ILEIA

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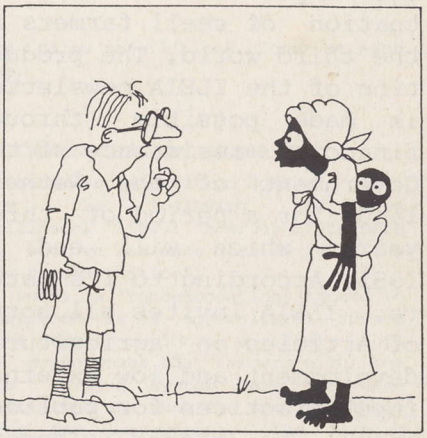
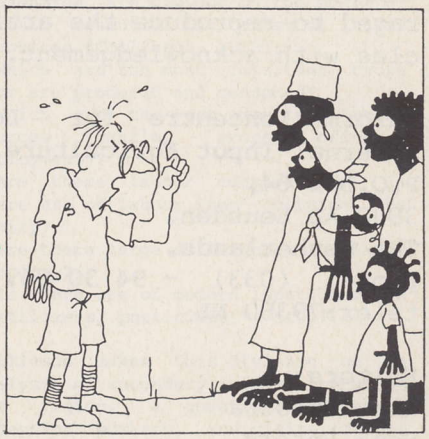
Participatory approaches

in rural development

This fourth issue of our ILEIA-Newsletter is assigned to methodological aspects of rural development. Being editors of a Newsletter on low-external-input agriculture, we feel that we should also discuss different approaches to rural develop-ment, especially on how to cooperate with farming households. The point is, according to us and some people, who have reacted on previous Newsletters, that criticisms on the high technology approaches of Western development efforts should not only concentrate on the inappropriateness and negative aspects of the developed technological innovations, but also on the way in which these innovations are developed and disseminated.





Criticism on the applied methodologies in rural development have become stronger in the last decade. Generally, one can distinguish four points of criticism:

1. There has always been a focus of researchers on biological potential and yields. It has become clear that farming households never decide on yield alone, but also on risk aversion, food security, varied diets and ecological balances.
2. Governments and scientists always decided for farmers on what should be done in the rural areas. They told the farming households always: "We know what is best for you". An enormous top-down approach without attention to local strategies and practices.
3. Technological innovations were developed far from the farming households on isolated research stations. Researchers and extension workers were not motivated to go out in the field to try to understand local strategies. Furthermore, the conditions on the research station with high soil fertility and abundant labour were not representative of small farmers' circumstances (in most cases characterized by labour shortages and poor natural soil fertility).
4. Social and economic constraints were not included in the work. Social scientists were always asked to evaluate a project after its implementation. From the failures of these projects it is more and more acknowledged that social scientists should participate in the beginning phase of the identification and planning of projects.

From this criticism one can find, even in the mainstream literature and projects, a tendency to develop more participatory approaches. Although one could question how e.g. participation is defined in some of these projects, the following trends can be found:

- A search for a more holistic and interdisciplinary approach to analyse the rural situation and how to improve it;
- A search to analyse the differences between people inside a region or even a village, leading to a choice for certain 'target groups';
- A search for more participatory, grass roots approaches.

This Newsletter concentrates on examples of these approaches, accompanied by more introductory articles. The first article deals with Farming Systems Research (FSR), the latest developed approach in the mainstream of

Colophon

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agricultural research. This article is followed by a comment by Ir. Louise Fresco pointing out the possibilities and shortcomings of FSR, and especially the neglected attention of FSR towards the position of women.

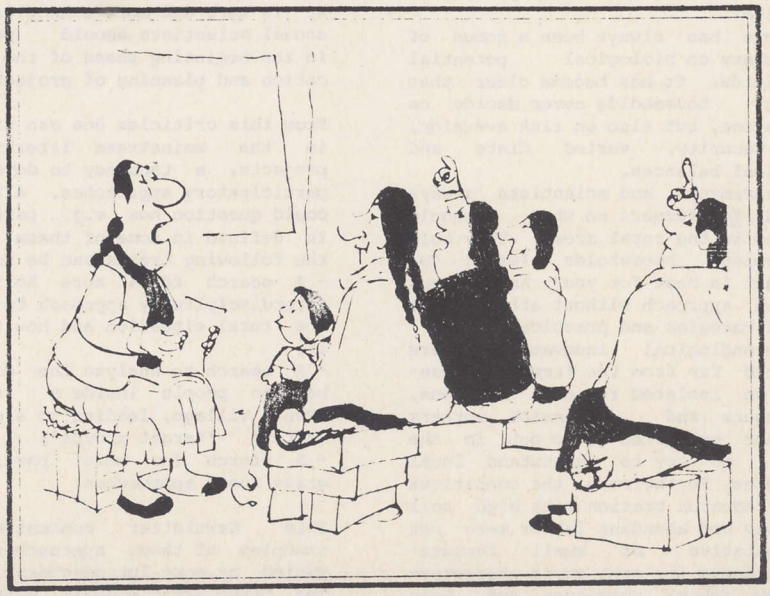
These two articles are followed by an introductory article on participatory research or action research, which is in turn followed by some case-studies of 'more or less participatory' approaches. One example comes from Peru and Ecuador, another from Burkina Faso and a third from the Philippines. The article on the Philippines was written by Jeroen Ex, a Dutch volunteer in that country. Finally, three book reviews focus on interesting publications in this cadre.

With these articles we hope to give you some idea of the wide scope of methods and approaches. It will probably become clear that each of the examples has its own background and its specific strength and weaknesses. Louise Fresco argues a.o. that FSR is predominantly focussing on improvement of agricultural research and therefore has a different scope than rural development projects. Although we agree on this point, we believe that FSR and other agricultural research could learn from these 'broader' rural development concepts. This is especially the case in FSR-ers' use of 'participation'. FSR seems to use participation more as 'effective communication between researchers and farmers' mainly using surveys and questionnaires for this. The surveys, which are mostly done very quickly, can be criticized for this and only give one-way information from the farmer (women are mostly forgotten!) to the researcher. In addition, it is becoming more and more clear that single visits and questionnaires are very unreliable. In regard to participation, the other examples in this Newsletter have another view and use it more in the sense of self-development, mobilisation and organisation.

On the other hand, one has to be careful -as some experiences (see e.g. the article on the GRAAP-method in Burkina Faso) show- not to become involved in 'pseudo participation'. People are involved in discussions, but the outcome of these discussions are already programmed by the outsider. Then, of course, time is lost and will lead to non-involvement of the people. Another discussion point in this respect are the experiences of Verhagen: the outsider should not only remain discussing with farming households. Also from the case-study of Peru and Ecuador it can be seen that farming households do expect specific actions and knowledge. Certain (technical) know-how is then essential. Thus, especially technically-trained people should be willing to step out of their professional cadres and to listen to farmers.
We think that everyone, working in agriculture in Third World countries should search in his or her specific situation for methods in which people can be involved right at the beginning of the project, starting from locally-felt needs and contraints and locally-developed strategies.
We hope this Newsletter can give some inspiration.

Readers who were waiting for articles about agriculture in more drought-prone areas, as we promised in the third Newsletter, are asked to accept our apologies. These articles are still underway. We hope that you will find them in the next issue of the ILEIA-Newsletter, which will reach you in three months. At that moment we also expect to have more insight into our future. For this reason we want to ask you not to pay your subsription for 1986 yet.

The Editors



FARMING SYSTEMS RESEARCH

Farming Systems Research (FSR) has developed from many different backgrounds and criticisms. At the moment it is gaining much attention, even in the bastions of traditional research like CIMMYT (Mexico), IRRI (Philippines) and IITA (Nigeria). Whyte (1981) states for example, that the discovery of the CIMMYT-researchers of the mixed cropping of maize and beans in the famous Puebla-project in 1967, was one of the first steps towards a FSR-methodology. But also at other places FSR-procedures were developed (Gilbert, Norman and Winch, 1980). FSR is mostly developed from criticisms by people working inside the traditional agricultural research, which was and is mostly oriented to one crop (e.g.cotton research stations, oilpalm research, IRRI on rice, CIMMYT on maize and wheat, etc.). FSR criticizes this single-commodity approach, the isolation of the research station, the top-down approach and the neglect of the whole range of activities and problems of the farming household (see editorial).

Central to FSR is the farming system:
"The entire range of human and technical aspects, which influence the living of a farming family" (Gilbert, et al., 1980).
The primary target of FSR is then:
"To increase the productivity of the farming system in the context of the entire range of private and societal goals, given the constraints and potentials of the existing farming system"(ibid).
Important differences between this concept and traditional concepts on agricultural research are:
1. FSR recognizes that not only production but also consumption is a major issue in the farming household's decision-making. Farmers' objectives are not only to yield high production, but also to avoid risks of drought or pests and to have a varied and assured food supply and a sustained ecological balance.
2. FSR recognizes that socio-economic constraints are important. FSR dedicates explicit attention to farmers' objectives and constraints. Traditionally, research focussed on biological and technical constraints only.
3. FSR criticizes the single crop or commodity approach and recommends concentration on the whole range of farming household activities. Essential activities such as off-farm employment and livestock production are included in the research.
4. Although FSR is essentially a method for the improvement of agricultural research and therefore tends to search for technical solutions, it also recognizes that socio-economic constraints such as land scarcity, a bad marketing situation or infrastructural problems, can be important.
5. FSR promotes the effort to enhance communication and contact between researchers, extension workers and farmers to avoid the isolation and top-down contact of traditional research.

FSR should be complimentary to the work on a research station, and feed the research on the station with ideas (see figure 1).

Methodology

The FSR-methodology generally consists of 4 essential steps (although many variations on this concept exist; see Gilbert, et al., 1980).
1. Target group orientation: groups or regions of farming families with the same farming system are identified (recommendation domains).
2. Diagnosis: within one recommendation domain farmers are interviewed about their constraints and possible solutions.
3. On-farm experiments: based on the diagnosis an experimental field programme is designed, which concentrates heavily on experimental work inside the farmer's fields.
4. Evaluation and extension.

Here below we will look closer at each step.

Recommendation domains

The term 'recommendation domain' comes from the following definition (Collinson, 1982): "A group of farmers for whom we can make more or less the same recommendation".
As such, a 'recommendation' should be understood as an agricultural advice for a certain region or a certain crop. FSR presupposes that farmers with the same farming system have the same constraints and thus the same possibilities for improvement. The farming households are divided on the basis of certain essential indicators of their practices (Collinson, 1982):
- Which are the most important crops that are produced and consumed?
- Which are the most important cash-sources (cattle, crops, off-farm employment)?
- Are there labour constraints? Is there use of labour from outside the family?
- Are there large differences in land-property?
- Is there use of modern inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, etc.?

Collinson makes this division on an analysis of secondary information about the region, a questionnaire among extension workers, and visits to the region. In this way, six recommendation

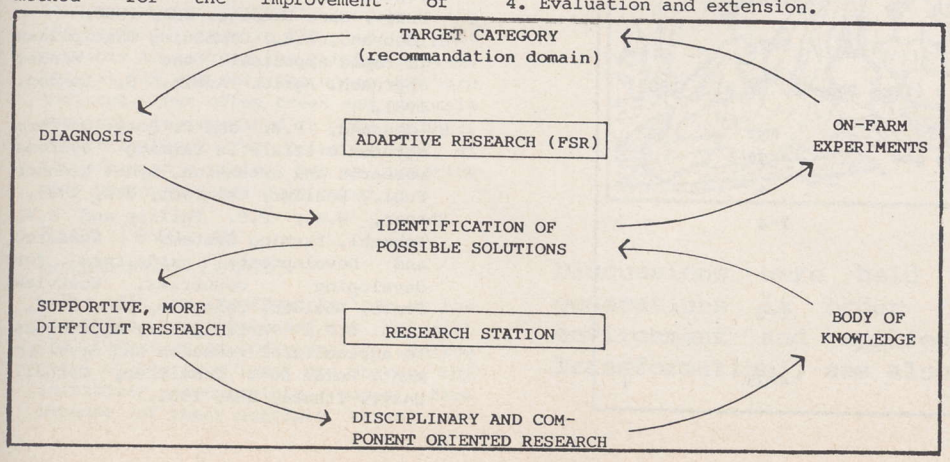


figure 1

Farming Systems Research complementary to research station (Collinson 1982)

domains for Central Province in Zambia were identified (CIMMYT, 1979).
A FSR-team should then concentrate on one recommendation domain in the next step.

Diagnosis

Several procedures have been developed for this phase. A major objective is to identify constraints and possible solutions for farming households in a recommendation domain.
Most methods tend to emphasize quick and cheap methods for this diagnosis, as it is argued that further contacts and communication between researchers and farmers will be possible in the ongoing process of on-farm experimentation. Generally, informal and formal surveys are used:
- informal surveys or sondeo (Hildebrand, 1981).
The project team visits the recommendation domain for 1 - 2 weeks, has discussions with farmers and people, who are working in agriculture in the region and tries to identify major constraints and possible strategies for improvement. Unstructured interviews are used.
- formal surveys: here several types can be found in literature, but individual farmers are mainly interviewed by questionnaire, once or twice. This questionnaire is based on a previous informal survey (e.g. Collinson, 1982).
The results of the diagnosis give direction to the following phase.

On-farm experimentation

In this phase certain possible improvements are tested on the farmers' fields. Research on the farmers' fields should be carried out along with experiments at the research station (see figure 1). The on-farm experiments can be complemented by, for example:
- Monitoring: to follow in detail a certain number of representative farming households and their activities;
- Farm-record keeping: some farmers are asked to describe their daily activities and their decision-making.
Generally, on-farm experiments can be distinguished on the basis of two criteria:
1. Who is responsible for the management of the experiment?
Here 3 types are distinguished:
- Researcher-Managed Trials (RMT): mostly more detailed or complicated experiments.
- Superimposed Trials (SIT): here a field, which was prepared and sowed by the farmer using traditional practices, is used to test certain factors. - Farmer-Managed Trials (FMT): here the farmer is solely responsible for the management of the experiment. The researcher only asks to follow certain (improved) practices (new variety, early sowing, hill planting, etc.).
2. What is the objective of the experiment?
Shaner (et al., 1982) distinguish three types:
- Exploratory trials: several factors which could possibly give scope for improving the farming system are analysed in the same trial. Factorial trials (2n) are often used, in which each factor has two levels; one level on the usual practise of the farmer, the other level markedly higher. In this manner, possible interesting factors or their interactions can be rapidly identified. Other commonly used trials are 'plus' and 'minus' trials (see e.g. Hildebrand and Poey, 1985).
- 'Level' experiments or 'how-much' experiments: promising factors are further tested in order to discover if the factor could fit into local farming practises and how this could be done.
- Verification trials: further testing on field scale of interesting factors. These should be farmer-managed.

Table 1 and 2 show some essential characteristics of these different types (from Shaner, et al., 1982).
The on-farm experiments and especially the verification trials should be the way in which new technologies are presented to farmers. Close contacts should exist during the whole process between researchers, farmers and extension workers. It is further theoreticized that the concept of target definition (recommendation domain) should imply the 'appropriateness' of the developed technology for the whole group of farming households. Therefore it should be easily adaptable for all farmers.

In short, these general aspects of FSR can be mentioned in the scope of this article. For details, the literature listed at the end contains detailed descriptions of methodology, but also discussions of the FSR-concepts.
For a discussion of some issues of Farming Systems Research see the interview with Ir. Louise Fresco in this Newsletter.

Table 1 Classification of on-farm experiments

OBJECTIVE	NAME	MANAGEMENT
Exploratory	"yes-no"	RMT/SIT
Level	"how-much"	RMT/SIT
Verification/ demonstration	"verification"	FMT

Table 2 Characteristics on-farm experiments (from Shaner, et al., 1982)

	RMT	SIT	FMT
plotsize	small	both large and small	large
number of treatments	5-20	4-6	2-4
number of replications per field	1-5	1-2	1-2
number of farmers	4-5	4-10	4-25

Literature

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Not only the grain but also the straw

"Farming Systems Research only is an analytical methodology and not a strategy for rural development. The relevance of this methodology depends on the choices one makes, about the factors to be incorporated in the research. For example, in sorghum breeding, the question is: are we looking only at grain-yields or also at straw-yields ? In other words: do we look only at the men or also at the women and their role in the farming system ?"

The editors of the ILEIA newsletter noted this statement in their **interview with Ir. Louise Fresco** who works at the Department of Tropical Agriculture at the Agricultural University of Wageningen in the Netherlands. In this interview she gives her views on Farming Systems Research and tells about the FAO project in Kwango-Kwilu, Zaire.

Women in Farming Systems Research

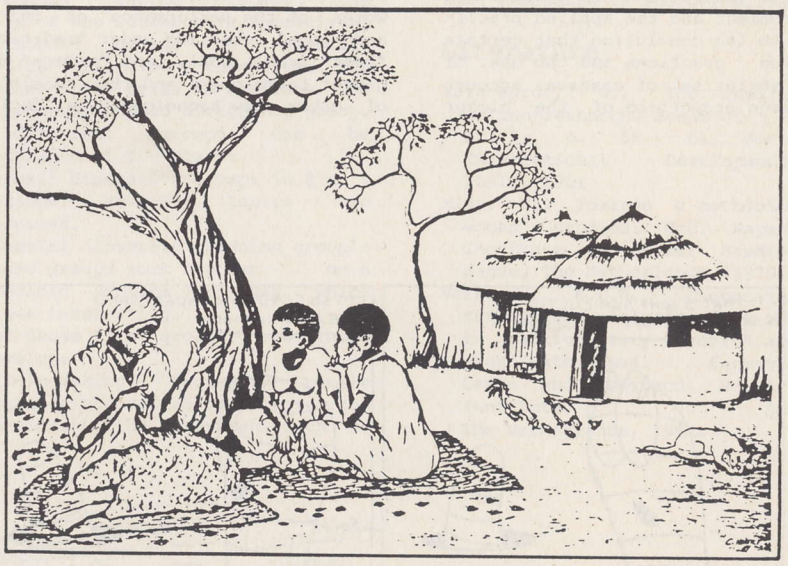
L.F.: "Farming Systems Research (FSR) often neglects women in the farming system." To demonstrate this, Louise Fresco gives the example of the introduction of semi-dwarf varieties of sorghum in West-Africa. These varieties are producing higher grain-yields but may have many negative effects, especially for women. They are e.g. less competive with weeds which increases the workload of the women who are traditionally responsable for the weeding. They are also producing a smaller quantity of straw which means that women dispose of less material for roofing or for basket- and soap-making (important sources of income) and fodder for their animals.
Increased grain-yield, however important, can therefore not be the only criterion for new agricultural technology. Another example is the introduction of rice on valley bottom land in West-Africa: this is where women tradionally to cultivate their subsistence crops, and where livestock graze in the dry season. The rice-crop thus displaces the traditional spatial organization of agriculture without providing women with alternatives for crop growing.
In many countries the greater part of the agricultural work is done by women who are often not only responsible for the production of the subsistence crops but also for an important part of the work on cash crops (field- and post-harvest work). Without incorporating the role of women in FSR, it is not possible to improve the farming system. But it is not only the women who are left out, but often trees and animals are not incorporated in FSR either. Theoretically, FSR tries to look at the farm as a whole, but in practice many components are overlooked.

Farm level or household level

L.F.: "It is important to look at the household as a whole and not only at the farmer as an individual." Looking only at the farm level can obscure the particular constraints women face because of their multiple tasks, and their limited access to production inputs. It can also hide potential conflicts and inequity between household members. FSR should pay more attention to decision-making structures within the household. The situation of the household, the number and age of its members, health etc. are important factors determining labour availability and the agricultural techniques and management. Off-farm work or "relatives in town" can be important for the availability of capital inputs in agricultural production.
Analysis of the household consumption patterns and the degree of self-sufficiency in food crops can serve as an eye-opener to the main constraints in the farming system.

Surveys

Surveys and other ways of obtaining information on farmers' problems are an essential step in FSR.
Louise Fresco suggests that surveys should not exclusively rely on interviews with individuals but use a combination of techniques (group discussions, key-informants, female and male) as well as careful observations and measurements of actual practices in the fields and in the household. Often, surveys risk being male-biased because too little attention is paid to women who are not included in the interviews. In addition, male farmers usually do not clarify the contributions of their wives to agricultural work. Conducting trials in farmers' fields constitutes an essential source of additional information. One way to learn about the farming system is to introduce (small) changes in it.



Discussions were held with village women of different generations in order to analyse the changes in the environment and applied practices (from 'Training for Transformation', see also page 14)

Important items to analyse in the survey are labour input, labour division and access to land.
In FSR these surveys are normally executed by interdisciplinary teams. This is, however, only successful when the different diciplines develop a joint analytical framework. FSR, as an analytical methodology may provide such a framework.
FSR can contribute to a more successful application of agricultural technology because it focusses on constraints that small-farmer households face. However, FSR can be no more than an element in an overall development strategy which should include things like pricing, marketing, land reform, etc.

The FAO project in Kwango-Kwilu, Zaire in which Louise Fresco worked, dealt with cassava production. Cassava is the main crop, not only produced for subsistence use but also for the market. Because the production of cassava is mainly "women's work", the actual target group of the project was women farmers.

"Best" traditional management techniques

The first step in improving cultivation techniques is to compare variations in existing patterns between women and between villages in order to discover practices that make more successful use of the same ecological environment.
Why do some women on some cassava fields have higher yields and fewer diseases than others? Or in other words: is there any room for improvement within traditional cultivation practices?
Careful observations in the fields throughout several growing seasons, and discussions with village women of different generations (in order to analyse within two generations the changes in the environment and the applied practices) led to the conclusion that certain cultivation practices and the use of certain varieties of cassava account for a large proportion of the higher yields achieved by some women.
Of course, individual characteristics play their part also, such as a woman's strength and age, her regular presence in the fields (because she or her child are healthy), and the care and commitment she displays, etc..
Many of these "successful" cultivation practices can be taken over by other women. Among these are: location of the fields, planting dates, thinning, soil preparation, plant densities, mulching, timely weeding and crop associations.

Women's criteria for varietal selection

In the Kwango-Kwilu region alone there are at least 30 local varieties of cassava. Great variation has been observed between local varieties in terms of disease and drought tolerance, tuber and leaf yield, taste, etc..
The discussions with the women also permitted room to define their criteria for the selection of "best" varieties, e.g.: tuber as well as leaf yields, high dry matter content, rapid formation of leaf canopy, taste, height, time of flowering, shape of tubers, drought and disease/pest tolerance, and a combination of early and late maturing varieties.

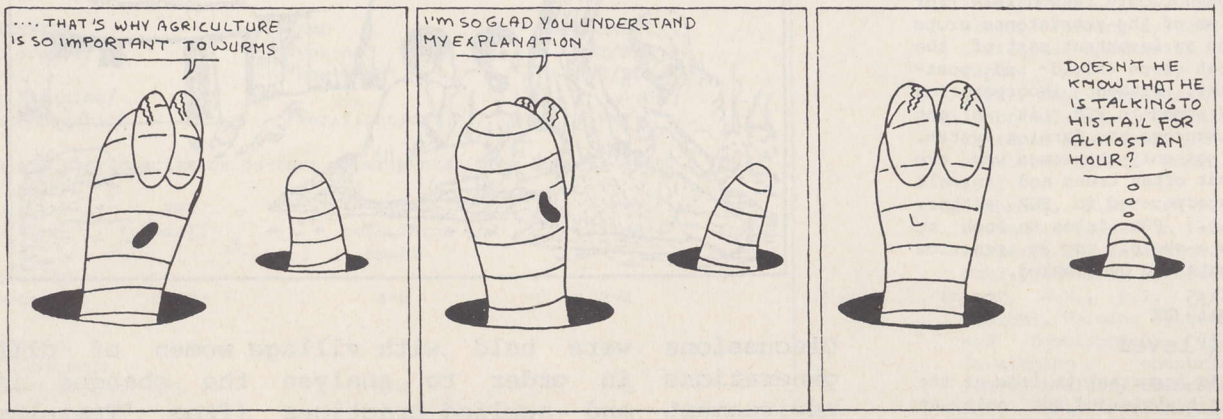
Field tests by women

After an initial definition of potential improvements in cultivation techniques and varieties etc., these were tested under farming conditions. This meant that the women did not only participate in deciding what features would be tested, but also decided on the location of their fields, the cultivation practices, and their timing. Carrying out the work and managing the trials was in itself a learning experience. Evaluation by the women of the performance of improved and local varieties under traditional, "best" traditional, and "modern" management techniques and the feasibility of other new techniques was decisive for the project and strongly promoted the extension of these "successful" techniques.

Extension by women

A network of information-sharing and testing by women under the informal leadership of an "animatrice" seemed successful if the animatrices (extension workers) were chosen by the community as a whole for their farming and personal skills. Animatrices did not receive a salary but received some benefits in kind (tools, seeds) and travel expenses for training sessions. Their range of action was limited to their village of residence, where their fields sometimes functioned as permanent demonstration plots. Most exchanges of experiences and information took place while women were visiting each other or walking to and from the fields or the well.
It was the experience of Louise Fresco that the extensive discussions with the women about cassava cultivation proved to be a very valuable method for helping them to become aware of their possibilities, and to change matters which were traditionally considered as immutable.

More information about the FAO project in Kwango-Kwilu, Zaire can be found in:
- Louise Fresco: Techniques Agricoles Ameliorees pour le Kwango-Kwilu, a manual in French and Kikongo describing the traditional agriculture and the possible improvements, 1984, INADES-Formation Zaire/CEPAS, P.O. Box 5717, Kinshasa-Gombe, ZAIRE.
- The bi-monthly magazine of the FAO: Ceres 105, May-June 1985: Daniele Blain: A farming system for women: the case of cassava production in Zaire. (Distribution and Sales Sec.,Via delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy or the regional FAO Sales Agent).
- Slide series FSSP (Farming Systems Support Program), Univ. of Florida, 3028 McCarty Hall, Gainesville 32611, Florida, U.S.A.



ACTION-RESEARCH

Action-research has developed from Marxist and Neo-marxist criticism on the use of science. Paulo Freire's methods are an example of this approach, but others have also contributed to this thinking (e.g. Frankfurter Schule, Fals Borda, Huizer). They state:

"The present science just reflects certain goals which are determined by the dominant groups and classes in society" (Fals Borda, 1981).

The usual 'positivistic' science is criticized on philosophical and societal grounds:

- Science only produces knowledge which reproduces existing, unequal social class structures. It does not discuss or attack these unequal structures.
- Science pretends to be 'devoid of value judgements', and pretends to be objective. In fact, objective science doesn't exist.
- Science should be oriented to the participation of the people and it should be directed to organisation and action for social change instead of the 'ivory tower' mentality of established science.

Action-research is the alternative to this science.

An action-researcher (or development worker) chooses on the basis of political motives for an existing target organisation, which is being marginalized by the societal process. The researcher should be part of the organisation. Self-education and - organisation of the group has the highest priority and the researcher should conform him/herself to this. The group takes the decisions and the reseacher only acts as a 'handy person' for the group. In this way, the people will start their own process and take their own decisions and set their own strategy for development. Examples of such an approach are given in the next two articles of this Newsletter.

However, in many situations in the Third World, this kind of farmers' organisation does not yet exist. In the literature of action-research, there is a controversy as to whether one should start to organise at all (see e.g. Maria Mies, 1977), as it will then be you who initiates certain activities, and not the people themselves. Others point out that it is necessary that people from outside do make a choice for marginalized groups and set things in motion.

Verhagen (1984) gives the following methodology for this last form of actionresearch:

- Introduction in the village

One local graduate social scientist is stationed in a village and lives there between the people. She/he should try to develop good contacts with the target group and work together with them (participatory observation).

- Identification of the poorest groups in the village and their problems. Here several methods are used: informal talks, participatory observation, and surveys.

The primary aim is to analyse the major problems of the target group(s). After this the researcher makes a list of possible subjects which are then discussed in groups discussions.

- Groupdiscussions

The researcher tries to gather people to discuss their situation, their problems and possible solutions. The participants should discuss the analysis of the researchers themselves, and should decide on possible strategies for action themselves. The researcher only tries to activate the group process, not to direct the group. Two different groups can be distinguished at the start:

a. 'Normal' discussion group: in 8 or 9 meetings several topics are discussed.
b. 'Special interest planning group': these groups work further on a specific problem or idea which seems interesting.

Out of these first groups, new groups can develop:

c. 'Claim-making groups': people organise themselves to improve the services of the government such as extension, credit, co-operatives etc. (which are mostly only available for already richer and larger farms).
d. 'Cooperative action groups': such a group is dealing with a certain economic activity, e.g. the cultivation and cooperative marketing of a certain product or a rotating saving and credit association.

The researcher monitors these groups and tries to make the groups self-reliant.

In Verhagen's planning this whole process takes about one year. After that year the researcher starts the same procedure in another village.

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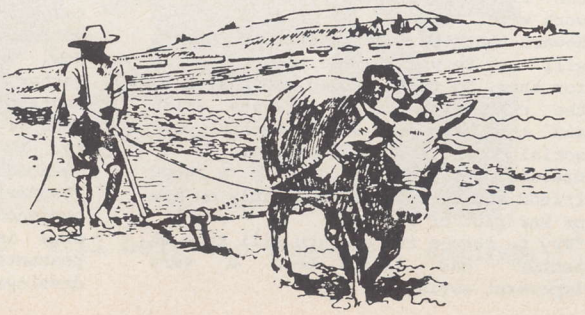


WORKING WITH PEASANTS IN PERU AND ECUADOR:
THE FARMERS' KNOWLEDGE IS THE BASIS FOR SELF-RELIANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

People's knowledge is people's power

"Farmers can solve the majority of their problems themselves when you help them to regain their self-reliance which has been destroyed in so many years of so-called 'development'.
People who neglect their own traditional technology (developed through ages to survive in mostly very limited circumstances) put the time-bomb under their own existence".

Hans and Ana Carlier, Horticulturalist and Nutrionist respectively of the Organisation of Dutch Volunteers, have come to this conclusion after working for more than ten years with peasant-unions in Latin America.
Their method of working is one which inter-relates farming, nutrition and health. It aims at both giving peasants more power over their own development, and helping them to revalueate their own culture and tradition.
This article describes the way Ana and Hans work with peasants, not the mistakes, which were plenty, but the positive experiences which can be useful for others doing the same job.

"When you visit a village, the people do put expectations on you, based on previous experiences with 'people from outside', like extension officers, doctors, teachers and quite a lot of university students. Mostly, these people seem to have a bad image, due to thousands of promises and the little real help given to the development of the poor.
Your start also depends on the good or bad image of your counterpart-organisation among peasants and, of course, quite a lot depends on your ability for human contact in which language plays an important role.
Still, when you're open and accept the local people as your teachers, their acceptance will be better and the work easier."

Beware of traps

What is the best way to start ?
One should start very quietly; rent a modest room or house in the village and live there among the people with whom you want to work. We feel that it is very important to live in the same situation, in order to be able to understand their way of life. We always lived half of the time in the village and the other half in the town. Please stand the temptation to start with 'demonstration courses' or 'demonstration plots', but first try to get to know the people. Walk around and observe their gardens and try to help in their agricultural plots, they will teach you how to cultivate these and they will accept your mistakes, because you are new.
Talk with the people. Moreover, listen well. Write your diary or field-book, because you will forget a lot of details. Try to come into contact with organised people and help them to reach more men and women. It is destructive to create parallel organizations.
When we need more detailed technical information about certain customs or technologies, we ask for 'local specialists': men and women with acknowledged position and skills with regard to traditional agriculture, curing animals or healing people with natural medicins. These specialists are the first persons in your project to work with.
Beware that the more wealthier farmers will try to win you and make you work for them. Do realise then, that also in the rural areas social classes exist and that the poor will observe your social contacts with suspicion.
Discuss new techniques with a good friend and test these preferably on his or her plot or garden.
"Try to change it, and you will know it better" has always been a very important saying for us.
Prevent the people from saying "he (or she) does not know a thing, because he (or she) is only asking !" They like to get to know you, your friends, your family, your technical, social and political experiences.
We consider development to have a political colour. Therefore we talked a lot with the organised farmers about the problem of technical assistance (e.g. machinery) being provided for the village, not for their needs, but to pacify their political activity. We hope that the discussions helped them to come to action and to a radical change of the structural injustice.

Education becomes communication

But how can you avoid being abused by others (or abuse others yourself) ?
That is the reason why we grew from a teacher-student relation to a form of horizontal communication work.
Now, we try to bring the people together in meetings and discuss the development-process. We always ask the groups: How was it ten or twenty years ago ? How is it today ? What has changed ? Why did it change ? Who is responsible for all this and why ? What happened with the power ? One of our aims is to try to understand why the peasants unions do not fight for the development of natural medicines. Why

healers who have always helped the people to survive ?
When they analyse this process of change, and their experiences with the modern way of life, e.g. in the form of theatre or role-plays, then they realise that they are just dreaming and that they do not have their 'own programme' directed towards their needs on development, food production, nutrition and health.
We also inform people about the problems we encounter in modern agriculture, nutrition and medicine in Europe, and we have made lists of chemicals and medicines which are forbidden in Europe and still for sale in Latin America.
If people are not informed about the negative sides of western technology, they will not understand the importance and value of their own knowledge and technology.

Solving problems

How do you come to your conclusion that the farmers can solve the majority of their problems themselves ?
This is based on our experience in Ecuador. In a centre we worked together with peasants, technicians and a priest on the development of the peasant' unions. We helped to orga-nize workshops on health, nutrition and food production. Normally, we had about 25 representatives from different groups of peasants, including men and women, old and young. Every one of them was asked to write down his or her five most important problems on agriculture. These questions were gathered on the blackboard and divided into 4 groups. Then the participants discussed in smaller groups how they themselves would solve the problems and how their ancestors would have done it.
From the results of these discussions they (and we) learned that with a bit of communication and concentration, they could solve the majority of their problems.
Investigation with other farmers who had more experience could probably solve the remaining questions and if this was insufficient, they would ask specialists from outside.

Farming, food and health

When you work in agriculture, how do you relate food and health ?
We always work together: Ana more in the field of nutrition and Hans in agricultural production for better nutrition.
In the first project in Peru, we worked with a cooperative. They asked us to help the associated villages in the production of vegetables for the market in town. But we wanted to help the peasants with the improvement of their own food production. So we specialized on working in family gardens. When we started, we did not have the slightest idea of their feeding habits and how they looked upon, and accordingly dealt with, health problems. For this reason we lost too much time on trying to introduce western type vegetables gardens, which had no link at all with their culture and way of living.
We had to radically change our method of working - we started to analyse with the people themselves the value of their food crops. We discovered that the peasants used vegetables as medicinal herbs: onions to cure cough, celery for stomach-aches caused by cold wind, tea of lettuce as a tranquillizer and so on.
In our opinion, the peasants know very well the relation between certain foodstuffs and diseases. Their food theory is very similar to the macrobiotics of Japan and they taught us to classify foodstuffs in warm and cold (Yang and Yin).
However, a lot of this kind of knowledge is disappearing.

Making science with people

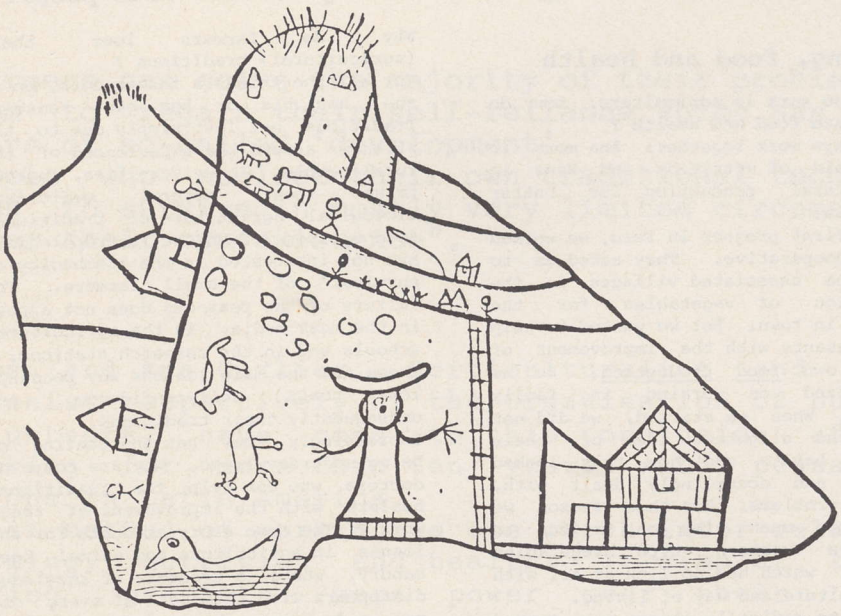
Why do farmers lose their (agricultural) traditions ?
For all the things a farmer does, he or she has his or her own reasons. Traditions get lost simply due to the silence around the experiences of the rural people. In universities, nobody talks about natural medicines, biological agriculture or traditional food systems. Even the antropologists are not interested in the 'technolgy of survival' of the small farmers. The culture of the peasants does not appear in the mass-media, in the agricultural schools and in the research stations.
These are the main reasons why peasants lose their self-confidence, and consequently their traditions.
Increasingly they get the feeling of being underdeveloped. Why are there no doctors who can help the traditional healers with the improvement of their work ? The same story accounts for the losses in agriculture and animal husbandry, where a treasure of knowledge disappears with the death of every old man and woman, because they have no child who is interested in their knowledge !
When you ask a farmer why he does a certain action, he will tell you - it is proved to be the best way - or - because they (my ancestors) always did it this way -.
It is our task, to find out with the people why this is the best way, e.g. when you know that beans fix nitrogen in the soil, there is an extra reason for planting them together with maize and thus (when explained to the farmer) he can defend this reason against "specialists" who tell that monoculture is the best way.
This 'finding out 'why' with people' is what we call making science with people.

Books

What did you do with the results of the investigations and meetings ?
We completed each series of meetings with the publication of the results in a book for the local people. We made manuals on horticulture, nutrition and traditional medicines in Peru. In Ecuador, we published the results of the workshops, held with the peasant unions. These two books (see below) deal with their way of agriculture and animal husbandry. The last book that we made with the union, 'Nuestra Alimentacion', is a working book for the union with the results of a completed study among 227 families.
The study - executed by the leaders of the union themselves - relates malnutrition, diseases and child mortality; the unequal distribution of land, migration and the negative

A song made in a workshop will help to remember serious things in a pleasant way

consequences for women; the decline of the health system and the bad drinking water; the integration in the (large-scale) market-economy and a lot of other themes.
With this book, we helped the peasants to investigate how far they could improve their own development plans and actions. This is why you can see in the same book an evaluation of all their established efforts and program-mes made to improve their situation, as well as a lot of proposals to the unions for projects made by the people themselves.



Let the people try out different ways of communication to express their problems: the differences between large-scale and small-scale farmers

How do you see the future of the projects you left ?
We have helped the people to rebuild a little bit of self reliance, self-confidence and independance, and because the programmes were based on traditional knowledge, we do not fear that this process will stop with our withdrawal.

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THE FARMERS TRAINING CENTER IN THE PHILIPPINES:

Helping farmers to change

The Farmers Training Center in which we work is situated on the island of Samar, which measures 10.000 sqkm (1/4 of the size of the Netherlands) and which is the sixth biggest island of the Philippino archipelago.
Within the Phillipines, Samar is known as a neglected area from which many people emigrate, being attracted to big cities like Manila and Cebu. Samar is also well known because of the tropical typhoons which pass the island about 8 times a year and bring heavy rains and strong winds. Farmers here usually joke about the climate by saying: "We have only two seasons here: the wet season and the very wet season", this means that about 5.000 mm of rain falls over 10 months, with a very short dry period during the months of March and April.

Working on the farmers' confidence: he is, after all, a professional !

Vanishing forests

The situation of the farmers in our area is only one example of the situation of so many shifting cultivation farmers in the world.
It was only about 40 years ago that the hilly island of Samar was still aminly covered with tropical rainforest. At the moment only the small remote central part of the island consists of forests. The narrow outer section of the island (with a relatively good infrastructure) was converted into rice paddies and coconut plantations. The area in between is now-adays covered with vast 'cogon' (Imperata cylindrica) areas, these do not succeed into a forest vegetation anymore because of yearly uncontrolled bushfires.
Previously, farmers here used to harvest big volumes of rice and corn or abaca when they followed the logging with their 'kaingin' (slash and burn) system of farming and when marketing was still easy with coastal roads at a close distance.
After that, when fertile land could only be found far away from villages, new communities were formed near the forest in the interior. These communities do not organise themselves anymore on bulky cash crops (like corn), they are mainly self-supporting by exchanging forest products (wood, ratan and boats) in return for their daily needs like petroleum, matches, cooking oil and clothes.
Nowadays, farmers in the forest live far away from markets, schools and other facilities and farmers left behind in the colognal areas only have poor harvests.

Self-reliance

In 1982, on the initiative of farmers from these two areas, the Farmers Training Center was established to look at possibilities of increasing the agri-cultural production in both areas. In a small village, in a representative cogonal area, farmers and staff built a training center and developed a demonstration- and a experimental farm. A 'low external input'-approach for the program was chosen because:
- In the past some farmers in the area had bad experiences with 'high external input' agricultural progammes (which use chemical fertilizers, insecticides, irrigation, certified seeds and loans) promoted by the government, which resulted in either further indebtness, or losing land or a working animal due to failure to obtain big harvest (as 'promised' in this green revolution approach).
- It is seen as a proper way to approach farmers who were previously not involved in an agricultural development program.
- The farmers can see the development of a new agricultural system as a strategy to become independent of outsiders (middlemen, banks, international dependency of the country).
- It considers factors like pollution of the environment, health of people and sustainability.

Soil improvement

In our training programme the focus lies on the control of erosion and improvement of soil fertility as these were seen by the farmers to be the main reasons for getting low harvests and to lead a swidden life. Related to soil erosion control, practices like drainage, checkdams, contourfarming, strip-cropping and cover-cropping are taught and demonstrated at the demofarm (1 hectare at present).
Aimed at improving soil fertility itself, green manuring (Leuceana leucocephala, Gliricidia cepium and Tithonia diversifolia), crop-rotation, cover-cropping and zero-tillage are demonstrated alongside the use of compost and animal manure (rabbits).

Weed control

Especially in a very humid climate weed infestation of a newly cleared piece of forest land is one cause for practicing shifting cultivation. Either because of lack of money (for hiring labour to weed), tools (like a plow) or techniques, farmers are forced to make a new farm every 2 or 3 years. The appro-priate technology component of the pro-gramme develops tools (and post-harvesting devices) out of locally available or cheap materials, which are time-saving and make certain farm-works easier (e.g. shelling corn or peanuts).
A satisfactory technique for the weed problem has not yet been found, however practice showed that weed infestation is curbed when crop rotation is practiced and when a piece of land is permanently used for cultivation (no fallow). A certain form of zero tillage or continuous cropping might be an acceptable practice in the future.

Eye-opener

After working for two years in this programme, I feel we have just started. Helping farmers to change from being shifting cultivators to more permanent farmers is a long process which, in the first place, requires a new attitude by the farmers towards their present practices. After the training course we hope farmers will understand why permanent agriculture is mainly a matter of taking good care of the soil and why their present practice of 'soil mining' will finally always lead to depletion of the soil and to their move to a new area. They realise that apparently useless plants (mainly legumes) or materials (manure, weeds) from their own environment can be valuable if used in a certain way. The FTC does not pretend to have clearly defined answers to the farmers' problems. In fact, their stay in the training center is usually no more then an eye-opener for them.
Very seldom are techniques exactly copies afterwards, which shows that each situation is different and that each farm is unique.
Working on the farmers' confidence to be able to change his apparent static situation is an important aspect of the extension work. But most important for the success of the programme is that farmers become aware of the effects of their present activities within their socio-economic situation and feel the necessity and being really willing and motivated to search for economically vialble and feasable alternatives.
Unfortunately in the Philippines, people often not allowed to discover the realities, and others who have discovered these are not allowed to work on alternatives.

Jeroen Ex, Organization of Netherlands Volenteers, Blanca Aurora - Samar, July 1985.

From SIBAT newsletter

Vol.2, No.2, July 1985

Sibol ng Agham at Akmang Teknolohiya (SIBAT) is a linkage network of appropriate technology (AT) groups in the Philippines. It aims to unify AT-groups for concerted effort to uplift socio-economic conditions of the Filipino people. P.O. Box 338, Manila.

IRRI under attack

Around 500 peasants from various provinces of Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon marched to the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Los Banos, Laguna last June 7 to protest IRRI's "miracle rice" seeds or High-Yielding Varieties (HYV).
According to the farmers, the HYV's developed by IRRI have spawned widespread poverty in the provinces, thus worsening the country's economic crisis. The IRRI seeds require high inputs of fertilizers, pesticides, irrigation and machinery, without which they cease to be high-yielding.
Jaime Tadeo of the Alyansa ng mga Magsasaka sa Gitnang Luson, accused IRRI of "genetic imperialisme". He said the adoptation of HYV's in all the country's major rice regions would lead to the eradication of our traditional rice varieties.
Dr. Burton Onata, former chief statistician of IRRI and the Asian Development Bank criticized IRRI's lack of sincerity in addressing the needs of the country and its small farmers, who have instead been dragged deeper in debt. He also denounced Presidential Degree No. 1620 which gives IRRI officials immunity from suit, an act which subjugates our rights to those of IRRI.
The protestors called for the dismantling of U.S. control over IRRI.

GRAAP's method

Experiences in Burkina Faso

The "Groupe de Recherche et d'Appui pour l'Autopromotion Paysanne", or briefly GRAAP, tries to stimulate the conciousness of the rural people. In the GRAAP-philosophy, it is necessary that the rural people decide for themselves on the patterns of development.The rural community should revalue their own cultural basis, and methods to improve the situation should start from there.

GRAAP-methodology

The self-development of villages can, according to GRAAP, be accelerated by so-called 'village facilitators' or 'animateurs'. These animateurs should stimulate a discussion between the villagers. The use of a flannelboard is essential in the GRAAP-method. Discussions can be visualized on this board with figures.
The animateurs are first trained in the handling of the GRAAP-method and the use of the flannelboard. The training is done at the Centre d'Etudes Economique et Sociales d'Afrique Occidentale (CESAO) in Bobo-Dioulasso.
The figures which are used to visualize the discussion are already available at CESAO and GRAAP, but ideally the figures should be adapted to each specific region. Also the animateur should speak the local language and should live or come from that region.
Three steps are essential in the methodology:

1. 'To see' after a short introduction by the animateur the village group is divided into smaller groups of about 10 persons. In each group some basic questions are asked such as:
   - What has changed in our village since our ancestors?
   - Are these changes good or bad,Why?

   The small groups discuss these questions and observe their life and problems.
2. 'To reflect': The village group gathers again and representatives of each smaller group give account of their discussion (mise en commun). Changes between 'past'and 'nowadays' are expressed on the flannel board (see figure 1). In the group, then, the causes and consequences of the present situation are analysed. What consequences do these changes have for men, women and children? Are the changes positive or negative?
3. 'Action': consequently, from the first step the villagers analyse what could be done about the situation and whether they can take certain steps to improve the situation.

The animateur is only required to stimulate the discussion. However, she or he can also give some basic information if the group wishes. GRAAP and CESAO have developed several series. Ideally, the group sessions should start with a serie "Les villageois s'animent" (the villagers are getting involved), but it is also possible to start with a more specific issue. Here is a list of some of the series which are available at GRAAP:

- grain storage
- management of harvested millets
- improved stoves
- the place of rural people in the world economy
- the place of rural people in the national economy
- the changes in our environment: with 3 'recherches':
  - -- to be master of our environment
  - -- to keep the soil and the water
  - -- the life in the soil
- health in the village
- birth of children
- education of children.

GRAAP has developed figures for each series which can be attached to the flannel board. These can serve as an example for people who want to use the GRAAP-method. For example, figures 1 and 2 are used in the serie: "The changes in our environment".

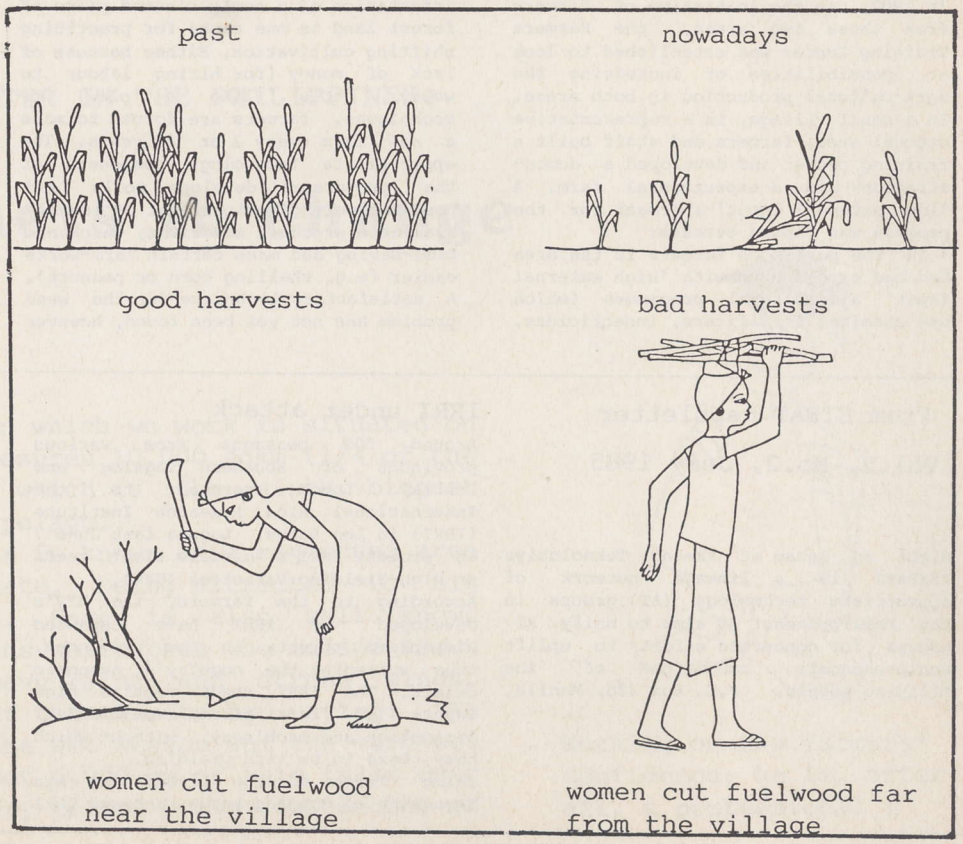

Figure 1
Some figures which are used in the the GRAAP-method

With the serie 'The changes in our environment', GRAAP has the following objectives:

a. To make the villagers aware of the changes in the environment: fewer trees, less rains, erosion.
b. To make the villagers see the consequences of these changes: e.g. the women have to walk further to obtain fuelwood, low crop yields, changing village life by migration of young people to the cities, etc.
c. To make the villagers see the causes of these changes and take action on them: reforestation, use of legumes, erosion control, etc.

GRAAP in practice

In a project 'Bois de villages' in Burkina Faso, the GRAAP-method was used. After some sessions voluntary villages were provided with seedlings of trees to plant 1 ha of village woodlot and were asked also to establish a small village tree nursery. In addition, a programme of improvement of the locally used stoves was started. About 200 villages participated. The project was evaluated by Reij (1983):

- The establishment of the village nurseries was very poor. This was caused mainly by the fact that no one villager felt responsible for the management.
- The survival rate of the trees in the village woodlots was rather low (about 40%). Some village plantations attained survival rates of 90%, but others attained less than 40%. Explanations for the low figures were sought in: tree planting on poor quality land, drought, and bad management.
- When the villagers were asked who would to benefit from the trees in about 10 years, the answer was often: "We don't know"or, "Ask the president of the groupement villageois". There is great uncertainty to whom the trees belong. This explains probably why the trees sometimes do not receive the necessary care.
- An important objective of the village afforestation was to assure the future supply of firewood and as such was expected to lighten the women's burdensome task of firewood collection. However, the groupement villageois had usually male members only and most of them replied, when they were asked whether they would give the wood to their wives, that they intended to sell the wood and put their money in their 'caisse'. Women can probably not make any demands as they usually don't participate in communal afforestation efforts.

A Dutch volunteer evaluated this project (Van Staaveren, 1984):
"There are enough problems: the scarcity of fertile fields leaving for afforestation only the exhausted, eroded fields; the diminishing rainfall causing crop failures and food shortages; the organisation and motivation of the villagers; the lack of well-trained forestry agents and higher cadre. But, although our reforestation look sometimes hopelessly little, I am convinced that our approach, with its strong accent on extension, has a real chance".

Discussion

In discussing this method, it should be clear that the GRAAP-method is certainly important and more and more used in West Africa. Although it is never mentioned in the GRAAP-publications, it has a close resemblance with the methods of Paulo Freire. Particularly the use of the flannel board and the figures can be evaluated positively and are helpful as a tool to stimulate discussions.
Still, from the evaluation of the Bois de Villages project, some important criticisms can be mentioned. Firstly, the GRAAP-method tends to have a strong bias to impose certain problems and solutions on the villagers. In the reforestation project, the people were suggested from outside that the planting of communal tree plots could solve some of the problems they face. Therefore, one can question whether this would have been the choice of the villagers, and if they really felt it as an answer to their needs. The bad establishment and management certainly reflect such criticisms.
Secondly, there is a strong bias towards collective -or village- action, and its seems that the GRAAP-method does not recognize the hierarchal differences inside a village. The women do not participate in the Bois de Villages project, and nobody knows who is really going to benefit. The GRAAP-method again falls into the same trap as the Community Development programmes in the sixties: they have an idealistic vision of the equity inside a village: they ignore the hierarchal structures.
The above criticism is esp. from Richards (1985) and Johnny and Richards (1980). They warn against "pseudo-participation". They do not want to bring a message, but plead that development workers and extension workers should better listen to the people, for whom they are considering working. Understanding and use of local customs and expressions is then important.
Probably also certain elements of the GRAAP-method can then be useful.

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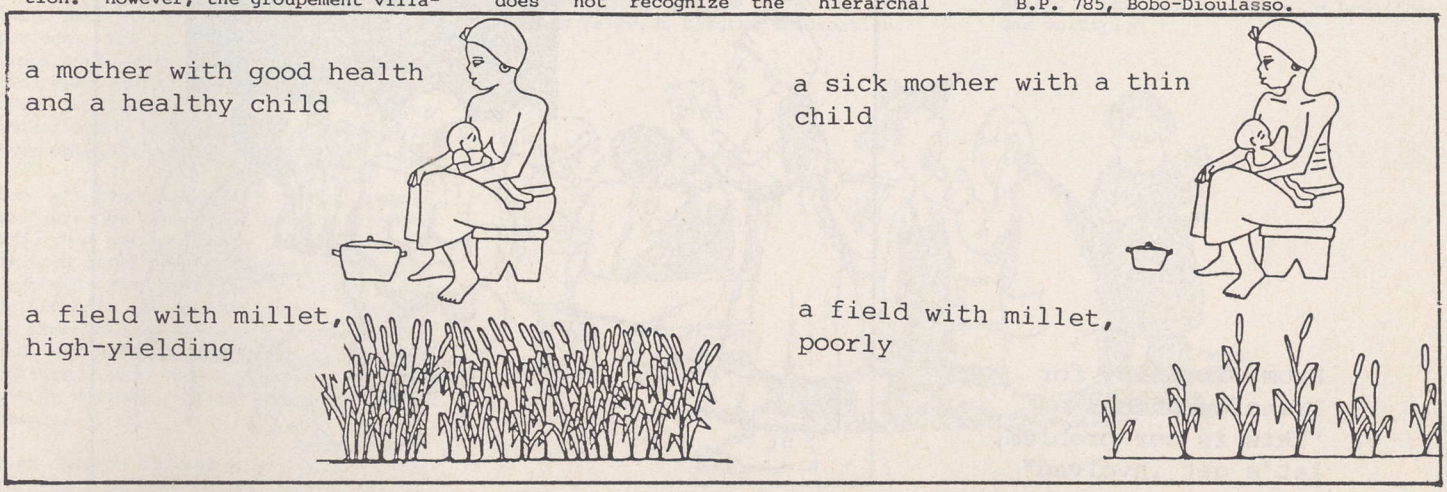

Figure 2 Figures from the GRAAP-series, explaining that the soil is a mother and the plants are her children.

Go to the people

An African experience in education for development

Jerry Crowley, Spearhead no 86-87, 1985 Gaba publications, Ameca Pastoral Institute, P.O. Box 908, Edoret, Kenya.

Jerry Crowly gives us in this book of 100 pages a description of the Kenyan Catholic movement D.E.P. (Development Education Programme), its history, vision, motivation, methodology and results.

"One of the greatest achievements of the D.E.P is the promotion of that sense of responsibility among people for whatever affects their lives. People have been helped to realise: "this is our problem let's get involved", and not to think too big, and therefore look to others for help, or else despair. They are now able to look for feasible solutions, to start small projects that they can manage themselves, like a kiosk in the market , a common garden to grow tomatos, or a small poultry project".

D.E.P started in 1974 with a training programme which came to be known as DELTA (Development Education and Leadership Teams in Action). Out of this programme the D.E.P approach was developed which is based on five converging streams:

* **a theology of development** based on the biblical ideas that God has left the world as an unfinished product in the hands of human beings, and that the imperative of love proclaimed by Jesus calls on Christians to progressively humanise the world and make it a hospitable abode for all of humanity;
* **a theory and method of adult education** based on the writings and practice of Paulo Freire, the radical Brazilian educationalist, working with Cardinal Arns in the archdiocese of Sao Paulo, whose ideas have helped to bring a fundamental change in the education of adults world-wide;
* **a theory of Human Relations** and a method of training based on working in groups;
* **a system of Organisational Development** based principally on models developed by Management Design Incorporated, an Institute in Cincinnati, U.S.A.;
* **a method of social analysis**, based mainly on schemas developed by the Ecumenical Institute for the Development of Peoples (INODEP) in Paris, and adapted for use in Kenya.

Not all of the above mentioned elements carry the same weight with individual facilitators or participants or with different specific programmes or in different stages of the development of the entire programme. Yet the five streams are there and if the movement continues to grow, they will remain the basis for further reflection, planning and action.
A sixth element of the D.E.P programme is the progressive **adoptation** of the methodology to the **various cultures** that form the fabric of Kenyan society. And another feature is the almost complete Africanisation of D.E.P leadership.

Each Diocese in Kenya now has a development office with a full time staff. For example, in the Machakos diocese there are eight seperate programmes based on the principles and methodology of the D.E.P operating entirely under lay African leadership: Adult Literacy, Family Life, Community Health, Women's Groups, Saving and Credit, Agriculture and Water Projects.
In 1982 there were already more than 2000 groups working with this methodology and also in other countries like Zimbabwe, Nigeria and India programmes were started.

"Through the D.E.P we found we had a tool that enabled us to go to the people - not telling them what to do, but using their knowledge, their experience, their goodwill to find out what was important for them to enable to achieve what they were actually capable of".

The methodology of D.E.P is outlined in the comprehensive three part handbook Training for Transformation - A handbook for Community Workers by A. Hope and S. Timmel, Mambo Press P.O. Box779, Geveru, Zimbabwe, 1984.

Edit.: compared with the GRAAP method (see page 12) the D.E.P methodology is giving more attention to community building and to organization and training of the group involved. It is leaving the group free to chose for activities which really meet their needs. The group is not forced to participate in any activity the development agency thinks to be important. Pseudo-participation is in this way evited.

From: Training for Transformation: "This is our problem, let's get involved"

Rural Development

Putting the Last First

Robert Chambers, 1983; Longman Group Limited, Burnt Mill, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE, England and Associated Companies throughout the world; ISBN 0-582 64443-7; Price: US$ 7,=, 246 pp., 245 refs.,

When you're not open to question your actions and ways of thinking about rural development, when you want to keep your comfortable views and position, you should not read this book. For Chambers clearly demonstrates that we, the outsiders, sustain rural poverty in many ways due to misperception and unwillingness to understand what is really going on in the rural areas. He writes realistically and in a carefully balanced way about the life of rural poor in Third World countries. Many examples from African and Asian countries - where he worked as a consultant on rural development -, and quotations from other books, makes this book easy and varied to read. His main message is that, at all possible levels, from practitioners to professionals, there should be more openness and a learning attitude about what the rural people themselves have to say; thus he gives ideas on how to reverse the learning process. Chambers, however, does not analyse in depth the possible alternatives: how should one (practically defined) work with small farmers ? Though this may be regarded as a shortcoming, the book is - we would say - a must for everyone who is esteemed or considering working for and with the rural poor in Third World countries.

The first chapter explains a strong statement: we, the outsiders, do not perceive rural poverty. There are many reasons why 'the poorest of the poor' are unseen: e.g. we are urban-based and if we go out of town, we only stay along the roadside. Project biases prevents looking outside the area; professionnal biases (and specialisation) prevents understanding the linkages of deprivation; travelling is not done during the heavy rainy periods, but in the dry season when no crops grow. Thus, the real situation of the poor is little seen and "... even less is the nature of their poverty understood". Consequently, knowledge is kept monopolized by outsiders.

Who are the outsiders ? Those people who are not themselves rural and poor and who want to help. These can be defined within two cultures: academics "engaged in unhurried analysis and criticism" and practitioners "engaged in time-bounded actions". A pluralistic view is needed, synthezising the two cultures and having openness for the third culture: that of the rural people.

Then how do outsiders understand rural poverty ? In many cases, questionnaires and surveys are used. They bring, however, great gaps between the cultures: "what a practitioner thinks 'useful' an academic may not find 'interesting'. The surveys also bring wrong data due to many reasons: - there is a wrong perception of rural poverty; - the concepts used in surveys are from the outsiders and not from the rural people; - only that information is looked for what is "measurable, answerable and acceptable". And, of course, poor people give for many reasons false or slanted information.

It would be more (cost-) effective if approaches put the problem more central; if long-lived experiences of the rural people could be taken up. The approaches need to be more adaptable and open for the 'unexpected'.

Why is there so little status for rural people's own knowledge ? In the fourth chapter it is explained how "the links of modern scientific knowledge with wealth, power and prestige condition outsiders to despise and ignore rural people's knowledge". But Chambers concludes that rural people do have a lot of knowledge of their environment, and that "small farmers do experiment and innovate on their own". Still, many situations need the professional outsiders' knowledge, and together with what the rural people know, new technologies can be generated.

The fifth chapter describes the trends for the majority of the rural poor who are "moving down into deeper and more tightly integrated rural poverty" and closes the first section of the book. That rural poverty is misperceived should be clear by now.

It will be easier to see what to do when outsiders start with the priorities and strategies of rural people themselves.
Secondly, outsiders and rural people should concentrate on where they agree. Different ways to analyse rural environments and deprivation are described.

How to put the last first ? Chapter seven and eight describe ideas which can reverse the integrated poverty trends: choices have to be made which enable more listening to, more contact with, and more learning from the poorest. Many people do have influence over such choices. In addition, a more open-minded observation, discussion and analysis is essential.
These 'new professionals' do already exist, "the hard question is how they can multiply" !

Urban-based professionals will gain nothing but a partial view of the problems (from CERES, FAO-magazine, no. 74)

Appropriate technology for grain storage
Report of a pilot project

Community Development Trust Fund of Tanzania, 1977. Printed by the Ministry of Agriculture Ukalima Wa Kisasa, P.O. Box 2308, Dar-es-Salaam.

The project described in this report for improving small-scale grain storage at village level was undertaken by a team composed of staff of the Community Development Trust Fund, the Institute of Adult Education, and associates of the Economic Development Bureau in Tanzania. The work was carried out in the village of Bwarkira Chini in the Morogoro District. The goal of the project was to develop, in the course of discussion meetings with villagers, improved designs and strategies for grain storage appropriate to local conditions, and to begin implementating these improvements.

The efforts of the external team were from the start combined with those of a village ad hoc Storage Committee appointed by the Village Council. In the course of more than 20 formal meetings over eight weeks, clear lines of low-cost improvements for the existing grain storage structures and methods emerged from the people themselves and were systematized by the Storage Committee. This process involved discussions with villagers concerning the nature and significance of the full range of food problems and priorities in the village. Existing village structures and methods of storage were elicited and discussed critically. Since the village is composed of many tribal groups, a rich variety of structures and methods existed, but had not necessarily been shared even by close neighbours. This existing range of storage technology was combined with inputs of low-cost storage technology developed in other countries such as Nigeria and Mexico. Further discussions ensued during which the "foreign" technology was criticized, modified, and added to the stock of possibilities already known in the village.

Three major streams of modifications were agreed upon by groups of villagers who started implementation under supervision of the Storage Committee. These three streams of modifications of existing storage systems corresponded to the expressed needs of peasants having different socio-economic positions, resources and harvest sizes.

Benefits

Immediate benefits of the project included the construction of 15 improved, rat-proofed storage structures with a capacity of 25 tons of food grains in the harvest season, and the use of pesticides by 25 peasant farmers on some 12 tons of grain. The value of crops saved from destruction by rats and insects through these improvements during the first six months is estimated to be as high as the approximate value of ten tons of cereal grains.

Medium range benefits include a greater awareness and understanding on the part of the villagers of the principles of grain storage, and the technical and social variables which affect storage in their environment. In addition, the creation of the Storage Committee means that the village has a mechanism for evaluating and assessing the modifications made, and a vehicle for the continued mobilization of villagers in incremental improvements of their storage systems. The Storage Committee could also become a permanent manpower resource for similar operations in the entire Division, as well as in the project village.

Long-range benefits of the project include the development of methods of village dialogue and participation for use by several Tanzanian institutions in training their rural workers and in running their programmes. Furthermore, the project's considerable documentation, including 25 hours of tape-recorded reflection by peasants on their own food and storage problems, is a rich resource for the creation of post-literacy reading matter, radio programmes, and other educational materials.

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