

editorial

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Welcome to issue 51 of *Participatory Learning and Action* on civil society participation in the implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction strategy (PRS) processes. It consists of ten theme articles from eight countries – Bolivia, Bulgaria, Ghana, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia.

The guest-editors of this special issue are **Alexandra Hughes** and **Nicholas Atampugre**.

Alexandra Hughes is a Canadian, currently working as a consultant in Mozambique in the area of civil society participation in policy processes, rights based approaches to development, and most recently, HIV/AIDS. Prior to that she was a researcher with the Participation Group and the Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). In 2002 she facilitated a learning exchange of experiences in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) processes between three civil society members of the Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action (RCPLA) – *Grupo Nacional de Trabajo para la Participacion* (GNTP) in Bolivia, *Participatory Methodologies Forum of Kenya* (PAMFORK) and the *Community Development Resource Network* (CDRN) in Uganda – and other government stakeholders.¹

Dr Nicholas Atampugre is a Ghanaian with twelve years of experience in development, research and communication with DFID, NGOs and as a consultant. He is an

¹ Lessons learnt on civil society engagement in PRSP processes in Bolivia, Kenya and Uganda: A report emerging from the Bolivian-East African Sharing and Learning Exchange, July 2002. (www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip/networks/prsp-exch-rep.pdf)

Nicole Kenton with guest-editors Alexandra Hughes and Nicholas Atampugre



experienced PLA practitioner with competence in a broad range of participatory methodologies and he developed, in association with the IDS Participation Group, the PLA for Advocacy initiative in Nigeria. Prior to becoming a consultant, he worked for DFID-Nigeria as Social Development Adviser and was responsible for developing the Strategic Programme of Engagement with Civil Society (SPECS), monitoring the implementation of the DFID Nigeria strategy for poverty monitoring with key advisers, facilitating broad-based participation in the ongoing PRSP process, and collaborating with key donors and partners on support to the Nigerian PRSP process, as well as managing the PRSP fund and overseeing its implementation. He also assisted with the development of a DFID Nigeria strategy of the Country Assistance Plan in relation to the consultation and communication process, as well as civil society input. In addition, he maintained an overview of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) developments in Nigeria and identified areas for DFID engagement.

We are grateful to our two guest-editors for their time and commitment to this special issue of *Participatory Learning and Action*, and to all the authors for sharing their experiences.

The process

At a meeting of RCPLA members, the network invited proposals for a series of workshops, which would both capture the rich experiences of PLA practitioners, which often go undocumented, and help build practitioners' capacity to write for publication. This issue of *Participatory Learning and Action* is the outcome of a joint initiative of the RCPLA, the Participation Group (PG) at IDS and IIED, focusing on experiences of critical engagement of civil society actors in PRS processes. It is considered a natural follow-up to previous learning exchanges in this area between some of the RCPLA members.

Special thanks go to **Angela Milligan** of IIED and **Sammy Musyoki** of IDS for initiating this process.

Once the guest-editors had identified potential contributors, abstracts were submitted, followed

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Some of the participants at the authors' writeshop, Nairobi, July 2004. Back row from left to right: Richard Sseywakiryanga, Mohamud Faroole, Sammy Musyoki, Nicholas Atampugre, Hudson Shiverenje. Front row from left to right: Harriet Yeboah, Alexandra Hughes, Moses Isooba, Jas Vaghadia, Jordi Beneria Surkin, Nicole Kenton



by first drafts of papers, which were reviewed by the *Participatory Learning and Action* editorial board. The contributors focused on the following issues:

- From a critical perspective, what is or has been your or your organisation's experience in engaging in the effective or not-so-effective implementing, monitoring and evaluating of PRS processes?
- In what cases have you been successful in opening up spaces for poor peoples' participation through these processes? What factors made this success possible?
- In what cases have you not been successful in opening up spaces for poor peoples' participation through these processes? What were the contextual and institutional challenges you faced in these cases, and how could they have been better dealt with?

With support from the RCPLA, IDS and IIED held a writeshop for contributors in Nairobi from 12 to 16

July 2004, hosted by PAMFORK. This was followed by a RCPLA Steering Committee meeting, as some participants were also members of the RCPLA. This meant that the RCPLA coordinators, Tom Thomas and Catherine Kannam, and the Asia coordinator, Jayatissa Samaranayake, were able to attend part of the workshop.

Participants at the PLA 51 writeshop were: **Alexandra Hughes** and **Nicholas Atampugre** as guest-editors, **Nicole Kenton** from IIED as editor, **Samuel Musyoki** and **Jas Vaghadia** from IDS as resource persons, **Eliud Wakwabubi** as local coordinator, and the following authors: **Mohamud Faroole**, **Moses Isooba**, **Atieno Ndomo**, **Hudson Shiverenje**, **Richard Sseywakiryanga**, **Jordi Beneria Surkin** and **Harriet Yeboah**. We would also like to thank those authors who were unable to be present at the writeshop, but whose papers were discussed and are included in this issue: **Anna**

Athanassova, **Besinati Mpepo**, **Venkatesh Seshamani** and **Hoang Xuan Thanh**. We would also like to thank **Siapha Kamara** who co-wrote a paper with **Harriet Yeboah**, but was not able to attend the writeshop, and **Gerald Twijukye** from CDRN Uganda for providing valuable input into Moses Isooba's paper. In addition we would like to thank **Reiner Forster** from the Participation and Civic Engagement Team at the World Bank, **Ana Quirós** from Nicaragua and **Lydia Richardson** (with experience in Moldova) for their involvement in the earlier stages of the process.

Each paper was allocated a discussant who presented and commented on the paper at the writeshop, giving all participants an opportunity to comment. Authors then were given time and space to finalise their papers, with support from the resource team. The writeshop was a capacity-building exercise in itself, having the following objectives:

- to share the rich experiences of practitioners' engagement in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation process of PRSs through presentations and discussions of the articles;
- to finalise the articles and to mutually help build capacity to communicate these experiences to international audiences; and
- to help build capacity to more effectively and strategically engage (or not) in PRSs.

At the end of the writeshop, there was a plenary session where common themes, experiences and lessons were drawn out. These were fed into the overview piece for the issue.

PAMFORK also helped arrange a PRSP Forum of the National Council

of NGOs to coincide with the PLA authors' writeshop.² This was held at the Nairobi Safari Club on Thursday 15th July 2004, where participants presented two papers. Tom Thomas also gave a short presentation on the role of the RCPLA in disseminating information on the PRSP.

In addition to the guest-editors, contributors and the co-ordinator of PAMFORK, **Eliud Wakwabubi**, I would like to thank **Ben Musyoki** of Kilimanjaro Ventures in Nairobi for welcoming us all to Kenya and arranging international travel and in-country transport, IDS for co-funding the writeshop, with special thanks to **Sammy Musyoki** and **Jas Vaghadia**, who helped facilitate the writeshop, and DFID for their additional support to this issue through the RCPLA.

We hope that readers will learn how the authors, through their own experiences, have engaged critically and how in the future they might want to engage (or not engage) more strategically and effectively in PRSPs and their processes, so that we can better understand the potentials and limitations of **scaling up and institutionalising participatory approaches**, and the potentials and limitations of **participatory policy-making processes**. As ever, we welcome your feedback and your own experiences.

General section

In this issue, we have five general articles. The first one looks at participatory three-dimensional modeling. In Vietnam, changes in agricultural production policy have altered the ways in which villagers manage livestock, farming and natural resources. **Jean-Christophe**

Castella, Tran Trong Hieu and Yann K Eguienta describe their experiences of facilitating a collective learning process. They describe how graphic models can be used to develop a common spatial language; as a mediation tool; as a basis for facilitating discussions; and to help create village farming scenarios around seasonal land use. The article discusses how these tools can be extremely useful for developing sustainable collective management strategies for natural resources.

Articles 14 and 16, from India and Bangladesh, focus on developing and scaling-up healthcare programmes using participatory approaches. Both articles emphasise the importance of capacity-building with healthcare service providers, local authorities and civil society. Interestingly, both programmes have used appreciative enquiry to develop plans to provide more effective healthcare using existing resources.

Dipankar Datta, Michelle Kouletio and Taifur Rahman describe how Concern has been working with municipalities in Bangladesh to develop more sustainable urban healthcare systems. Through a partnership process of capacity-building with civil society organisations, health staff, traditional healers and government officials, Concern's Child Survival Programme (CSP) has enabled these groups to work more effectively together, to make more efficient use of existing healthcare resources and to ensure community ownership of the process. The CSP partnership now has plans to scale-up its healthcare programme, to reach over one million residents in seven additional municipalities.

Amita Jain, Rajiv S. Saxena and Subir K. Pradhan describe how the

Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) in India has been scaling up the use of participatory approaches, in a pilot health and nutrition programme. Whereas previous efforts focused on providing healthcare by distributing supplementary nutrition to poor families, the ICDS programme instead focuses on using more effective participatory communications with the communities involved to develop health action plans. In addition, ICDS worked with local healthcare service providers to build their capacity to institutionalise participatory approaches in their day-to-day work with residents.

Articles 15 and 17 look at people-oriented approaches to planning and decision-making used by communities in coastal regions of Bangladesh. The first looks at tidal river management and solutions for improving conditions on water-logged char land; and the second looks at farming innovations developed by char-dwellers. Water-logging destroys homes, prevents crops from being planted and contributes to environmental pollution and poor health. Article 15 focuses in particular on using actor-oriented tools to analyse pro-poor interventions in chilli and livestock innovation systems in the char lands of Bangladesh. Here, **Harriet Malsaert, Zahir Ahmed, Noushin Islam and Faruque Hussain** discuss first the actor-oriented approach as one that relies on 'strong flows of information and useful partnership coalitions between key actors over time'. They describe the tools that were used, and their experiences of working with char-dwellers to improve the benefits of their natural resource-based enterprises through

² For more information visit www.ngocouncil.org

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better access to information, services and market opportunities.

Ashraf-Ul-Alam Tutu's article describes how a local people's initiative in Khulna and Jessore districts was successful in solving land water-logging problems and for improving overall river management. In addition, they used an effective advocacy campaign to improve the design and implementation of future tidal management policies by using people-oriented approaches to policy and planning.

Tips for trainers

When talking about participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) of poverty reduction strategies, many practitioners grapple with the idea of what kind of indicators to use. Here, the Social Enterprise Development

(SEND) Foundation of West Africa shares some of the indicators that it has developed with civil society partners, to assess the performance of the Government of Ghana in the use of Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) funds.

Regular features

You will find the latest update on the *Communications for Change Initiative* on the **RCPLA Network** pages, as well as news from IDS on its new webspace, and from IIED on the appointment of the new Chair of its Board of Trustees and on the exciting *Farmer Exchange for Mutual Learning* workshop.

Next issue

The next issue, *Participatory Learning and Action 52*, will be a special issue,

guest-edited and coordinated by the Participation Group at IDS, on using participatory methods for rights-based work. The guest-editors have had a fantastic response to their call for papers and look forward to sharing some of the participatory tools and techniques that practitioners have used to explore, assess, plan, implement or evaluate rights-related work with different groups, and some of the experiences of people who have actually been using these methods themselves.

Contribute to *Participatory Learning and Action!*

Please continue to send feedback, general articles, tips for trainers, book reviews and details of workshops and events!

Nicole Kenton

Erratum

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Our apologies for errors in the Editorial in the last issue. John Thompson was Director of the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods Programme at IIED from 1997 to 2003. Jules Pretty was Director of the Sustainable Agriculture Programme from 1988 to 1996 and was instrumental in the early years of *RRA Notes*, together with Gordon Conway, who founded the Programme. Michel Pimbert took over as Director of the Programme in 2003.

acronyms

and terms used in this issue

ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFRODAD	African Forum & Network on Debt and Development
AI	Appreciative Inquiry
BSIF	Bulgarian Social Investment Fund
CBNRM	Community-based natural resource management
CAP	Community Action Plan
CBO	Community-based organisation
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDF	Comprehensive Development Framework
CDRN	Community Development Resource Network (Uganda)
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
CPRGS	Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (Vietnam)
CRN	Country Re-engagement Note
CS	Civil society
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSPR	Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (Zambia)
CV	<i>Comites de Vigilancia</i> (Bolivia)
DA	District Assembly
DHMC	District HIPC Monitoring Committee
DTIS	Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies
EBRP	<i>Estrategia Boliviana de Reducción de Pobreza</i> (Bolivia)
EFA	Education for all
EIA	Environmental impact assessment
ERS	Economic Recovery Strategy
ERSP	Economic Recovery Strategy Paper
ESAF	Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility
GFGEW	GPRS Focus Group Educational Workshops
GHW	Ghana HIPC Watch
GIS	Geographic Information System
GNTF	<i>Grupo Nacional de Trabajo para la Participacion</i> (Bolivia)
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GRO	Grassroots organisation
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Country
IDS	Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IFI	International Financial Institution
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
I-PRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
KANU	Kenya African National Union
LDN	<i>Ley del Dialogo Nacional</i> (Bolivia)
LICUS	Low income countries under stress
LPP	Law of Popular Participation (Bolivia)
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Uganda)

ACRONYMS

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MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition (Kenya)
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRM	National Resistance Movement (Uganda)
PAF	Poverty Action Fund (Uganda)
PAMFORK	Participatory Methodologies Forum of Kenya
PAR	Participatory action research
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan (Uganda)
PEM	Public Expenditure Management
PER	Public Expenditure Review
PMA	Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture
PM&E	Participatory monitoring and evaluation
PMES	Poverty Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy or System
PMU	Poverty Monitoring Unit
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSC	Poverty Reduction Support Credit
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSR	Public service reform
PTF	Poverty Task Force
PWG	Poverty Working Group
RCPLA	Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action
SACB	Somali Aid Coordination Body
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SCSO	Somali civil society organisation
SEND Foundation	Social Enterprise Development Foundation of West Africa
SIA	Social impact assessment
SOE	State-owned enterprise (Vietnam)
SPECS	Strategic Programme of Engagement with Civil Society
SWG	Sector working group
TRM	Tidal River Management (Bangladesh)
UDN	Uganda Debt Network
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia
UPPAP	Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Project
VLSS	Vietnam Living Standard Survey
WB	World Bank
WDR	World Development Report