

TEACHING NOTE
FOR WORKSHOP
FACILITATORSIDENTIFYING OUR OWN PROBLEMS:
WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES FOR
PARTICIPATORY PHE RESEARCH

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Key Issue	Case-Study Discussion Questions
Participatory research/community involvement	2–7
Volunteer recruitment and retention	5, 7, 9
Cross-sectoral planning	8, 9
Adolescent reproductive health, agriculture, migration	1, 8

Case-Study Synopsis

Determining the most important development challenges at the community level can be difficult, especially when they entail complex cause-and-effect relationships across different sectors. This case study relates the story of how World Neighbors (a development NGO) involved community members in identifying both critical development challenges and the relationships among those challenges in their community. World Neighbors then supported a process through which the community members developed a plan of action to achieve their goals in the areas of livelihoods, natural-resource management, and reproductive health.

Teaching Tip

Depending on the experiences of the individuals in your group, readers could learn a great deal through sharing personal experiences during discussion. Be prepared for a wide-ranging discussion on the ethics of using various incentives to recruit and retain volunteers. If this is not what you are interested in exploring, prepare a strategy for acknowledging various viewpoints on the topic while moving on to other issues.

Selected Learning Points

This case study offers readers rich material to discuss the challenges and benefits associated with using participatory methods in the planning and implementation of development projects. The case-study author offers the following lessons learned from her experience, which may be useful additions to the workshop discussion:

- ▶ **Participatory processes are important in carrying out PHE work.** PHE concerns are people's issues and interests—hence, the people affected are the ones who understand the issues best and are in the best position to address them.
- ▶ **Participatory processes lead to community involvement and ownership of the project.** It is important to have community members identify their own needs, analyze the factors that lead to the needs, and draw up action plans to address them. The author notes that respect for and the use of community's inherent knowledge and capacities allows the community to cultivate innovative approaches to address their own problems.
- ▶ **Using participatory approaches in the PHE framework allows for critical, comprehensive, and long-term analysis and planning by the community.** These approaches facilitated a better community understanding of how a single issue is linked to one or more community problems and how a single intervention can contribute to the solutions for one or more problems.

Related Readings and Tools

- ▶ Fatimata Lankoande, “Understanding the Link Between Population and Environment Through Participatory Action Research,” *World Neighbors In Action* 29, no. 2E (2003).

This eight-page newsletter uses examples from Burkina Faso and includes hands-on tools such as sample surveys and planning documents.

- ▶ World Neighbors, *Lessons From the Field—Making the Connection: Assessing the Impact of Integrating Natural Resource Management and Reproductive Health in the Loboc Watershed, Bohol Island, Philippines* (Cebu City, Philippines: World Neighbors, 2005), accessed online at www.wn.org/wnstore/PDFs/WNIA/Philippines.pdf, on July 11, 2006.

This document reports the methods and findings of an operational research project designed to assess the impact of efforts to integrate natural-resources management and reproductive health in the Philippines.

- ▶ World Neighbors, *Lessons From the Field—Building the Capacity of Local Organizations in Reproductive Health: Nepal Case Study* (Oklahoma City: World Neighbors, 2005), accessed online at www.wn.org/rh_nepal.pdf, on July 11, 2006.

This report describes the process World Neighbors used to partner with local NGOs in developing a reproductive health component in Terai, a rural area in the southeastern plains of Nepal.

- ▶ International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR), *Participatory Methods in Community-based Coastal Resource Management* (Silang, Cavite, the Philippines: IIRR, 1998). Available for purchase online at www.iirr.org/publicationbdate.htm.

This sourcebook is a documentation of various tools and methods developed in the course of doing community-based coastal resource management as employed by field practitioners in the Philippines, Indonesia, India, and other Asian countries. The sourcebook includes a step-by-step description of various participatory methods that have been field-tested by the authors and their organizations.

- ▶ Thomas Barton et al., *Our People, Our Resources: Supporting Rural Communities in Participatory Action Research on Population Dynamics and the Local Environment* (Gland, Switzerland: IUCN, 1997). Available for purchase online at www.iucn.org/bookstore/Soc-issues-index.htm.

This volume illustrates concepts, methods, and tools for “primary environmental care,” an approach that seeks to empower communities to meet basic needs while protecting the environment. It emphasizes a community-led process of participatory action research in which local knowledge and skills are fully utilized in order to promote the effective, integrated management of environment and population dynamics for the benefit of local people.

- ▶ *Participatory Rural Appraisal Handbook* (Worcester, MA: The National Environment Secretariat, Government of Kenya; Clark University; Egerton University, Kenya; and The Center for International Development and Environment of the World Resources Institute, 1994). Available for purchase online at www.clarku.edu/departments/idce/publications.shtml.

This guide presents field-based steps of the participatory rural appraisal methodology, including: data gathering, organizing and ranking problems and opportunities, creating community action plans for resource management, and evaluation/monitoring.