Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

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Introduction

- ✓ **Quantitative research and it's limitations**
  - ➢ Rural Development Tourism – the phenomenon of the brief rural visit by the urban – based professional
  - ➢ Large-scale surveys with long questionnaires are tedious, a headache to administer, a nightmare to process, and write up,
  - ➢ Exclusion approach
- ✓ **Qualitative research**
  - ➢ aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior.
  - ➢ Inclusion approach

Introduction (contd.)

"It is a paradox that when economists analyse the welfare impacts of policies, they typically assume that people are the best judges of their own welfare, yet they resist directly asking people themselves whether they are better off. It is assumed instead that the economist knows the answer on the basis of objective data on incomes and prices. When early ideas of 'utility' were explicitly subjective, the modern approach in economics has generally ignored the expressed views of people themselves about their own welfare". (pp.1)

"Indeed, economists should not expect to be able to predict well peoples' own perceptions of their economic welfare from even a quite broad set of conventional objective socio-economic data". (pp. 25)

[Ravallion, Martin and Lokshin, Michael (1999); Subjective Economic Welfare; Policy Research Working Papers No. 2106; Washington DC: World Bank.]

Introduction (contd.)

✓History

- The phrase 'qualitative research' was until the 1970s used only to refer to a discipline of anthropology or sociology. During the 1970s and 1980s qualitative research began to be used in other disciplines.

- In the last thirty years the acceptance of qualitative research by journal publishers and editors has been growing. Prior to that time many mainstream journals were prone to publish research articles based upon the natural sciences and which featured quantitative analysis

Introduction (contd.)

Qualitative Vs Quantitative

Qualitative	Quantitative
The aim is a complete, detailed description.	The aim is to classify features, count them, and construct statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed.
Researcher may only know roughly in advance what he/she is looking for.	Researcher knows clearly in advance what he/she is looking for.
The design emerges as the study unfolds.	All aspects of the study are carefully designed before data is collected.
Researcher is the data gathering instrument.	Researcher uses tools, such as questionnaires or equipment to collect numerical data.

Introduction (contd.)

Qualitative Vs Quantitative

Qualitative	Quantitative
Data is in the form of words, pictures or objects.	Data is in the form of numbers and statistics.
Subjective - individuals' interpretation of events is important ,e.g., uses participant observation, in-depth interviews etc.	Objective – seeks precise measurement & analysis of target concepts, e.g., uses surveys, questionnaires etc.
Qualitative data is more 'rich', time consuming, and less able to be generalized.	Quantitative data is more efficient, able to test hypotheses, but may miss contextual detail.
Researcher tends to become subjectively immersed in the subject matter.	Researcher tends to remain objectively separated from the subject matter.

Introduction (contd.)

- ✓PRA: Definition

  "An approach and methods for learning about rural life and conditions from, with and by rural people"

  "a family of approaches and methods to enable local people to express, enhance, share, and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act"

Introduction (contd.)

- ✓ Origins of PRA

  The roots of PRA techniques can be traced to the activist adult education methods of **Paulo Freire** and the study clubs of the **Antigonish Movement**. In this view, an actively involved and empowered local population is essential to successful rural community development. **Robert Chambers**, a key exponent of PRA, argues that the approach owes much to "the Freirian theme, that poor and exploited people can and should be enabled to analyze their own reality" (Chambers 1997; Wikipedia 2008).

- ✓ PRA – a misnomer:
  - ➢ Participatory – more or less
  - ➢ Rural – but also urban uses
  - ➢ Appraisal – but also used in identification, implementation, evaluation

Introduction (contd.)

- ✓ PRA has evolved from the following five streams:
  - ➢ Activist participatory research
  - ➢ Agoecosystem analysis
  - ➢ Applied anthropology
  - ➢ Field research on farming systems
  - ➢ Rapid rural appraisal

PRA: Characteristics

- ✓ Participation:
  - ➢ Local people serve as partners in data collection and analysis
- ✓ Flexibility:
  - ➢ Not a standardized methodology, depends on purpose, resources, skills and time.
- ✓ Teamwork:
  - ➢ Outsiders and insiders, men and women, mix of disciplines

PRA: Characteristics (contd.)

- ✓ Efficiency:
  - ➢ Cost and time efficient, but ample opportunity for analysis and planning
- ✓ Systematic:
  - ➢ For validity and reliability, partly stratified sampling, cross-checking.

PRA: Principles (contd.)

Principles Shared by PRA and RRA

- ✓ A reversal of learning
  - ➢ Leaning from local people, directly, on the site, face to face, gaining insight from local physical, technical, and social knowledge
- ✓ Learning rapidly and progressively:
  - ➢ Conscious exploration, flexible use of methods, crosschecking, ……., not following a blueprint program

PRA: Principles (contd.)

- ✓ Offsetting biases,
  - ➢ Offsetting biases of rural development tourism, by being relaxed and not rushing, listening not lecturing, learning concerns and priorities of local people.
- ✓ Triangulating:
  - ➢ Crosschecking and progressive learning and approximation through plural investigation.
- ✓ Seeking diversity:
  - ➢ Seeking variability rather than averages; deliberately looks for contradictions, anomalies and differences.

PRA: Principles (contd.)

Principles additionally stressed in PRA

- ✓ They do it,
  - ➢ Investigation, analysis, presentation and learning by local people.
- ✓ Self critical awareness:
  - ➢ Facilitators continuously examine their own behavior
- ✓ Personal Responsibility:
  - ➢ Take personal responsibility for what is done rather than relying on the authority of manuals.
- ✓ Sharing:
  - ➢ Sharing information and ideas with local people, different practitioners, and outsider facilitators.

PRA: Key Techniques

- ✓ Interviews/Discussions
  - ➢ Individuals
  - ➢ Key informants
  - ➢ Focus groups, community meetings
- ✓ Mapping
  - ➢ Community maps
  - ➢ Institutional maps

PRA: Key Techniques (contd.)

- ✓ Ranking:
  - ➢ Problem ranking
  - ➢ Preference ranking
  - ➢ Wealth ranking
- ✓ Trend Analysis:
  - ➢ Seasonal calendars
  - ➢ Daily activity charts

Interviews/Discussions

- ✓ Individuals

  Individual from the community to learn about their own situations, and to reveal their personal perspective on particular topics

- ✓ Key informants

  People with specialist knowledge, or people represent a particular group or viewpoint, to gain insights on a particular subject

- ✓ Focus groups, community meetings

  Either randomly selected, or systematically selected to allow a focused discussion of a particular issue.

Mapping

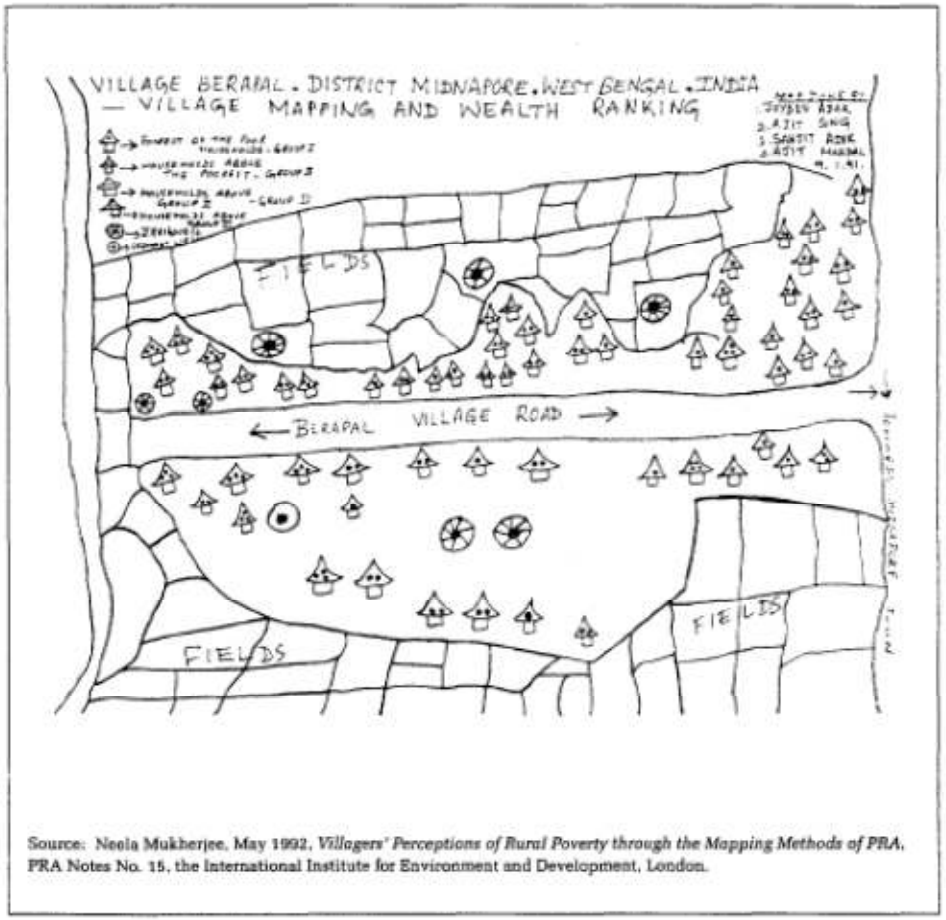
- ✓ Historical maps

  document changes that have occurred in the community and can be used, for example, causes and effects of environmental degradation

- ✓ Social maps

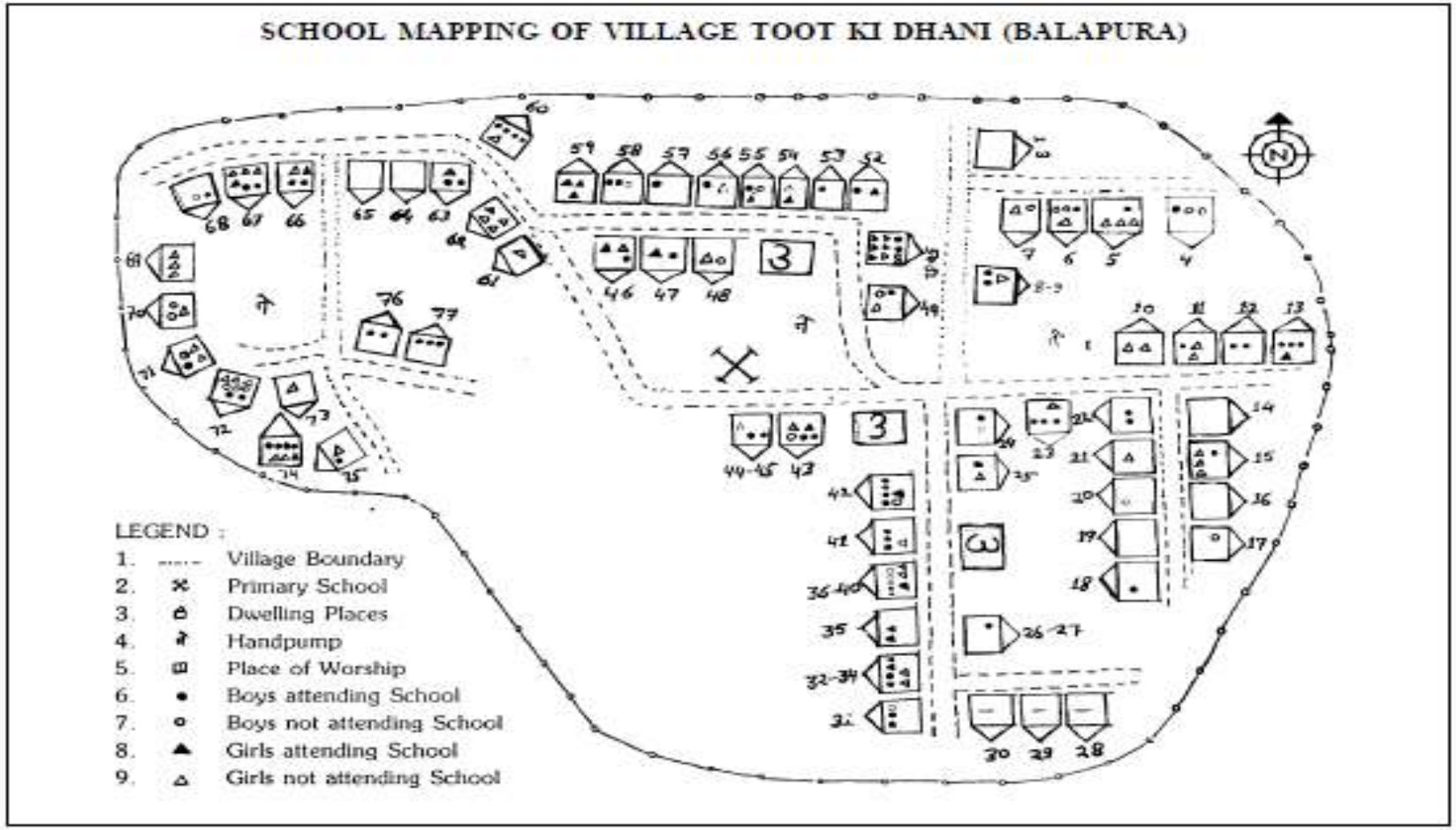
  illustrate the individual HHs that make up the community, and different symbols are used to show HH level characteristics

Social Map Showing Wealth Ranking



Source: Neela Mukherjee, May 1992, *Villagers' Perceptions of Rural Poverty through the Mapping Methods of PRA*, PRA Notes No. 15, the International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

School Mapping



Mapping

- ✓ Personal maps

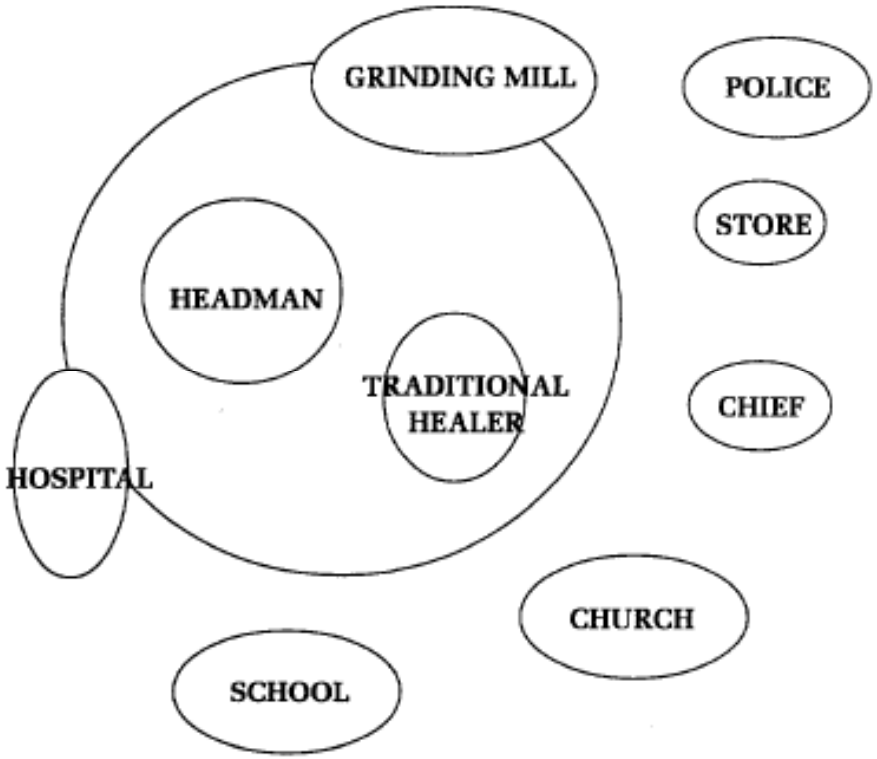
  Drawn by individuals rather than groups can show perspectives of different sections of the community

- ✓ Institutional mapping

  Institutional maps, sometimes called Venn or Chapati diagrams, are visual representations of the different groups and organizations within a community and their relationships and importance for decision-making.

  Relative importance of a group is shown by the relative size of the circle representing it.

Institutional Mapping



Ranking

- ✓ Problem ranking

  ask participants to list the six or main problems in their community and then to rank these problems in order of importance

- ✓ Preference ranking

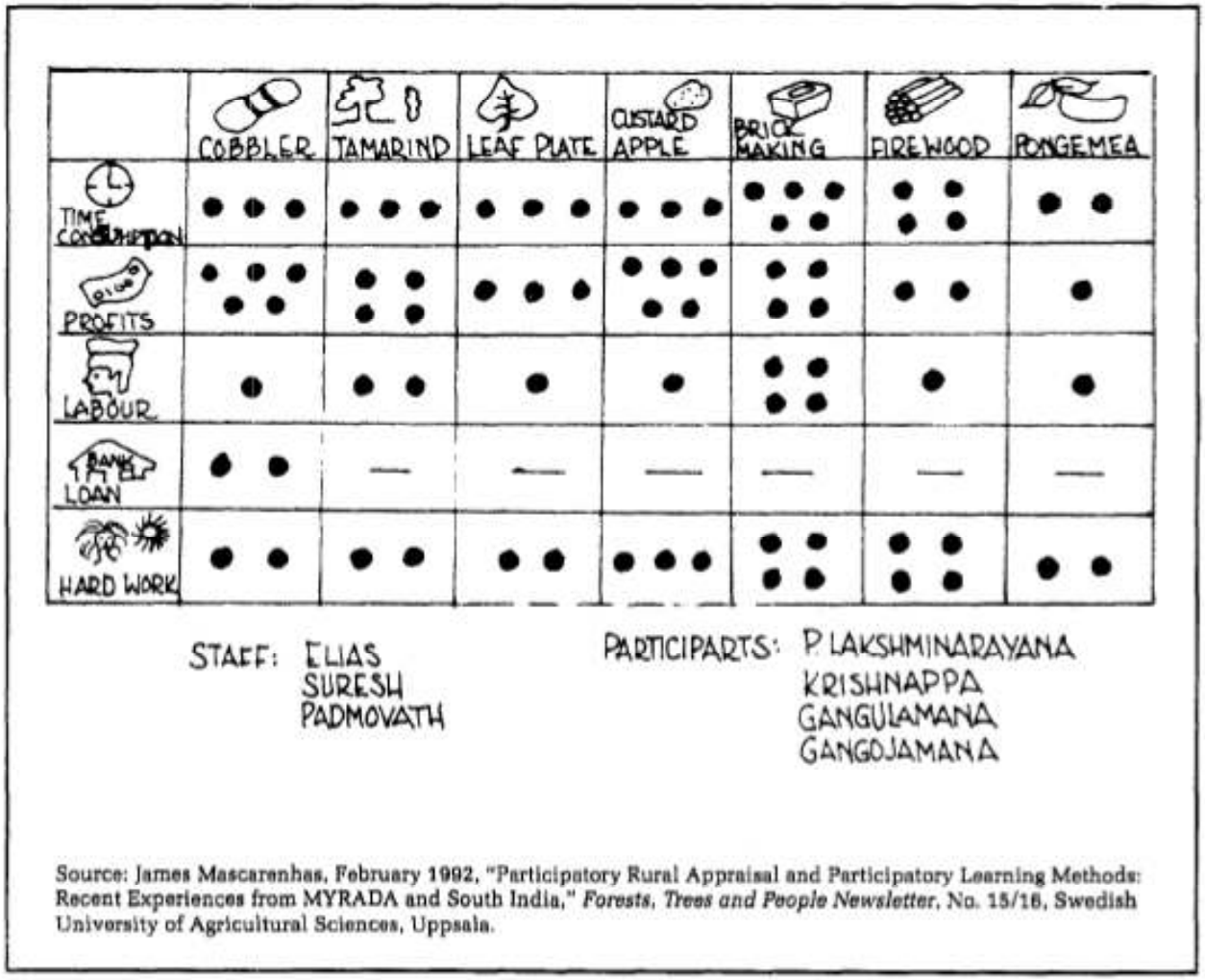
  Similar to problem ranking, preference ranking involves participants assessing different items or options, using criteria that they themselves identify.

- ✓ Wealth ranking

  Wealth ranking, or well being, involves community members identifying and analyzing the different wealth group in a community

  Enables researchers to learn about the social stratification

Preference Ranking



Source: James Mascarenhas, February 1992, "Participatory Rural Appraisal and Participatory Learning Methods: Recent Experiences from MYRADA and South India," *Forests, Trees and People Newsletter*, No. 15/16, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala.

Trend Analysis

- ✓ Seasonal calendars

  SC drawn by the local people are very useful means of generating information about seasonal trend within the community and identifying periods of particular stress and vulnerability

- ✓ Daily activity charts

  Daily activity charts are useful as a way for community members to show graphically how they spend their day.

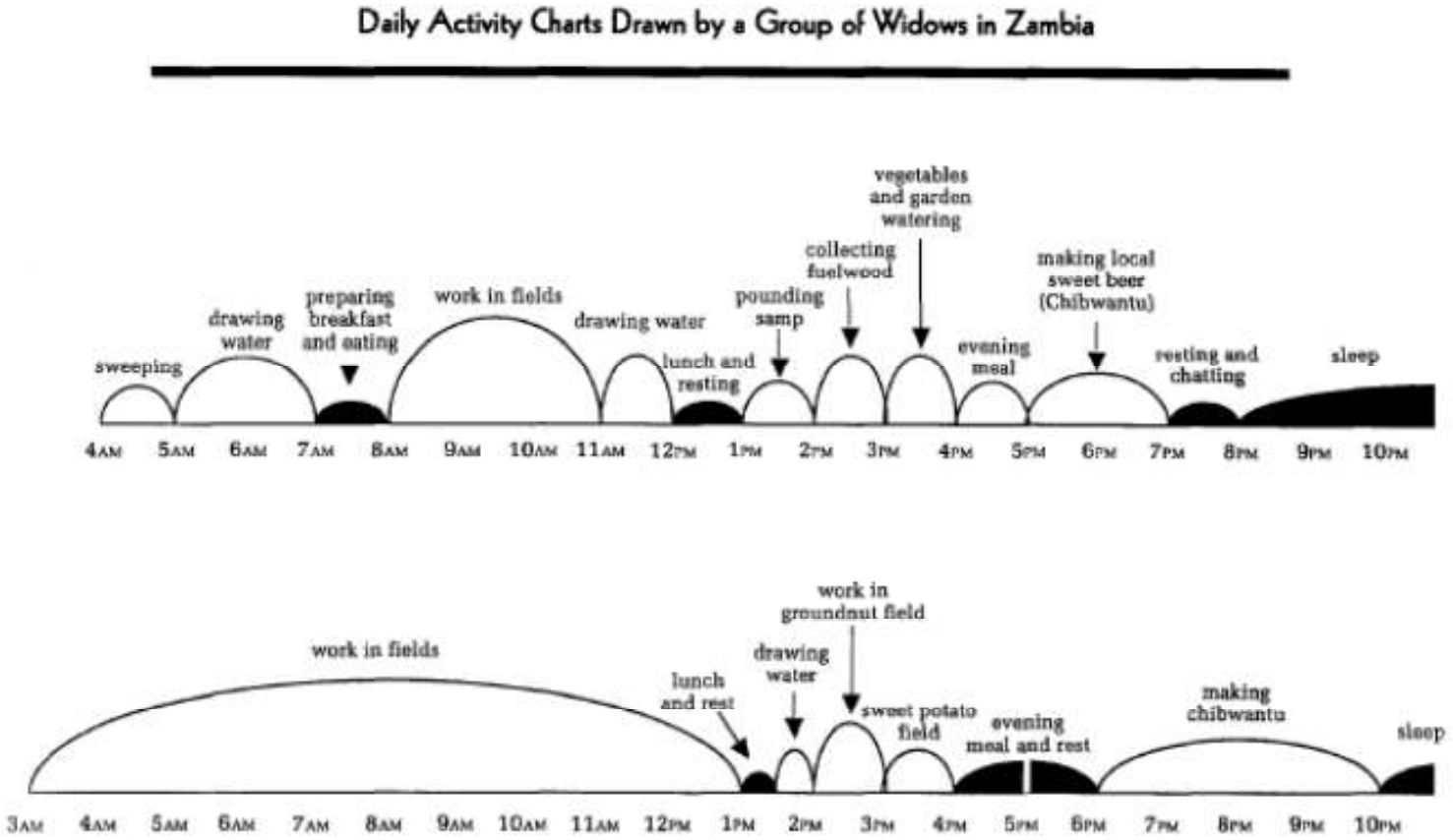
Seasonal Calendar

Seasonal Calendar of Poverty, Drawn by a Group of Villagers in Nyamira, Kenya*

Item	*Jan*	*Feb*	*Mar*	*Apr*	*May*	*Jun*	*Jul*	*Aug*	*Sep*	*Oct*	*Nov*	*Dec*
Light meals	000	000	0	0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	00
Begging	000	000	0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	00
	000	000	0	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	00	000
Migration	000	000	00	0	0	00	–	–	–	–	–	–
	000	000				0	00					
Unemployment	000	000	00	–	–	–						
	000	000			–	–	0	000	000	000		0
Income	–	–	0	00	00	00	000	000	000	000	000	0
				00	00	00	000	000	00	0	0	0
Disease	–	–	0	0000	0000	000	00	000	00			
Rainfall	–	–	0000	0000				0	0	000	000	00

* Zeros (0) in table represent stones used by participants to indicate the degree of change by month. Thus, three zeros in the January column for "Light Meals" means that light meals are three times more likely that month than they are in March or April.

Daily activity charts



PRA: Some Limitations

- ✓ Raising expectations
- ✓ Desired for quantitative, statistically verifiable data
- ✓ Indiscriminate use of techniques
- ✓ Rushing and overlooking the poor and disadvantaged
- ✓ Transferring diagrammatic analysis into a standard report
- ✓ Credibility of results
- ✓ Follow up

PRA and Surveys Compared

Features	PRA	Surveys
Duration	Short	Long
Cost	Low to medium	Medium to high
Methods	Basket of tools	Standardized methods
Major Research Tools	Semi-structured interviewing	Formal questionnaire
Sampling	Small to medium	Large random
Statistical Analysis	Little or none	Major part
Analysis	In-the-field On-the spot	Back-in-office

Case Studies: Mali Livestock Development Strategy Formulation

- ✓ Objective:

  to develop a strategy for livestock development
- ✓ Techniques:
  - ➢ Semi-structured interviews
  - ➢ Social mapping
  - ➢ Resource mapping
  - ➢ Transect
  - ➢ Seasonal calendars
  - ➢ Historical profile
  - ➢ Preference ranking

Case Studies: Mali Livestock Development Strategy Formulation

- ✓ Techniques:
  - ➢ Problem ranking
  - ➢ Institutional mapping
- ✓ Outputs and impacts:
  - ➢ Results were fed into the identification of an agricultural sector investment program
  - ➢ Incorporation of livestock component in world bank financed project
  - ➢ Benchmark data for further monitoring
  - ➢ Raised awareness about the value of participatory approaches

Case Studies: Estonia Agricultural Project

- ✓ Objective:
  - ➢ Learn about farmers' attitudes on the benefits subsurface drainage rehabilitation
  - ➢ facilitate farmers analyses of resource constraints
  - ➢ explore farmers' perception about land restitutions and ownership issues
  - ➢ identify farmers' consensus of the nest steps to be taken
  - ➢ identify vulnerable rural households
- ✓ Techniques:
  - ➢ Semi-structured interviews
  - ➢ Firm profiles

Case Studies: Estonia Agricultural Project

- ✓ Techniques:
  - ➢ Resource mapping at community level
  - ➢ Social mapping
  - ➢ System analysis
  - ➢ Seasonal calendars
- ✓ Outputs and impacts:
  - ➢ Generated information on a wide range of eco-development issues
  - ➢ Sensitized local and state officials to the importance of working with tribals
  - ➢ Provided an order-of-magnitude estimate for the level of investment required to support alternative livelihoods for the affected people

Thanks