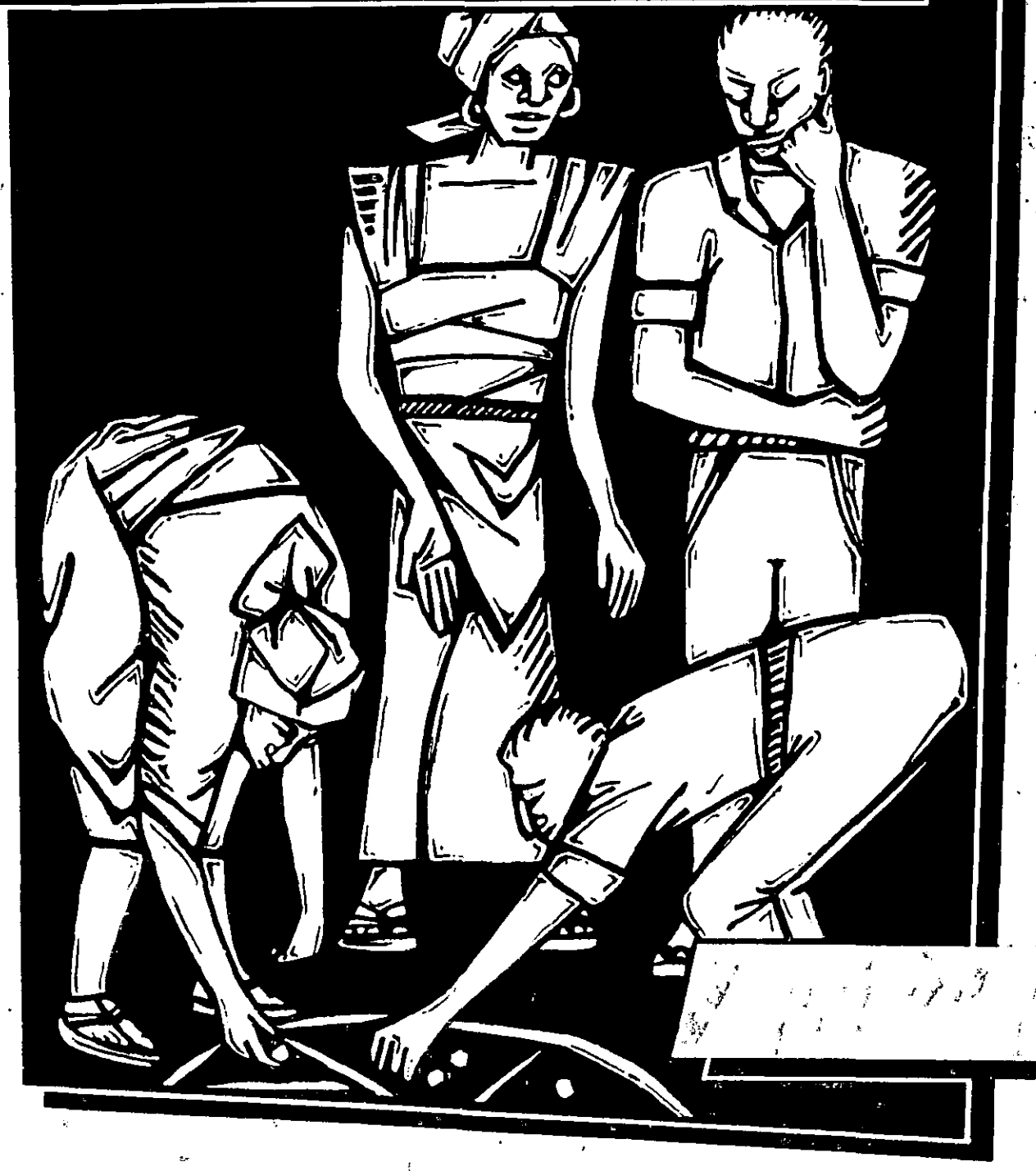
IIED PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGY SERIES

Participatory Video



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USE OF THE MATERIALS

83: TRICKY TRANSCRIPT

OBJECTIVES

- To help the participants identify unsatisfactory interviewing techniques
- To encourage them to avoid using such techniques

MATERIALS

A prepared transcript of part of a simulated interview between an outside investigator and one or more local people (one copy for each of the participants)

TIME

25–35 minutes

PROCEDURE

1. Divide participants into sub-groups of 2 or 3.
2. Give each sub-group 1 or 2 pages of the transcript (see next page for an extract).
3. Ask them to read their page(s) and to identify one good and one bad question and why they think so.
4. Ask for each sub-group's feedback (all participants will be able to locate the identified questions in their copy of the transcript) and ask the other sub-groups whether they agree or not.
5. Ask the sub-groups to rephrase the bad question so it is better
6. You can add any new suggestions for good and bad questioning techniques to the flipchart of dos and don'ts from the Interview Context Analysis exercise (No. 79), or make a new flipchart.

COMMENTS

If you wish, you can then write your own imaginary transcript. You can have fun with this exercise by recalling one of the worst interviews you yourself ever conducted, then using that as the inspiration for writing the dialogue. Remember to add closed questions (*"Do you have difficulty getting fertilisers here?"*), leading questions (eg. *"Would you grow sunflowers if the government raised the price?"*), ambiguous questions (eg. *"Why was Mr. X elected chairman of the self-help farmers' organisation?"*) and rapid shifts from topic to topic and too many questions at one time (eg. *"Please tell me about the crops you grow here? Can you describe any changes in rainfall over the past ten years? Do your animals suffer from any serious diseases?"*). If prepared well, participants will be able to identify many types of insensitive questioning techniques. This exercise can serve as a reference point for the rest of the workshop and the fieldwork. A shorter and less comprehensive version of this exercise is What's Wrong with the Question? (No. 84).

When asking the groups to rephrase bad questions, you will probably get a number of alternatives. This is a good opportunity to point out that there is no single correct way to phrase a question but that it depends on the context.

Source: Alice Welbourn, pers. comm.

(Continued on next page)

83: TRICKY TRANSCRIPT (continued)

Field Visit, December 1990: Old men's contact group, Googu Village, Bawku West District, Ghana

Q. What is the meaning of Googu?
A. It is the name of their clan and the clan to which the founding ancestor belonged
Q. Over the past few years has the *harmattan* changed? Is it later or earlier? If there was a change, what has brought this about?
A. There have been no rains, and this has caused the *harmattan* to delay. This time it should have been very cold; people would not even want to bathe. This time it still looks warm; this is because the rain still wants to fall since it hasn't rained enough.
Q. Is the size of the population increasing or decreasing?
A. It is always increasing.
Q. If it increases, is this good for you?
A. Well, yes.
Q. Why is there this shortage of land?
A. Because of the influx of people into the area
Q. Is the population only increasing because of the influx from outside, or is it also because of a higher birthrate?
A. Well, the number of births is also increasing
Q. When there was no school here, where did your children go for schooling?
A. Sepeliga.
Q. How were the children able to go that far?
A. If there was a car we'd go by vehicle; otherwise we'd walk.
Q. Are there any traditional healers or herbalists in the village?
A. Yes, there are.
Q. What fees do they charge, and how does this compare to government services?
A. The traditional healers charge less.
Q. So do you find the traditional healers better than government health services?
A. No, the hospital is good; much better But sometimes you have to have someone lead you/help you. If there is someone there to help you it's OK, but otherwise you might not get treatment.
Q. Do you mean you need someone to pay bribes, or someone very influential to help?
A. No, it's not money; but you need an influential person to talk to the doctors to make sure you get assistance.
Q. Most of you don't like to go to hospital. Is it because the drugs are expensive, or you need someone to lead you there?
A. It is because they don't have influential people to help them. Other don't like the idea of going to hospital; some don't like the drugs and don't trust them. Sometimes if someone dies after taking medicine, others come to lose trust in those medicines. The herbalist comes to treat you at home. Whether you get well or die, at least you die at home.
Q. For some traditional practices have there been any changes over time? Or is it still like the time of our grandfathers?
A. It has changed. In the past, funerals took 12 days. Nowadays it may take seven.
Q. Why, what has caused this change?
A. If you do it for 12 days, other things may come in, and take longer. It takes a lot of food. It is expensive to do this
Q. Why did your fathers make it 12 days? Did they have more food, or was it that there wouldn't be any problems during this time?
A. No. It was just because they had enough food that they made it 12 days.

Source: adapted from transcript of an interview carried out by workshop trainees, Ghana, 1990 (Sources: A. Welbourn, ACTIONAID)

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWING

84. WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE QUESTION?

OBJECTIVES

- To illustrate to participants the details of ambiguous and leading questions
- To encourage them to avoid using such unsatisfactory interviewing techniques

MATERIALS

A prepared list of ambiguous and leading questions in random order

TIME

20–30 minutes

PROCEDURE

1. Ask participants if they understand what an ambiguous question is and what a leading question is, and reach agreement on this.

2. Read out a range of questions from a transparency or a flipchart, or give out prepared sheets (examples below) and ask the group to identify what is wrong with each question. Answer in brackets is only for your easy use!

   - *Is it true that it is difficult to get your cattle to the veterinary clinic?* (LEADING)
   - *How do you get your medicine?* (AMBIGUOUS)
   - *Wouldn't you prefer to grow improved potato varieties?* (LEADING)
   - *What do you do as a local extension agent?* (AMBIGUOUS)
   - *Isn't the new health post wonderful?* (LEADING)
   - *Do you sow seeds in a straight row?* (LEADING)
   - *How do you find the school?* (AMBIGUOUS)
   - *Shouldn't you cover your water storage pot?* (LEADING)

3. Then ask them to rephrase it in a less ambiguous or more open-ended fashion.

COMMENTS

This exercise usually leads to some debate about whether an ambiguous or a leading question is always inappropriate or is sometimes appropriate. This is a good opportunity to stress that there is no absolutely correct or incorrect question, and that it will depend on the stage of the interview, the topic and the context. In general, participants should become aware of the need to word their questions carefully.

Emphasise that leading questions lead the respondent to say yes or no, whereas an open-ended question that uses what? when? where? who? why? or how? opens up the conversation. There may, however, be occasions when closed questions are correct and necessary.

85: BUT WHY?

OBJECTIVES

- To encourage participants to realise the value of probing during interviewing
- To investigate cause and effect relationships in detail

MATERIALS

None

TIME

20 minutes

PROCEDURE

1. Divide the group into sub-groups of three people.
2. Give each group several simple questions derived from an observation, such as: *"Why have the crops suffered pest damage?"; "Why is your cow so thin?"; "Why is your sorghum so yellow?"; "Why do you think there is a gully in your field?", "Why is the child crying?"*. Make sure that the same statement is given to at least two groups, which should be out of earshot of each other.
3. Ask the sub-groups to divide responsibilities – one as interviewer, one as an informant and one as recorder of the interview. The responsibility of the interviewer is to find out the real cause of the observation, using sensitive probing questions. You may explain that probing is rather like peeling away the layers of an onion, and so the objective is to get towards the centre of the onion. Before starting, ask them to suggest a few good probing questions. If they have no ideas, give a few examples: *"But why?"* or *"Please tell me more about that"* or *"Anything else?"*.
4. After ten minutes, ask groups to report briefly on what they have learned, ending with the final underlying reason for the initial statement. Ask those who used the same statement to feed back in succession. Ask the recorders to describe the interview and the major findings.
5. Then ask them to comment on whether there were any leading questions, and whether they had any difficulties in recording the interview. Ask the informants to reflect on the process of being interviewed. How did they feel? Ask the interviewers to comment. How easy was the interview? To what extent did the key probes help?
6. Make a list of all the probing questions used. This may be an opportunity to introduce the "Six Helpers": *What? When? Where? Who? Why? How?*

COMMENTS

This exercise can be used to reinforce several learning points, including the importance of good team work, the challenge of conducting a sensitive interview, the importance of building rapport with people before starting an interview, and the value of asking open-ended, non-leading questions. It is interesting to find out how different groups with the same observational statement have explored widely different routes of investigation.

A variation of this exercise is to select a question that directly relates to something personal, so that the informants get to feel what it is like to answer questions about themselves and their own personal activities. Questions might include:

- *"Why are you wearing that particular type of shoe?"*
- *"Why are you working in your particular job?"*

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWING

86: ROLE PLAY OF GOOD AND BAD INTERVIEWS

OBJECTIVES

- To generate a discussion on the merits of adopting good interviewing technique
- To summarise the main good and bad elements of semi-structured interviewing
- To energise the group

MATERIALS

None, although groups can find props around the training area

TIME

30–40 minutes

PROCEDURE

1. Divide the participants into groups of 4 or 5 people.
2. Ask half of the sub-groups to develop a 'bad' interview sketch and half to develop a 'good' interview sketch. Suggest that they reflect on all the dos and don'ts developed in earlier exercises as guidelines, and on the type of questions they can ask.
3. After 15 minutes preparation, ask the 'bad' interview role plays to present their sketch first. These are much easier to do and provoke many laughs.
4. After the 'bad' interview, ask the audience if there were still any good points. After the 'good' interview ask if there were any bad points.

COMMENTS

The role play groups can concentrate on different types of interview. For instance, one group can role play an individual interview, another a group interview etc. In the discussion afterwards, highlight key points raised by the role plays and get participants to discuss their own experiences. You might need to tone down criticism of the attempted 'good' interviews by stressing how difficult it is to do a good interview. These role plays should become reference points for the group as the training progresses.

87: STATUES IN INTERVIEWS

OBJECTIVE

- To illustrate the importance of interview context and body language on the messages given from outsiders to local people

MATERIALS

None

TIME

10–15 minutes

PROCEDURE

1. Ask for five volunteers to act as statues.
2. Position them as statues into a scene that shows some interview context, such as *four people interviewing a poor farmer*. Add elements of body language to show dominance.
3. Then ask half the remaining participants to change the scene however they feel is necessary to show a better example of an interview setting. They can physically move the statues or take them away altogether.
4. Then ask the other half to change the scene for the worse again.

COMMENTS

This is a particularly powerful exercise as it is not dependent on actual role play. It focuses *attention on body language and context.*

A variation is to set up two scenes at the same time, one good and one bad, and have the participants change them both

Ask in the debriefing:

- *"What are essential for a good interview context?"*
- *"What must be avoided?"*

Source: Koos Neefjes, pers. comm.

88: MAP YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

OBJECTIVES

- To give participants the opportunity to experience diagramming, and so understand some of the processes
- To give them the opportunity to appreciate issues of scale, symbols, direction and omission in diagramming

MATERIALS

Pen and paper

TIME

10 minutes

PROCEDURE

1. Ask participants to think about where they live and then draw their neighbourhood. They should include major landmarks, resources of importance and transport routes.
2. After 5 minutes, stop the drawing and discuss what happened (see debriefing questions below).
3. Ask for all maps to be exhibited on the wall, so that all can observe the different styles and symbols.

COMMENTS

This is a very short exercise that can be used as a very first introduction for a session on mapping. It brings across some very essential issues in a short time. To get things started at the beginning, you can suggest that you are travelling to their house, and need a map. But note this will inevitably bias what they draw, as it is for your purposes.

You can use the following questions to help in the debriefing:

- *Where did you put your house?* (in the middle, at the edge)
- *Did you use symbols alone, or did you add words?* (assumption that trainer is literate).
- *What happened when you came close to the edge of the paper?* (edge of the paper is a false boundary; scale gets distorted, elements omitted?)
- *What did you draw first?* (sometimes the house, sometimes the boundary)
- *Which direction is north on your map?* Ask them to add an arrow to indicate north. Many participants will smile and realise they have not put north to the top, in contrast to the widely applied professional convention, some individual mental maps will have north to the top, but probably only by chance.
- *Which of you have lived in your house for more than 5–10 years? How does your detailed knowledge compare with anyone who has only just moved to their neighbourhood?*

A variation is to ask participants to draw the neighbourhood in which they were living when aged 10.

DIAGRAMMING & VISUALISATION

89: MAPPING YOUR OWN TOWN OR CITY

OBJECTIVES

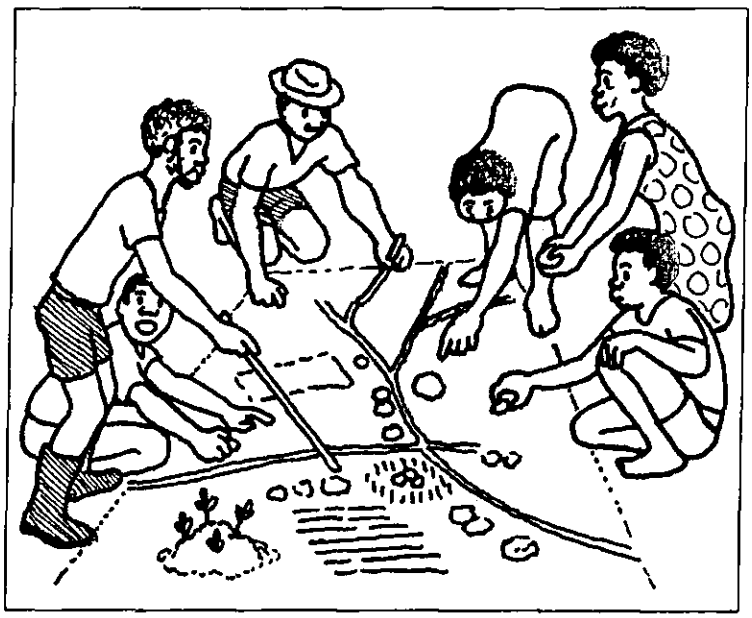
- To demonstrate that we all have different mental maps of where we live or work depending greatly on who we are and what information we have
- To practise mapping and modelling first hand

MATERIALS

Pens and large sheets of paper; any other available materials

TIME

45–75 minutes



PROCEDURE

1. Divide the participants into groups to produce map-models of the village, town or city in which the training is being conducted. The exact mix of groups and nature of the task will depend on the knowledge of participants present about the locality.
2. If there is a wide range of knowledge based upon how long/often participants have lived in or visited the location in question, then divide them on this basis. The groups may comprise the most recent arrivals (eg. expatriates), those who have come to live there, those who were born and grew up there, and those who have never been there before the workshop. Each group will produce a different mental map according to their varying perceptions and knowledge.

(Continued on next page)

89: MAPPING YOUR OWN TOWN OR CITY (continued)

PROCEDURE

3. If there is not the range of knowledge, then introduce another variable by telling each group in private that you are from a particular institution which wants to conduct a project here, and so are chiefly interested in only certain issues (eg. World Health Organisation project on health; Ministry of Environment project on trees; project on food marketing; etc.). Each group will produce different maps by emphasising elements and issues they think are important to the outside project.
4. After all the groups are finished, or about 45 minutes (whichever is first!), conduct a roving exhibition so all participants get to see the various constructed maps. Ask each group to present their map, focusing on the process of creating it, rather than each detail.
5. Conclude with a buzz session to reflect on two questions:
   - *"What did you learn?"*
   - *"What will you do differently next time?"* (when you are in a village; when you are working with colleagues).

COMMENTS

If the weather is reasonable, then encourage participants to produce map-models on the ground outside the workshop. They should make use of whatever resources are available. If this is not possible, then drawings on large sheets of paper will suffice. But remember that this might give the impression that pen and paper can be used freely for this exercise during the fieldwork.

When the map-models are completed, ask the whole group to begin at one exhibit to hear a brief presentation on substance and process. Then move as a group to the next. The trainer should use this exhibition to introduce important new issues for the field. These might include:

1. How a map-model is only a snapshot of the present. Suggest that useful historical information could be gathered if map-models of the past and the future (ideal and/or expected) were to be constructed in the field. Now that a map of the present and future ideal have been constructed, discussion can be turned to how to get to the future ideal. This is the *"Story Without The Middle"* – we know about the present and the desired future, but not yet how to get from one the other. .
2. The power of the pen or stick. When drawing on paper, usually only one or two people do the drawing (often the 'artist' in the group is elected). When constructing map-models, all members of the group can participate. Remind everyone to watch "who holds the stick" during discussions and presentations.
3. The process of creating the map-model. What did you agree upon? What was difficult to represent? What was included? What was excluded? What was emphasised (eg by size of symbol)? What was de-emphasised? Why? Use this reflection to explore issues of perception, bias, hidden/secret information.

Ask if participants have learnt anything from this exercise – often they will say this is the first time they had thought about or visualised many of the issues raised.

DIAGRAMMING & VISUALISATION

90: MENTAL MAP ANALYSIS

OBJECTIVES

- To discover what different maps tell about the people who drew them
- To illustrate the great differences in perceptions held by different groups of people within communities or organisations
- To demonstrate the validity of these different views and the importance of acknowledging and understanding multiple perspectives and priorities within communities and organisations

MATERIALS

Prepared maps copied onto coloured paper

TIME

20 minutes – 1 hour, depending on the number of examples given for analysis

PROCEDURE

1. Choose a selection of maps that were drawn by local people during actual field situations. These may be either resource maps or social maps prepared by different groups of people (young/old, rich/poor, men/women, etc.). These should be organised in advance and photocopied onto A4 paper. Make sure there are enough copies for all participants.
2. Hand out copies to participants arranged in buzz groups. Ask them to analyse the diagrams, then consider two questions:
   - *What do the maps reveal about the area or issues?*
   - *What do they tell you about the people who constructed them?*
3. Comments should be presented back to plenary, using the flipcharts to write down the main points.

COMMENTS

Examples should be chosen that clearly show different views of the same reality. The following has been successfully used in this exercise.

Example: Maps of a Village in Sierra Leone
Shown overleaf are the perceptions of a village in Sierra Leone as drawn by a group of men and a group of women. The diagrams were drawn on the ground at separate times and locations, and have been copied onto paper.

- The men put emphasis on the outside of the village and desired changes to be made where outsiders would see them when passing on the road. They emphasised the location of meeting places, such as cotton trees, the long dry log, the broken tractor.
- The women, by contrast, emphasised the village itself, though with less detail. They made the school and hospital of disproportionately large size. Women drew the boundary first, men drew the roads.

Source: Alice Welbourn (1991)

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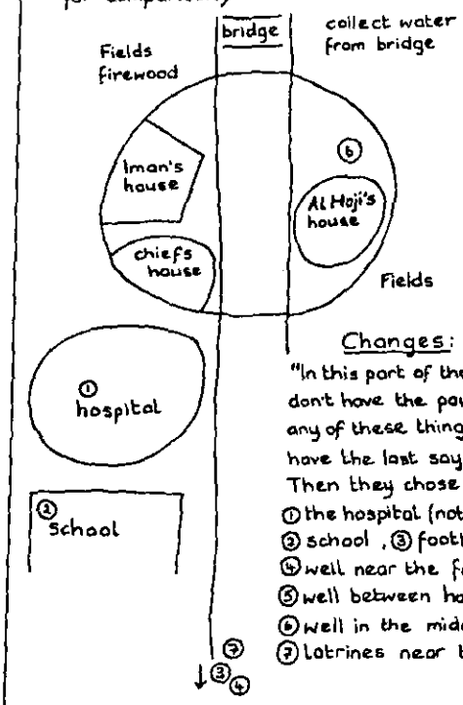
90: MENTAL MAP ANALYSIS (continued)

fig. II Women's Map of their village and proposed changes. (see also fig. I for comparison)



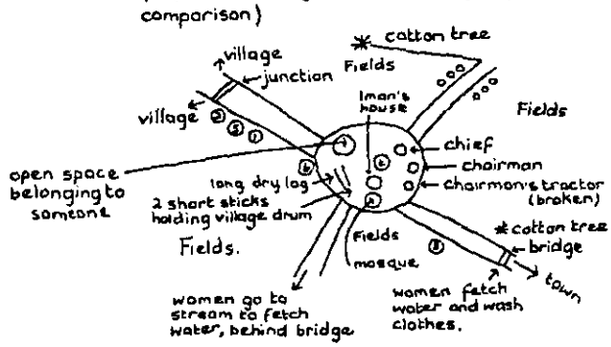
Changes:

"In this part of the country women don't have the power to decide where any of these things should be. The men have the last say."

Then they chose to place:

① the hospital (note its relative size)
② school, ③ football field
④ well near the football field
⑤ well between hospital and school
⑥ well in the middle of town
⑦ latrines near the school field for children.

fig I. Men's Map of their village and proposed changes (see also fig. II for comparison)



Great interest shown in details of roads + junctions.

Changes:

They want ① hospital and ② school along the left road (the "best place for them") and ③ + ④ wells (older men say 2 wells enough, others want well ⑤ near school. Also they want an administration hall.

91: TRANSECT WALKS

OBJECTIVE

- To demonstrate the importance of going in person (as a team) to observe and talk about things of local importance

MATERIALS

Small notebooks, pens, large sheets of paper (optional)

TIME

1–3 hours, up to a whole day

PROCEDURE

1. Identify the route for several teams to conduct transect walks. This may be close to where the workshop is being held (such as in the research station, in the neighbourhood of the hotel); further away (such as in a nearby village or community); or inside a building (if the workshop is in a large bureaucracy).
2. If possible, arrange for local key informants to accompany the teams.
3. Divide the participants into small teams (using an energiser/group forming exercise).
4. Give the group time to plan their transect walk. Use the Group Problem Solving Exercise (No. 31) if you have time. Ensure the groups focus on what they are hoping to find out and which methods they will be using. It is better if the subject of the inquiry is precisely defined, as groups will be able to compare findings on their return.
5. The groups conduct transect walks, returning by an agreed time to prepare the diagram and present their findings.

COMMENTS

During the debriefing, focus the discussion on both methodological issues and findings of the walks:

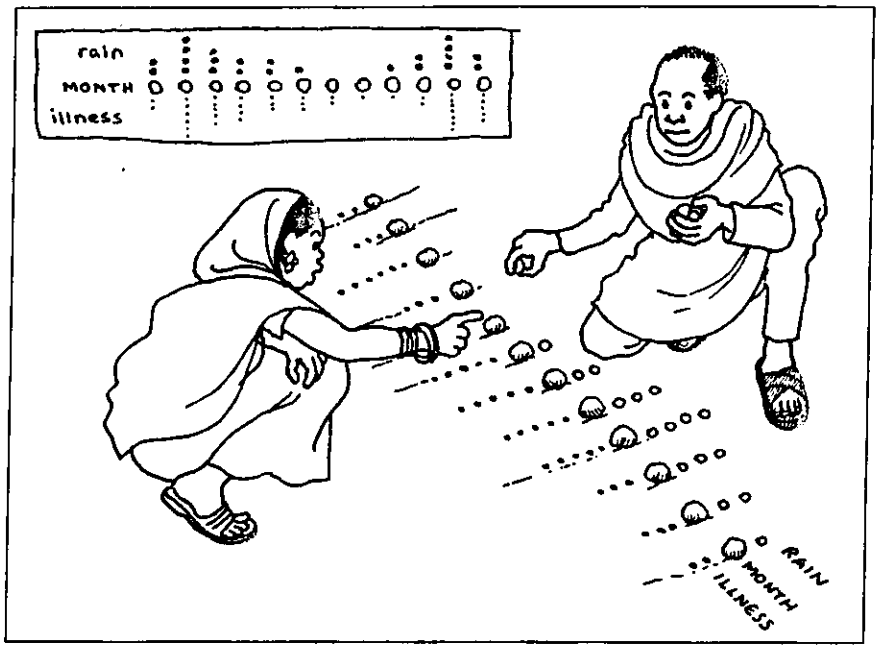
- *"What did you discover that was new?"*
- *"How did you feel talking to informants on their own territory?"*
- *"What methods did you use during the transect walk?"*

92: SEASONAL CALENDARS

OBJECTIVE ■ To demonstrate ways to explore changes during the year

MATERIALS Locally available materials (stones, sticks, seeds, beans), chalk, pens, etc.

TIME 20 minutes – 1 hour



PROCEDURE

1. Divide the participants into small groups of between 3 and 5 people by using a group-forming exercise (see Nos 13–25).

2. Either you or the participants can select one or two 'key informants' from each of the groups. Although it is not essential, these informants may be interviewed about some specialised knowledge they have of the local area or a particular subject (eg. an agronomist may be asked to create calendars of cropping patterns or major crop pests and diseases; a public health officer may be requested to prepare calendars of major diseases).

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92: SEASONAL CALENDARS (continued)

PROCEDURE

3. The remaining members of each group are then asked to interview their key informant(s) about a theme that you assigned or they select. Then the informants are asked to make diagrams or set of diagrams to illustrate trends and changes in those activities and/or events over the course of a single day, a week, or a year (whatever is appropriate).

   For example, if you have five working groups, each with their own key informants, they may be asked to create: (1) calendars of rainfall (days of rain/month, relative amount of rain over a year, inches of soil moisture/month, etc.) for a particular area, comparing the present with 20 years ago; (2) major crop production and price calendars (average) of area; (3) agricultural labour, and income and expenditure calendars for men and women in area; (4) daily activity diagrams for particular groups (young men, young women, older men, older women); and (5) daily activity calendars (before and after some intervention or introduction of a new technology)

COMMENTS

After the diagrams have been completed (usually 20–30 minutes), ask each group to present its 'findings' to the others. Encourage the groups to concentrate their presentations on the process they went through (how they interviewed their key informants, the way the diagram developed, and so on), not just the final product. The important point to highlight in these presentations is the possible applications and limitations of these methods in real world situations.

After the group presentations, you may want to ask them to reflect on the advantages and disadvantages, and the analytical potential of visual representation of seasonality. Issues they should raise include:

- their use in the analysis of intra- and inter-household differences in daily activities (which can lead to the identification of constraints and appropriate times of day to schedule meetings with various groups);
- their value in identifying trends and changes over time;
- their utility in discovering correlations and connections between different seasonal patterns (such as precipitation and income and expenditure) which might help to understand causes and effects;
- their power in conveying useful information that everyone – literate and non-literate – can understand and assess;
- their value for monitoring the impact of interventions or projects.

A quick variation, which can also be used as an introduction, is to show the group how to establish quantitative information by conducting an *analysis of seasonality of conception*. Make a circle with 12 large cards, on which are written the names of the months of the year. Ask participants to line up behind the month of their birth. See if there is a pattern to the month of conception.

93: VENN DIAGRAM OF YOUR ORGANISATION

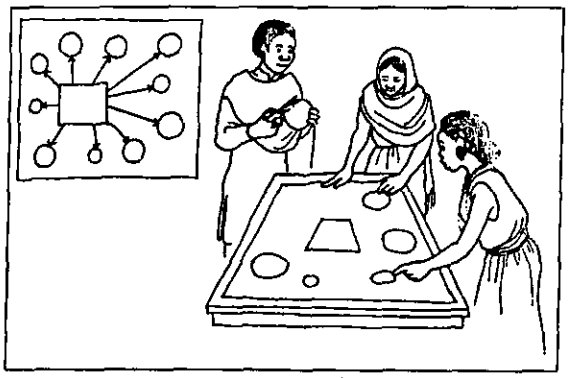
OBJECTIVES

- To teach participants about the value of using visuals to understand institutional linkages and relationships
- To reveal important linkages and constraints in the participants' own institution or organisation according to the perceptions of different groups of participants (senior management, junior management, department heads, field staff, etc.)

MATERIALS Pens, paper, scissors, tape or glue

TIME 45 minutes – 1 hour

PROCEDURE



1. Divide participants into groups to produce Venn diagrams of a known institution, usually the one to which the participants belong. Divide participants into groups either according to what they know about the institution or according to hierarchy or department.
2. Describe the process of Venn diagramming (you can use the examples below). Circles of different sizes are allocated to different institutions, groups, departments or programmes. These then overlap depending on the degree of contract in the real world. They are contained within a circle if they are part of that circle's institution. A large circle means an important institution.
3. Explain that there are two processes for Venn diagrams: cutting circles of paper and laying them on or against each other, or simply drawing on paper or on the ground. The former
takes longer, but is better as changes can be made. The latter is quicker, but can become messy when changes need to be made.
4. Ask the groups to exhibit their Venn diagrams. Analyse key differences between the groups and the underlying causes.

COMMENTS This can be an extremely illuminating exercise for participants as certain aspects of their own institution and work may be revealed for the first time. It will also show the different perceptions of different groups. It may help to highlight contrasting perceptions of different roles, responsibilities and linkages, pointing to areas of conflict and dispute as well as pointing to ways of resolving these. Following the construction of a series of diagrams of the existing situation as seen by different actors, participants can discuss ways of resolving conflicts, filling institutional gaps, or encouraging linkages.

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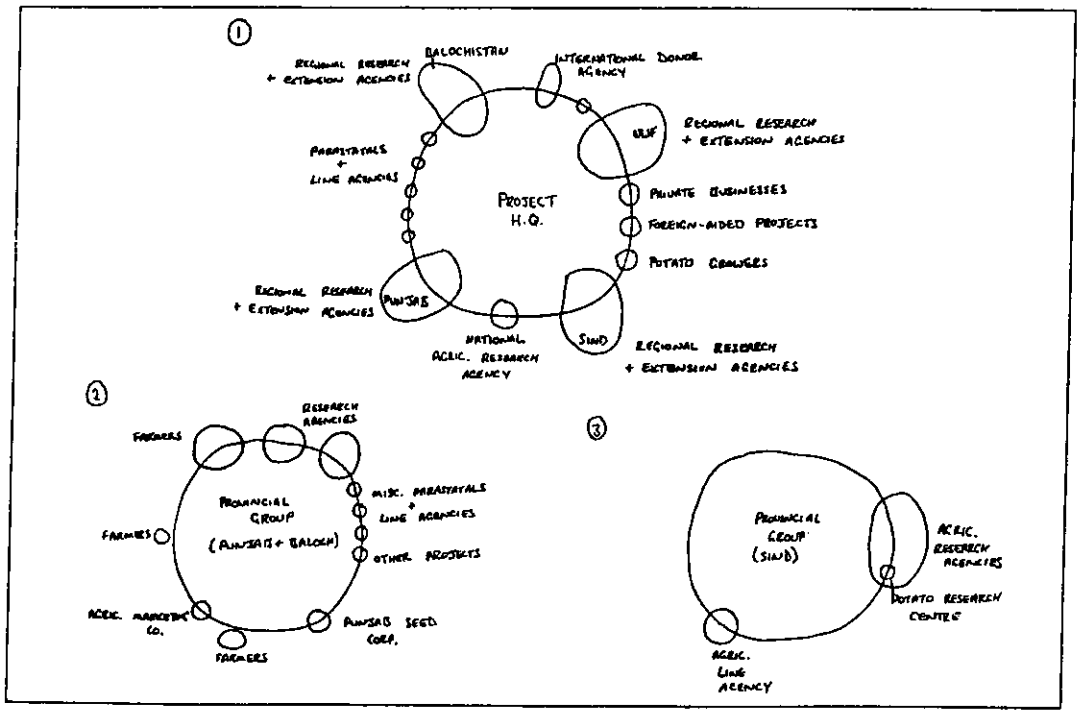
93: VENN DIAGRAM OF YOUR ORGANISATION (continued)

COMMENTS

A shorter variation is to give each participant a copy of the Venn diagrams below and ask them to identify key differences. These examples are quite striking but also very complex. If participants feel frustrated about not understanding the context, then stop and summarise the main point: different people will have a different understanding of the same organisation depending on their role in the institution, and that this might cause communication difficulties.

Example: Research Project in Pakistan

In the example of a potato project in Pakistan, participants from headquarters (national and expatriate) and from the regions produced very different pictures of their project and its linkages with other institutions. The staff at headquarters in Islamabad mapped a wide range of institutions with which they had regular contact. These included those at international level (such as donors), national level (other government agencies and NGOs), and at local level. The provincial staff closest to the 'centre' knew of more linkages than those from other provinces, but did not show international links. The most remote staff indicated a very simple picture of institutional relationships, clearly illustrating their marginalisation within the project.



94: FLOW DIAGRAMS FOR SYSTEMS AND IMPACT ANALYSIS

OBJECTIVES

- To illustrate how farm and livelihood systems can be shown on a diagram, leading to a better understanding of the complexities of linkages and relationships at the local level
- To illustrate how the impact of an intervention or process can be represented on a diagram, leading to a better understanding of the anticipated and unexpected effects from local people's perspective
- To describe the basic principles and procedures of flow diagrams

MATERIALS

Large sheets of paper, pens

TIME

1–2 hours

PROCEDURE

First divide participants into groups (using a group-forming exercise).

For Systems Diagrams

1. Ask them to consider a typical farming system in an area they know well. The first step is for them to identify and represent the components of the farming system
2. Then ask them to show the linkages and flows between the different components (such as manure from livestock to fields, fuelwood from trees to homestead).
3. Next they should show the linkages that the farm has with markets, hospitals, seed stores, distant towns etc.
4. Discuss with the groups whether the system they have depicted has changed over time. What happens if certain linkages break down?

For Impact Diagram

1. Ask the teams to select an activity or event, the impact of which they wish to explore. This may be the impact of a programme (such as an irrigation project), or of policy changes (such as structural adjustment programme), or of household changes (such as disabling illness in a family member). They could also consider the impact of the training on their lives or work.
2. Ask them to represent the impact on paper, and then identify the consequences of the activity or event. This could be both positive and negative. Ask them to link the consequences, using arrows to indicate the direction of flow.
3. Encourage them to think of primary, secondary and tertiary effects, grouping these into different sub-systems (see below).
4. Ask them to exhibit their flow diagrams and have a debriefing session.

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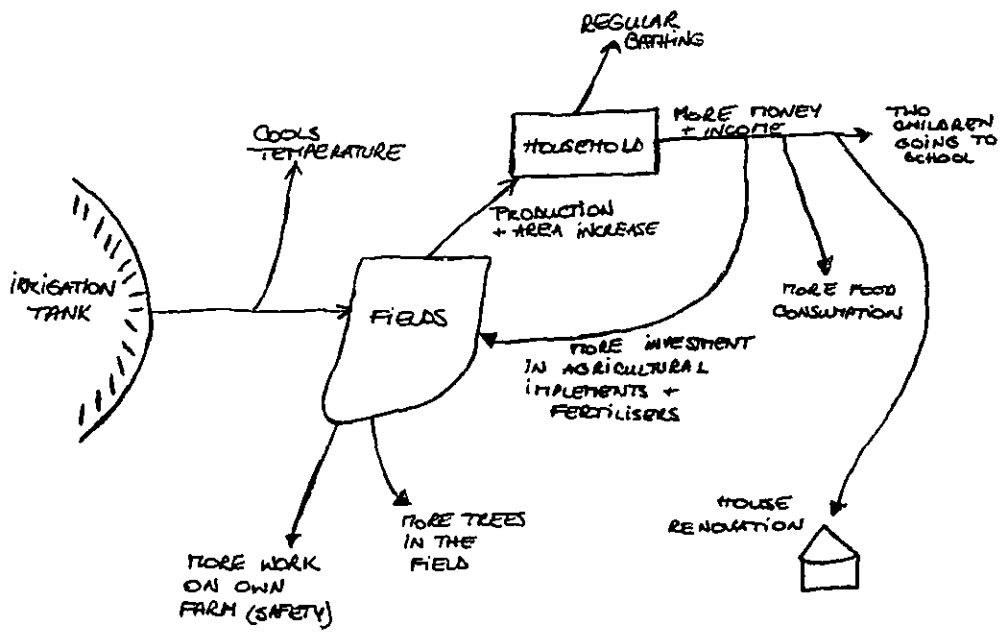
94: FLOW DIAGRAMS FOR SYSTEMS AND IMPACT ANALYSIS (continued)

COMMENTS Show the results of the group work by having a roving exhibition, with all the participants visiting each group in turn. Use these presentations to allow participants to reflect on actual findings and on methodology:

- *"How will the process differ in the field?"*
- *"What have you learned as a group from this exercise?"*
- *"What problems do you anticipate?"*
- *"What possible applications can you think of for your work?"*

Impact diagram of irrigation tank in Gadechi Village, redrawn from original drawing by farmer



Source. Shah et al. (1991)

97: PREFERENCE RANKING

OBJECTIVES

- To describe the basic procedure of preference ranking
- To highlight how criteria for choices are made by the informant
- To highlight the importance of exploring the existence of key differences in preferences between informants

MATERIALS

Paper and pens; flipcharts or overhead projector for workshop activity

TIME

1 hour

PROCEDURE

1. First divide the group into sub-groups of three or four. Ask them to allocate roles – interviewer, informant, recorder.
2. Ask each group to select a topic to be discussed and ranked, for example trees, vegetables, fruits, lecturers, cars, cheese, football teams etc.
3. Then ask them to chose a maximum of six items for the exercise. If too many are chosen, then the exercise becomes too lengthy.
4. Ask the sub-groups to draw up a recording matrix, showing them an example on a flipchart or overhead projector. Also suggest that they find real things, such as tree leaves, wood, vegetables, fruit etc. to symbolise the items. Alternatively ask them to write the name of each item on six separate pieces of paper.
5. The informant is then asked pair-by-pair which he/she prefers most. The question that forces the informant to make the choice is important. Farmers may be asked *"Which of these two do you prefer to grow?"*; but consumers would be asked *"Which of these two do you prefer to eat?"*. Once the choice is made, it can be recorded in the matrix (see below).
6. The informant should then be asked why he/she has made the choice. In other words: *"So what is good about the winner?"* The team continue to probe until nothing further arises. Then ask *"What is bad about the loser?"* to find out all negative qualities. The sub-group should be reminded not to ask leading questions by suggesting criteria.
7. The sub-groups should continue this process for all possible combinations. For six items, there will be 15 pair-wise comparisons. To keep the informant interested, suggest to the interviewer that they pick different pairs each time. For example, rather than comparing item A against B, A against C, and then against D, suggest that they compare A and B, then C and D, then E and F, then C and A and so on.
8. Ask the recorders to record all the reasons that the informant gave about why the choices were made.
9. Show the sub-groups how to complete a ranked list from most preferable to least, with favourable and unfavourable criteria listed by each item. For this, the frequency of occurrence of each item indicates the rank, ie highest frequency for most preferred.

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97: PREFERENCE RANKING (continued)

COMMENTS At the end of the exercise it is useful to focus the debriefing on the following comments and questions:

- *"Note that the criteria and preference lists varied greatly between informants. Why was this so?"*
- *"How would the criteria differ if you are not, for example, a consumer of fruit but a producer or a marketer?"*
- *"How could we use this exercise to make it relevant for your programme or project?"*

For this to be a successful exercise in the workshop the sub-groups must choose items with which everyone is familiar. What has always worked is selecting fruit or vegetables (but it might be more relevant to ask sub-groups to decide on a topic of common interest). Ask the participants to imagine that you, the trainer, are the manager of a fruit and vegetable development project. You know the perceptions of the farmers already, but now a consumer survey needs to be conducted. Each participant is to be themselves, and not pretend to be a farmer etc.

To avoid confusion, this exercise works best if each step is explained and completed before the next step is started. If the entire procedure is explained at once, then you will probably end up explaining the different steps to all the sub-groups again as you walk around between the groups.

	PT	ST	MA	MGR	FT	BT
PLUM TIK						
SPICE TIK	PT					
MONKEY APPLE	PT	ST				
MANGROVE	PT	MGR	MGR			
FAMBUL TIK	FT	FT	FT	FT		
BLACK TUMBLA	PT	BT	BT	BT	FT	

RANKING
1 Fambul tik
2 Plum tik
3 Black tumbla
4 Mangrove
5 Spice tik
6 Monkey apple

Source: Inglis (1991)

RANKING & SCORING

98: MATRIX RANKING AND SCORING

OBJECTIVES

- To show participants how they can discover different perceptions about advantages and disadvantages of a particular issue amongst different social groups in a community
- To describe the basic procedure of matrix ranking and scoring
- To produce a scored and/or ranked list of criteria or qualities of some topic of interest

MATERIALS

Paper, pens, and any material such as fruit peelings, stones, bottle tops, paperclips, seeds, beans etc.

TIME

1 hour

PROCEDURE

1. Divide the participants into groups of 4–5 people. They can divide responsibilities – one recorder, one or two interviewers, one or two informants; or everybody can be an informant.

2. Ask the sub-groups to choose a topic which is important or of interest to them (tree species, paddy varieties, vegetables, local pubs, fertilisers etc.). If they are all to be informants, then they must choose a topic about which they all know something.

3. Ask them to identify the 5 or 6 most important objects.

4. Each sub-group must now elicit criteria on what is good and bad about each object. For each item in turn, they should ask themselves: *"What is good about it?"* and continue asking until there are no more replies. They should then ask *"What is bad about it?"* Continue until 10–20 criteria are produced.

5. Each group should then be asked to list all the criteria. At this point you can ask them to turn all negative criteria (for example, vulnerable to pests or expensive) into positive ones (for example, resistant to pests or cheap) so that all criteria are positive. Ask them to reflect on what would happen if they did not do this. (They should answer that the scoring would not be consistent: they would be giving a high score to a positive criterion in some cases and a high score to negative criteria in others.)

6. Each sub-group is then asked to draw up a matrix with the objects across the top and the criteria down the side.

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98: MATRIX RANKING AND SCORING (continued)

PROCEDURE

If everybody is an informant, ie. it is a group discussion, they must then decide how well each criterion is fulfilled by each object. If they are doing a matrix ranking with six objects, suggest using the following sequence of questions.

- *"Which is best?"*
- *"Which is next best?"*
- *"Which is worst?"*
- *"Which is next worst?"*
- *"Of the two remaining, which is better?*

If they are doing a matrix scoring rather than a ranking, then explain that they can choose how many counters (stones, seeds, paperclips, etc.) to allocate as a maximum per cell or per row They must then fill each box with the number they think represents the relative value of that item.

7. Remind them to record the rankings/scoring directly onto the matrix.

8. Ask the interviewer(s) to end with a question such as: *"If you could only have one of these, then which would you choose?" "Which next?"* etc. This can lead to new criteria and further discussion.

COMMENTS

This exercise is one of the more lively ones in a training on participatory learning, and provokes much discussion about methodological pros and cons. As with preference ranking, this exercise works best if each step is explained and completed before the next step is started. If the entire procedure is explained at once, then you will probably end up explaining the different steps to all the sub-groups again as you walk around between the groups.

During the feedback, discussion should focus on as many issues as possible. These key findings can be summarised on a flipchart. Draw attention during the debriefing to the following issues:

- *If they worked as a group of informants, how did the decision-making process proceed?* The method works well with both individuals and groups, though groups have several advantages:
  - a wider range of experience is brought to bear
  - responses tend to be quicker;
  - if one person gets tired, others can take over;
  - more criteria are likely to be elicited, and more quickly;
  - disagreements which develop can be revealing, and identify issues for further investigation.

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98: MATRIX RANKING AND SCORING (continued)

COMMENTS

Groups often have the disadvantage that some people may dominate while others stay quiet and also that a consensus cannot be reached.

- *If it was an individual interview, whose criteria were included in the final matrix?* It is tempting for interviewers to introduce their own criteria. This should be done only at the end, and the criteria should be clearly identified as different from those of the respondents.
- *Whose symbols were used?*
- *What extra information did the final question (see 8 above) reveal?*
- *What limitations of matrix scoring did you find?* For example:
  - it does not automatically handle weighting of the criteria,
  - it is subject to most of the usual biases and weaknesses of individual and group interviews;
  - it is only useful for comparing fairly similar items that are readily interchangeable.
- *What particular strengths did you find?* For example:
  - it is a quick way to discuss options in detail, usually taking no more than an hour;
  - it is an exercise from which participants themselves can learn something through the discussion and through making choices explicit;
  - it requires outsiders to listen, respect and record the knowledge, judgements and preferences of rural people according to their own criteria.

The difference between matrix ranking and scoring should be made clear. This can be done during the explanation of the method. Another option is to do two consecutive exercises; either starting with the ranking and then doing a scoring, or starting with the scoring and making a ranking from that. Or you can ask one group to try the ranking and another to do the scoring. In discussions about the difference, participants should be clear of the extra information provided by matrix scoring – you can show them by deriving a ranking from a scoring example.

You will need to make participants realise the limitations of statistical analysis of the scores if the criteria are not weighted. This is most effective if you let them try to add the outcome and then challenge the outcome during the feedback session. Their final question (see 8 above) might well contradict their total scores.

26: NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE

OBJECTIVES

- To generate ideas and produce group consensus through a structured problem-solving process
- To draw on individual ideas and opinions, and combine them to arrive at collective judgements

MATERIALS

Three 7.5 × 12.5 cm cards for each group member, pin-boards

TIME

2–2½ hours

PROCEDURE

The procedure involves four steps:

1. **SILENT IDEA GENERATION**
   The objective of this first step is to allow individuals time to generate possible solutions to a given problem. Pass out worksheets with the problem statement printed at the top, and ask group members to respond to the statement using short written phrases. By discouraging talking or moving around, you can encourage more serious thinking. Step 1 provides the time for members to respond to the problem with their own ideas.

2. **ROUND-ROBIN REPORTING OF IDEAS**
   This step allows each member of the group to share his or her ideas. Ask someone to report one written thought and write it on a flipchart using the person's exact words. Then the next person is asked for one idea and the process is repeated. Ideas are taken in order around the table until everyone has shared as many as they wish. If anyone chooses to pass, then the facilitator simply goes on to the next person. When ideas written on the flipchart stimulate another idea with another participant, that person is encouraged to add the idea to his or her own worksheet and report it to the group.

   Each idea is labelled with a letter of the alphabet. This labelling makes the ranking of solutions easier in the last step.

   Try to discourage discussion of the ideas during this phase. The purpose of 'round-robin reporting' is to encourage everyone to present ideas, particularly for shyer participants who may feel overwhelmed by the more talkative members.

3. **DISCUSSION FOR CLARIFICATION**
   This step provides an opportunity for open discussion and clarification of all the generated ideas. Encourage group members to ask one another the meaning of words and phrases which appear on the worksheets. The discussion can and should convey the meaning, logic, or thought behind an idea.

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26: NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE (continued)

PROCEDURE

4. **THE RANKING OF PROBLEMS/SOLUTIONS ACCORDING TO IMPORTANCE**
   The purpose of this final phase is to combine the ideas and opinions of individual members to determine the relative importance of the problems or solutions that have been identified. During this step, hand each group member five 3" × 5" cards and ask each person to record five items (one per card) of highest priority from those listed on the flipchart. They write one phrase and the identifying letter of the alphabet on each card. Then ask the group members to identify the item of highest importance and rank it as 5, the next highest importance as 4, and so on. The cards are collected and points are tallied on a master sheet.

5. The final outcome is, therefore, a set of independent judgements.

COMMENTS

Individuals working in groups generate more ideas than when they work alone. Nominal groups, groups 'in name only' where people are brought together but not allowed to communicate, have been found to be more effective for idea generation than interacting groups, where people meet to discuss, brainstorm, and exchange information. Interacting groups tend to inhibit creative thinking.

It is important to note that ranking ideas in this non-threatening, private way makes it possible to generate a group judgement without social pressure to conform.

Source: Frank Oomkes and Richard Thomas (1992), based on the work of André Delbecq