kind of participation that they hope for in their work. They first defined **Principles** (see Box 1) for their work and then developed **Guidelines for Commissioners** (see Box 2) as a way of helping people think about what would make a good piece of participatory work. More recently, they have produced a set of statements on ethical issues which led to a list of **Promises** (see Box 3) that participatory practitioners might make to a potential client.

This article tells the story of these

repeated attempts to describe better participatory work and define the ethical issues of participation, and asks if clear definitions can be widely approved and applied. Can we define ethical standards for participatory work or do practitioners have to struggle with the ethical issues in each different piece of work?

The work of the PPfC

The PPfC launched a website in 2007 and described one key overarching factor as follows:

Our common issue is that much that is done in the name of participation does not in fact lead to greater involvement of people, nor does it lead to any significant change in the status quo of power and decision-making.

The search for 'genuine' participation is driven by the excitement of having seen significant and lasting change occur in community-led processes – and by frustra-

¹See: ppfcuk.wordpress.com

Box 1: The PPfC principles

Work on defining the principles of participatory work took over a year and in November 2005, a PPfC meeting edited a lot of earlier work into eight simple statements.²

1. Local people are experts in their own lives – others learn from them.
2. Participatory work tries to include everyone relevant to the activity. Participants try to find those who need to be involved and to include voices and ideas that may not normally be heard.
3. In good participatory work people take ownership of the process (using their analysis, their ideas and their words) that is developed together with others from many different backgrounds.
4. Participatory work follows cycles of learning – each step helps decide on the next step.
5. Participatory work requires people to be self-reflective. Practitioners continuously examine and develop their practice.
6. Participatory work is rigorous and ethical. Participants continually check their work and design ways of testing the process and the findings.
7. Participatory work should lead to action.
8. Good participatory work identifies the role of power in relationships and seeks to lead to empowerment of those disadvantaged by the existing situation.

The importance of honesty, handing over power and helping to bring about action can be seen clearly.

See: ppfcuk.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/ppfccoreprinciples.pdf

tion at seeing initiatives fail where participation is weak. There is also frustration at seeing the word ‘participatory’ become essentially meaningless. People can be disappointed by a weak consultation process in which, for example, they do not know how their ideas have been used nor hear of any results of the process. When this happens, they may choose not to take part in further consultations and develop what is often called ‘consultation fatigue’.

PPfC members are motivated by a desire to see successful, locally led community development work, but they are aware that many initiatives funded in the name of participation may have a limited mandate or limited resources. In such

cases, it may be wrong to attempt a broad participatory exercise if proposed initiatives cannot be carried out. It is, of course, perfectly legitimate to carry out limited public consultation exercises as long as the limits are made completely clear to participants to avoid creating false expectations.

Maintaining quality

The participants at a PPfC meeting in 2001 discussed ethical issues and principles, standards and quality and expressed the view that respect for the principles listed above ‘ensures that participatory appraisal is a process, not merely a tool’. The question of maintaining quality includes issues of inclusion, building confidence and challenging existing ideas. The report on the meeting includes a statement of the need to ensure that the ‘outcome of participatory appraisal is [...] a change in the way decisions are made [...] and that action happens’.

The discussions that PPfC members were having are a reflection of similar discussions that people working in participatory work have had in many different contexts. It seems that it is necessary and perhaps part of participatory practice that practitioners have to develop the ideas for themselves rather than follow a text or guide that sets out how participatory work should be carried out. It is also true that none of the key principles of good participatory practice became institutionalised or standard practice during the 1990s. A publication called *Pathways to Participation* (Cornwall and Pratt, 2003) includes a chapter called ‘Concerns over quality – the elusive nature of good practice’ which voices concerns identical to those of the PPfC members. However, despite the interest shown by practitioners, no definitive definitions or codes of conduct for participatory work have gained widespread acceptance.

One of the most powerful examinations of the meanings associated with participation is the **ladder of participation**

²See: ppfcuk.wordpress.com/2012/02/20/principles-of-participatory-work/

designed by Arnstein (1969). This ladder describes eight levels of engagement of increasingly genuine participation, including levels of tokenism up to citizens having real power. Similar ladders of participation have been developed since then.³ These ladders make clear that there is a wide range of work carried out to promote citizen engagement but much of it is not genuine participation; some of it is misleading and some is ethically wrong.

One could argue that every initiative in public consultation should include an assessment of the level of participation at which it will operate and this could then be made clear to participants. Problems are sometimes caused not by the level of participation itself, but by misunderstandings over the level at which the consultation is operating, or by the differences between the rhetoric and the reality.

Defining the guidelines

One difficulty with principles is that they do not always suggest action that could be taken to improve the level of participation in any particular initiative. They tend to describe an ideal state and may not provide much help in how to get there. This is one of the reasons that the PPfC worked on guidelines for commissioners. The idea behind the guidelines was that practitioners could show them to potential clients to help them to design a more participatory process or to help them choose between tenders for the work. The guidelines were edited down to ten questions (see Box 2).

The complete guidelines are four pages long and explain some of the rationale of the ten questions. The guidelines are quite variable in the demands they put on the imagined 'commissioner'. Question 2 is simply asking that the results of any participatory work are fed back to those who took part. The rationale is simple to understand and the costs of organising feedback are not

Box 2: The PPfC guidelines for commissioners

1. Does the consultation process contain time to think and flexibility so that work can be modified as it goes along?
2. Does the consultation process contain methods for feeding back to participants and for sharing the findings with key stakeholders?
3. Is there someone who will support and promote the consultation process?
4. Will it be possible to involve people in different areas outside the initial brief?
5. Does the process include the intention of promoting action and change at community level?
6. Does the process involve local people and help to build their skills?
7. Does the consultation have the capacity to cope with unexpected findings?
8. Can you find good facilitators for this process; do you know where to search and have clear criteria and methods for selection?
9. Are the key stakeholders informed about this initiative and have they got time allocated to learning about the process and about the findings?
10. Can you identify similar participatory initiatives that have happened recently in the same area or may be planned in the near future?

For the full guidelines see: ppfcuk.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/ppfccoreprinciples.pdf

likely to be excessive. However, Questions 1 and 7 relate to the key principle of believing that one cannot know where a genuinely participatory process will lead and therefore flexibility needs to be built in.⁴ This is harder to explain and even harder to prepare for.

Making use of the principles

Members of the PPfC have reported positively on the usefulness of having the principles and guidelines. In some cases, they find that people working in community development share many of the ideas captured in the principles and that it is very useful to have them made explicit and written down. In other cases, the very existence of the principles is seen as a source of support and as a helpful checklist and a reminder of the useful contributions made

³ See, for example Pretty (1994) and Hart (1992).

⁴ For example, we have had experiences in participatory work commissioned by healthcare organisations that raised issues around transport and street lighting.

by the PPfC to the learning of its members.

The principles are seen as an important framework, which underpins the approach to the work and summarises the responsibilities of the facilitators of a participatory process. They make it clear that the work includes much more than learning a set of interview tools. This has been a major problem because participatory tools have spread much faster than participatory approaches and concerns about the ethical issues of participatory work.

Having a written code of ethics has been important for some PPfC members when working with health services or research institutions, which have strict codes of their own, or where staff expect work proposals to be checked by an ethics committee. Participatory work clearly depends on the personal qualities and behaviour of the practitioners involved and it is surprising that so little has been invested in devising codes of conduct.

According to some members of the PPfC, the focus on power in the eighth principle appears to provide a revelation of something that trainees and participants know and recognise but had not made explicit. It seems to be easy for trainees to think about how change occurs without thinking directly about power questions. It is perhaps rare for questions on power to be acknowledged as clearly as they are in this principle. However, it has always been known that participatory work is political.⁵ This principle is reported to be a helpful way of leading trainees into thinking about how their work will fit into changes which are not part of a neutral process, in which not all stakeholders will have similar views on proposed developments.

The first principle – that people are experts in their own lives – can lead to important discussions of what knowledge local people possess, why it is valuable and how it fits with other information. The forthright language of this principle helps

to focus on the challenge that the people leading a consultation must approach it with the intention to learn. This requires adopting a humble attitude that not everyone finds easy.

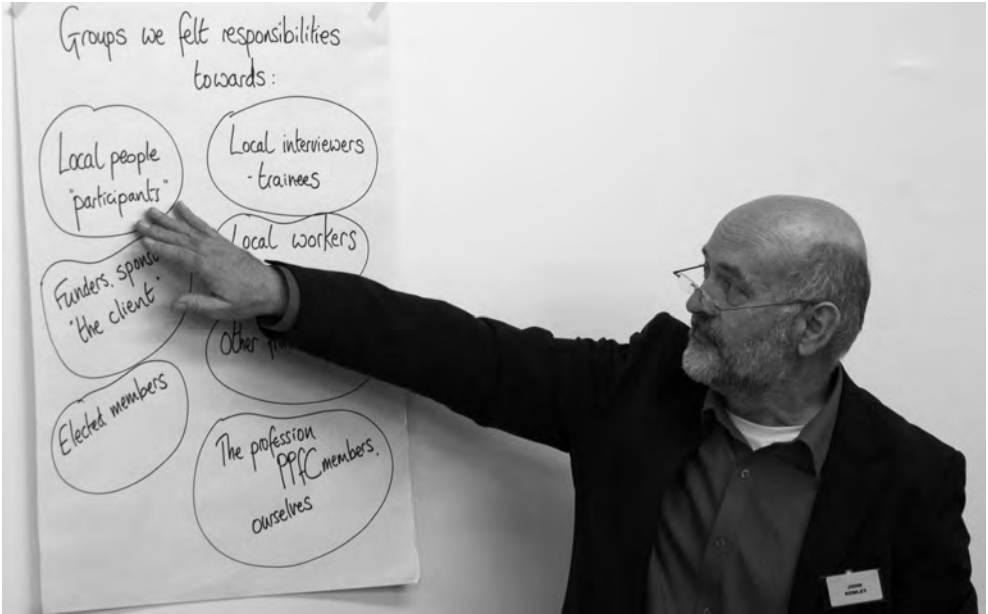
In the experience of PPfC members, getting into a humble learning mode is sometimes more difficult for people for whom knowing about an area is part of their professional role, for example, local councillors. Discussing the principle with such people can help them see how their expertise will be useful and used alongside that of other local people – and that both forms of knowledge are valuable. This highlights the ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ issues and makes it easier for the facilitator to show participants when their expertise can be brought in and when it might distort the process.

PPfC members have reported that it is often necessary to explain carefully what is meant by saying that local people are experts. For example, the experience of using health services does not make you an expert in medicine but it does give you special knowledge that health professionals do not have and which could be useful in improving those services. There are several forms of valuable expertise that can be useful in designing a development initiative.

The second principle – on being proactively inclusive – has had two impacts on how I have carried out participatory appraisals. First, it has helped me to include exercises that keep track of who we have heard from during an appraisal. This sometimes includes asking participants to put sticky dots in different boxes to identify some important characteristics like their gender, age, the part of town they come from and similar. These observations may be posted on the wall so that all those involved in the appraisal can see who we have heard from. Second, it has led me to add interviews to a process to try to collect views from people we had not yet met. For example, during an appraisal in southern

⁵ See Guijt and Cornwall (1994) (*PLA Notes 24*), which contains a number of papers on power issues in participatory work, including e.g. Guijt and Cornwall; Scoones; Cornwall and Fleming; Mosse.

Photo: Tony Jones



John Rowley presents at the Consequences workshop in 2011.

England we noticed that we had not heard from middle-class men who work in London and who are only in the project area in the evenings and at weekends. We set up interviews on the railway platform from which commuters left to go to London and carried out a large number of very short interviews and collected a lot of ideas to add to what we had already.

In another similar piece of work, we found that we had carried out very few interviews with young women (around 16–20 years old). Young women interviewers went to find some local women of the missing age group and offered them disposable cameras for them to take photos of things they liked and didn't like in the area. This method meant that we had several repeat interviews as the photographs were produced and developed and eventually used in part of a meeting with other local people.

In both these examples, it would have been easy to ignore the missing groups or even blame them for being hard to reach and complete the appraisal without them – except that it would have been counter to the second principle.

The need for participatory appraisals to lead to action remains a key principle for many Ppfc members. Principle 7 is reported to help practitioners focus on which questions and methods are more likely to lead to participant-led action. Some Ppfc members have produced a training manual that uses positive approaches to work and emphasises action and change. Users of the manual tend to think more about what might lead to action when choosing tools to use and in following up different issues.

Some practitioners have experienced tension between the need to manage the process so that it remains ethical and true to the principles and the need to avoid controlling the process so that it can be led by local priorities. For some trainees, this seems to contain a contradiction in that they must control the process and also allow the participants to control it. Discussions of the principles are useful in exploring these issues.

There are clear conflicts in some cases between personal ethics and the ethics of a good participatory process, where the facilitator is confronted by views that they find difficult to tolerate, for example, if partici-

pants in interviews expound racist views or intolerant attitudes on religion or sexuality. It is hugely important that these issues are raised and discussed and ways of working must be agreed before interviews take place.⁶ Sometimes, describing the issue as ethical did not help but made it seem that the ethics of participation were in opposition to, or somehow more important than, people's personal ethics. Nevertheless, it is important that the issues are raised so that they can be addressed explicitly.

Ethical issues

Despite the progress made by having the principles and the guidelines in place and some of the positive experiences in using them, the unease over the ethics of good participation remained a preoccupation for some PPfC members. In 2010, a small group formed to continue work on key ethical issues in participatory work and started by identifying the main groups towards whom they felt they had a responsibility. The scenario imagined was one in which the PPfC member was going to train a number of people to carry out interviews with local residents in order to design a development initiative. This scenario contains the largest number of potential groups that participatory practitioners would have to relate to including:

- Local residents, the local 'experts', the participants – the people who will be interviewed.
- Local interviewers – the people to be trained to carry out interviews. They may be residents, local workers etc.
- Local workers involved in the project as part of their paid roles.
- Funders, sponsors, the client.
- Elected members (councillors).
- Other players, 'frontline' staff, carers, local police, access providers.
- The participation profession, participatory practitioners, PPfC, ourselves.

The group examined the key issues that

relate to each group towards which we feel some responsibility and then expressed these in terms of questions that we should ask ourselves as we take up the work. These are presented in Table 1.

The questions seem comprehensive and potentially useful for people contemplating a piece of participatory work. Again, they include simple good practice activities, such as informing other agencies about your work, and crucial ethical issues such as personal safety, transparency and confidentiality. Some people have reported that the questions are helpful.

The list of questions seemed quite long so we went on to extract from the questions a short set of promises that a practitioner might make to a commissioner of a new piece of work (see Box 3).

Box 3: The promises

1. I will work out with you clear roles and responsibilities.
2. I will keep you informed of findings and changes in the work in a timely manner.
3. I will want to understand the pressures you are under relating to this project and the possibilities that you see for continued sustainable work based on it.
4. I will engage with other key players to increase the possibilities of collective work and sustainable change.
5. The training I provide will include work on appropriate behaviour, which will keep the trainees safe and protect, where appropriate, the confidentiality of the interviewees or participants.
6. Trainees will be selected in order to be as inclusive as possible.
7. The training will, where possible, provide longer term capacity building as well as the skills necessary for this project.
8. We will negotiate informed consent with all participants so that they know what they are contributing to and how their contributions will be used.
9. I will design and run a process that promotes genuine learning by all those involved.
10. The process will be inclusive; we will actively seek out diverse opinions and try to hear from people whose views are less often heard.
11. I will report the findings faithfully including those that may not fit with the initial brief and which may be challenging to you and to other players.

⁶ In one appraisal where racist views were frequently expressed we agreed that we had a duty to listen to the racist views and faithfully report them to the client who had commissioned the appraisal. If the interviewer wanted to respond on a personal level they were required to make it clear that they were doing so outside the interview process. In fact, once the issue had been explored by the team it became relatively easy to manage.

Table 1: Questions for participants

Group	Issue	Questions
Local people, the local experts, the participants	Have the participants given informed consent? ⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you been clear with them why you are carrying out the project? • Has you explained who it is for and how the results will be used? • Have you explained how their role in the project will be identified in the results? • Have you made clear how the outcomes of the research will be used and publicised? • Have you made clear how they can access the results of the project? • Do participants understand that they are completely free to say what they want or stop if they feel uncomfortable? • Do participants know that you will faithfully report their views?
Local interviewers (researchers, trainees) residents, workers etc. involved in the project	Do trainees know what their roles and responsibilities are? Do trainees know how to keep themselves safe?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you designed the training to include longer term capacity building for trainees? • Do interviewers know when to provide their own views and when to avoid introducing their own ideas? • Do interviewers know when and how to protect the identity of interviewees?
Local workers involved in the project as part of their paid roles	Do the workers know what their roles and responsibilities within the project are? Do they know how to keep themselves safe?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you designed the training to include longer term capacity building for trainees? • Do interviewers know when to provide their own views and when to avoid introducing their own ideas? • Do interviewers know when and how to protect the identity of interviewees? • Do workers know how to start to deal with any conflicts of interest that may come up during and after the project?
Funders, sponsors, the client	Do funders know how a participatory appraisal process should work? Have funders guaranteed feedback to participants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you explained the risks and benefits of a participatory appraisal approach? • Have you explored the pressures the sponsor is under and what they hope for from this work? • Do they have the resources to support the actions that are identified as part of the research? • Do they have a clear idea of the possibilities for broadening the brief and for continuing the work (e.g. future funding)?
Elected members (e.g. councillors)	Do councillors understand how a participatory process should work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have an understanding of how local councillors will welcome unexpected findings? • Do you know how supportive local councillors are to the project? • Do councillors understand how the project might affect their work?

⁷ Prior informed consent is a phrase which has a legal meaning in many countries. We are using the phrase in the simple sense that informed consent is achieved if the practitioner is able to answer positively to the seven questions in the table. If they can say 'yes' to those questions then the people taking part in the interviews will be thoroughly informed on what they are getting involved in.

Table 1: Questions for participants (continued)

Group	Issue	Questions
Other players, 'frontline' staff, carers, local police, access providers	Do they understand their roles in the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you explored links between different organisations? • Do you know if they will be able to carry on some of the work after the project?
To the profession, to participatory practice, PPfC, to ourselves		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are any other participatory practitioners working in the same area? Are there any opportunities for collaboration and developing more participatory working? • Do you feel confident in taking on the work or are there too many compromises? Do you need to get in other people with different skills to do the job well? • Can you carry out a good process including cycles of learning and build in some sustainability, when this is appropriate? • Have you identified another practitioner to support you to deliver the work? (This could be a co-worker or someone who agrees to mentor or support you to reflect on your practice.) • Will you be able to report confidently on the results?

We were aware that the promises cover the same mixture of good practice and major ethical issues. These promises were prioritised in a workshop in 2011. The results were quite varied but a few promises were clearly seen to be more important.

The most important promises seemed to be 10 and 11, followed by 8 and 5 and then 7 and 9. The participants in the workshop also suggested that the promises could be made more concise and that some mention should be made of the overall aim. This is partly because of the need to monitor success and demonstrate value for money and this can only be done if the objectives were clearly stated.

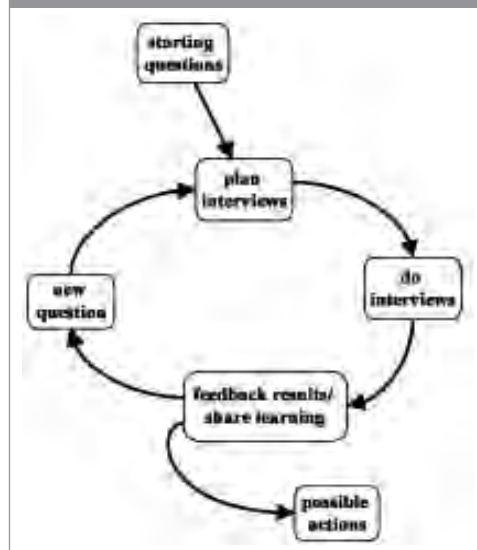
Promise 9, to promote genuine learning, is very important and also appears in the principles and the guidelines. Good participatory processes should have repeated events so that learning from earlier work can be used in later cycles (see Figure 1). It may also hint at the potential dangers of single events or one-off tools like questionnaire enquiries. The success of participatory projects often comes from people changing their understanding through learning. It is rarely acknowledged but the design of good

participatory processes comes from ideas in learning theory.⁸

Shortlist of promises

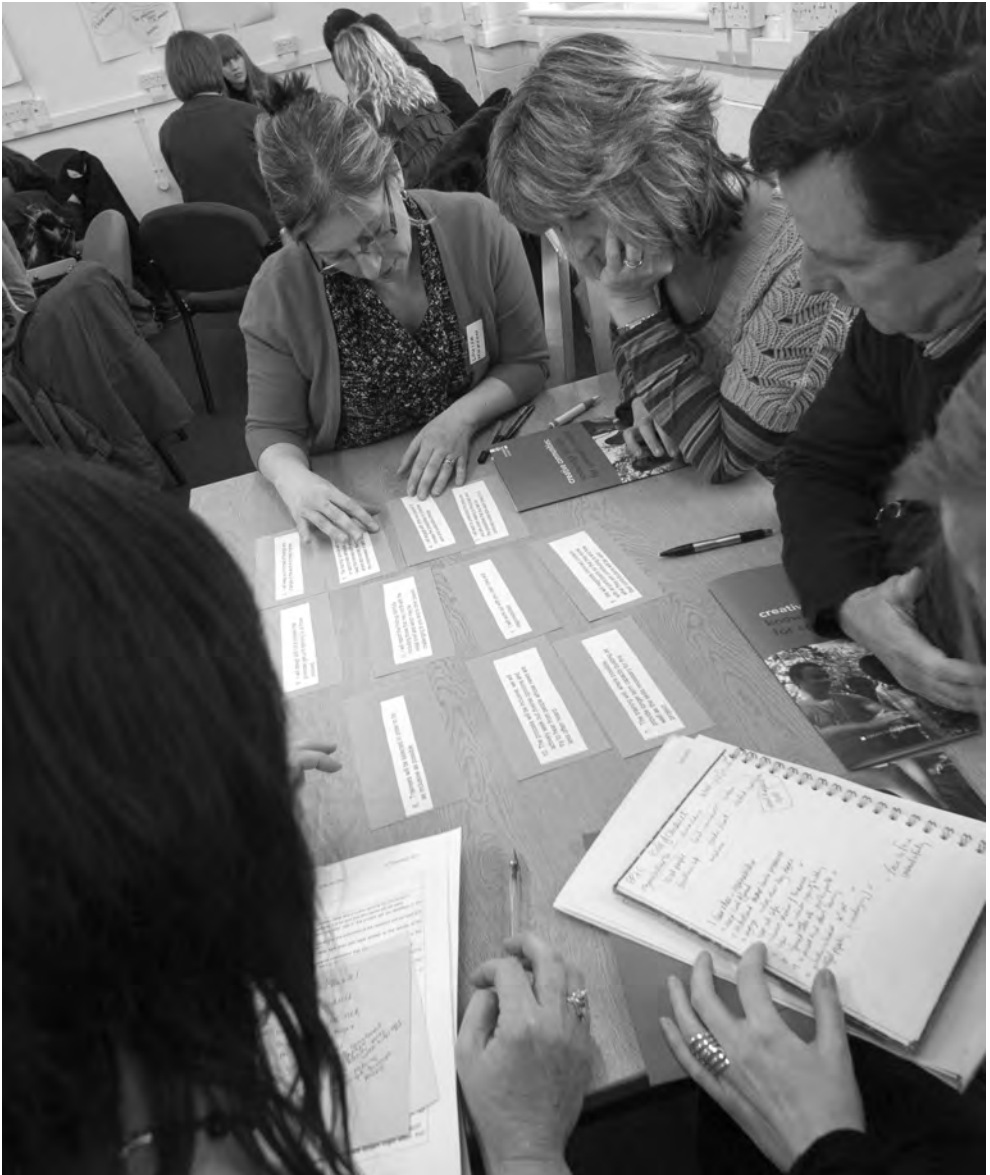
If we take at face value the learning from the workshop, it should be possible to express the top four promises in shorter phrases and perhaps add a statement of the

Figure 1: The repeated cycles of participatory processes



⁸ For example, Paulo Freire developed an approach to education that links the identification of issues to positive action for change and development. Freire's work has influenced people working in education, community development, community health and many other fields. Source: www.freire.org.

Photo: Tony Jones



Participants at the Consequences workshop in 2011.

overall purpose. Then the PPfC members' promises might be:

- My participatory work will be proactively inclusive.
- The process will include repeat contacts to improve learning and feedback.
- It may produce results that are challenging and which might not fit the original brief.
- I will teach all trainees to keep themselves

safe and protect interviewees.

- We will negotiate informed consent with all interviewees (participants).
- The work will lead to action and raised skills and confidence among local people.

Summing up

Telling the story of the PPfC members' attempts to define and promote genuine participation leads us to this short list of

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NOTES

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Whose public spaces? Citizen participation in urban planning in Santiago, Chile

9

by VIVIANA FERNÁNDEZ PRAJOUX

Introduction

This article describes how community action stopped two planning proposals to build in public spaces in Las Condes, a commune in the metropolitan area of Santiago in Chile.¹ The first proposal was the construction of a shopping mall by a private owner and the second a municipal proposal by the city council to build an enclosure around a public park. Although I am a resident of the commune, my involvement in these projects has been as an observer, rather than an active member of the community, because for most of the time, I was not in Santiago. My observation and interest in this type of process comes mainly from an academic perspective; I am a researcher at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of Chile. It also comes specifically from my research on the relationship between urban planning and development and citizen participation. My conviction is that all residents should have

Box 1: Las Condes – some statistics

The municipality of Las Condes is one of 34 communes in the Santiago metropolitan area. It is economically prosperous, in a good location and with good-quality services and infrastructure.

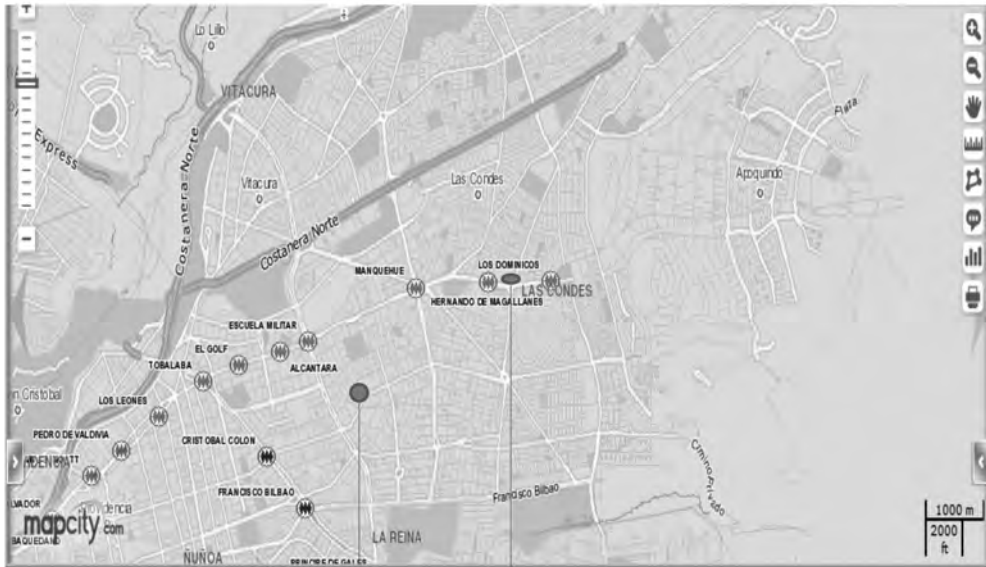
Las Condes is one of the main business and commercial centres in Santiago (see Map 1). Around 110 square kilometres in size, it has a population of about 280,000 and a density of 2,524 inhabitants per km². It is one of the five most populated municipalities in the metropolitan area, yet one of the least dense. It also has one of the lowest poverty rates, 1.1% compared with 15.1% at the national level and a municipal *per capita* income of nearly double the national average.

a say in how they live in their city and how their city is built.

The Martín de Zamora mall or 'Jardines de Colón' proposal

The first planning proposal was for a new shopping centre, to be built on a site covering three hectares, owned by CENCOSUD

¹ A commune is the smallest administrative subdivision in Chile. In highly populated areas such as Santiago, a conurbation may be broken into several communes.



Map: Viviana Fernández Prajoux

Mall Martín de Zamora

Parque Los Dominicos

Map of Las Condes, showing the two project sites.

with an investment of nearly US\$30 million.² The proposed centre would have a surface area of 100,000m² and would be built on three levels to include two large stores, cinemas, restaurants, a leisure centre, a medical centre and a large underground car park. However, according to the local planning regulations, the land can only be used for educational or cultural purposes – commercial use is not permitted. Even so, CENCOSUD obtained a permit to draw up preliminary plans for the construction of the mall from the local municipality of Las Condes.

Residents only informally found out about the proposal in 2009 – they were not formally informed by the municipality – and discussions soon began about the pros and cons of the project. As the proposal had required an amendment to the regulations so as to change the land use specifications and as the land was privately owned, the community had no say over its use. So the residents decided

to organise themselves informally and held community meetings to discuss their options and to keep everyone informed. They were active in producing flyers and sending emails informing people about what was happening. They also contacted the municipality, CENCOSUD and others to demand a meeting to explore other options for the site rather than the proposed development.

Little by little, the residents' organisation grew and began to mobilise other residents, collecting signatures to oppose the plans. The community had several arguments against the project, including that there would be increased traffic in the surrounding areas – CENCOSUD estimated that the expected vehicular impact would be 5,000 cars a day. There were also concerns that a shopping mall would attract people from outside the residential area, which might increase crime and negatively impact on property values in the area. In addition, there are already other

² CENCOSUD is one of the largest retail groups in Latin America. See: www.cencosud.com. Alemparte and Barreda were the architects commissioned to come up with the project design.

Image: CENCOSUD



Plan of the Martín de Zamora or 'Jardines de Colón' mall.

facilities nearby. The leader of the residents opposing the mall, Daniel Silva, stated:

This is not an ideological war, not a battle against the business or against CENCOSUD. What we don't want is a large project in our neighbourhood, because no one deserves to have a monster in their area (El Mercurio, 2010).

Another resident, Thomas Buttazzoni, said that the process was one-sided:

It's good to consult the people, but it is an unequal competition with a company that has significant marketing power. They even come to offer merchandise to my house.

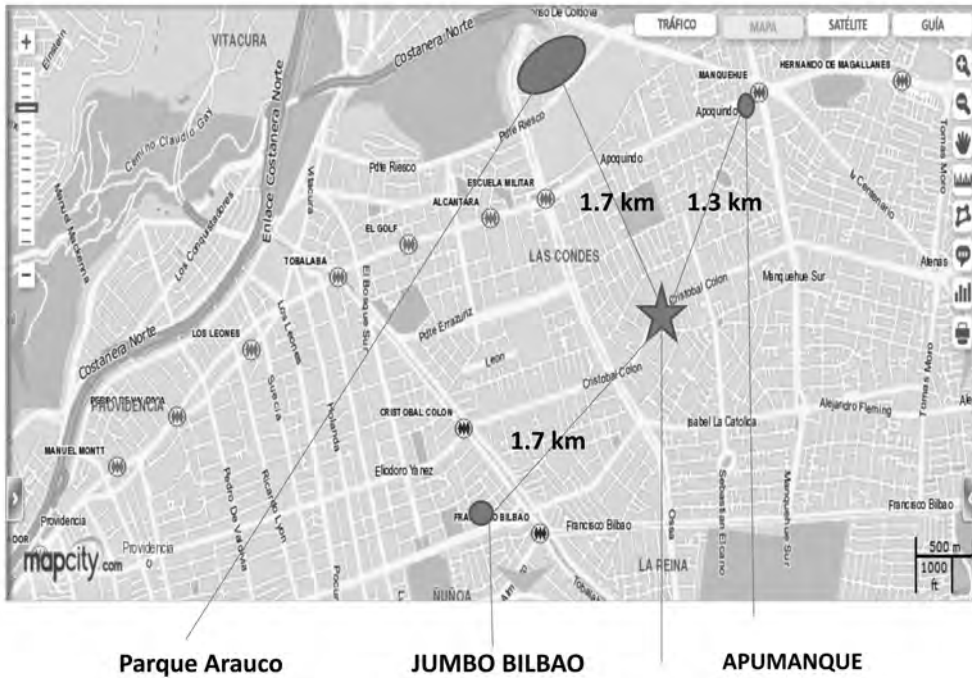
Some had a different view, believing that the mall would increase commercial activity in the area. For several years, local planning regulations had obstructed the commercial dynamism in the neighbourhood. Although some people stated this as an argument against the project, other

neighbours considered that the mall would add value to the area and help them to access goods and services in shorter timescales.

According to Minerva Sapag, another resident,

The fact that they will build a mall here, I find it good. But there are things that concern me, like possible traffic and congestion in the area, but I think that nowadays many older people are facing problems with time and can't manage, with the mall they will have everything at hand.

After the first public meeting with local representatives and neighbours, the municipality, CENCOSUD and others, the company listened to the residents' comments and made some changes to the project plans. Their amendments included reducing the height of some parts of the building and offering new services to the residents who lived closest to the site, such as free parking, improving green areas and the free use of some facilities in the mall,



Map: Viviana Fernández Prajoux

This map shows the distance from the proposed site of the Martín de Zamora mall and other existing facilities nearby. Both Parque Arauco and APUMANQUE are malls; JUMBO Bilbao is a supermarket also owned by CENCOSUD.

such as community meeting rooms. Later, they also offered to add a sports circuit around the site perimeter. None of these amendments convinced the community that they should accept the proposals, since they still felt there were more disadvantages than benefits.

Public consultation

In 2009, given the opposition to the plan and considering the need to amend the local planning regulations, the municipality agreed to carry out a public consultation. The council agreed that residents on the electoral roll within an area defined by the municipality could participate in the consultation.

The Participation Ordinance³ of the municipality states that any public vote is not binding, in the sense that the decision

of the municipal council is not bound by the results. The ordinance does not give any power to citizens – it only states that the municipality will inform, and in some cases, consult, on issues that concern local residents.⁴ However, the mayor said publicly that he would respect the will of the residents.

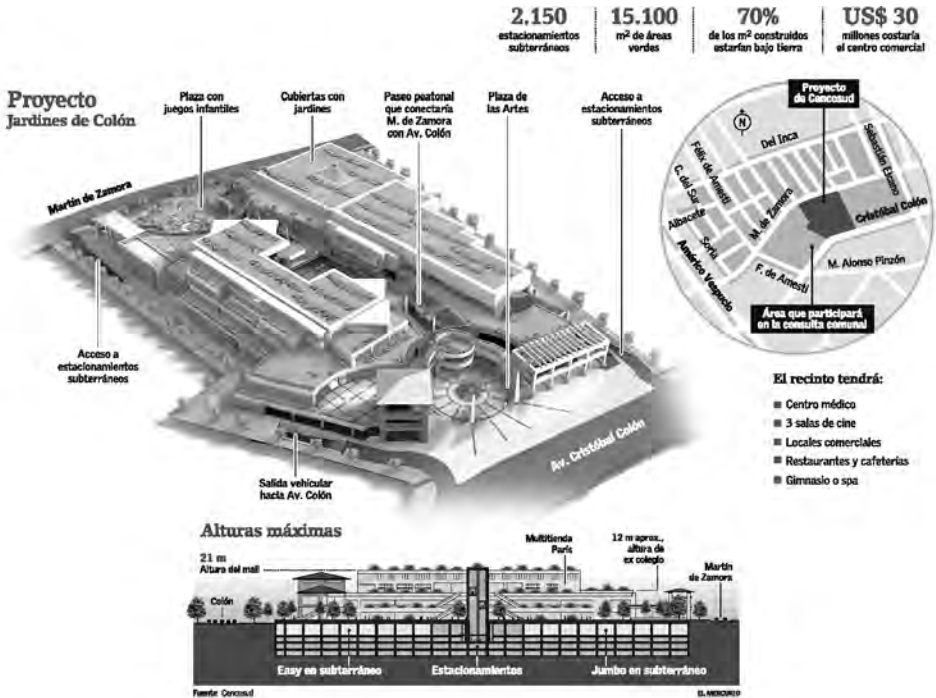
The vote was planned for 11th April 2010, but the February 2010 earthquake changed the priorities of the municipality and the electoral act was postponed until 6th June 2010. This postponement benefited each of the parties involved, as it extended the time available for the consultation. More residents became involved: they wrote to the local newspaper, they contacted local politicians and won other organisations over to their side, such as the architects and a private organisation called

³ All Chilean municipalities have a Participation Ordinance that regulates citizen participation.

The new Ordinance of Las Condes recognises and promotes the right of citizen participation in the design and formulation of municipal policies and actions and it includes several mechanisms for citizen participation.

⁴ There is an exception in the case of a neighbourhood in Providencia where the residents formed a legal residents' organisation (*junta de vecinos*) and were able to introduce changes in the planning regulations.

Image: CENCOSUD



Proposed plan of the Martín de Zamora 'Jardines de Colón' mall.

Defendamos La Ciudad (Let's Defend Our City). This extra time allowed the residents to increase the visibility of the issue, not only to those living nearby, but throughout the commune, due to the extra media coverage it received.

During the consultation, the project plans were exhibited on the proposed site for 47 days, including a model, drawings and images with the details of the project. A representative from CENCOSUD was available to answer any questions. Information was also posted on the website of the municipality of Las Condes. The mayor was quoted as saying that the public consultation would allow him to 'hear the views of residents regarding the possible change in land use of the site'. But in reality, the consultation asked only one question: do you support the plan to build a mall as exhibited here? There were only two options given for answers: 'yes' or 'no'.

In total, more than 1,600 people participated in the consultation – around 40% of those eligible to vote. Of those, 65%

rejected the project. The mayor honoured his word. He declared that the municipality would abide by the community's decision, and the plans for the redevelopment were stopped.

Los Dominicos Park, 2011

The second proposal was to enclose the Los Dominicos Park and privatise it. The park is adjacent to the Church of Los Dominicos – both the park and church were awarded conservation status by the National Monuments Council in 1983. As well as the church, the park has various facilities such as a craft centre, a skating rink, playgrounds, public toilets, an exhibition area, and municipal services, kiosks, water fountains, a subway station and a car park. The park is an important recreation area for local residents and visitors.

The proposal was to remove the existing car park, which would free up an area of 7,700m², and to plant 150 trees, and required a municipal investment of nearly US\$1,000 million. A sculpture walk would



Photo: Viviana Fernández Prajoux

A banner saying 'No master plan' at the church at Los Dominicos Park.

be created, with a pedestrian pathway connecting the park from north to south alongside the church, and extending the church grounds to provide space for religious and cultural activities. Also, the open market would be moved, loading and unloading services and sanitation services would be added, and access for those with disabilities would be incorporated. A bicycle storage area, a skate park, a children's playground and a gourmet market site would also be built. Additionally, a perimeter fence was planned to improve security in the park (although the proposal stated that the park would continue to be free access). However, the park would effectively be privatised through the construction of 500 underground paid parking spaces (the existing car park was cheaper than the proposed one).

Arguments against the proposal

The community opposed the proposal, mainly because it was not involved in any prior consultation. They objected to the increased pedestrian paved surface, even

with the new trees, but their main concern was the privatisation of the park because of the underground parking, the addition of the commercial buildings, and the proposal to gate the park. As a public space, they felt that it should not be privatised.

The community also argued that the plan would reduce the green areas of the park by a third, which had an area of six hectares, as there would be more cemented areas.

The community of Dominican Fathers also opposed the project because the church, which is part of a conservation area, 'would be reduced to a museum piece' and that if they gated the park 'it would hinder the participation of people in training courses that are held there, because they would need to pay more to park in the underground car park.'

The process

Since the residents knew that the municipality was planning to redevelop the park, they were able to arrange a meeting with the municipal authority to discuss the

Photo: Viviana Fernández Prajoux



Inside Los Dominicos Park.

proposals. But despite being informed about the project, they were not invited to participate in its design.

Neighbourhood meetings were held with three members of the municipality, Felipe de Pujadas, Gabriel Flández and María de la Luz Herrera, who filed the community's objections and sought support for suspending the inquiry. Two neighbouring organisations built alliances and sought support from other institutions such as the National Monuments Council, the College of Architects and the *Fundación Defendamos la Ciudad* (Defend the City Foundation). Forums were organised, primarily around the issue of privatisation of public space and the impact on the heritage of the park and the church.

When the municipality announced the project plans, a group of more than 300 people sent letters to the mayor of the commune to express their discontent, saying that the 'neighbourhood organisations require that the mayor of Las Condes and the council suspend the consultation and promote a participatory process'.

Letters were also sent to the media. The National Monuments Council stated in a letter to the mayor that even 'if this project is approved by the community, it would then need to be evaluated and approved by the National Monuments Council'. The College of Architects and the *Fundación Defendamos la Ciudad* supported the residents and also sent letters to the mayor trying to stop the consultation.

Public consultation

In early 2011, considering the strong opposition from residents, and with the support of other institutions, the municipality decided to convene a public consultation on the park improvement works. This consultation was open to all residents on the commune's electoral roll.

Prior to voting, the project plans were exhibited – as a finished project – near to the park for about 45 days. As with the Martín de Zamora mall proposal, the consultation only included two questions: do you agree with the master plan? Do you agree to the building of a gate around the



Posters advertising the forthcoming vote.

perimeter of the park? And once again, voters only had two options for answers: 'yes' or 'no'.

On 7th August 2011, more than 5,000 residents of Las Condes came to vote in the special polling booth set up by the municipality. Many brought placards with them, saying: 'NO to cement, NO to trade, NO to gates'. These slogans clearly expressed their opposition to a proposal in which the community had no involvement.

An overwhelming 81% voted against the master plan. The mayor of the commune once again stressed that citizen opinion would be respected:

The residents have spoken with active participation, and the result will be respected absolutely, which means that the city will only make improvements to the park without any structural change and we will keep the community involved in shaping any plans.

Limitations and success

There were three main limitations with the consultation process used in both cases.

A lack of recognition of the contribution of different actors

The development of a city cannot be measured only from an economic perspective. The municipal council assumed that there was no need for citizen participation in either urban development proposal. But whether it is the development of a neighbourhood, changing land use or improving public space, decision-making is not just for technical experts: it is a right that we all have as citizens.

In both cases, it was the residents, their neighbours and other concerned institutions who came together to initiate a participatory process. This was precisely because they had not been invited to participate in the first place, nor consulted on issues to which their contribution was important.

Lack of dialogue between the municipality and community

In the end, the mayor of the municipality had no choice but to turn to the participation ordinance to settle the dispute, and institute a public consultation. But why did this only occur after the conflict had broken out? The lack of any permanent dialogue mechanism on urban issues between council members and community organisations was clearly a significant limitation.

In the case of the Martín de Zamora mall, Councillor Felipe de Pujadas strongly supported the residents to oppose any authorised change in land use and the building of the mall. In the case of the Los Domínicos Park, more dialogue and at an earlier stage could have meant that the project was developed with the community's participation, involving a truly participatory process rather than just a citizen consultation.

Photo: Viviana Fernández Prajoux



Residents turn up to vote on the Los Dominicos Park proposals.

Limitations in how the consultation was presented

In both cases, the consultation questions only offered limited ‘Yes, I agree’ or ‘No, I disagree’ options, effectively cutting off any possibility for more creative involvement. In both cases, the communities’ rejection of the projects was mainly due to the lack of dialogue and engagement. They did not have any ownership of the projects. Especially in the Los Dominicos Park, residents did not indicate in any way that they were opposed to the **improvement** of the park. Instead it was their lack of involvement in agreeing on the park upgrading and who would benefit from those improvements.

There were also several successful aspects to the process.

Increased community awareness of their role as citizens

In recent years, active citizenship has grown increasingly. The community has become more interested in what is happening locally. They are sharing their views,

demanding more and are better organised. A key element in this increase in active citizenship is the existence and extent of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, among others. In addition, the public participation process for both projects was followed by the mainstream media, including *El Mercurio*, *La Tercera*, *La Nación*, *La Segunda* and others.

Strengthening existing organisations

Now that the consultation has finished, not all of the local organisations involved are still as active and some have consolidated more than others. But the process certainly transcended the boundaries of the respective projects, helping to strengthen local organisations and inspire future participatory processes.

Validation of the consultation results by the mayor

It was important that the municipal authority officially recognised the validity of the process and abided by the residents’ wishes, even though the process was part

of a framework that was not legally binding. In future, the existing legislation could be modified, so that the results of participatory processes legally have an influence on planning proposals.

Impact of the participatory processes on the community and commune

Following the consultation, the community continued to ask for more participation. The president of the San Carlos de Apoquindo Residents' Association (*Junta de Vecinos San Carlos de Apoquindo*) stated that 'we as neighbours are not closing the possibility of improving the park,' and that hopefully 'the mayor will make new terms of reference and open it to public competition'. According to Rodolfo Palacios, an architect and president of the Los Domínicos Residents' Association (*Junta de Vecinos Portal Los Domínicos*) at the time of the consultation,

The ideal is now that the municipality believes technical boards should include local experts and neighbourhood representatives as well, to decide together what to do with a community space. No one doubts that the park needs improvements. We do not want to suspend the works, we want to do something better.

One year after the completion of the consultation, little progress has been made in reaching an agreement. The municipal authority is reluctant to form working groups involving the various stakeholders – residents, community organisations, artisans, peddlers, the National Monuments Council and the Church – to define guidelines for typical zone interventions that seek to protect or preserve the unique identity of each zone.

The municipality invited some representatives of the commune, one

neighbourhood organisation, the Dominican Church and artisans to a meeting to reconcile positions on the urban future and landscape of the park. At the request of the representatives, the meeting concluded with the municipality promising to develop guidelines for a regulatory framework to guide any future intervention in the park. The next step would be to have an open tendering process for the redevelopment of the park, but since then little has happened.⁵

In the case of the shopping centre in Martín de Zamora, as the community participation was led by residents rather than any formal organisation, it has been difficult to continue working on the issue. Nothing has happened since then; the land is still vacant, and it is not known what CENCOSUD plans to do next.

One might say that both experiences have inspired participation in other initiatives. Residents living around the Araucano Park, another landmark community park, have reacted against the municipality's plans to redevelop it. They too have developed a Facebook group, to discuss urban issues and how to best improve the park.⁶

But in general, communities tend to organise themselves when there is a real problem, when they realise that they must react to show themselves and others that they can stand up and fight for those spaces and principles they believe in. At the same time, much more work is needed to promote a real participatory culture, to develop stronger organisations who can continue to monitor what is – or what could be – happening in their neighbourhood.

Lessons learnt

What lessons can we draw from these examples that can be applied by other organisations in similar contexts and with similar problems?

⁵ See Facebook group *Amigos del Parque Los Domínicos* (Friends of Los Domínicos Park): www.facebook.com/groups/204818332887145

⁶ See Facebook group *Amigos del Parque Araucano* (Friends of Araucano Park): www.facebook.com/groups/260366694016019

14 LA NACIÓN 10 DE JUNIO DE 2010

Nacional

Vecinos de Martín de Zamora rechazan construcción de mall

El resultado de la consulta -donde participó el 65% de los vecinos que se habían inscrito para votar- dejó claro el hecho de que termino la implementación del proyecto de un mall en la zona de Martín de Zamora, tras haberse rechazado por el 65% de los votantes que se inscribieron para votar.

Los vecinos de la comuna de Martín de Zamora rechazaron la construcción de un mall en la zona de Martín de Zamora, tras haberse rechazado por el 65% de los votantes que se inscribieron para votar.



Los detalles de la iniciativa

La comuna de Martín de Zamora rechazó la construcción de un mall en la zona de Martín de Zamora, tras haberse rechazado por el 65% de los votantes que se inscribieron para votar.

El resultado de la consulta -donde participó el 65% de los vecinos que se habían inscrito para votar- dejó claro el hecho de que termino la implementación del proyecto de un mall en la zona de Martín de Zamora, tras haberse rechazado por el 65% de los votantes que se inscribieron para votar.



Consulta ciudadana



'Neighbouring residents reject the construction of the Martín Zamora mall.' Article in *La Nación*, a national Chilean newspaper.

Reaction rather than planning

In both cases, the participatory process was rather a reactive breakthrough process, and not planned and agreed between the different actors involved. The two projects were examples of a spontaneous neighbourhood mobilisation, one organised by two neighbourhood organisations in Los Domínicos Park, and in the case of the Martín de Zamora mall, by local residents who were prepared to commit their time and use effective leadership to rally the community to defend the identity of their neighbourhood.

Would it not be better for citizen participation to begin at the very start of a project? The process should begin with a shared diagnosis and an acknowledgment of the problem, identifying the objectives and benefits of the project. If the municipality deems it necessary to make improvements to an urban area, then why not **begin** the process with a public consultation to provide that initial diagnosis? Who lives, work or visits the area, and why? What do **they** think the problems are? What are the possible options?

The mechanism of participation: citizen consultation

While consultation is an instance of citizen participation, the main objections the community had were that participation was restricted to a limited number of people within a given area. As this was probably the first time the municipality had done a consultation of this kind, it is likely that they decided to define a limited number of voters, without taking into account that the project would affect more people than just those living within a few blocks of the proposed site. But as the community involved in the Martín de Zamora mall consultation pointed out - who gets to decide who will participate in the voting? In the Los Domínicos Park plan, the vote was extended to all the commune residents, but it would also have been very important to include those who worked in the open market or the craft market beside the church.

In addition, communities objected to the fact that only 'yes' or 'no' responses were accepted as part of the consultation, effectively cutting off all meaningful discussion without creating a space for negotiation. It would have been better to use participatory processes to involve the community, such as workshops, surveys and interviews, and promoting these via social networks.

The municipality decided who was eligible to vote. With the mall, participation was restricted to those living in the immediate area, however later on, in the case of Los Domínicos, anyone who lived within the municipality was able to vote. This change was probably due to the experience of the first consultation.

Final thoughts

In both cases, the ability of the communities involved to organise themselves and to engage other actors made it possible for them to stop the projects from going ahead. I hope that the municipality will learn from these two experiences, recognising the rights the community have in relation to

their own places – and understanding that urban development is not only a technical or economic matter. It is also about the feelings and perceptions that we each have about our lives.

Instead of working in opposition, municipalities and communities should be working together. The community needs to learn that being a real citizen implies that

we each have both rights and duties. One duty is the need to keep informed about what is happening in our neighbourhood, how we can make it better, how we can use what local government has to offer us to our benefit. And finally, we should all remember that urban improvements should always be developed for collective and inclusive use.

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Tools for measuring change: self-assessment by communities

10

by **BERNWARD CAUSEMANN** and **EBERHARD GOHL**

Introduction

With increasing demands on development programmes to demonstrate the impact of their work, a number of German NGOs initiated a process of collaboration with partner NGOs in Africa and Asia. They sought solutions amid concerns that many participatory tools currently in use lead to monitoring systems that serve only for donor accountability, but neither add value for poor people nor for the implementing NGOs because they do not improve effectiveness on the ground.

NGO-IDEAs¹ is a collective of NGOs that developed impact monitoring tools for learning, management and reporting while involving grassroots communities. This article describes the effects of implementation with communities. It also describes the process of an NGO collective creating such tools and spreading them to its members.

The NGO collective

NGO-IDEAs worked in two phases. The first phase from 2004 to 2007 in South India developed a first version of the Impact Toolbox for programmes with savings and credit groups in South India. In the second phase from 2008 to 2011, a group of 14 German NGOs in cooperation with about 40 NGOs from South Asia, East Africa and the Philippines extended the approach to other regions and sectors. A team of five consultants from four countries supported the process. At the end of the second phase, a number of 'how to' guides for assessing outcome and impact were published. The external funding of NGO-IDEAs by the German Ministry for Development ended in early 2012, but NGO-IDEAs continues in Germany as a process with a group based in VENRO,² the German development NGO coalition. It continues in developing countries

¹ NGO Impact on Development, Empowerment and Actions (IDEAS). For more information about NGO-IDEAs, its concepts and values see: www.ngo-ideas.net/publications. NGO-IDEAs also developed a manual to develop impact-oriented monitoring systems (*Monitoring self-effectiveness*) and a set of lean PRA tools that assist in one-time impact assessments (*Tiny tools*).

² For more information see In Touch, this issue and: venro.org/english/whoweare

Box 1: The NGO-IDEAs concept

The basic idea is simple:

- people set themselves goals or targets
- from time to time they measure who achieves these goals and to what extent
- people analyse the trend of change, and who/what contributes to it
- people decide what they should do next to achieve their goals

Mostly, but not necessarily, this is done in peer/self-help groups. The data generated can be collected by development programmes to reflect and report on impact. It can also be used to improve performance of local government.

through the cooperation of local NGOs in East Africa, the Philippines and South Asia, as well as an emerging new project in Latin America.

Many practitioners felt that solutions were needed that are more relevant for community groups and NGOs. The tools developed by NGO-IDEAs aim to address these issues. They focus on participatory impact-oriented management, designed as 'everyday tools' which are transformative and focus on the intended change. They are about self-effectiveness; the difference that local people, community-based organisations and NGOs want to see happen. The tools are designed to empower their users and increase their awareness of the change happening around them and to develop strategies to enhance desirable change.

A particular focus is on the use by poor and vulnerable people – the tools can easily be used to differentiate change for distinct social groups. In order to achieve that, NGO-IDEAs uses participatory impact assessment processes which facilitate community learning. They help community groups clarify and develop their own goals, beyond just thinking in terms of activities. This involves a change in mindset. The process of mutual understanding, exercises and validation often needs a time period of a few months, until the community is happy with the goals it has set (see Box 2).

Box 2: NGO-IDEAs tools**Participatory well-being ranking (PWR)**

In a process involving the community and key informants, households are clustered according to criteria for well-being. The tool gives information about the village-specific poverty stratification which can be used for project planning, as baseline data and for target group selection and for the socially differentiated analysis of change.

Situational assessment and goal establishment (SAGE)

Groups develop goals for their members (individuals and households); they monitor how the individuals perform in relation to these goals, and analyse the performance immediately in a group discussion. Reflection on the outcomes, as well as the planning and activities, are integral parts of this tool.

Participatory assessment by groups (PAG)

Groups develop goals for the group as a whole, and monitor how they perform in relation to these goals. Analysis, reflection and planning are designed as in SAGE.

Participatory impact analysis and reflection (PIAR)

Data from PWR, SAGE and PAG are consolidated and analysed at programme or NGO level. Data from other tools and sources are compared with this. Further elements of the tool are a reliability check of the data, cause-effect analysis and steps for programme adaptation.

Working with indigenous groups in the Philippines

One example is Kapwa, an organisation working with indigenous people on the Philippine island of Mindanao. Kapwa introduced the NGO-IDEAs tools to Bagobo Tagabawa, indigenous people in Makilala who farm in remote mountainous areas. The clan representatives agreed common goals for all the 149 households involved. Clan members scored themselves in group discussions. They used a simple yes/no scoring for the goals. Goals were clustered as social/cultural (including health), economic and political. Goals included:

- We have a written development plan for our family (2010: 10% yes, 2011: 24% yes)
- We have increased our household income (2010: 51% yes, 2011: 72% yes)
- We send our children to school (2010: 68% yes, 2011: 82% yes)
- We take our children to the health centre for immunisation (2010: 56% yes, 2011: 74% yes)

Table 1: Immunisation of children: contributing and hindering factors

	Community contribution	The project's/NGO's influence	Other external factors
Contributing factors	Parents bring their 0–5-year-old children to health centre for immunisation.	Linkage to rural health unit and training of health volunteer from the tribe. Support during training such as fares, food and materials.	Department of Health immunisation programme for children 0–5 years old.
Hindering factors	Some parents stopped bringing their children for immunisation because the children developed a fever afterwards.	Limited number of staff handling multiple project components.	Only one midwife is assigned to take care of several villages, affecting the quality of service.

Source: Presentation by Alma de la Paz, Kapwa, July 2011 in Cebu, Philippines.

• We participate in meetings and common clan activities (2010: 59% yes, 2011: 88% yes)

The differences in one year show clear progress. For example, the number of households with increased income grew; the number of children immunised and sent to school increased. According to Kapwa staff, the monitoring tools sped up this development. People learnt to progress their goals more clearly. Leaders were able to see progress and how to improve performance. Both farmers and Kapwa staff became more aware of results and could better use opportunities to improve livelihoods. All this was observed both by Kapwa staff and by community members themselves. Kapwa had used participatory assessment tools before to encourage reflections, but in their experience, the NGO-IDEAs tools helped to structure analysis better. A challenge for Kapwa was to find the literate leaders who could facilitate the process and document the results. Initially, clan members tended to give the same answers as clan leaders. It took time and patience to convince people that each household member was to be assessed according to their situation. Such competences had been more difficult to build in previous communities that Kapwa worked in. At the same time, people did not accept all that was brought in by Kapwa. Kapwa had suggested a goal that early and multiple

marriages were to be discouraged, but that was not agreed by the clan representatives.³

Part of the analysis at both clan and NGO levels is a reflection on what influences contributed to the observed change. Like Kapwa, many NGOs used a table with a layout similar to Table 1 above.

Working with pre-schools in India

Another example comes from Ramakrishna Mission (RKM) Ashrama in Narendrapur, near Kolkata in India, applied the NGO-IDEAs toolbox in an early child education project in five districts. With parent-teacher groups, RKM established goals at two levels:

- learning objectives for the children; and
- behavioural/supporting objectives for the parents to improve these learning objectives.

These goals were discussed in detail and set by the parent-teacher groups who also set the goals for their pre-school children.

Some learning objectives for the children included:

- I will obey the teachers' guidelines.
- I can tell stories, rhymes etc.
- I can recognise animals, birds, flowers, fruit, vegetables and vehicles from pictures.
- I can identify vowels and consonants in the Bengali alphabets.
- I will wash my hands with soap before eating food and after going to the toilet.

³ For more details, see Brenner (2011), pp. 8-12.

CHILDREN	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	TOTAL	%
Child 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	16	64%
Child 2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	17	68%
Child 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25	100%
Child 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	16%
Child 5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	21	84%
Child 6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	29	96%
Child 7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	25	100%
Child 8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	22	88%
Child 9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6	24%
Child 10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	17	68%
Child 11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9	36%
Child 12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3	12%
Child 13	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7	28%
Child 14	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	13	52%
Child 15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	18	72%
Child 16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	20	80%
Child 17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	0	0%
Child 18	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	14	56%
SUB TOTAL	12	10	11	13	14	11	13	17	15	17	14	16	8	7	5	8	15	6	9	8	3	7	10	11	260	58%		

Photo: Eberhard Gohl

Example of a chart showing the children's performance. Note the total scores for each child (last line) and for each learning objectives (last two columns) which include a percentage calculation.

Some behavioural objectives for the parents included:

- I will send my children to school regularly and on time.
- I will send my children to school clean and tidy.
- I will provide the necessary teaching materials regularly for my children.
- I will regularly monitor my child's progress in health and education.
- I will try to understand the course curriculum of the centre.

Dos and don'ts for the teachers:

- I will arrive at the centre before the scheduled time.
- I will maintain a friendly attitude with the children.
- I will use child-friendly methods of teaching.
- I will teach the children using practical demonstrations.
- I will communicate with the children's families at regular intervals.

The results of the first assessment above show the status of each child, parent and

teacher against their set goals/objectives.

For each goal, the percentage of children achieving this goal was calculated. To analyse the assessment, the following questions were discussed:

- What contributed to the achievement of this goal?
- What hindered the achievement of this goal?
- What actions are required at different levels?

After the goal setting and the first assessment, participation improved. RKM observed a number of remarkable changes in the children, such as:

- Increased participation of children, e.g. they were now more active and attentive.
- Improved children's personal hygiene, e.g. children came dressed in cleaner clothes and washed their hands as a matter of course.
- Improved learning, e.g. before, some children could only name one or two flowers; afterwards they could easily name five.
- Before applying the toolbox, many chil-

Box 3: More case studies

Dipshika, an NGO in Bangladesh that works with families, not groups, has integrated the tools into their family approach. After joining the programme, families develop a vision. Since the NGO-IDEAs tools were introduced, each family also develops concrete and specific goals, although many goals are common amongst most families, like increased savings, the start of new income-generating activities, rearing cows and only drinking safe water from the well. A cluster of families comes together occasionally to assess their performance. Dipshika found that the process 'creates self-motivation, confidence, responsibility, self-initiative and ownership of development among the family members. It creates participatory decision-making in the family' (Islam, 2011, p.7). As a consequence, Dipshika field workers experienced a growing sense of responsibility and it became easier for the supervisors to identify in which sectors they needed to intervene. Dipshika has since introduced the tools to thousands of families in various projects, and is in the process of introducing it to other organisations in Bangladesh.

The Catholic Diocese of Embu in Kenya has an agricultural development programme that started introducing both well-being ranking and the goal-setting tools SAGE and PAG in 2009. By 2011, 30 groups had applied the tools. Many families had moved up one step in the well-being ranking by then. The neediest households had been identified, and group members supported them e.g. with preferential credit from group saving schemes, and by identifying economic opportunities for them. Savings and loan repayments had improved. Members understood better where they stood and what could contribute to improvement (Brenner, 2011, pp.13–19).

Tambayan, an organisation in Davao, Philippines, has introduced the tools with gangs of street children they work with. They found that establishing goals with a new gang requires many days of patient work with much interaction and fun exercises in between. After a few weeks, once the children have agreed their goals, work with them becomes much easier than without the goals, and Tambayan found that the children could be reintegrated faster than with other gangs before. Many gangs set goals like 'harmony in the family' which caused Tambayan to include the families in their work, which again enhanced the process of integration (Causemann, 2011, p.75).

dren came to school late. After this exercise, most came on time.

- Before, their attendance was irregular, afterwards it was daily.
- Before, the children got no help with their learning at home. After the first application, mothers started helping their children with their homework.

All these immediate effects are valued highly in the local context, and they do indicate that children benefit more from the pre-schools.

The mothers of the erratically attending children also started to involve their husbands in sending their children to the centre. Parents became increasingly involved in the network of centre, children, teachers and the CBO. The staff members noticed a hidden but healthy competition among the parents to achieve the goals they had defined and agreed.⁴

Dynamic fit in the communities

The question emerged: what made the NGO-IDEAs process successful? Why did about 850 groups apply the tools, instead of the 90 groups originally planned? There are several reasons. Seven critical elements worked together in a specific way – in what Bagadion (1999) calls a 'dynamic fit':⁵

Situational analysis: discussing goals is coupled with an analysis of reality. People become more acutely aware of the situation they live in.

Setting goals: people become more determined to do something to achieve their goals.

Responsibility: as these are their own goals, people take more ownership and become more responsible in achieving them.

Rating and comparison: assessing which goals they have achieved more in (or less) requires thorough thought. This empha-

⁴ Dolai *et al.* (2011).

⁵ 'Success proceeds from the way in which the variables interact to achieve a **dynamic fit** or **dynamic equilibrium**, i.e., the synergy of variables relating to and changing or adjusting with each other to bring about the desired outcome.' Bagadion (1999).

sises their importance and goals are better understood.

Reminder: coming back after some time to discuss the goals again (for validation and rating) and a second rating emphasises the importance of the goals.

Legitimisation to act: as these are jointly agreed goals, group members feel they have a right to pursue them, even when other community members disagree. The groups nurture their social relations. They build trust and support each other.

Nurturing social relations: the groups build trust and support each other.

The tool development process

The tools and their various adaptations were developed in an iterative action research process and in different sectors. CBO federations started applying the tools for their own purposes.⁶ Hundreds of NGO staff members participated in developing the tools and reflected upon the effectiveness of their work. Development work has become more meaningful, satisfactory and people-centred. Members of more than 10,000 households in 850 groups were involved in developing and working towards their goals by September 2011.⁷ They have been assessing themselves in relation to these personal and group goals. They have learnt, given feedback and contributed to an evolving body of experience. Over time, they became more focused, and mostly proud of the progress they measured.

But this was not easily achieved. It often required a re-orientation of the development approach and the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. Introducing a new tool required more than just staff and finance. It required a participatory way of working which accepts that the responsibility for setting priorities lies with the community and the individual households. That has been a re-learning for many NGO

workers involved. It required trial and error, perseverance, learning from failure and accepting guidance. Some had to learn the principles of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) anew. But it was also visible from the beginning that there was something in it that was worth it: the increasing commitment by the NGOs – and the spread to many more groups – was beyond expectations as evidenced by reaching almost tenfold the number of groups targeted. Reports from many NGOs showed that staff realised that this way of working was more rewarding. A Ugandan NGO M&E officer put it this way: ‘We are now emphasising bottom-up. Gone are the days when we did top-down.’

Before all this could be achieved, there were resistance, complications and problems that are worth analysing. One challenge was that tools developed in the savings and credit sector in South India had to then be applied in different sectors, countries and cultures. How would the tools work? And how would NGO staff adapt them? The process showed that many people preferred to take small steps, not to change everything but seek situations that were most similar to what had worked elsewhere. Many started with their savings and credit programmes, their group-based programmes, in rural areas, and then transferred it to other contexts. Many waited for a few innovators to start in a new context, and then adopt how it worked there. We came to realise in the process that people learn on different levels.⁸

- **Adaptive learning:** people and organisations learn to apply something that they have been taught or have seen elsewhere, in as identical a form as possible (how most organisations applied well-being ranking, SAGE and PAG).

- **Reflexive learning:** people and organisations apply what they have learnt to other situations on a needs basis, transferring

⁶ Causemann *et al.* (2011, p.76).

⁷ NGO-IDEAs (2012, p.8) based on Ritthaa (2011, p.6).

⁸ GTZ (2009, p. 215).

Box 3: Sectors where the tools have been applied

The goal-setting NGO-IDEAs tools have been applied in the following sectors or target groups:

- Agriculture
- Commercial sex workers
- Community development
- Community housing
- Early childhood education
- Indigenous people
- Mangrove protection
- Peace work
- People with disabilities
- Pregnant and breastfeeding mothers
- Savings and credit groups
- Street children
- Water provision

experience from one situation to another. With well-being ranking, SAGE and PAG many did this, but we could see the difficulties, and often people applied tools in a way that was not yet adapted, ran into difficulties, and then overcame these problems on their own or with guidance from the consultants. Reflexive learning often requires peer or external counselling.

• **Reflected learning:** people and organisations plan what they need to learn based on past experience and expected future challenges. They design their data collection and training for this purpose. Some organisations had to think deeply about the tools and completely revise them before even starting their first try. That resulted in significant innovations.

Challenges for NGOs in working on figures

The 'participatory numbers'⁹ that the NGO-IDEAs tools generate are produced and analysed by target groups themselves. At grassroots level, people are usually able to easily interpret the findings. But NGOs also collect this data for in-depth analysis. Experience shows that there are several challenges. Many NGOs are not experienced in dealing with figures. Many of their staff are not 'numbers people' – they prefer to look at social or technical issues, not at

figures. Few have a thorough training in quantitative data processing. They are skilled in other fields. And the finance people know figures but are often not familiar with the programmes. So if it is difficult to get good quality figures, how can we improve? And how much data should we expect?

Two skills would be needed in the NGOs: to ask the relevant analytical questions and to deal with figures in their various aspects. In order to gain such skills, NGOs would need to employ expensive and highly skilled staff. Another possibility is to invest in external support for developing the relevant analytical questions and training staff, and not all staff members want to learn that; after all, they want to work with people, not paper. But a number-competent staff member will easily find better paid employment elsewhere after the training.¹⁰ NGO-IDEAs has therefore developed a way of generating lots of numbers, but wise decisions need to be made where to collect and analyse them in detail, and where rough summaries could suffice.

Dynamic fit of NGO-IDEAs as a process

Why did so many organisations actually stick to NGO-IDEAs when they had the opportunity to drop out from a process that was initially difficult? The collective NGO-IDEAs process involved a number of critical elements that altogether made things move, a dynamic fit of the process itself:

- Clear expectations from German NGOs regarding participating partners in the global South to improve their impact monitoring systems in the context of NGO-IDEAs, i.e. to honour their commitment.
- Commitment of regional partners to really achieve something; the selection of motivated partners was crucial, but a general environment helped in which organisations saw the need to report about impact as a means to attract further funding.

⁹ Chambers (2008), Holland (2013).

¹⁰ For a detailed analysis of the challenges with numbers, see Causemann *et al.* (2011, p.77).

- Regular exchanges with regional partners at regional workshops and training courses.
- Benefits already visible to target groups at an early stage (see dynamic fit at the group level).
- Accompaniment by the consultants: a continuous open and joint reflect-to-improve-process, to motivate and to synergise. The process needed accompaniment over three years, and that was sufficient only for mainstreaming it into some of the organisations, not in all.
- Freedom to innovate and high flexibility in the project implementation (e.g. many more visits to partners were possible than originally planned).
- Reflections, exchange and guidance given by German partners, particularly the steering group.
- Nurturing relationships throughout all the structures and processes to develop trust, open exchange and bonding (i.e. working on stable relationships, making room for formulating concerns, having different opportunities to meet and reflect jointly). This was crucial in encouraging people to persevere.¹¹

Part of the dynamic was possibly that the German NGOs had their own process in NGO-IDEAs where they improved and refocused their understanding of how to work on impact. Apart from training courses conducted for German NGO staff, a working group based in VENRO developed a policy paper on impact monitoring that included the empowerment of target groups as one of the purposes of monitoring systems, which triggered quite some debate (See *Quality before proof*, In Touch section, this issue).

As for the future, it remains to be seen how the tools will spread if not all elements of the dynamic fit are in place. Currently, many organisations continue to use the tools within their own organisations and to spread them to other groups and projects. But very few invest in spreading the tools to other partners, or other countries.

Box 4: Countries where the tools have been applied

- Bangladesh
- Ethiopia
- India
- Kenya
- Philippines
- Tanzania
- Uganda

At the time of writing, there are also plans to introduce the tools in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and in a couple of Latin American countries.

Conclusion

The NGO-IDEAs experience shows that poor people can bring about change, and they can accelerate change massively if they have the opportunity to measure it with effective concepts and if they are supported by programmes that take up their concerns. The awareness of changes in attitude and behaviour encourages them to take on ever more difficult challenges. Building on this, they reach out to others and they can finally make local government more accountable – and even make this one of their goals.

For the involved NGOs, however, there are more benefits. The NGO-IDEAs tools are not only useful for collecting data but also for empowering communities in the process of data generation and reflection. With the NGO-IDEAs methodology, poor and marginalised people understand and act on contextualised meaning. If this is assured, the NGO-IDEAs tools contributes to a more accurate measurement of change by providing differentiated data on who benefited most from it: e.g. women and men, or households below and above the poverty line. Data can also be analysed separately for groups such as migrants or people living with disabilities. This data is group validated and documents a process over time. And it is comprehensive. ‘Coverage of all project beneficiaries makes the NGO-IDEAs toolbox more rigorous than many research methods’ (Chambers, 2013, p.199).

- The methodology integrates measuring

¹¹ Another process that, running independently, had similar elements was the Most Significant Change process of EED partners in Zimbabwe 2008–9 (Ndlovu, 2010).

outputs, outcomes and impact. By looking at longer-term changes and loosening the chain of attribution to a project intervention, the initiative empowers local communities to analyse and act on their own understanding of cause and effect, which goes well beyond the confines of the logical framework planning tool.

- It does not start from ‘top-down’ planning, but people’s individual goals are consolidated into community goals and can be consolidated further.
- The ‘theory of change’ (i.e. the logics of attribution/contribution) is not linear or led by planning logics, but is systemic and asks for contributions and hindrances of the community, NGO and any other actor, led by empirical observation.
- This means that both the community and the project staff analyse who the teams are, whether they playing against or with them, and how that helps or hinders them.
- While the NGO-IDEAs tools go beyond logical frameworks, the data can nevertheless be used easily for accountability purposes.¹²

Empowerment and awareness-creation mean more than democratic participation. Although democratic participation is

required in the context of self-help promotion, NGO-IDEAs demonstrates this much more than just consultations: all project activities can contribute to the empowerment of the poor and marginalised; and specifically, the outcome and impact monitoring can serve as an eye-opener, creating new awareness about the results of their own actions (i.e. their self-effectiveness) and helping to improve it. At the same time, the visibility of changes at community and NGO level is continuously improved, from the start of the project.

Two kinds of synergies emerge with the NGO-IDEAs approach.¹³ Firstly, it often improves data collection for conventional ends: in other words, participatory data collection produces higher quality data in some fields than standard extractive methodologies. Understanding the context leads to a higher accuracy of data and learning processes increase the level of accountability. Secondly, continuous sharing between two autonomous monitoring systems (the NGO-IDEAs system of the groups and the NGO’s own system that cannot rely only on these data) contributes to mutual learning and bridge-building.

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¹² How to create a link between the data created and logframes is described in Gohl *et al.* (2011b).

¹³ For more details on the synergies and the trade-offs involved, see Causemann *et al.* (2013, p.120).

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IN TOUCH



Tools for supporting sustainable natural resource management and livelihoods

RESOURCES



Sharing the load: a guide to improving the welfare of working animals through collective action

● *Lisa van Dijk, Joy C. Pritchard, S.K. Pradhan and Kimberly L. Wells.*

Practical Action Publishing in association with The Brooke, 2011

The Brooke's experience of working with animal-owning communities has been documented in this field manual for community facilitators. The book helps the grassroot-level facilitator to develop an understanding of animal welfare through observational exercises in the field. It provides a broad explanation of strategies and approaches for improving welfare, looking at the specific context of different target populations in terms of welfare risks to working animals and the

vulnerability of their owners' livelihoods. It provides guidance for collective action through practical examples and illustrations of the participatory process and tools developed, as well as discussing the use of mass media, radio and other outreach strategies.

This manual is written for community facilitators and anyone else who has direct contact with working (traction and transport) animals and their owners, including vets, community-based animal health workers, government extension workers and development workers. It can be used by animal welfare organisations with projects in the developing world who wish to be more effective in finding sustainable solutions to welfare issues. It is also written for development organisations that promote the use of animals to improve human livelihoods and need specialist information to manage the welfare implications of their programmes.

See also 'Sustainable animal welfare: community-led action for

improving care and livelihoods' in this issue.

■ Available from Practical Action Publishing : developmentbookshop.com/sharing-the-load.html#.Uhr8jH_4LWd

Available online in Spanish and French: www.thebrooke.org/resources-approach/our-approach/expansion2. English, Hindi and Arabic available online soon.

Yayasan Tambuhak Sinta newsletter, *Kabah Itah*

Yayasan Tambuhak Sinta (YTS) is a development foundation based in the Indonesian provinces of Kalimantan. These provinces have a small population, but are rich in natural resources. The foundation YTS is working to create conditions that will enable development locally to be balanced, sustainable and equitable. To this end YTS is collaborating with local communities and governments to strengthen their capacity to jointly manage the process of development.

■ Download the *Kabah Itah* newsletter, including back issues: tambuhaksinta.com/kabaritah/index.html
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www.unep.org/flvPlayer/videoplayer.asp?id=27529&l=en



Voices and flavours from the Earth: visualising food sovereignty in the Andes (*Los sabores y las voces de la Tierra: visualizando la soberanía alimentaria en los Andes*)

● *Maruja Salas and the wise elders network from the Altiplano of Peru, IIED, 2013*

This is a new multimedia publication that uses video, audio, images and text to describe how indigenous communities are drawing on their knowledge and cosmovisions to rethink the priorities and governance of food and agricultural research in the Andean Altiplano of Bolivia and Peru.

This book reflects the testimonies of the wise elders from Quechua and Aymara communities in the highlands of Peru about the right to the culture of food, and a plea to ask scientists for their research to respond to these communities' needs – and for the benefits of their research to be for the public good. A detailed description of the dialogue



between farmers and scientists is part of this documentation. The work presented here is part of a larger international and multi-regional initiative known as: Democratising the Governance of Food Systems: Citizens Rethinking Food and Agricultural Research for the Public Good. To find out more about the project, see: www.excludedvoices.org

■ Download the full publication or individual chapters in English or Spanish:

www.iied.org/voices-flavours-earth-food-sovereignty-andes

Read and watch a series of short videos online 'Learning to value mother earth':

www.iied.org/learning-value-mother-earth

For more information contact: Maruja Salas, Gomaringenstr. 6, D-72810 Gomaringen, Germany. Email: mas49@gmx.net



Re-searching agriculture in South Asia: the law and policy context for agricultural research and development and its impact on smallholder farmers

● *Shalini Bhutani, IIED, 2013*

Drawing on evidence and new data accessed under the Indian Right to Information Act, this report shows how an emerging web of powerful actors and processes is now redefining public agricultural research in South Asia. It analyses the forces and factors that are re-shaping and privatising research, resulting in rapid change under the influence of global economic forces such as the new rules of global finance, free trade, intellectual property rights and new laws, as well as consolidations and strategic alliances in the agricultural input industry and the structural power of multinational food corporations.

The report is part of an international initiative called Democratising Food and Agricultural Research, launched in 2007

by partners in South and West Asia, the Andean region of Latin America, West Africa and Europe (including IIED). This multi-regional initiative uses a decentralised and bottom-up process to enable small-scale farmers and other citizens to (a) decide what type of agricultural research needs to be done to ensure peoples' right to food; and (b) influence and transform agricultural research policies and practices for food sovereignty. For more information see: www.excludedvoices.org. The South Asian component of this international initiative is known as the Alliance for Democratising Agricultural Research in South Asia (ADARSA):

www.raitateerpu.com/adarsa.html

■ Download the report online: pubs.iied.org/G03628.html



Listen, think and act: radio broadcasting to promote farmers' participation in Mali's land policy

● *Mamadou Goïta and Mohamed Coulibaly, IIED and IRPAD, 2012*

The vast majority of agricultural production in Mali is carried out by smallholder farmers, who are often unaware of the laws and policies that govern access to the land and resources they rely on to secure their livelihoods. This means they can lose out as access to resources is secured by large-scale agribusinesses or investors. In response, the Institute for Research and Promotion of Alternatives in Development in Africa (IRPAD) launched a project to raise the awareness of farmers and their organisations of agricultural laws and policies. The aim was to enhance their capacities to influence policy and to participate in decision-making in agriculture and natural resource management, particularly on land issues.

IRPAD used an innovative tool to communicate information on the law and related policies to rural people and farmers' organisations: the approach combined community-based training and pre-recorded radio broadcasts explaining the provisions of Mali's newly adopted Agricultural Orientation Law. This paper presents the tool, its outcomes and lessons learnt.

■ Online: pubs.iied.org/G03419.html
Also available in French:
pubs.iied.org/G03424.html



Introducing just sustainabilities: policy, planning and practice

● Julian Agyeman,
Zed Books, 2013

This unique and insightful text offers an exploration of the origins and subsequent development of the

concept of just sustainability. *Introducing just sustainabilities* discusses key topics, such as food justice, sovereignty and urban agriculture; community, space, place (making) and spatial justice; the democratisation of our streets and public spaces; how to create culturally inclusive spaces; intercultural cities and social inclusion; green-collar jobs and the just transition; and alternative economic models, such as co-production. With a specific focus on solutions-oriented policy and planning initiatives that specifically address issues of equity and justice within the context of developing sustainable communities, this is the essential introduction to just sustainabilities.

■ Available from Zed Books:
zedbooks.co.uk/node/11882

Who counts? The power of participatory statistics

● Edited by Jeremy Holland, Practical Action Publishing, 2013

Participatory statistics (PS) aim at both

ends – providing information as a solid and reliable foundation for policy-making and programme planning and empowering concerned people by enhancing their consciousness and self-realisation and thus providing them with the power to change for the better. This book gives an abundance of well-reflected examples of the combination of these two aspects through PS approaches.



The introduction frames PS in the context of social research and development efforts and provides an exciting perspective of a future range of applications for this approach. The main body of the book consists of three parts on functioning approaches to participatory statistics for policy planning, programme steering and impact assessment.

Part I contains key examples on 'planning from below'. PS provides such an approach for very different administrative fields (e.g. climate change adaptation, health or fragile post-war situations). This 'bottom-up' approach also provides a solid and reliable database for regional and state policy planning that effectively meets the needs of the people concerned. At the same time, the applied methods generate self-help and self-governing potentials with the actors, generating information relevant to their own perspectives. Mapping in a variety of forms constitutes the core instrument of this first part.

Part II focuses on the creativity of methodological approaches in making complex concepts such as 'empowerment', 'well-being', and/or 'poverty' both visible and quantifiable. The examples show especially how the advantages of quantification (i.e. generalisation, overview and clear structure) can be

combined with the advantages of a qualitative approach in order to understand the context, motivation and perspectives of the people concerned.

Part III focuses on the impact assessment of relief and development efforts based on the people's perspectives. From the generation of such indicators, participatory methods create powerful insights at the local level that allow for conclusions of the target groups. At the same time, the application of the same methods in a randomised number of locations allows for the aggregation of findings and programme-level conclusions.

Overall, the book provides a great overview of methods and approaches that successfully overcome the dichotomy of quantification and participation. Examples show that there are areas between extreme positions – such as:

- People owned versus extractive
- Understanding versus counting
- Single spot case study versus the general view.

Such contrasts can be effectively allied. In his afterword, Robert Chambers shares this insight. He formulates the vision that with this breakthrough of bottom-up methods and approaches the visibility, influence and power of marginalised people will grow. His hope is that, with the approaches of PS, academic and official perceptions will be more timely, accurate and realistic, helping for joint development efforts fuelled by adequate political decisions in addition to the inspiration and creativity of the people.

● *Reviewed by Jochen Currie, a consultant specialising in rural development and agricultural innovation systems at FAKT (www.fakt-consult.de).*

■ For more information including a table of contents visit: www.ids.ac.uk/publication/who-counts-the-power-of-participatory-statistics. To order a copy: www.ntd.co.uk/idsbookshop/details.asp?id=1325 Alternatively, please call the IDS Bookshop: +44 1273 915 637.



● *Hannah Reid, Lucy Faulkner and Axel Weiser, IIED, 2013*

This Climate Change Group working paper describes the methodology developed to assess the role of selected community-based/participatory initiatives undertaken by Save the Children with pastoral communities in the lowlands of Borana and Guji zones in Ethiopia in contributing to climate change adaptation.

The authors outline the results and recommendations generated from applying this bespoke methodology at the study sites. Similar sites that also suffered from drought and had the same history of development and humanitarian interventions, but had no Save the Children interventions, were also visited for comparative purposes.

■ Online only: pubs.iied.org/10048IIED.html



**Tried and tested:
learning from
farmers on
adaptation to
climate change**

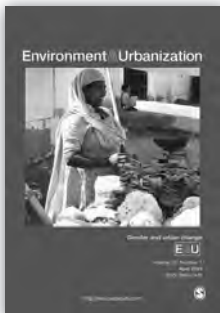
● *Hannah Reid,
Muyeye Chambwera,
Laurel Murray,
Gatekeeper 153, IIED,
2013*

There exists a wealth of largely overlooked experience that has been accrued over generations by small-scale farmers and pastoralists in poor countries as they cope with climatic extremes and increasing uncertainty – climate-change related or otherwise. This Gatekeeper

paper draws lessons from this wealth of knowledge in order to inform adaptation planning efforts at all levels. The paper underscores how measures to increase climate change resilience must view food, energy, water and waste management systems as interconnected and mutually dependent. This holistic approach must also be applied to economic analysis for adaptation planning. Similarly, it is vital to use traditional knowledge and management skills, which can further support adaptation planning. The aim of this paper is to avoid energy and effort being expended on re-inventing the wheel; it urges those involved in supporting climate change adaptation to draw much more from the existing strategies and knowledge of the millions of farmers and pastoralists worldwide. Of course, no amount of knowledge based on past experience will help deal with large or extreme changes. But in many cases the existing knowledge and experience of how to cope with current and past climate variability provide a solid grounding for how best to adapt to current and future climate change.

■ Available online:

pubs.iied.org/14622IIED.html



Environment and Urbanization: Gender and urban change

● *Cecilia Tacoli, David Satterthwaite, Sylvia Chant, Celine D'Cruz, Patience Mudimu, Caren Levy, Cathy McIlwaine,*

Sarah Bradshaw, Nicola Banks, Julian Walker, Alexandre Apsan Frediani, Jean-François Trani, Kaveri Haritas, IIED, 2013.

Urbanization is often associated with greater independence and opportunities for women – but also with high risks of violence and constraints on employment, mobility and leadership that reflect deep

gender-based inequalities. These issues are explored in the April 2013 issue of *Environment and Urbanization*, on gender and urban change. It includes papers on: where and when urban women enjoy advantages over their rural counterparts; community savings schemes that build women's leadership and support upgrading; how transport planning still fails to respond to women's travel needs; how urban contexts can reduce gender-based violence, although often they can increase it; how income and ideology influence women's decision-making in rural and urban areas in Nicaragua; the changes in women's participation in labour markets in Dhaka and the tensions this can generate within households; what was learnt from a project working with girls and boys with disabilities in Mumbai; and the particular roles of women in seeking to get better services for their low-income/informal neighbourhoods in Bengaluru. The editorial summarising the key issues covered is open-access. This issue also has two papers on climate change, which are a detailed benefit-cost analysis applied to Durban; and the different responses of low-income tenants and squatters to adaptation in Khulna. Other papers include: the limitations in the Indian government's Basic Services for the Urban Poor Programme; the politics of non-payment for water in Manila's low-income communities; community-managed reconstruction in Old Fadama (Accra) after a fire; developing a solid waste collection service in informal settlements in Managua; how well-connected individuals control land allocations and water supply in an informal settlement in Dhaka; and an assessment of provision for water, sanitation and waste collection in two informal settlements in Kumasi.

■ Download a sample PDF or subscribe at pubs.iied.org/10628IIED.html



Facilitating cultural transition and change: a practical approach

● *Christine Hogan, 4 Square Books, 2013, 300pp.*

People are crossing international

boundaries for work, study and/or in pursuit of a better life in larger numbers than ever before. *Facilitating cultural transitions and change* provides a practical approach for facilitators needing to enhance their skills when working with participants in transition from a diverse range of multicultural backgrounds. Based on research and feedback from participants, the book includes a variety of materials to suit different learning goals and contexts.

This book is important reading for facilitators working with students, workers and sojourners in transition, before departure and on arrival in new lands; and importantly, in returning to their homelands. Using a step-by-step approach, it gives the facilitator ideas, myths, stories, processes and models to assist the preparation and facilitation of workshops.

Christine is also the author of *Facilitating multicultural groups; Practical facilitation; Understanding facilitation; Facilitating empowerment* (all published by Kogan Page, London) as well as *Facilitating learning* (published by Eruditions, Melbourne).

This book is available from Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk or from the author.

■ Email: Christine@hogans.id.au
Guide price: US\$45; £29.95; €34.95 (plus postage).

The SAGE encyclopedia of action research

● *Edited by David Coghlan, Mary Brydon-Miller. Forthcoming, 2014*

Action research is a term used to describe a family of related approaches that integrate theory and action with a goal of

addressing important organisational, community and social issues together with those who experience them. It focuses on the creation of areas for collaborative learning and the design, enactment and evaluation of liberating actions through combining action and research, reflection and action in an ongoing cycle of co-generative knowledge. While the roots of these methodologies go back to the 1940s, there has been a dramatic increase in research output and adoption in university curricula over the past decade. This is now an area of high popularity among academics and researchers from various fields — especially business and organisation studies, education, healthcare and nursing, development studies, and social and community work. This encyclopedia brings together the many strands of action research and addresses the interplay between these disciplines by presenting a state-of-the-art overview and comprehensive breakdown of the key tenets and methods of action research as well as detailing the work of key theorists and contributors to action research.

■ Available from: www.sagepub.com



Quality before proof

● *Policy paper on impact monitoring, VENRO, 2010*

A note by Claudia Villagra, Kolping International

VENRO is an umbrella association,

which combines the strengths of German development NGOs. Together in solidarity, they stand up to combat poverty, promote human rights and conserve our natural resources. The central goal of VENRO is to promote fair and just globalisation, or more importantly to combat world-wide poverty. VENRO strengthens the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

and civil society in international development so that they can make their contribution to global justice.

VENRO members are very heterogeneous in their areas of work as well as their size. However, targeting civil society as partners and the empowerment of the target groups are their main similarities. Partnership and participation with their partners and with the target groups are fundamental values of their work. Among the VENRO members impact is a very important topic.

In 2004, VENRO member organisations initiated the forum NGO-IDEAs to empower organisations in impact monitoring by empowering the target groups to set their own goals and monitor their achievements. External funding for NGO-IDEAs ended early 2012, but NGO-IDEAs continues as an informal process. Since 2008, there is also a working group on impact observation. This group promotes the exchange of experiences among member organisations, encourages them to work out concepts and political positions and promotes dialogue with political and academic stakeholders.

In 2010, the working group wrote a position paper, *Quality before proof*,

which was adopted and published by VENRO. This paper presents the quintessence of impact monitoring from the perspective of VENRO members, to promote understanding and to start a dialogue. Quality in this paper is defined through four goals of impact assessment: learning from experience, steering, empowerment and accountability.

This paper sparked a discussion in Germany about impact, monitoring, participation and science-based methods. These critiques found the scientific perspective missing in VENRO's understanding of monitoring. VENRO responded by pointing out some misunderstandings about concepts such as impact observation versus impact evaluation, empowerment versus capacity building, or data validity based on different perspectives versus scientific validity. This debate in academic journals was followed by a conference Dialogue Day: Impact in November 2011.

Quality before proof started a dialogue that it is still ongoing; the outcomes of this debate and exchanges are now the basis for the dialogue between VENRO and the new German evaluation institute.

■ Download online:
www.venro.org/628.html

Events and training

EVENTS

TheWorkshop2013

Praxis will be hosting its 17th annual commune on participatory development from 21st–28th October 2013 in Thrissur, in the southern Indian state of Kerala.

This year's format offers participants the opportunity to learn about participatory methods and attend modules to see how these approaches work in different contexts. The thematic application modules on offer this year include: project cycle management; public accountability; participatory communication; participatory monitoring and evaluation (with focus on sustainability); campaign, advocacy and networking; and community

mobilisation. See also an update from Praxis in the RCPLA pages of this issue.

■ For more information please visit: www.theworkshop.in or email us at: info@theworkshop.in

The Big Push Forward conference

A report by Bernward Causemann

In April 2013, the Big Push Forward's conference on the Politics of Evidence took place at the Institute of Development Studies in Brighton, UK to discuss the effects of the results agenda on the development sector. Given that 'the politics of evidence' had not been scrutinised systematically in much depth, the conference sought to provide that platform. Central to all discussions were the implications for

TheWorkshop2013

17th Praxis Annual Commune on Participatory Development

transformational development. Centring on participants' experiences of the pros and cons of dealing with the politics of evidence and the results agenda, the conference was structured around four questions:

- What do we mean by 'the politics of evidence' – factors, actors, artefacts? And why is it important?
- What are the effects on transformative intentions and impacts of potentially useful approaches on evidence of and for change, such as 'theory of change' or 'value for money'?
- Under what conditions do these practices retain their utility rather than undermine transformational development efforts? What factors and relationships drive the less useful practices and protocols?
- How are people engaging with problematic practices and protocols? What are they accepting and doing, what are they resisting and how? What alternatives have they found to create spaces for approaches more aligned with transformational development?

A survey by Brendan Whitty ('Experiences of the results agenda') amongst practitioners in the run-up to the conference showed that experiences with the results agenda were ambivalent. Concepts like 'logical frameworks', 'theories of change' and 'value for money' had both positive and negative effects. Externals (researchers and academics) and advisers inside the organisations were much more critical than monitoring and evaluation (M&E) specialists and senior managers. Implementers sat in the middle.

- Many organisations with resources but sluggish bureaucracies saw positive effects. They reported improved monitoring and evaluation.
- Organisations with sophisticated systems often found the results framework limiting, too burdensome and damaging to learning.

- Smaller local organisations with limited administrative capacity were struggling to meet the requirements without benefiting from them; the results framework forces them to put more resources into accountability often without benefit to their own learning or practice. They risk losing funding although they might be doing reasonable work on the ground.

During the conference, individual cases were discussed and lessons drawn. A major factor for the disempowering consequences of the results agenda seems to be that public and parliament in some countries are very critical of development aid. It has been drawn into partisan politics at least in the UK, the Netherlands, Australia and Sweden. Where aid is contested, results are used to defend or to constrain development spending. But as that does not really help to convince opponents, it became clear that many in the development bureaucracy believe in the results agenda and use the 'accountability to the tax payer' argument to justify the results focus that rather benefits the bureaucracy and puts implementers under pressure.

The case studies were also used to discuss strategies. Very few questioned the results framework as a whole, although there was a question whether all this actually needed to be done. Most strategies dealt with creating space for transformative, empowering development work. All the results concepts, if used flexibly, can help to promote learning and improve practice. If that was not possible, constructive complicity was suggested: do what needs to be done in face-saving ways and get on with what your work really is about. It often helps to offer positive alternatives because initially, all these tools were designed to promote critical thinking.

In the end, it seemed to boil down to senior managers. Do they make their organisations comply with the reporting and 'evidence' requirements 'to the letter'?

Do they increase demands even further? Or do they stick to vision and values of their organisations and create as much space as possible to mitigate the disempowering effects of the results framework?

Reflecting on the discussions with a small group of participants from German civil society organisations, the conclusion was obvious: there is broad consensus about development funding and German NGOs still have much more space than many organisations funded in the Anglo-Saxon world. If German NGOs bureaucratise their reporting on effectiveness, then it is done out of choice,

not because of requirements by the German Ministry for Development. But as practice in Germany's bilateral cooperation can be much more restrictive, it will be important for civil society to retain this space.

Many wanted to continue the conversation. At the end of the conference it was not yet clear how that could happen as the five convenors announced that they would stand down later in the year. However, some of these discussions have continued online and there also various resources related to the conference available to download.

■ Visit: www.bigpushforward.net

E-participation

Access Agriculture

www.accessagriculture.org

Access Agriculture is an international NGO which showcases agricultural training videos in local languages. Here you can see examples of videos, download them or order a DVD copy. The audio tracks can also be downloaded by radio stations. This is a platform for agricultural research and development staff, service providers, extension agents, communication professionals and representatives of farmer organisations to see what training videos are available and request new language versions. The videos are all designed to support sustainable agriculture in developing countries.

Participatory Methods

www.participatorymethods.org

This new website from the Participation, Power and Social Change Team at the Institute of Development Studies, UK, provides resources on a range of methods for inclusive social development. The site

gives an overview of participatory methods, where and how they have been used, their problems and potentials and the debates about them. The focus is on participatory approaches to strategic analysis and programme design, monitoring and evaluation. It also includes resources on participatory learning, research and communication in organisations, networks and communities.



Participating in Knuts

www.go-knuts.com

The recent spring of mass political action around the world has led to a flourishing of websites that attempt to create online environments that facilitate communication and engagement of large

groups of people. But the ideal set out by the deliberative democracy movement is not easily implemented online. Multiple forums and long linear threads leave members overwhelmed and disengaged. A central question is how to moderate the flow of information. Some use moderators, a useful way to ensure productive discussions, but this comes at the price of decentralised deliberation. On other websites with no moderators it is hard to make sense of the cacophony of statement exchanges. When large numbers of people engage in a discussion they produce a very rich data set of opinions and reactions. Is there a useful way to sift through this data using statistical analysis, the way we analyse survey data?

Knuts – a new online interactive forum by D-Governance – tries to take a small step in addressing the above obstacles. Named after the famous king who thought he could stop the tide with his words, Knuts invites participants to try and change the tide of opinion. In Knuts, large groups of people can discuss and vote on a particular issue. The discussion is completely decentralised, using the wisdom of the crowd to glean the important aspects and main arguments. Unlike social media, it centres on the arguments themselves, rather than on who made those arguments. Knuts also ensures that every participant gets useful feedback on how s/he influences others' opinions.

The brainchild of a London School of Economics professor and a web designer, Knuts has two faces. Behind the scenes, a sophisticated distribution system based on dynamic auctions ensures a decentralised, smooth and meaningful flow of discussion. Innovative statistical inference techniques allow the platform to use the wisdom of the crowd to analyse the public discussion. The other face of Knuts is the one that those who participate encounter. Especially designed

to increase engagement, the platform focuses on how the individual interacts with the group. Participants get constant and useful feedback on their participation, how different opinions they expressed or supported are perceived by others, and how they relate to the group as a whole.

Knuts has a wide range of applications in education, political organisations and in consultations and evaluations in large organisations. Knuts is currently in its Beta phase and D-Governance are looking for organisations that could benefit from its use. The aim is to set up a platform that would allow any organisation or individual set up their own Knuts interactive forums in an easy and economical fashion. For further details and contact information visit Knuts: www.go-knuts.com

The Pelican Initiative: Platform for Evidence-based Learning and Communication for Social Change

dgroups.org/groups/pelican

The Pelican Initiative is an online platform hosted by dgroups which focuses on the central question: How can we learn more from what we do while at the same time having the biggest possible impact on the social change processes in which we engage?

We usually try to learn from what we do through monitoring and evaluation (M&E), participatory inquiry, research or combinations of these. We have made a lot of progress in developing better approaches and methods to allow relevant stakeholders to participate in such processes. However, to allow for broadened social interaction around evidence and widespread learning for development, insights need to be communicated effectively.

This platform seeks to bring together development practitioners from different disciplines, specialists and policy makers to explore this question, share

experiences, and to push the agenda further on three themes:

- evidence and learning for policy change;
- learning in organisations and among partners; and
- society-wide learning among a multitude of stakeholders.

It aims to enhance practical understanding of joint learning processes in development and to identify strategies to strengthen them. The space can be used to:

- interact with other participants on issues of concern to you through the interactive email discussion forum;
- make your own views and experiences available to a wider community of practice by sharing case studies;
- link to or upload your tools, methods and other relevant documents as resources; and
- keep up to date, and make others aware of upcoming events in this field of work.

Contributors are invited to participate in a series of publications based on materials and interactions that take place on this platform. For more background information on the Initiative, please refer to the document *Learning for development: we can do better! Introduction and guidelines to the Pelican Initiative*: tinyurl.com/pelican-we-can-do-better

The initiative is open to all development practitioners, specialists and policy makers interested in the issue of learning for development.

Initiators of the Pelican Initiative are the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), Exchange, Bellanet and Unicef East Africa Regional Office. For more information, please contact Niels Keijzer: nk@ecdpm.org

Reality check approach

reality-check-approach.com

This is a resource for anyone interested in reality check approaches (RCAs). RCA is

a qualitative approach to feedback and evaluation which involves outsiders living with people living in poverty in their own homes and joining in their everyday lives over several days and nights. The relaxed environment this provides enables easy informal conversations with all members of the family and their neighbours. It enables the outsider to experience and observe for themselves and provides a meaningful basis for joint reflection on change with the family. It helps to shed light on the disconnects between knowledge, attitudes and practice which conventional evaluation is often unable to do.

The interest in commissioning RCAs has increased recently as they have earned credibility as potentially powerful tools for improving the connection between policy makers and implementors of development policies and programmes with the people served by them. To date they have been commissioned by Sida, DfID, AusAid and the European Commission. Findings have frequently challenged received wisdom and revealed important insights into how development assistance is experienced. RCAs have now been carried out in a number of different contexts. The Bangladesh RCA (2007–2012) provided insights into the large-scale sector-wide approaches in primary health and primary education. Among many findings which policy makers have responded to was the issue of rising drop-out of boys from school (noted long before the official statistics confirmed this), the changes in the diets of people living in poverty (which have serious consequences for health such as the increased intake of salt and spices) and the extent of misuse of free Government medicines by the non-ill. The Nepal RCA (2012) undertaken as part of a larger review of the impact of forty years of development assistance in the Koshi Hills for DfID and the

Government of Nepal revealed a major lag in development assistance response of some seven to ten years to people's aspirations, local context changes and local innovation. A small scale RCA in Mozambique (2010–11) noted that project assumptions that increased disease resistance of poultry would lead to better household-level nutrition outcomes was flawed. Although families indicated in PRA sessions that they ate chicken, the RCA found that this was not the case. This highlights the difference between public and private space disclosure and RCA's special advantage. The Indonesia RCA (2010) focusing on basic education highlighted the real costs of so-called free education, including the demands made by children to have daily pocket money to purchase snacks at school and the high levels of children's own agency in making decisions to skip or leave school. The latest RCA in Northern Ghana (2013) which will continue periodically until 2020 has noted among other things the unrealistic expectations of programmes which demand cash payments, albeit small, in communities which are still largely cashless. The voices of people living in poverty gathered through different RCAs have been heavily cited in various documents produced to try to influence the post 2015 agenda.



Food We Want

www.foodwewant.org/eng

Food We Want is an international campaign to raise information, awareness and lobbying to promote small-scale family farming and sustainable agri-food systems as a key solution to tackling hunger, as well as addressing poverty and climate change issues. The initiative is

funded by the European Union, and involves eight countries (Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, UK, Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania) with the objective of sharing ideas, promoting common solutions and stimulating a public debate on the future of food.

Our Food

www.ourfood.org.uk



Our Food

works to give excluded voices

more say in the future of food and farming. Building on international experience, this initiative has organised a series of community events in the UK to bring people together to share food and discuss the issues around food research. The project aims to create spaces for free and wide-ranging discussion of many of the key issues linked to agricultural and food research, and to build a more inclusive way of working based on a re-imagining of the role of research in our food system based on dialogue. The dialogue process has led to theatre performances, developed by actors and community drama groups who met with community groups and researchers with experience in food and farming.

Age of We

www.ageofwe.org

The Age of We is a non-commercial network set up to provide support to creative clusters – groups involved in creative activities with an ethos of inclusion and participation aimed at bringing about positive change in communities.

LINKEDIN GROUPS

Video4Dev and Web2forDev are both open discussion groups on LinkedIn. Join in the discussions, view and contact other members of the group, or find out about forthcoming events, training and job offers.

Video4Dev: Participatory Video for Development

www.linkedin.com/groups/participatory-video-development-2123359?trk=myg_ugrp_ovr

Web2forDev – Participatory Web 2.0 for Development

www.linkedin.com/groups/web2fordev-participatory-web-20-development-135666?trk=myg_ugrp_ovr

The environmental lens

www.environmentallens.org

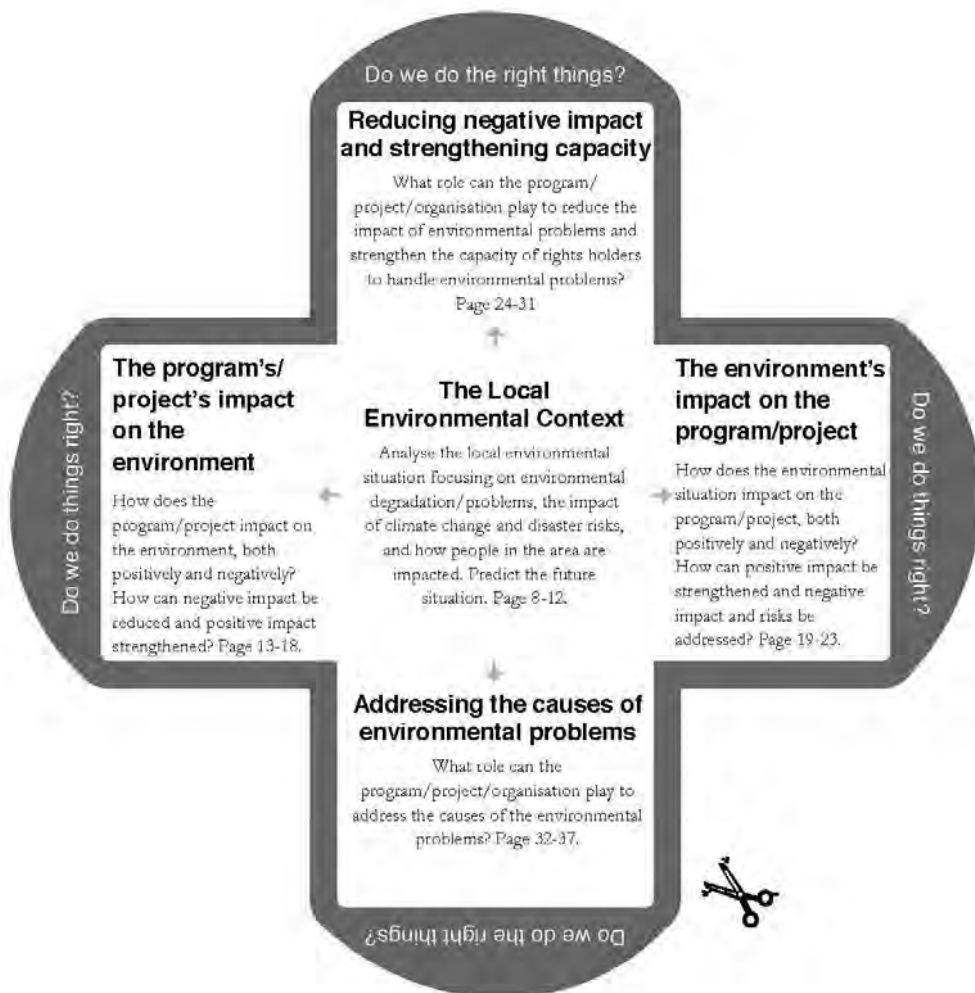
The Environmental Lens is a creative method that aims to help you analyse a programme, project or organisation from an environmental perspective. The method consists of a tool in the shape of a plus sign. It provides an in-depth analysis of how

address the impacts and causes of environmental problems. It aims to help you to create more sustainable and well-thought-out projects and programmes, using simple brainstorming exercises. Successful implementation comes about when participants take an active part in the context analysis, problem description, and in formulating and prioritising solutions.

Participatory video

www.insightshare.org

In 2014, InsightShare will celebrate its 15th anniversary. It has become a leading centre of Participatory Video (PV) knowledge, learning, training and sharing of methods and best practice. Alongside standard capacity-building in PV and PV





The participatory video team with their storyboard in Aretika, NE India.

for monitoring and evaluation (M&E), InsightShare supports organisations to implement their own participatory video programmes. Combining face-to-face and virtual mentoring, it offers organisations and individuals support in PV programme design and implementation, troubleshooting, tailored training courses, and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) of their PV projects. To celebrate InsightShare's upcoming anniversary, we thought we would share an update on some of its recent activities.

- Over the past year, members of the team have provided face-to-face and distance support to two freelance PV facilitators who work in the Netherlands. They were looking for advice on how to strengthen their PV practice, as well as guidance on how to set up a PV charity that supports asylum seeker youth during their integration period.

- InsightShare also undertook a participatory monitoring and evaluation process of a participatory video programme being delivered by War Child Holland and its partners in Yei County, South Sudan. It trained project beneficiaries to use the collection, selection and analysis of video-recorded testimonies and dramas to generate a clear and accessible picture of the way the initiative has led to

transformation at the organisational level and how those initiatives are changing lives in communities. They also made recommendations for future scaling up of this work.

- Recently, InsightShare has delivered a series of capacity-building projects in participatory video facilitation programmes for partners of IUCN Netherlands in India and Bolivia. The three-stage training model enabled staff from four national conservation agencies to be trained in all aspects of participatory video, which led to a variety of rich and powerful participatory video processes with communities living with and impacted by conservation projects. *TYI* (Atong for 'water') is a video made by the local people of Aretika, a small village located along the Simsang river in the South Garo Hills (Meghalaya). It shows how, amongst other challenges affecting traditional livelihoods and lifestyles, recently established coal mines have heavily polluted the river which lies at the heart of their community. Villagers who once depended on fishing as their main livelihood are now resorting to using their nets to fishing coal out of the river to sell in the local markets. This is an example of a participatory video project undertaken by trainee facilitators working with the



Photo: InSightShare

The participatory video evaluation team in Eldoret, Kenya finishes an in depth 14-day process, and celebrates!

Wildlife Trust of India as part of their post training assignment (stage two of a three-stage training) see: tinyurl.com/o4jqw7x

- Two InSightShare trainers – Sole and Sara – carried out a participatory video evaluation for Mercy Corps in Kenya, as part of their Financial Literacy Research Programme. Over 14 days they trained local facilitators to support 74 young people to share their stories of change. They then facilitated workshops with over 130 people representing a spectrum of key stakeholders. The videos of change were screened, stimulating lively exchanges and debates as the targeted audiences selected which story they felt was most significant and discussed why. A story that was selected over and over was one about a man called Matthew, who after receiving training in financial literacy felt the need to do something with his life. He started a business with one packet of flour and almost no investment, and today he has diversified into three businesses and has gone back to college to study agriculture. This story gives a lot of detail about the ‘enablers of change’ (training and family support), as well as the blockers he has had to overcome (stereotypes, peer pressure, lack of knowledge). This story and the other video stories of change will

soon be available at www.youtube.com/insightshare. More information about the PV Most Significant Change (MSC) approach can be seen here: bit.ly/pvmscdiag

TEDx

www.ted.com/tedx

TED started out in 1984 as a conference bringing together people from three worlds: technology, entertainment and design. TEDx was created in the spirit of TED’s mission: ‘ideas worth spreading’. It is an international community that organises TED-style events, celebrating locally-driven ideas and elevating them to a global stage. TEDx events are produced independently of TED conferences, each event curates speakers on their own, but based on TED’s format and rules. The programme gives communities, organisations and individuals the opportunity to stimulate debate and action at the local level. Recent TEDx talks include: *This is not a video camera*: Chris Lunch on participatory video at TEDxIHECS <http://youtu.be/5nVsI2nzzEs>
How to ensure that aid empowers urban poor groups: David Satterthwaite at TEDxHamburg youtu.be/95Lq2T9OoFo

RCPLA NETWORK

In 1995, in response to the tremendous demand for ideas and information on participatory learning and action approaches generated, in part, by *Participatory Learning and Action* and its collaborative research and capacity strengthening activities, IIED established a resource centre to acquire and disseminate information on participation worldwide. It developed strong relationships with other resource centres, both South and North, and in 1997, the Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action (RCPLA) Network was formally established with 15 member organisations, with Tom Thomas of Praxis India as the convenor.

The original aim of this global network was to bring together, organise, synthesise and distribute information on participatory approaches in appropriate formats and languages and to exchange ideas, information and knowledge between members in order to promote more effective participatory learning and action at local, regional and international levels.

IIED and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) played fundamental roles in supporting the development of the RCPLA Network. IDS now hosts the Participation Resource Centre and in 2005, Ali Mokhtar of the Center for Development Services (CDS) was voted by network members as the next convenor.

More recently, funding challenges have meant that the network has been less active over the last few years. This section gives some thoughts from both Tom Thomas and from colleagues at CDS about ways forward for the network.

RCPLA and *PLA*: two sides of the same coin

by TOM THOMAS

The Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action (RCPLA) Network and *PLA* have been like two sides of the same coin – one practicing and researching, and the other documenting and reflecting on the action and research. The combination gave an apt institutional expression to the Freirian notion of Praxis. An attempt at building knowledge *a posteriori*, this combination was the pride of practitioners and a humbling learning for the academic. The *PLA* team worked zealously on the daunting task of turning passionate practitioners with an aversion to writing into published development writers and the result is evident in the 66 editions of *PLA*. The RCPLA team for its part continued its efforts at networking field practitioners from around the world to deepen both the theory and practice of participatory approaches. In a significant move, just a few years after its formation, RCPLA devolved its leadership to southern partners – Praxis India being the first southern secretariat and subsequently the

Centre for Development Services (CDS) in Egypt. This move gave additional impetus to the southern focus and built more south-south exchanges and dialogues. The southern writeshops saw the compilation of many critical southern experiences ranging from grassroots democracy to community radio.

PLA has completed 25 years and RCPLA's journey has been with it for over 15 years. One wonders whether in these two decades, has the world become participatory and are RCPLA and *PLA* now irrelevant? Far from it. Though every top-down and patriarchal institution has imbibed the lingo/jargon of 'participation', there is scant regard for its purpose. There is an urgent need to deepen participation at all levels if we are not to lose the gains of over two decades of learning together with communities.

I would like to see the current evaluation of the *PLA* series find a way for the continuation of *PLA* (as well as RCPLA). It is an opportunity to take a pause and recast *PLA* and RCPLA with

more vigour and purpose, both in form and content, to continue the true praxis of development practitioners and thinkers.

Salute to the entire *PLA* team of 25 years.

Until *PLA* 67,

Tom Thomas

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Beyond RCPLA

by LISA VAN DIJK and PASSINTE ISAAK

Background

The RCPLA Network was established in 1997 to bring together a collection of organisations from around the world to promote participatory approaches for development.¹ The network aimed to enhance the exchange of knowledge and ideas between member organisations, and help promote effective participatory approaches in different contexts and in local languages. Each member of the network brought its own strengths, and the network was united in its desire to provide access to a variety of resources on participatory learning and action (PLA).

Since its creation, the RCPLA has helped to facilitate the development of ideas, organise workshops and seminars on PLA, provide training and assist with participatory research. This sharing of resources has encouraged the spread of participatory methods around the world and members have also influenced the

development and application of participatory methodologies on local, national and international levels.

The Center for Development Services

The Center for Development Services (CDS) has been part of the network since its early days – representing the North Africa and Middle East region in the RCPLA Network steering group. CDS, or as it was originally called, the Learning Resource Centre, was established by the Near East Foundation (NEF) (www.near-east.org) in 1990 as a regional resource centre in Arabic-language development services as a result of the Local Development Practitioners Network implemented by NEF and partially funded by the Ford Foundation. CDS was established with the mission ‘to support people and organisations to realise their full potential and foster self-determined, self-sustaining change’.

¹ The Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action (RCPLA Network) was established in 1997 by IIED with funding from the UK Department for International Development (DfID) and the UK National Lottery.



Photo: Milad Moawad

A participatory community needs assessment, Sohag, Egypt.

In 2006, CDS was registered under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in Cairo as an employee-owned (shareholding) company. The change in CDS's identity was sought to assure that the organisation was better able to prosper, grow and make a greater contribution to development in the region. The CDS philosophy continued to revolve around participation and towards linking participatory processes, tools and techniques into development practice.

From 2005 to 2009, CDS became the RCPLA Network coordinator. The coordination of the network rotated among steering group members (founding institutions) as the regional advocates and representatives of the network in different continents of the world. Each term of coordination lasts three years and selection was done by an election process held during the annual steering group meeting. During the board meeting held in Sri Lanka in August 2005, RCPLA members nominated Ali Mokhtar from CDS as the network coordinator. In this role, CDS expanded the network membership by arranging bilateral meetings with potential members who were interested in joining the network to

discuss how they could add value to and benefit from the network. CDS further developed the RCPLA website as a hub for information on participatory approaches. Different sections were added, such as cases studies and e-discussion sessions. Through the website, a series of e-discussions took place. The aim of these was to develop a communication network among participants. Every year the RCPLA e-forum hosted one or two discussions on different themes related to PLA. It served as a space to promote the e-discussions concept and attract new RCPLA participants. The themes for discussion were agreed with the steering committee and after each discussion RCPLA issued a synthesis report that was posted on the RCPLA webpage along with a list of other relevant reading.

A series of good practice case studies focusing on the power of participation was also developed and published on the RCPLA website. Additionally, the RCPLA published *Deepening participation for social change*.² This publication presents conceptual reflections on participation in development; analyses participation as an active process throughout the project cycle;

² See: pubs.iied.org/G02726.html

Photo: Milad Moawad



Village mapping in Wadi El Saaida, Aswan, Egypt.

and identifies the challenges in deepening the use of participatory approaches. It also includes tips on how to monitor and evaluate the process of implementing participatory approaches. And in 2010, CDS facilitated the translation into Arabic of *PLA 60 Community-based adaptation to climate change*.³

Beyond the RCPLA network

CDS has seen clear benefits of being part of the RCPLA network in terms of cross-regional exposure, South-South learning and the multiplier effect of learning from the experience gained by other practitioners. Over the years, the number of RCPLA members has increased, yet limited activities have been conducted over the past five years. In 2008–2009, an action plan was designed for the RCPLA Network, however no action was taken due to lack of funding. A network's success depends on its members' ability to interconnect, share

information and lessons learnt, and benefit from the experience and capabilities of each other. For many members, the benefits of being part of the network has been limited in the past few years and the RCPLA Network would not be the first network that collapses when funding stops and members do not see specific tangible benefits of being part of the network. As the network has not been active in the past five years the question is whether we can still speak of a 'way forward' or do we need to go beyond the RCPLA Network?

- Does the purpose of the network still stand or do we want to go beyond a network of resource centres and evolve to a network that benefits a large group of practitioners (for example a participatory practitioners' network).
- How can a network sustain itself beyond its initial funding, and what is the capacity (organisational, institutional, technical) of the member organisations

³ See: pubs.iied.org/G02730.html



Photo: Milad Moawad

Village mapping in Wadi El Saaida, Aswan, Egypt.

which could be mobilised to strengthen and drive this network? Would it be possible to link the network and its objects and actions to specific projects that are already implemented by the member organisations?

Thoughts of one way forward have been inspired by the model of the Pelican Initiative⁴ (see In Touch, this issue). This is a diverse and active network and could provide ideas of how the RCPLA network might potentially evolve.

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⁴ See: dgroups.org/groups/pelican

RCPLA Network

News from the Participation, Power and Social Change Team (PPSC) at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS)

Participate

Participate, coordinated by IDS and Beyond 2015, is a global research initiative which focuses on the experiences of those living in greatest poverty. It brings together participatory research programmes in more than 40 countries, and connects the unfiltered voices of those most affected by poverty with UN and intergovernmental deliberations. Participate is filling a crucial gap in the current policy context, providing high quality evidence on the reality of poverty at ground level, bringing the perspectives of the poorest into the post-2015 debate. The Centre for Development Services (CDS), Cairo and Praxis in India are also members of the initiative.

To date, Participate has drawn out key lessons from existing participatory studies and global consultations;

provided methodological support to a network of organisations and 18 participatory research projects which are currently ongoing; developed a major programme of research using participatory visual methods; and engaged in international advocacy activities to ensure that knowledge from the margins is included in post-2015 policy-making.

In the second half of this year, Participate will produce a documentary of the research process, a synthesis of the findings from 18 research projects, and organise ground-level panels (to mirror the UN high-level panels on the post-2015 development agenda) in India, Uganda, Brazil and Egypt (see the update from Praxis below). It is also creating an exhibition of the synthesis and a collage of multimedia outputs from the research as a space for engagement at the UN General Assembly in September 2013. A series of reflections and methodology pieces will be produced, continuing ongoing efforts to ensure that

participatory research and knowledge from the margins is embedded in global policy-making.

■ To find out more, please visit: www.participate2015.org or email: participate@ids.ac.uk

The Big Push Forward

The Big Push Forward provides space for discussion, debate and the exploration of appropriate approaches for assessing transformative development processes. Evidenced-based results, rigorous data, conclusive proof and value for money are terms promising clarity about what works and what should be funded in international development. For some donors, certain ways of knowing and assessing impact are considered more legitimate than others. Yet increasingly people are recognising the need for multiple and mixed methods and approaches to better understand complex change and that, compared to imposed standards, are more likely to lead to fair assessments to support a fairer world.

The PPSC team at IDS, Praxis and CDS are all members of the Big Push Forward – an informal international network of practitioners seeking constructive ways to advance conceptually and methodologically international development aid's support of a fairer world, beyond the narrow bureaucratic protocols that assume guaranteed predictable outcomes.

Rosalind Eyben, a fellow at IDS and member of the PPSC team, is one of the co-convenors of the Big Push Forward. See the In Touch section of this issue of *PLA* for more information on the conference on The Politics of Evidence held at IDS in April 2013.

■ For more information on The Big Push Forward visit: bigpushforward.net

Other news from the PPSC

There has been a great deal going on in the PPSC team in recent months. In

addition to the Participate and Big Push Forward initiatives, they have been involved in a variety of projects, publications and events. Accountability may seem like an obvious part of the relationship between a state and its citizens yet accountability mechanisms are often weak or absent. Working with HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, they have been undertaking a multi-country study which aims to gain insights into accountability and its contribution to development and local democratic governance.

■ See: IDS Working Paper 422 *Local accountabilities in fragile contexts: experiences from Nepal, Bangladesh and Mozambique*. Available online (350kb): www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/Wp422.pdf

Rosalind Eyben has been looking at how unpaid care work across the world is rarely acknowledged within development agendas, and investigating how to get this important aspect of peoples' lives included in development policy and programmes.

■ See IDS Policy Briefing Issue 31: *Getting unpaid care onto development agendas*. Available online (1mb): www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/IFPB31.pdf

The PPSC team recently launched a new book which explores how people can, and are, using participatory methods to create their own statistics and influence policy. *Who counts? The power of participatory statistics* is published by Practical Action (see our In Touch section for a review and more details).

In addition, Zed Books have just published *Organizing women workers in the informal economy: beyond the weapons of the weak*, edited by Naila Kabeer, Ratna Sudarshan and Kirsty Milward, as part of the Pathways of Women's Empowerment Consortium. This is the first in a Zed Books series on feminism and development.

Since 2009 we have been working with Oxfam on tracking the social

impacts of economic crises. This project has just produced a report called *Squeezed: life in a time of food price volatility, year 1 results*.

■ Available online: policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/squeezed-life-in-a-time-of-food-price-volatility-year-1-results-292412

New website

Supported by the Swiss Development Corporation, the PPSC have set up a new website on participatory methods at www.participatorymethods.org. Focusing on participatory approaches to strategic analysis, programme design, monitoring and evaluation, it also includes resources on participatory learning, research and communication in organisations, networks and communities. The Participation Resource Centre is included in the site – many of the resources are electronic and others can be sourced by emailing: ppsc@ids.ac.uk. The centre also continues to operate as a physical space at IDS where visitors are very welcome.

The PPSC blog goes from strength to strength: recent postings have discussed the lack of accountability in the garment industry following the tragic collapse of the factory in Dhaka, how communication in development, particularly using images, can worsen a charitable ‘us and them’ mentality within richer countries, and how men are risking their lives for gender justice. Read more online:

participationpower.wordpress.com

■ For further information about any of the above, or if you wish to visit the Resource Centre please email ppsc@ids.ac.uk or call +44 1273 915879.

Update from the Centre for Development Services (CDS), Cairo

As mentioned above, CDS is part of the IDS Beyond 2015 Participatory Research Group, a consortium of organisations who are working to coordinate and strengthen participatory research projects

which engage people living in poverty directly in the post-2015 debate. The group aims to draw local initiatives together to produce rich, in-depth qualitative evidence, co-produced with people living in poverty, on what their priorities are, what they see as pressing development needs, and what they might need from a post-2015 framework. CDS bring into this group its extensive participatory research on youth in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

■ For more information on CDS activities visit: www.cds-mena.com



Update from Praxis India

Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices is a not-for-profit organisation committed to mainstreaming the voices of the poor and marginalised sections of society in the process of development. Based in New Delhi, with branches in Chennai, Patna, Hyderabad and London, Praxis works to promote participatory practices in all spheres of human development. Praxis carries out research and consultancies, and also engages in several self-funded initiatives to further the cause of development.

TheWorkshop2013

Praxis will be hosting its 17th Annual Commune on Participatory Development from 21st–28th October 2013 in Thrissur, in the southern Indian state of Kerala. This year's format offers participants the opportunity to learn about participatory methods and attend modules to see how these approaches work in different contexts. The thematic application modules on offer this year include: project cycle management; public accountability; participatory

The Workshop 2013

17th Praxis Annual Commune on Participatory Development

communication; participatory monitoring and evaluation (with a focus on sustainability); campaigning, advocacy and networking; and community mobilisation.

■ For more information visit: www.theworkshop.in or email Praxis at: info@theworkshop.in

Ground-level panels

As part of the Participate global initiative, Praxis hosted a ground-level panel, integrating voices of poor and marginalised people in India with recommendations on development policies. The panel was made up of 14 people who experienced poverty and exclusion in their day-to-day lives. This panel deliberated on the recommendations of the United Nations high-level panel on 14th–18th July 2013 and their report was shared at an event attended by representatives of civil

society, the media and government bodies. The panellists were not members of any government, private or non-governmental organisations or associated with any political parties or trade unions. Instead, they drew on their own experiences of marginalisation and exclusion to provide a ‘ground-level’ reality check to the high-level panel. Read the ground-level panel report online: www.praxisindia.org/?q=node/245

Recommendations made by a ground-level panel of 14 people from poor and marginalised communities from across India echoed demand more generally for a corruption-free society and a state that focuses on removing barriers rather than just handing out benefits. The recent mood in the country seemed to find resonance at a meeting hosted by Praxis in July 2013 called Voice for Change: A Post-2015 Development Agenda by People Living in Poverty.

The panel included *dalits*, tribal people, religious and sexual minorities, differently-abled people, children and the elderly. The panel met in Delhi to



Photo: Praxis

The ground-level panel's exhibit at the Voice for Change meeting.

Photo: Praxis



Ground-level panel participants collectively reviewed the recommendations and agreed 15 overarching action-oriented goals.

deliberate on the United Nations high-level panel recommendations for the post-2015 development agenda. The panellists, who experience poverty daily, used a participatory process to collectively review the recommendations, agreeing 15 overarching action-oriented goals:

- establishing a corruption-free state and society;
- promoting equity;
- establishing robust accountability mechanisms;
- providing identities instead of goals;
- creating institutional spaces to promote people's participation in local governance and policy-making processes;
- an end to stigma and discrimination;
- abolishing traditions that uphold discrimination;
- creating stringent restrictions on the sale and promotion of alcohol and other addictive substances;
- facilitating collectivisation, awareness and sensitisation of citizens;
- promoting a safe and secure home environment;

- promoting the interests of agricultural labourers, poor farmers, peasants, tribal peoples and slum dwellers and their rights;
- protecting the environment;
- enforcing mechanisms to prevent tax evasion by corporations;
- creating and rigidly implementing systems that protect workers' rights; and
- promoting gender equality and safety in public spaces.

As Raghunath Sada, a panel member from Dabhang district of Bihar said:

Promises of food, housing, health, employment and education have been repeated in different forms since the 1950s. We want action now. We want goals to be written in such a way that they address all barriers that prevent the realisation of these promises.

The panel also stressed the need to include a ban on nuclear armaments and to address the domination of the United States in the United Nations.

The panel shared its recommendations with social activist Ms Aruna Roy,

planning commission member Dr Syeda Hameed and seasoned journalist Mr Vinod Mehta. Dr Hameed said she would raise some of these issues when the planning commission next met on discussions of the post-2015 development agenda.

To commemorate the event, a postage stamp was released and two books documenting the narratives of sexual minorities, sex workers and poor people living in cities was released. The Voice for Change series includes two titles: *Collective action for safe spaces by sexual minorities and sex workers* and *Citymakers seeking to reclaim cities they build*. These books document the experiences of marginalised groups and their struggle for an inclusive development process.

■ For more information on the ground-level panels, please contact Anusha at Praxis. Tel: +91 997 1116536 Email: anushac@praxisindia.org

Beyond 2015

As mentioned earlier, Praxis is part of the Participate initiative, which enables voices from the margins to be heard by policymakers and sector experts working on the post-2015 development agenda. Praxis facilitated participatory video processes with sexual minorities and urban poor groups in Tamil Nadu. The

participants debated on the development framework that should replace the millennium development goals in 2015.

■ Watch the film online:
youtu.be/O-oMKwKIX38

To request a copy email: communications@praxisindia.org

Participatory disaster management planning Praxis helped to formulate a district disaster management plan, working with the District Disaster Management Authority in Bihar, India. Praxis mapped 18 diverse indicators across 1248 villages in Samastipur district, using an open-source GIS platforms. The most significant aspect was that the plan, unlike other disaster management plans, focused mainly on 'disaster risk reduction' and 'preparedness' elements. Instead of planning post-crisis interventions in the wake of disasters, the project sought to prepare 19 line departments and agencies to pre-empt potential threats posed by disasters. It customised existing government departmental allocations to creative uses for dealing with disasters, without requiring any extra budget.

Development of self-administrable tools for measuring vulnerability reduction

Praxis is associated with a programme for measuring community mobilisation among female sex workers, men having sex with men, transgender people and injecting drug users in six Indian states (Nagaland, Manipur, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu). The aim is to enable an effective transition of the HIV/AIDS intervention programme from donors to the state and the communities themselves. The design was evolved with comprehensive inputs from members of these communities. Data collection and analysis for the final year has been completed.

As a logical progression from the community mobilisation monitoring study, Praxis created a set of self-administrable



Participate

Knowledge from the margins for post-2015

tools to monitor community mobilisation with sustainability as its goal. The self-administrable tools were piloted at community-based organisations in Tamil Nadu. The tools are meant to guide an organisation towards self-sustainability under the different parameters of leadership, governance, resource mobilisation, project cycle management, networking, financial and legal risk management, provision of rights and entitlements and engagement with society.

The toolbox is called *From beneficiaries to agents of change – self-administrable tools to assess community preparedness for vulnerability reduction*. Download online: www.praxisindia.org/?q=books

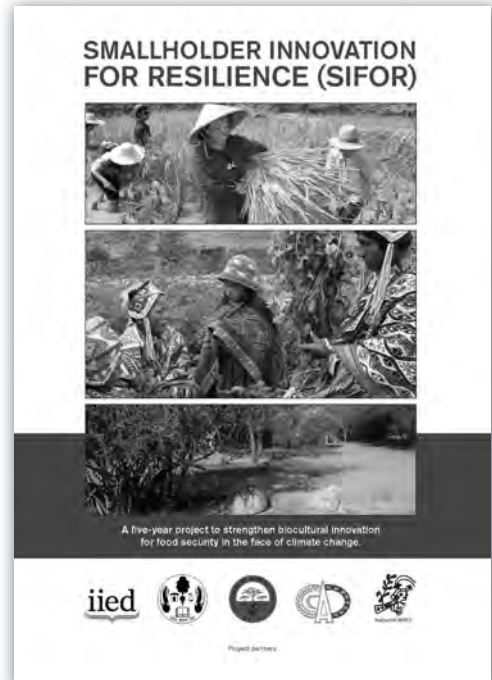
■ For more information about Praxis and its work, visit: www.praxisindia.org
The Praxis YouTube channel includes videos of previous workshops as well as other films made by Praxis:
www.youtube.com/PraxisIndia

Updates from IIED

Smallholder innovation and traditional knowledge

The Agroecology Team at IIED and partners are collaborating on a project to strengthen biocultural innovation for food security in the face of climate change. In October 2012, a planning and methodology workshop was held in China to launch the Smallholder Innovation for Resilience (SIFOR) project. This brought together the research partners – the Centre for Chinese Agricultural Policy (CCAP, China), Asociacion ANDES (Peru), Lok Chetna Manch (India), Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI, Kenya) and IIED (UK).

The goal of this five-year project, funded by the European Union and UK aid, is to improve food security and resilience by enabling smallholder innovation and traditional knowledge systems to thrive in developing countries.



The project will conduct research with traditional farmers in areas of significant crop diversity: potatoes in the Andean Potato Park, Peru; maize and rice in the Karst mountains of southwest China; rice and millets in the Himalayas, India; and indigenous vegetables in coastal Kenya. It will generate new evidence of the role of local landraces and traditional knowledge in adaptation to climate change; develop practical approaches and tools to strengthen local innovation systems and rights; and promote more enabling policies to support smallholder innovation. The project will revitalise biocultural innovation for adaptation and food security through participatory action research, including: the development of seed registers, value addition and novel products; strengthening farmer organisations; and participatory plant breeding (PPB).

■ For more information, download the project information: pubs.iied.org/G03557.html or contact Krystyna Swiderska: krystyna.swiderska@iied.org

New blog series: In Our World

IIED has launched a new blog series called In Our World. Each week, we publish links to top content about environment and development that we have seen online in the past few days.

Here are recent editions:

In Our World, 30th August (cities, ecosystem services, food, forests and more) www.iied.org/our-world-30-august-cities-ecosystem-services-food-forests-more

In Our World, 23rd August 2013 (land, climate, cities, forests and more) www.iied.org/our-world-23-august-land-climate-cities-forests-more

In Our World, 16th August 2013 (natural resources, cities, business and more) www.iied.org/our-world-16-august-natural-resources-cities-energy-business-more

You can subscribe to IIED's news and updates here: www.iied.org/sign-up

Participation at IDS

Since June 2002, the IIED Resource Centre for Participatory Learning and Action has been housed by the Institute of Development Studies, UK. Participatory approaches and methodologies are also a focus for the Participation, Power and Social Change Team at IDS. This group of researchers and practitioners is involved in sharing knowledge, in strengthening capacity to support quality participatory approaches, and in deepening understanding of participatory methods, principles, and ethics. For further information please contact: Jane Stevens, IDS, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE, UK.
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Website: www.ids.ac.uk

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Participatory Learning and Action is 25 years old this year and at this important milestone and with the drafting of its new strategy, IIED is taking stock to look at *PLA*'s legacy and future direction. For now, the series has been put on hold, pending the findings from an external evaluation, which is exploring possible future options.

In this final issue of *PLA*, which includes articles submitted by readers, the authors explore the links between participation, sustainable natural resource management and improving livelihoods, including:

- How a P3DM project in the Solomon Islands has generated multiple benefits, including ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change.
- How a modified form of scoring, used within a livelihoods framework, revealed how famine was averted in Southern Africa.
- How community-led action in India is improving animal health and work practices.
- How digital mapping is helping to identify and plan around key natural resources with pastoralists in Kenya and Tanzania.
- How a blend of *PLA* methods and ethnographic approaches proved invaluable in conducting HIV/AIDS research with fishing communities in Uganda.
- How a former bonded-labour group in Nepal have campaigned to uphold their rights of access, use and control of community forests.

- How an evaluation of a drought-rehabilitation project in Niger combined qualitative participatory and quantitative gendered budget analysis.

This issue also includes a selection of other articles, including how urban community groups in Chile have opposed two urban redevelopment projects; the use of participatory impact assessment tools to define, measure, monitor, review and analyse progress; and a discussion of ethical issues and standards for participatory work. There are also reflections from members of the international Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action (RCPLA) network, as well as a foreword from IIED's Camilla Toulmin and a note by Robert Chambers.

Participatory Learning and Action is the world's leading informal journal on participatory approaches and methods. It draws on the expertise of guest editors to provide up-to-the minute accounts of participatory approaches in specific fields. Since 1987, *PLA* has provided a forum for participatory practitioners – community workers, activists and researchers – to share experiences, conceptual reflections and methodological innovations with others, providing a genuine 'voice from the field'. A vital resource for those working to enhance the participation of ordinary people in local, regional, national and international decision-making, in both South and North. Download the full back catalogue: www.planotes.org



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