



Participatory Research International Networking Memo

February 1, 1986



THE WORLD ASSEMBLY

The ICAE World Assembly at Buenos Aires, Argentina from November 24-30, 1985 was an historic event. The popular education methods used to conduct the Assembly, evoked tremendous enthusiasm in the participants and enhanced their contributions to the theme of 'Adult Education, Development and Peace'. Each of the 18 working groups systematically reviewed and analysed their current status and collectively evolved future plans of operation.

The working group on Participatory Research initially analysed their experiences and discussed various issues arising from their practice. They look at the next four years as a period of consolidation, stabilization and promotion of Participatory Research.

REPORT OF WORKING GROUP ON PR AT WORLD ASSEMBLY

The working group had 45 participants from more than 30 countries across the world. Despite the contextual variance of methods, techniques and details in the practice of PR, the principles of PR remained common worldwide—a unique experience of similarity in diversity.

The issues discussed were :

- (1) Use of PR methodology for macro issues (the micro - macro linkage),
- (2) Systematization of experiences in PR and the process of creation of knowledge,
- (3) PR and popular education,
- (4) PR and social movements and popular organisations,
- (5) How to provide leadership of popular classes with tools of PR?

- (6) How to legitimise PR in the eyes of others?

Present Practice

The summarisation of the debate in the group clarified the directions that PR practice should aim for :

- (1) PR is an attempt to empower popular classes through "knowledge in their hands", since knowledge is one of the important sources of power and control of people.
- (2) Therefore, generation of popular knowledge, its integrations with and appropriation of scientific knowledge, and the acquisition of the tools of knowledge production by the popular classes was one of the major aims of PR.
- (3) The PR methodology should sharpen the knowledge and skills of the popular classes in their efforts to understand and transform their reality.
- (4) The contribution of PR to social movements and the strengthening of popular organizations must be seen as a long-term goal.
- (5) PR is an integral part of popular education. Several working groups during the World Assembly recognized the importance of PR in their own work thus enhancing the potential use of PR in the practice of popular educators.

Methodology of PR

The participants came to a common understanding that though techniques could vary, there were some common critical elements in the methodology of PR :

- collective, not individualistic
- promotes participation of people
- breaks down distinctions between intellectual and manual work
- historically rooted
- values people's experiences and encourages them to value themselves
- builds confidence of the popular classes to create their own knowledge
- provides skills and tools to popular classes to build their own knowledge.

Future Directions

The future plans of the working groups included regional, interregional and international plans. Some common elements of this future are :

(1) Systematization of Experiences in PR

The importance of consolidating the PR practice to further enhance our understandings and demonstrate to the others the contributions of PR was recognized. Systematization plans for 1986-87 have been made by the Latin American PR Network. The Asian, African, Caribbean and North American networks too have evolved future plans. Some of these plans include meetings in the region, preparation of case studies and wider dissemination.

(2) Publications

The systematization of experiences is planned to lead to a series of publications in the various regions. This would also include popular publications and audio-visual materials. It was also agreed upon to continue the publication of regional newsletters as well initiate new ones (where none exist).

(3) Building Resource Centres

Creating and strengthening of regional and sub-regional resource centres of PR was seen as a crucial next step in supporting and strengthening regional networks.

(4) Grass-Roots Exchange

To further strengthen networks, share experiences and promote inter-regional learning, it was reaffirm-

ed that grass roots participatory researchers exchange across regions be organized.

(5) Theme - based Workshops

It was proposed that the use of PR methodology around a concrete theme (like land, ecology, women, occupational health) be a focus of inter-regional exchange. Joint projects and workshops could be organized to analyse and promote the use of PR around a given theme.

REGIONAL UPDATE

AFRICA

The regional plans drawn by the African PR Network (APRN) were as follows:

- (a) Intensity membership drive identifying and building up of National Coordinators
- (b) Strengthening the APRN structure
- (c) Publishing a newsletter by the Zambia PR branch
- (d) Editing the proceedings of the second regional conference held at Tanzania
- (e) Planning a third regional workshop in 1987 in Senegal
- (f) Building up a PR resource centre in Dar-es-Salam
- (g) Systematization and documentation of PR theory and practice over a period of 5 years.

ASIA

The Asian PR Network plans include:

- (1) Documenting PR case studies for a systematization process. Translating of Latin and African PR materials
- (2) Building up resource centres in 2-3 countries
- (3) Strengthen and reactivate South East Asian links
- (4) Plan for a workshop in April 1986 in South-East Asia
- (5) Set-up research exchange programmes
- (6) Organize a regional meeting in 1987

- (7) Prepare audio-visual materials on PR practice in Asia.

CARIBBEAN

A four year draft plan has been prepared by the Caribbean region:

Year 1

1. Hold a regional assembly for all adult educators in 1986 and conduct a PR project with the participants
2. Producing a second case book, including the above and three more field cases
3. Bringing out a newsletter.

Year 2

1. Consolidating of PR projects documented in the two case books
2. Holding several territorial workshops to identify and support other projects.

Year 3

1. Continue with the PR projects of year 1 and 2
2. Updating Case Book.

Year 4

1. Holding a regional workshop to assess : "Where we are "and 'where we are going'"
2. Regional meeting and ICAE Assembly
3. Bringing out a special year book.

LATIN AMERICA

CEAAL has developed a detailed plan of action for the future. That the systematization of PR practice needs both theoretical and methodological framework has been emphasized. Their overall objective is to move towards the development of a PR theory based on Latin American experience and comparative studies. The three parameters identified for systematization are as follows:

1. Goals of knowledge for social transformation
2. Setting goals for transformational action

3. Production of knowledge through reflection and analysis of action where popular movements are active, or generation of action, where none exists.

Each country team is to submit a tentative schedule for their proposed working strategies by January 1986.

EUROPE

1. The South European PR Network (SEPRN) conducted a seminar in Barcelona 'Problems of Participation on Adult Education : Participatory Research methods and techniques' from October 24-26, 1985. Delegates from Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Rumania and Spain attended this seminar. Reports in Spanish, English, French and Italian has been prepared.

Proposals for the next SEPRN seminars during 1986-88 are; to conduct a European Seminar on PR in England, a seminar in Portugal and an International Seminar in Florence, Italy.

Further, to broaden the network at the local and national level, it is proposed to set up exchanges of experiences and bilateral meetings. Plans to hold PR national meetings to focus further development strategies in different countries are underway. There is also a proposal to set up a PR South European Association.

2. Participatory Research Exchange, (PRX) England in its efforts to evolve their plans for 1986 propose to : hold a meeting in London on February 8, 1986 to form the basis for a working group, to subsequently organise an open meeting where the structure and future plans of PRX would be discussed and decided upon.

North America

The Participatory Research Group had brought out a number of publications in the last few months.

1. An Annotated Bibliography on Participatory Research and Popular Education titled, 'Research, Education and Action'. Suggestions and comments are welcome on this publication.
2. Strong Women, Strong Unions : Speeches by union women, it addresses issues of how to

organize and develop the militancy needed to gain control of women's jobs and lives.

3. **Short Circuit: Women in the Automated Office:** Addresses issues faced by automation and its impact on women's work.
4. **Short Circuit: Women on the Global Assembly Line :** Analyses women's role in the production, assembly and use of new technology around the world.
5. **Who's in Control ? Microtechnology and Women's work:** A 30 minute slide/tape show, it examines the impact of microtechnology on women workers in Canada.

NEW MATERIALS

1. Polluted Japan

A report by members of the Jishu-Koza Citizen's, movement, edited by Jun Ui, it consists of twenty case studies which document the incalculable numbers of tragedies that have come to light regarding environmental pollution, and the struggle of the Japanese people against the inevitabilities of the over riding scourge of pollution. Available from: Jun Ui c/o Jishu Koza, Department of Urban Engineering, University of Tokyo, Bunkyo-Ku, Tokyo, Japan 113.

2. Race Gender Class

The first issue July 1985 of this journal brought out both in Maaori and English, cover areas of Maaori self determination, feminism and socialism. For details write to : The Coordinating Collective, P.O. Box 1372 Christchurch, New Zealand.

3. We, the Invisible

This is a report of the recent census of 6000 pavement households in the 'E' ward and the arterial roads of Bombay conducted by an organisation called

SPARC. It highlights demographic profiles of individuals and households, their roles in the urban economy, determines causes, history and patterns of migration of each family and attempts to understand factors leading to pavement dwelling. A joint publication of Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centre, Meghraj Sethi Marg, Municipal Dispensary, Byculla, Bombay - 400008 and Society for Participatory Research in Asia, 45, Sainik Farm, Khanpur, New Delhi — 110 062.

Brief reports in Hindi and Marathi are also available.

4. Eco-News

This recently brought out half-yearly publication attempts to highlight the interrelationship between Ecology and Economics. The focus of this newsletter is to create a better understanding of the environmental processes. Published jointly by : Habitat Centre, Centre for Human Settlements, India, and Eco-Centre, Centre for Socio-economics and Environmental Development, 25-27 Netaji Subhas Road, Calcutta - 1.

5. Women Speak

A quarterly newsletter about Caribben women, different issues related to women are featured to help speed up the process for improving women's status.

Published by : The Women and Development Unit (WAND), Extra-Mural Department, UWI Pinelands, St. Micheal, Barbados.

6. Knowledge and Social Change : An Inquiry into Participatory Research in India

A study of seven different organisations engaged in Participatory Research, Evaluation and Training, it documents and analyses these experiences in order to strengthen the practice of PR. Available in English, Hindi, and Marathi. Published by PRIA.

Limited Circulation