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Workshop Report

Workshop

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

(2)

PRA, LITERACY AND EMPOWERMENT

10438

THE REFLECT METHOD

HOSTED BY:
ACTIONAID BANGLADESH and
CAMPE (Campaign for Popular Education)

SUPPORTED BY:
ODA
HELD IN KOITTA TRAINING CENTRE,
MANIKGANJ,
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Other Documents available on request

- Uganda Presentation
- El Salvador Presentation
- Bangladesh Presentation
- Literacy and Numeracy Manual from Bhola, Bangladesh
- Literacy Manual from Uganda
- Evaluating Empowerment
- Gender and REFLECT
- Introduction to PRA
- An introduction to the Bhola Project
- Education Action magazine Issues 1 and 2

INTRODUCTION

The International Workshop on PRA, Literacy and Empowerment in Bangladesh attracted 50 participants from 7 countries (full list attached).

Over 4 days the participants learnt about the new adult literacy methodology which has become known as the REFLECT method,

standing for:

**Regenerated Freirean Literacy
through
Empowering Community Techniques**

The objectives of the workshop were:

- * To share the experiences of three innovative adult literacy programmes which are using Participatory Rural Appraisal methods in El Salvador, Uganda and Bangladesh.
- * To receive contributions, criticisms and recommendations on the new methods from a wide range of experienced literacy practitioners in Asia.
- * To reflect the participatory nature of the new methodology in the process and functioning of the Workshop itself.

REFLECT seeks to build on the theoretical framework of Paulo Freire but provide a more effective methodology through using PRA techniques. In this method there is no need for a primer. Each literacy group produces its own curriculum materials through constructing maps, matrices, calendars and diagrams about local life. Through these means discussions are easily structured and are always firmly rooted in the experience of the learners.

The maps and matrices are initially constructed on the ground and then transferred to large pieces of paper with the help of visual cards. Literacy and numeracy work is then based directly on each map or matrix, with a major emphasis placed on writing.

The four day workshop started with an introduction to the new methodology by David Archer, followed by simulations of literacy classes using the REFLECT approach. There followed a series of presentations from the three pilot programmes, each working in radically different contexts.

The control of power in the workshop was handed over to participants on the afternoon of the second day, where everyone contributed their views on the strengths and weaknesses of REFLECT (using Visualisation in Participatory Planning methods) and then collectively decided on a series of workshop themes for the following days. The selected workshops were:

PRA Philosophy and Practice
Materials Development for REFLECT
REFLECT and Reading and Writing
Organisation and Management of REFLECT Pilots
Selecting and Training Facilitators for REFLECT
Learner Assessment in the Pilot Experiences
Gender and REFLECT
Evaluation of Empowerment in the REFLECT pilots
REFLECT and Post-literacy
Adapting the REFLECT methodology for Urban Areas
REFLECT and Empowerment
Scaling up / Replicating the REFLECT approach

A report on each of these Workshops is attached. Further copies of the original papers presented at the conference are available from ACTIONAID.

At the workshop there was a considerable demand for follow up, including:

- * training on the REFLECT approach (requested by several Bangladeshi NGOs as well as participants from India, Nepal and South Africa).
- * the developing of a REFLECT network for exchange of experience between organisations who adopt the approach (with ongoing news from the three initial pilot projects).
- * a manual on "How to Develop the REFLECT approach."

All of these are now being planned:

- * Training courses on REFLECT will be organised during 1995, starting with a course in Bangladesh, probably in April.
- * Within Bangladesh the coordination of a REFLECT network will be undertaken by Mukul

Rahman of ACTIONAID Bangladesh and on an international level, David Archer and Sara Cottingham in ACTIONAID UK will be building a Network.

* A Manual on REFLECT (explaining how to adapt the methodology in different conditions) will be developed with a first draft available by mid-1995.

We also take this opportunity to remind you that:

* an International Workshop on REFLECT will be held in Uganda in late July / early August in Kampala, Uganda. It is hoped that a similar workshop can be organised soon in El Salvador.

* in October 1995 the final evaluation report on the three pilot projects will be completed.

Meanwhile, organisations wishing to visit the Bhola Island project in Bangladesh to see REFLECT in practice should contact Mukul Rahman (NGO Coordination Unit, ACTIONAID Bangladesh: tel 811763, 811802, 810903; fax 813150) who will help to arrange a visit.

For further news of developments with REFLECT at an international level, or to visit the other pilot projects, contact David Archer or Sara Cottingham at ACTIONAID UK, Hamlyn House, Archway, London N19 5PG. Tel: 071 281 4101 Fax: 071 263 7599.

We would like to thank all participants at the Workshop in Koitta. We learnt a lot in the process and are confident that the REFLECT methodology will be enriched as a result of the discussions. If you do develop or adapt the REFLECT approach, please keep in touch with us. We will certainly keep in touch with you.

David Archer (AA UK)
Mukul Rahman (AA BANGLADESH)
10 December 1994

Overview of the Conference Proceedings

Monday 14th November

Welcome by Parveen Mahmud on behalf of ACTIONAID;

1. Inauguration by Dr Sharafuddin, Director of CAMPE
2. Introductory Speech by David Archer
3. Simulation of REFLECT / PRA and Literacy
4. Simulation of PRA on the Causes of Poverty
5. Presentation of Ugandan Experience

Tuesday 15th November

6. Presentation of the El Salvador Experience
7. Presentation of the Bangladesh Experience
8. VIPP on the Strengths and Weaknesses of REFLECT
9. VIPP to select workshops

Wednesday 16th November

Workshops:

10. PRA Philosophy and Practice
11. Materials Development for REFLECT
12. REFLECT and Reading and Writing
13. Organisation and Management of REFLECT Pilots
14. Selecting and Training Facilitators for REFLECT
15. Learner Assessment in the Pilot Experiences
16. Gender and REFLECT
17. Monitoring and Evaluating Empowerment in REFLECT pilots

Thursday 17th November

Workshops:

18. REFLECT and Post-literacy
19. Adapting the REFLECT methodology for Urban Areas
20. REFLECT and Empowerment

21. Plenary: Scaling up / Replicating the REFLECT approach
22. Evaluation of the Workshop (summary table attached)

1. INAUGURATION BY DR. SHARAFUDDIN

Dr. Sharafuddin, the renowned Bangladeshi educationalist, opened by saying that he had come as a learner to this workshop. He expressed his interest in finding out more about the new approach.

He went on to outline the seriousness of the situation in Bangladesh as there are still 80 million "illiterates". It seems that child literacy programmes have been more successful than adult programmes (with BRAC and PROSHIKA as two outstanding examples). This trend had certainly been underlined in Helen Abadzi's recent World Bank report which was very critical of past adult literacy programmes.

Dr. Sharafuddin reminded the participants of the hope for social change (indeed revolution), which had existed in his youth, after World War II. Despite historical disappointments, he stressed that the most important element in adult education was still raising social awareness, and not just literacy rates. It was vital to experiment with all possible models.

Talking of the political context in Bangladesh, he described the problematic situation of the adult educator who ironically may be criticised as too reformist by the Left, and too Western by the Right. He felt that REFLECT was a strong combination which could avoid dogma by starting with the experiences of learners themselves - offering new hope to the Popular Education movement. He wished the workshop every success.

2. INTRODUCING PRA AND LITERACY: THE REFLECT APPROACH

(A TRANSCRIPTION OF THE OPENING PRESENTATION BY DAVID ARCHER)

INTRODUCTION

We have come here to share the experiences of three pilot projects in Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador, which are developing new approaches to adult literacy, using Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques.

I am David Archer, presently the Education Policy Analyst in ACTIONAID. I trained as a Secondary School teacher in Britain and have worked in special needs education, adult literacy and community education in the UK. During my training I wrote a thesis on the work of the Brazilian Paulo Freire and always sought to adapt his methods to my work in the UK. Following this interest, in 1985 I started a five year project researching and evaluating literacy programmes in eight Latin American countries, culminating in the publication, with Patrick Costello in 1990 of "Literacy and Power: The Latin American Battleground". In the same year, 1990, I started work with ACTIONAID coordinating our programmes in Latin America - during which time I became familiar with the philosophy and techniques of PRA. It is through combining these experiences that the new approach to adult literacy emerged and it is this which we are here to explore.

I would identify six sources or components to the new approach which I shall outline briefly:

1. FREIRE

The first and most obvious root is the work of the Brazilian Paulo Freire. In the 1960s and 1970s Freire radicalised a whole generation of literacy workers, linking literacy to social change through the process of conscientization. Freire saw dialogue as fundamental - the need to learn to read and write the world at the same time as learning to read and write the word. His approach is based on the belief that literacy alone is of no use if there is no other process of change which can help to lift the "culture of silence". Through problematising reality in what he called "codifications" learners could come face to face with their conditions. Generative words and themes structure the literacy process. Through becoming more aware of language in the process of dialogue the resonance of generative words provides a bridge to literacy and action.

Elements of this Freirean rhetoric are now everywhere - even in the most reactionary Ministries of Education. In many respects Freire has ironically become the traditional approach. But in most cases this can best be described as "pseudo Freireanism", stripped of its real radical potential. Why?

One of the greatest weaknesses of the Freirean approach in practice has been the immense difficulty faced by literacy facilitators seeking to generate "dialogue". Time and time again, when it comes to the classroom situation, facilitators sidestep dialogue (or any effective discussion) and fall back on what they see as the "meat" of teaching literacy. The cases where this is not true tend to be those highly politicised literacy programmes where there is more of a tendency to impose a new consciousness on learners than to generate a truly critical consciousness. These tendencies should not be seen as surprising - as it is difficult to promote effective discussion, and yet facilitators are often expected to do so with very little training and with only a codification (which at the end of the day is usually just a picture) and a generative word (which is just a word) to structure the process!

The result is that (despite the declarations and rhetoric of literacy planners) in 95% of cases there is no dialogue in literacy classes!

So, although the theoretical framework of Freire has, I believe, a lot to offer, the methodology is not working in practice. At the end of the day Freire was more interested in theory than methodology. Indeed, it could even be said that Freire wasn't particularly interested in teaching people to read and write because of his wider political concern. So, to realise some of his ideas, and to real link them to literacy effectively, we need to develop better methods. It is here that PRA has a lot to offer.

2. PRA:

Participatory Rural Appraisal has roots in a reaction to the Western model or the "modernisation" approach to development. It is against those who believe that there are simple or pre-packaged technological solutions to development which can be imposed by external professionals.

PRA practitioners have a desire to start from the lives of communities themselves. But what tools are there to find out about the priorities of the poor themselves? Questionnaires are clumsy, structured from outside, and take a long time to process collecting a lot of irrelevant information. Participant observation from the school of anthropology is often too long and drawn out - and is still extractive - often being used for academic papers rather than feeding into action.

PRA practitioners start from the recognition that poor communities have a wealth of technical and social indigenous knowledge. They have survived often through centuries in difficult environments with limited resources. What we need are techniques to enable non-literates to articulate their knowledge - as building on this knowledge and the reality of the poor must be the starting point of any effective development programme. PRA practitioners have developed a wide range of techniques particularly based on the idea that **visualisation can help participation. The starting point is thus the construction of maps, matrices, calendars and diagrams on a**

large scale on the ground using whatever materials are locally available.

However, as a set of techniques, PRA is not enough. If those who practice it do not have a real respect for, and a real commitment to, the priorities of the poor then it is often still extractive. Some PRA facilitators make copies of the maps constructed by the community and simply take them away for their own planning purposes. In such circumstances there is often a big gulf between what the community sought to articulate and what the external organisation actually plans and implements. Some NGOs nominally use these methods to say they have consulted with communities - but then proceed with their own priorities. Moreover, PRA is often, or even usually, done only on a short-term basis, for example over just two or three weeks - and is usually done only in selected communities.

PRA techniques have been applied to broad appraisals, to detailed diagnoses of health needs or local agriculture but they have not been applied in the past in literacy programmes. The three pilot projects we are developing are the first to attempt to systematically use PRA techniques for literacy. But before exploring how to marry the two, there are four other elements I would like to mention very briefly.

3. VISUAL LITERACY:

After Freire and PRA the third root I wish to mention briefly is visual literacy. Much work has been done by Fuglesang, UNICEF Nepal and others - exploring people's abilities to read and interpret pictures. In development work we take a lot for granted. We assume that people can understand the posters and leaflets we produce if we use lots of pictures (instead of words). **The images we use seem obvious to us. However they are often not clear to people with little exposure to seeing two dimensional visual images and who are unfamiliar with their conventions.** Photos are often too cluttered. Line drawings and cartoons are full of conventions (bubbles / arrows etc) - even perspective (which did not appear in the West until Renaissance art).

As a result of these analyses some work has been done on how to most effectively deliver development communications - how to make pictures easily recognisable or "readable" to people with little exposure to two-dimensional visual images. However, no concerted attempt has been made to develop a programme which will in the process help to make people visually literate.

4. WOMEN'S LITERACY:

Rather than dwell on this now let me mention the fourth component of the new approach: women's literacy. Until recently women's literacy was not given particular priority - despite the fact that levels of illiteracy amongst women are much higher than those amongst men worldwide.

Between 1960 and 1985 the overall number of illiterates in the world rose by 154 million and of those, 133 million were women.

Clearly, along with other factors, illiteracy increases women's marginalisation from power. **Yet, in the past most literacy campaigns have had male themes and male issues as dominant.**

This is despite the fact that more and more research suggests the critical importance of women's literacy (see Lalage Bown's work "Women, Literacy and Development" ACTIONAID 1990). In a rural area, women are more likely to retain skills in the community for the good of the community (and pass them on to children) whereas **men's literacy particularly in rural areas often causes migration (as they see literacy as an urban skill enabling them to get work).**

When literacy programmes have focussed on women, particularly in recent years, they have often placed an emphasis on issues affecting the domestic role of women - whether nutrition, child-care or hygiene - ignoring and even undermining the productive and community roles of women. Existing roles are thus usually reinforced. Where there is a conscious attempt to challenge existing roles the result is often a very didactic approach with outsiders effectively lecturing women about their oppression. It is very rare to find a programme which will provide women with space to reflect upon their roles and come to their own conclusions through their own analysis.

5. NUMERACY

The fifth element that led to the new approach is an analysis of numeracy which most literacy programmes either overlook or treat as being of secondary importance to reading and writing. Even the more radical and progressive literacy programmes rarely adapt the teaching of numeracy to adults and most fall back on "reactionary" methods - treating adults like children.

This is a serious problem because adults already have considerable numeracy skills. The learners know oral counting and some mathematical structures and have an art of mental arithmetic more or less adequate for their daily life. Indeed some non-literate people (especially those involved in trade) may be better at mental arithmetic than "educated" people.

So, in the same way that you do not have to teach people to speak before you teach them to read and write and likewise you do not need to teach people to count or add up before you teach them written numeracy.

So what is the value of written numeracy? It is necessary primarily because people are aware of the limitations of memory for keeping numbers in mind and for memorising daily events involving numbers etc. With complex calculations people lose track of the sub-totals in their heads. Being

able to write down numbers in such situations is a huge help - but it is not a matter of knowing how to write 1 or 6 or 10 - rather, the need is usually to be able to write down larger numbers. A numeracy programme must reach this level of teaching useful skills at an early stage. It should also focus on things like numeracy for different types of record keeping.

The key must be to start from peoples daily experience (the actual situations and types of calculation they have to do) and identify the areas where their skills are lacking. This requires a socio-mathematical survey prior to starting the numeracy programme - but this is very rarely done. Teaching "satisfying skills" (which for children might be regarded as complex) cannot be put off until a later date with adults. **The practical tools given must also supplement and not replace mental arithmetic skills.** The result must be a substantial improvement in the way they carry out existing required calculations at the point in everyday life that they need to.

A well targeted numeracy programme which treats adults as adults can in fact be just as empowering or more empowering than literacy - as it can give people very practical skills for their everyday life.

6. FAILURE OF OTHER METHODS

The final factor that led to the evolution of this new approach was an increasing awareness that adult literacy programmes are failing. This is not just a phenomenon in Asia or Latin America or Africa - but worldwide. Literacy programmes are failing in the most fundamental sense that they are not teaching people to read and write!

A recent World Bank Discussion Paper reviewing literacy programmes over the past thirty years estimates that the average effectiveness rate of literacy programmes is about 12.5%. This figure is arrived at in a simple and very obvious way and although it is not true of all programmes it is probably true of the majority. Firstly, of those who enrol in a literacy class it is common that at least 50% drop out within the first few weeks. Secondly, of those who stay on, a further 50% fail to complete the course or graduate. Thirdly, of those who do graduate, 50% lose their skills through dis-use - often in a matter of months. This leaves just 12.5% of those who had expressed an initial interest having actually learnt.

Now I believe that there are always people who enrol who will not learn - who do not have the commitment to follow through with what is a difficult process. Some drop-out - even up to 50% in the early weeks of a literacy programme is therefore not surprising. However, drop out beyond that point is, for me, a sign that we are failing - that we, the literacy planners, have not been able to teach effectively - and fundamentally that our teaching methods have failed.

What we need are new methods - a new hope - a new approach to revitalise literacy - which will bring it back into the heart of the development process - and which will teach people to read and write effectively

THE NEW METHOD

Drawing then on all these six elements of analysis ACTIONAID has developed the PRA, Literacy and Empowerment project which is promoting a new methodology. It seeks to have a focus on women and builds in some practical approaches to numeracy. The approach is being piloted in three countries in three continents, in very diverse contexts. Funding for evaluation of the work is coming from the ODA (David Clarke).

In Bundibugyo, Uganda the pilot is in a very remote multi-lingual area where neither of the two main local languages was previously written. A third language, Rutoro, imposed from outside the area is the only language used in schools but is disliked by most parents. The literacy programme in Bundibugyo is thus writing two of the local languages (Rukonjo and Lubwisi) almost for the first time - and is aiming to develop and empower the languages over the coming years. We have here Judith and James from Uganda who will share their experience later today.

In Bangladesh the pilot is with women's shomitis - savings and credit groups - in Bhola Island, a remote and strictly Islamic area. Shameem and Shahjahan are here along with other AABangladesh staff.

In El Salvador the pilot is with a grassroots NGO, COMUS - the United Communities of Usulután - which is led by ex guerrillas converting to peaceful methods after ten years in arms. El Salvador is still devastated by a decade and more of war and the literacy programme is operating in a highly politicised context. Abdon is from COMUS, which receives technical support from a national NGO specialising in literacy called CIAZO - from whom we have the participation of Oscar.

So what is the new method?

In the new method, rather than start from a centrally produced primer - or a primer of any description - **each literacy circle produces their own learning materials analysing their own village and their immediate circumstances.**

Rather than starting each lesson with a so called codification, each Unit starts with the construction of a map, matrix or calendar using PRA techniques. The range of methods include for example:

Maps:

households - all houses and who lives where
crops - the different kinds and where they are grown
natural resources - like wood and water - environment
land tenancy - individual, cooperative etc

Calendars:

rainfall - often ends up very accurate
agricultural work - different crops and activities
gender workload - to compare the work of women and men
illnesses - listing all illnesses and occurrence through year
income and expenditure - how it varies

Matrices:

to analyse crops - bringing out the criteria people use to choose
causes or cures of illnesses,- what they do when ill
sources and uses of credit -
involvement in household decisions

Diagrams:

venn (or chapati) diagram of different internal / external orgs.
informal power relations

Initially a map or matrix will be constructed on the ground with learners using their own codes of representation. For example, in constructing a household by household map of the village the group may use sticks to represent the roads and paths, stones to represent houses, beans to represent the number of men in each house and seeds to represent women.

By initially constructing the map on the ground everyone can participate and it can be changed until everyone agrees it is accurate. Then, rather than go into someones notebook (which is sometimes the case with PRA practice), in the literacy class a copy is made on a large flipchart. But how? We can't use words and can't just put sticks and stones - we need pictures. But literacy teachers are not artists! Fortunately we can anticipate many of the crops, illnesses, objects and activities which will come up in the construction of the different maps and matrices.

So, a set of about 100 visual cards has been developed in each pilot project, drawn by a local artist (and field-tested) in each case.

These cards enable the transfer from the ground to flipchart and increasingly can be used to help

construct maps etc on the ground. Each time a card is introduced for the first time it is discussed with the learners until it is recognised and accepted. After a few Units words are put alongside the pictures. Additional cards can be drawn by the learners or facilitator if other pictures are needed.

One interesting phenomenon here is that drawing humbles the facilitators as they can't get things to look right. It is just like the learners can't get letters to look right and the pen for them is a clumsy tool at first. So even in the supposed area of expertise (with pen and paper) the facilitator is not seen as the only expert (indeed sometimes learners are better at drawing!). In the process there is often a lot of humour!

The shift from three to two dimensions using pen and paper is the first step towards literacy. Learners gain confidence in using images and become more visually literate in the process! This is particularly the case as the images drawn by the artists should be very simple (to make the copying easy). The examples from the pilot projects give you some idea of this, though to my mind they are too complex and should be simplified much further.

Key words are then introduced on the map or matrix. We can anticipate what things will come up and thus sequence the words

to be used. The introduction of words could be left to the choice of learners and some cases is - but there is an advantage to planning in advance which words will be used at least in the first Units - to ensure that the most regular and basic syllables are introduced first - and that the first words are not too long or complex. Clearly the spatial location of the words helps learners to recognise and recall them - especially as the maps or matrices are kept on permanent display. In the first Units the words are then subjected to a syllabic breakdown much like in other literacy programmes - with a big emphasis on rebuilding new words (not the rote chanting of syllables). Other techniques are also introduced early on. The learners are asked to orally agree a few sentences describing the map they have produced and the facilitator writes these up and then asks learners to identify the syllables or words they know.

As the Units proceed so does the reading and writing. Rather than having just one word on a map or matrix, several words will be used (initially with the visual image alongside) providing the learners with a broad vocabulary around the theme being discussed. **This enables learners to independently construct phrases from an early stage - based at first largely on words that have been generated by the graphics.** As every learner is encouraged to make a copy of the map or matrix in their book and then write associated phrases - and eventually sentences - they end up producing a real document of their own rather than have just having an exercise book full of scribbles.

Numeracy work can be based on the themes discussed in the classes and sometimes practice

arises directly out of the maps or matrices produced.

So what about dialogue? Producing the maps and matrices of course itself involves discussion and dialogue - and it is clearly structured by the task that the group collectively face. **The literacy facilitator does not have to constantly guide or push the discussion in an artificial way as the discussion gathers its own momentum around the task.** Focussed questions afterwards can explore key issues but are always directly related to the learners lives and village because the framework for the discussion is the map or matrix that they themselves have produced. Learners thus feel ownership of the discussion rather than feeling that it is being imposed on them through pointed questions which produce only awkward silences or standard responses. The issues are theirs not someone elses.

Moreover, the starting point for all of the discussion is the learner's existing knowledge - which is on permanent display through the maps and matrices. **"Literacy" does not come in from outside pretending to be the only worthwhile knowledge.** Reading and writing are not seen as the only real skills and the learners do not feel as if they or their knowledge are invalidated. The facilitator cannot regard or treat the learners as "stupid" (which is not uncommon in literacy programmes). Literacy skills are thus more likely to fit into an existing framework of other skills - as another skill which will help them to systematise, analyse and apply their knowledge and their viewpoints.

This method means that learners are working collectively and actively producing a product with pen and paper. Each learner, by copying the maps in their own books can share them at home or with others to develop discussions outside the circle. At the end of the course each village has around 30 maps and matrices produced by them about their own village - which is a wonderful resource for them to establish priorities and make demands. For NGOs like ACTIONAID Uganda for example, we will have copies in Bundibugyo of all 30 products from 65 villages and can develop health and agriculture and other development programmes knowing the starting point, knowing the existing knowledge of the communities, the gaps, the priorities, the attitudes of people and even their prejudices. The potential link to other aspects of development is clearly strong.

Already we have seen remarkable impact- learners in Uganda demanding tree nurseries after recognising their own role in deforestation; actively planting elephant grass; demanding training in agriculture, protecting / cleaning around water sources, family spacing lectures for husbands etc. In Uganda also the potential for use in a multi-lingual setting is exciting. Rather than have three primers for the three languages and different materials, we just have visual materials and a manual. **Learners can chose the language they learn in - and share the same curriculum.** They can even learn in more than one language at the same time! This has massive potential to

be cheaper than a primer based approach. The integration of this new approach and a post-literacy strategy in the area is particularly exciting and will be explored later today in the presentation by our colleagues from Uganda.

In Bangladesh the focus has been on numeracy and the PRA methods have shown considerable potential for serving as a practical basis for initial calculations - and for ensuring that everything they learn supplements their existing mental arithmetic skills rather than replacing (or undermining) their existing skills.

In El Salvador the move from a top-down command structure of guerrillas in war to participation and listening and bottom up processes is the main challenge and this approach allows for a radical re-education of the teachers as well as the learners!

In each pilot project the methodology has been adapted differently - which is all part of the learning process of a pilot experience. Certain elements are common, such as a link to savings and credit programmes of different types, or the fact that ongoing training and exchange workshops for the literacy facilitators are encouraged in all three projects. Other elements are different. In Uganda and Bangladesh the literacy facilitators receive some pay whereas in El Salvador they are totally voluntary. The plans for post-literacy in each programme are emerging differently - but these are all themes which we can take up at a later point.

The one most crucial aspect of the three pilot projects is that they are all being documented carefully and have rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems. As well as obvious indicators of success such as the ability to read and write we will be monitoring the development of literate habits and evaluating the wider impact of the programmes on community participation and local action. In each of the three pilot countries control groups have been identified which will use the same range of indicators but apply them to a literacy programme using more traditional methods. The project is a two year action research project and is now at its half way mark. The final evaluation will be completed by September 1995.

One important aspect of the evaluation will be the financial element. At this stage we are confident that this approach cannot only be more effective in teaching literacy and integrating it to development - but that, moreover, it will prove to be low-cost and highly replicable. There is no need for a primer. There is little need of "expert" support. The literacy manuals used in these pilots were developed in a matter of weeks not months or years as is common in some cases. So, this I hope has given you some overview of the origins and practice of the new approach. We will explore more in detail later today and tomorrow through simulations and illustrations and through hearing from the three pilot projects themselves. We will then be dividing into workshops

of your choosing in order to set the agenda for the second half of our four day event - so that you can explore the aspects and issues which interest you.

But before I finish, I think it is appropriate that we should formally name the new approach. PRA and Literacy sounds rather obscure and requires a long explanation. We have anguished over a name for a long time and have finally come up with something which we feel describes what we are doing and has a good catchy acronym - which seems essential in the modern world! This name was identified just last week and is announced here for the first time in honour of this meeting with you. The name is:

REGENERATED FREIREAN LITERACY
through
EMPOWERING COMMUNITY TECHNIQUES

The abbreviation or acronym which we think should be used is thus:

REFLECT

From henceforth in this workshop I would thus ask you to refer to the REFLECT approach as a simple description of what we are going. And I hope that in the coming days we can truly REFLECT on REFLECT and improve it in the process.

Thank you.

3. OUTLINE OF THE SIMULATION OF REFLECT

The purpose of this role play was to show workshop participants the process of map and matrix construction, and the stages of visual literacy, and literacy/numeracy work.

Selected participants took the roles of learners, and David Archer stopped the role play with explanations and expansions at various intervals.

HOUSEHOLD AND NATURAL RESOURCE MAP

In the first role play, the learners, together with a facilitator constructed a household map indicating the relative positions of all houses and who lived in each (numbers of men, women, boys and girls). This map also included natural resources, such as wood and water sources. Initially this was constructed on the ground using sticks, stones, leaves, seeds and beans to represent different items.

The discussion amongst the learners was centred around the shrinkage of village boundaries due to flooding of the river, and the implications of losing land and homes in this way. The action point that emerged was to consider tree planting to reduce land loss in the future.

Visual cards were then placed on the ground to replace seeds, stones etc - and the map was copied from the ground to a large piece of paper using the pictures from the cards as a guide. The key word "village" was then introduced, and other words suggested by learners (well, pond, forest, home, forest etc.) were also written onto the paper.

This is an early unit of the course, so at this stage the facilitator demonstrated how the key word could be broken into syllables and then new words could be built.

Learners then copied the map and words into their notebooks.

Initial numeracy work was based on counting the changing number of people in households (through marriage etc.), and doing relevant addition and subtraction on the board.

CURATIVE HEALTH MATRIX

The second role play was from a later unit; the construction of Curative Health Matrix. Learners practised reading "illness" words, which were written on visual cards on the first row of the matrix and had been covered previously. Then, learners discussed the different courses of action they would take for illness in the family. These visual cards were laid down the left hand side of the matrix. Learners took it in turn to score the preferred course of action for each illness, and to write

numbers on the matrix. Discussion focussed on the expense and effectiveness of chemical based medicines compared to herbal medicines. Knowledge was shared within the group on these matters.

In addition to writing numbers, numeracy work would include comparison of traditional and metric quantities for weight, and calculations based on dosages.

Reading and writing work for this Unit would include:

- * learners writing words and phrases coming from the discussion
(drawing on the vocabulary generated and displayed by the matrix);
- * learners individually describing the matrix they have produced in writing and then sharing their writing with each other;
- * learners collectively agreeing an action (eg starting up a nursery for medicinal plants and herbs) and writing a contract to record who will do what and when (which is then signed and dated);
- * the facilitator writing up some of more complex sentences which came up in the discussions - and asking learners to identify words and try to read it;
- * reading supplementary materials brought in by the learners (eg medicine bottle instructions) or by the facilitator (eg health pamphlets).

4. OUTLINE OF THE PRA SIMULATION ON THE CAUSES OF POVERTY

After observing the simulation of a Health Matrix construction, participants were themselves invited to take part in a global PRA exercise on the relative causes of poverty in different continents. Visual cards were used to represent a range of causes of poverty, and small groups were facilitated to construct a matrix which involved scoring the relative importance of each cause of poverty in each of four world regions (Africa, Asia, Latin America and US/Europe). The purpose was to explore the learning potential of PRA with a theme relevant to the expertise of an international group of participants.

Despite the accelerated pace of the exercise, the processes involved in carrying out such an exercise were analysed in the following way:

The disadvantages were perceived to be the potential for conflict in a real life discussion with a group representing different interests. On the other hand the forming of the matrix might be difficult if there was inadequate knowledge within the group and the conclusions would therefore be misleading. It was also thought that PRA might be too time consuming in the village situation.

The advantages were that visualisation aided understanding and group sharing; the knowledge of the whole group could be used; the facilitator's role was to reflect opinion of the group not to lecture; debate was structured and systematised; the matrix formed a permanent record; information was rapidly drawn out; the task was collective and it was fun.

NOTE: 5. Presentation of the Uganda Experience

6. Presentation of the El Salvador Experience

7. Presentation of the Bangladesh Experience

[All papers distributed at the Workshop. Further copies available on request]

8. SUMMARY OF THE VIPP ON THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF REFLECT

All participants analysed the strengths and weaknesses of REFLECT, using participatory visualisation techniques. This involved each person writing down five strengths and five weaknesses, each one on a separate card (expressed in less than 20 words). These were then collected and shuffled and then displayed one by one and stuck on a large board. When similar ideas emerged they were clustered together and when all cards had been stuck on the boards each cluster was given a title.

The following were identified as the **STRENGTHS** of REFLECT:

Participative: learning from each other; limits facilitator; generates dialogue; learner centred; starts where people are...

Innovative: recognises peoples' ability, and creativity; promotes independent thinking; good method for experimenting; self innovation; power to the learners.

Scope for materials development:

Change of KAS (Knowledge; Skills; Attitude): Learners discover value of literacy and numeracy within the learning process itself.

Empowering: because the power is shared between learners and facilitators, and people learn to ask questions which challenge the status quo;

Promotes group harmony: through strengthening organisational processes, and friendly relations within group;

Cost effective:

Promotes sustainable development: because it is a method which considers issues related to numeracy, resource analysis and gender;

Valuing people's knowledge: as it is a process which starts with learners' strength and knowledge;

Fun and flexible: because it is easy to learn and the learners can supply variation;

Replicable:

Free of anxiety:

Relates to learners' reality: as the micro level analysis helps learners to find the real causes of poverty;

Sense of ownership: of group activities and materials development.

The following were identified as potential **WEAKNESSES** of REFLECT. We record all the weaknesses even where they were not agreed by the whole group:

Not appropriate for urban areas: it would need much adaptation.

May not be effective for multi-lingual areas

Not appropriate for children: no experience yet with younger people.

Needs high quality facilitators: which may be hard to find. There is a risk of the facilitator dominating.

Success so far has depended on incentives from an outside agency

Imported from abroad

Time consuming: the poor haven't got time to build maps. No time frame for course.

REFLECT is confusing for traditionalists: you can't do without a primer!

Learners will feel frustrated without primers: Facilitators will not be able to teach reading and writing skills without more reading materials.

Neither the philosophy or its implementation is as yet clear. The method itself is not systematic, and may become mechanical if not linked to an understanding of social relations.

REFLECT "is a happy marriage between NFE and PRA. In the case of DIVORCE it fails"

Divisions between learners: Women can be discriminated against in a mixed class, for example.

Needs social harmony to be successful.

Not enough social awareness:

Frustration if no action: it may generate too many expectations.

Expensive

No mechanism for retention:

No system to learn every word systematically:

[NOTE: 9. VIPP to Select Workshops

The same techniques were used to identify workshops for the following days. All suggested workshops took place and are reported on in the following pages.]

10. REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON: PRA Philosophy and Practice

The group agreed to discuss the philosophy and practice of PRA in general, and consider them in the context of the experiences of the pilot project on Bhola. Mukul (AA Bangladesh), Bimal (AA Nepal) and Prasad (AA India) acted as resource people for this group.

The **philosophy** of Participatory Rural Appraisal is drawn at least in part from Paulo Freire. It builds on Rapid Rural Appraisal which evolved in the 1990s into Participatory Rural Appraisal; the latter becoming popular as a way of recognising people's abilities to take charge of their own development. In short:

- * it is a concept not a method;
- * a process not an event,
- * an evolution of ideas, not an intervention.

The **practice** of PRA has been useful in baseline information gathering; participatory planning and evaluation. The advantages inherent in PRA are as follows:

- * involving people right from the original analysis stage;
- * promoting experience sharing and confidence;
- * linking actions and activities;
- * utilising techniques from a variety of disciplines egs. maps (geography), matrices (statistics), and in building on the indigenous knowledge of the people.

REFLECT is not a new approach coming from nowhere, but a regeneration of the Freirean approach to literacy. By using PRA techniques the REFLECT method:

- * becomes action oriented;
- * is participatory;
- * provides a concrete and structured way of generating dialogue,
- * ensures visualisation and sharing,
- * builds on learners' existing knowledge rather than substituting external knowledge and values.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- * Recognise knowledge gap around the areas of Freire, and PRA, and offer training accordingly. Freire particularly is much quoted, but little read and even less understood.
- * Recognise the difference between the philosophy of Freire, and the different methodologies which have been used to put that philosophy into action in different countries and contexts. Freire did not, for example, promote the use of a primer (and yet most people who claim to follow his methods use a primer!). REFLECT is another way of operationalising his philosophy.
- * Avoid distortion of REFLECT by always linking literacy and numeracy with ACTIONS leading to empowerment. Keep clear goals. Scale up with care - and focus on quality!

11. REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON: Materials Development for REFLECT

The Resource person for this workshop was James Kanyesigye, who described the materials used in Uganda, and how they were developed. The basic materials were:

- * the training manual for facilitators;
- * the set of visual cards;
- * large sheets of blank paper, pens and blank exercise books.

These lead to:

- * the learner generated materials of maps and matrices,
- * learner generated writing in their books,
- * notes of discussions made by facilitators.

The critical areas to consider in starting up a new project are the elaboration of a relevant manual and the preparation of visual cards. The manual must seek to decide a set of Units (each based on different PRA techniques) which will bring out key issues. In Uganda the Units were selected only after ACTIONAID had been carrying out village level research in the area for four months, and the priority issues were emerging. It was important to start with a sequence of maps and then move on to more complex calendars and matrices. There is sense to dividing the manual into sections so that for example a series of Units in sequence cover agriculture and then health. Once the PRA techniques which form the basis of each Unit have been selected and sequenced, it is necessary, especially for the early Units to choose key words - which should be words that we can anticipate will inevitably arise in the construction of the a particular map or matrix (eg "trees" or "river" or "wood" or "well" or "pond" in a natural resource map - depending on the area!). The early key words must be chosen as ones with a simple structure which use common syllables.

In Uganda key words were selected after a syllabic survey of the two main local languages; analysing the most common syllables. As these two languages had not been written previously the process was particularly difficult. After the first ten Units (when most different common syllables have been introduced) there is less emphasis on key words as the reading and writing will have moved much beyond individual words - but there is a value to having them as an insurance policy (to ensure all syllables are covered). Numeracy then needs to be interwoven with the Units. In Bangladesh this was done only after a socio-mathematical survey to identify the nature of calculations encountered by learners in their everyday life.

In Uganda the manual was prepared initially in four weeks, in El Salvador and Bangladesh in just over two weeks! It does not have to take long! A very different sequence of Units has been

developed in each country - with 29 in total in Bangladesh and 35 in El Salvador.

Once the manual is completed then visual cards are needed to help learners construct the maps and matrices (or translate them from the ground to large sheets of paper). Each map and matrix (especially the earlier Units) should be reviewed and the need for pictures anticipated. A list of words for anything from 50 to 150 pictures may result. Then a local artist should be sought who will (over a week or two) draw pictures of each of the things listed and test some of the drawings locally. The drawings should be SIMPLE, and easily copied by facilitators or learners (who are not artists). They should be large enough to be seen in the context of a literacy class and they must be locally relevant (and tested locally if there are doubts). They should be printed preferably on card with lots of blank cards available for learners to draw their own supplementary cards.

Uganda is now moving onto a second phase where the learners, having developed basic literacy skills are generating their own materials. These learner and facilitator generated materials are currently in the process of being shared between communities through stencil duplication of a news letter. The translation and printing of supplementary materials has also been recently started - to help create a more literate environment.

After discussion, the group made the following recommendations:

- * More blank cards should be made available, and facilitators should be trained to confidently add visuals at the demand of the learners.
- * Learner generated materials should be consistently shared with other groups.
- * The training manual should be physically divided into modules for ease of use, and so that facilitators' sharings in their meetings for on going training can be added to every facilitator's manual. This would also allow more flexibility about the order of the units.
- * REFLECT should empower learners to reject or accept supplementary materials as they see fit. These materials must be selected by the agency on merit alone ... and not commercial factors.
- * Agencies using REFLECT should make use of existing supplementary materials. This is part of the principle of sharing experience with other literacy organisations.

12. REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON: REFLECT and Reading and Writing

This group first of all focussed on the link between map and matrix construction and reading and writing, and then made some recommendations concerning the Bengali language.

STAGE 1

In Units 1 & 2, maps are transferred from the ground to paper (with visual symbols), and the key words are selected by the facilitator. These words are then broken down into syllables using the syllabic approach. Throughout the first Units learners are encouraged to make their own words, and the facilitator should feed in phrases (relating to discussion where possible) which use words composed of syllables already covered by learners. Learners are also encouraged to make their own new words and phrases. There is no need for any chanting or rote learning.

STAGE 2

Facilitators can move on to other possibilities using more extended reading eg. learners writing phrases about the maps and matrices (drawing on vocabulary generated by the visuals), agreement and contract writing by learners, more advanced thematic writing by the facilitator to be used as reading practice etc. Learners are encouraged to write without worrying about making mistakes, and where possible these learner generated material are shared within the group (for reading practice) and with other groups.

The fact that there are visual images alongside the words on the collectively constructed maps makes the REFLECT approach very useful for mixed ability classes - as those who are more advanced can focus on words and those with more difficulty can be helped by the pictures. There is a big emphasis on creative writing compared to a primer approach which involves mostly reading or copying of letters or words rather than truly active writing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * Promote locally managed low-cost printing.
- * Facilitators must use their skills in avoiding compound letters in Bengali at an early stage.
- * Facilitators should start from colloquial language (the language experience of the learners) but must plan how to move from colloquial language to mainstream Bengali later in the course.
- * Facilitators should be very aware of their pronunciation.
- * The manuals should be made more visual / user-friendly.
- * Encourage learners to bring in supplementary reading materials of their own choice.
- * The choice of whether to include a syllabic approach, a letter approach or a whole word approach will depend on the context (the language to be taught). The REFLECT approach can work with any of these. But REFLECT will may have a particular advantage in supporting whole word recognition and real reading or writing.

13. REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON: Organisation and Management of REFLECT

The resource person for this group was Shameem Siddiqi, who gave a detailed description of the organisational structure and management practices in the Bhola pilot. From this, the group were able to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of both aspects. The focus was therefore explicitly on the organisation and management of the literacy programme in Bhola - not of the wider issues. It was not feasible at this stage to make broad statements about any O and M factors inherent to the use of the REFLECT method.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHS

- * Functioning Structure
- * Introduction of REFLECT based on existing shomiti groups
- * Training of Facilitators
- * Shared experience and support of ACTIONAID

MANAGEMENT STRENGTHS

- * Workplan available
- * Budget available
- * Reporting and Monitoring systems in place.
- * Regular supervision and follow up

WEAKNESSES

- * No clear targets for the competency levels of learners
- * No clear time frame
- * No picture of cost benefits
- * No human resources analysis (either quantitative or qualitative)

NOTES:

There are some points which may become inherent to the REFLECT method:

- * The emphasis on ongoing training and exchange workshops for all three REFLECT pilots means that there needs to be strong organisation. It is not just a matter of training facilitators once and letting them loose - but then ongoing training should be a criteria for all good literacy programmes.
- * The fact that the REFLECT method generates a lot of demands or mobilises communities to new actions means that some structure to provide follow up support may be valuable or even essential. Although many actions may be self-generated and self-sustaining within the community, others may require external resources (either human or financial) and it may be important to anticipate this. Clearly a literacy programme which simply taught reading and writing would not require this follow up.

14. REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON: Training Facilitators for REFLECT

The workshops on Training facilitators was preceded by an explanation of the present practice in the three pilot projects, looking at three categories:

- * selecting facilitators
- * initial training
- * ongoing training

The recommendations of the groups are summarised as follows:

CRITERIA FOR FACILITATOR SELECTION:

The following observations were made regarding selection and recruitment of facilitators:

- * They should be local: in order to promote an internal and sustainable community process.
- * They should be of a similar socio economic level as the learners ... for understanding and harmony.
- * Mutual respect is essential (the facilitator must respect learners and be respected by them).
- * The choice must lie with learners.
- * The facilitator must show commitment.
- * Communication skills are essential.

NOTES:

If all above criteria are fulfilled; a high educational level is not essential. In practice in Uganda the facilitators have between 6th grade primary and 2nd grade secondary; in Bangladesh they are 3rd grade secondary and in El Salvador the facilitators on average have 6th grade primary and some have just 3rd grade primary. It was noted that the facilitators in El Salvador are volunteers, whilst in Uganda and Bangladesh there is some nominal pay. There was also some debate about the appropriacy of considering the marital status of female facilitators...in cases where unmarried women would be forced to leave the group on their marriage.

INITIAL TRAINING:

The initial training in the pilot projects has varied from 7 days to 12 days in duration. It was recommended that the training needs to cover:

- * Adult education methodologies;
- * The role of the facilitator both within and outside the class -
as an activist/ bridge;

- * Details of PRA and especially field practice of PRA;
- * How to handle issues arising from the learners
- * Techniques to help slow learners.
- * Training in lesson planning and time management.
- * Learner assessment; documentation skills and evaluation.
- * Promotion of literacy and mobilising the community.
- * Gender awareness training.

It was also noted that:

- * Initial training needs assessment must be carried out.
- * Training should focus on building the team, and commitment (a residential course is thus preferably allowing informal contact in the evening).
- * The **process** of training must be participatory, and stimulate creative thought (eg. games, role play, demonstrations).
- * The training must be a model of good practice.
- * Training must include managers, and supervisors/co-ordinators.

Finally it was felt that the minimum period of initial training to cover all this may be 10 days - but it was agreed that even one month or one would not be enough if there was no ongoing training!

ONGOING TRAINING

All three pilot projects have arranged regular workshops between facilitators - either monthly or fortnightly. In these workshops the facilitators discuss the problems they have had over the previous weeks and prepare themselves for forthcoming Units. They also address logistical issues and have monitoring and evaluation function.

These workshops are seen as absolutely essential as the facilitators do not know the problems they will face until they have started work. The ongoing contact refreshes facilitators and gives them renewed momentum.

One particular recommendation emerged from the discussions:

that the facilitators manual should be made loose-leaf - so that the facilitators can adapt the manual and thus take full ownership of it. The workshops would be the natural place for the facilitators to agree on re-ordering the manual or preparing new Units themselves to respond to emerging issues. It should be a basic principle to update the manual.

NOTE: Key aspects of the training should be consolidated in the manual so that the facilitators have a constant reference point.

15. REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON: Gender and REFLECT

The workshop began with a brief outline of the gender strategies followed in Uganda, from Resource Person Judith Bakirya. She described the research and planning stage which resulted in the prioritising of women's empowerment as an objective. On a practical level, women's councils had been given authority within the project, and women learners targeted in the pre-literacy campaign, and at every stage. The design of the units plus the dominance of women attenders, had meant that questions of gender were raised in almost every class. After discussion, the following recommendations were made.

It was agreed to be vital to start from where the learners were. At the same time it would be wrong to reproduce and reinforce existing discriminatory practices within the practice of the literacy groups. Therefore, gender awareness had to be part of the training of facilitators, and included in the manual. This would be necessary whether the facilitators were women or men.

Areas on which to concentrate:

- * Problem analysis and understanding the existing situation in the local area. This would include discussion of the different roles of women and men; both from an inter-personal viewpoint and also looking at the wider socio-economic impact of relationships between women and men.
- * Discussion of the gender issues likely to arise from each unit; especially units not based on "traditional" women's issues of health and domestic work. Facilitators should take an integrated approach to all units, and have the mental tools to identify gender issues (eg. control over loan use) as they come up in discussion.
- * Facilitators' meetings should consider how to handle units (such as Body Mapping) which would be inappropriate for a mixed group, or for a fe/male facilitator.
- * Facilitators should be encouraged to be role models for community members.
- * Action Points arising from classes must be allowed to include those which challenge the gender status quo. However, the facilitators (and agency) must consider the dangers for women of raising issues without raising the need to formulate some practical solutions for changing their situation.

Finally, it was noted that the plan to consider the different impacts on women and men (eg. disaggregated statistics) in monitoring and evaluation was a good one.

NOTE: See resource paper for the conference: "Gender and Development: the Contribution of the PRA Approach to Literacy" by Sara Cottingham.

16. REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON: Learner Assessment in the Pilots

The group decided to focus exclusively on the assessment of reading, writing and numeracy skills, leaving the assessment of wider impact (eg on awareness) to the next session on monitoring and evaluating empowerment.

Aluganti Prasad from ACTIONAID India facilitated the workshop and started by stressing the need for all literacy programmes to monitor the progress of learning, defining from the outset the basic competencies in reading, writing and numeracy which are to be expected. He outlined the practice in ACTIONAID India which included:

- * Reading: all learners should be able to read and understand simple signs and newspaper announcements;
- * Writing: all learners should be able write a simple letter or enquiry or complaint;
- * Numeracy: learners should be able to functionally use addition, subtraction, multiplication and division for the keeping of household accounts and for daily transactions involving weights, measures and the calculation of profit and loss.

The practice in the three pilot projects reflects these concerns but it was not possible from the outset to determine how long it would take the learners to reach these competencies given the new methodology. Basic tests have been devised for all three pilot projects, which include:

- * Reading: word recognition (3 sentences), speed of comprehension (5 sentences), contextual reading (from local materials); reading hand-writing / typed text (different sizes/fonts);
- * Writing: by dictation, copying and own initiative (3 sentences of each, then read back by the learner);
- * Numeracy: reading and writing large numbers, money based problems, calculations from savings and credit books etc.(especially command of metric system by Bholia learners).

As well as a final evaluation there is ongoing monitoring through reviews of the learner's books and occasional revision units. Field support visits by the literacy promoters or field workers play an important role. In each country there are formats to help guide such visits. For example, in Uganda the promoters are encouraged divide each visit to a class in three stages:

- * Observation / Review of materials - including observing level of participation and reviewing the maps, matrices, the register, the facilitator's notebook and learners' books;
- * Interaction with learners - to discuss recent Units and test some reading and writing;
- * Discussion with the literacy facilitator - regarding attendance, lesson planning, methodology, any problems etc.

Each visit is carefully recorded. The primary function of this ongoing monitoring is not to extract statistics but to help identify problems and feed into improving field practice.

Each of the pilots took a baseline which was considered essential for any monitoring system. In Uganda this revealed that almost 100% of learners had no literacy skills (as there is scarcely any literate environment). In Bangladesh, some learners knew how to write their name but were not able to identify the component letters or any other words. In El Salvador there was a wider mix of ability as some learners had enrolled in first grade primary school ten years ago and were able to recognise (but not write) some letters.

The group discussed whether it was appropriate to use traditional testing methods for a non-traditional literacy method. It was felt that for the sake of the pilot projects it was necessary to establish the effectiveness of the new methodology using such traditional tools. However, this needed to be balanced by a focus on wider evaluation of impact using more innovative techniques (see section on the evaluation of empowerment). Control groups have been identified in all three projects so that the effectiveness of the new method can be determined clearly.

Learner's self-assessment was considered to be of great importance and was one area which the pilot projects have not yet developed clear approaches. One useful suggestion was the construction of a matrix by the learners with reading, writing, numeracy (perhaps each with sub-divisions) across the top - and excellent, good, fair and poor down the side. The learners could be asked where they would place themselves on the matrix (perhaps in relation to their initial expectations). As well as considering learner self assessment there is clearly a role for assessment by facilitators / teachers and by supervisors - as well as by external agencies (in the case of such a pilot project).

The workshop concluded with a discussion about certificates. Although the REFLECT approach should not be reduced to certificated learning it was accepted that in a "culture of certificates" to ignore them was counter-productive. Some level of recognition is important and can help to keep people motivated. Certificates of participation should be preferred over certificates of achievement (which can be divisive and can even lead to drop out as people feel they have finished). In such a context the actual monitoring of learner assessment should be maintained as a separate process! To be more participatory it was even suggested that the learners could design their own certificates, print them locally and sign them for each other!

17. REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON: Evaluating Empowerment in the Pilots

The workshop groups addressing the evaluation of empowerment were preceded by presentations from the three pilot projects. The range of indicators used in the three pilots include:

- * matrices to monitor the development of literate and numerate habits;
- * levels of participation in community organisations;
- * matrix of actions that arose out of literacy class discussions (analysed Unit by Unit and clarifying numbers or people involved, success and sustainability of the activities)
- * strength of organisations arising out of the literacy classes and other community organisations
- * knowledge of: key health issues and how to do certain productive activities;
- * impact on children's education (attendance and achievement at school);
- * impact on gender relations / household decision making;
- * mobility from the home (eg in Uganda);
- * attitudes to the local languages (in Uganda);
- * levels of self-confidence (eg how vocal people are in meetings)
- * analytical abilities (answers to questions like: why do prices change?);
- * case studies of literacy learners (randomly selected, semi-structured interviews);
- * case studies of classes / villages (including interviews with other members of the community);
- * case studies of facilitators (to determine the impact on their lives and any emergence as role models / community activists);

In each country there is a control group of other literacy classes using more traditional methods. Where possible all of the same indicators will be used. On some occasions this will be more difficult (where indicators are closely tied to issues covered in the REFLECT classes) especially where the evaluation uses one of the original maps or matrices from the literacy class as baseline information (as such baseline information may not be available in the traditional classes). The

re-doing of maps and matrices initially constructed within the classes offers a huge potential for evaluation.

The evaluations of the three projects will take place in the first six months of 1995. However, initial indications clearly show that the REFLECT method is succeeding on both fronts: it is teaching people to read and write more effectively and it is empowering them.

The Workshop discussions classified three types of evaluation:

- * External Evaluation
- * Internal Evaluation
- * Self Evaluation

In the light of this classification the importance of having external involvement in the evaluations became clear. In Bangladesh, two or three independent individuals from other NGOs will be brought in to help evaluate the pilot experience around April / May 1995. Similar external involvement is being sought in Uganda (for March/April) and El Salvador (February / March).

Internal evaluation should include all the levels of participants - learners, the wider community, teachers, trainers, planners and the rest of the NGO (or other organisations) involved. Each of these should both be involved in the evaluation and be the subject of evaluation. The primary aim of such internal evaluation may be to improve future practice, learn from mistakes and feed into strategic planning. In the specific context of the REFLECT method it should include a comprehensive review of all materials produced by all classes as the basis for planning other activities (eg all health maps, matrices and calendars should be reviewed by local health workers to feed into their training and other programmes). Within such an internal evaluation each Unit should be evaluated against the explicit stated objectives of the Unit.

Self evaluation was considered particularly crucial as empowerment must surely include (and may even be) a feeling. You cannot be empowered and not know about it! In relation to learner self evaluation a matrix was suggested in which the learners generate their own criteria for evaluating the success and then plot themselves on it, indicating whether they have been successful or not in relation to each criteria. The learners could also construct calendars of empowerment identifying key activities which arose through the year (and the relative importance of the literacy class). Maps to indicate change could also be very useful - identifying the location of various new initiatives (eg new crops, terraces, tree nurseries, new latrines etc etc). This use of PRA methods within the evaluation itself should give the learners considerable scope for expression (as they will already be familiar with all the techniques involved).

For a full evaluation of the pilot experiences the timeframe is a serious limitation. A final report needs to be compiled from July 1995 - but to really evaluate impact will require a longer period. Given the present time constraints it may not be possible to do participant observation in selected villages - which might be the most revealing form of evaluation. However, it was stressed that the formal requirement to evaluate for the ODA will not be the final evaluation - and that it is hoped to evaluate the longer term impact over following years as all three projects will have a longer term presence.

The Workshop discussion felt that the documentation of failures was as important as documentation of successes. In selecting case studies it is important to be random but there may be prior classification to ensure that one or two case studies look at literacy classes where there were serious (even atypical) problems. Documenting the progress and problems of such classes may be more revealing for future learning than focusing just on successes.

Other indicators which came up in discussion were:

- * Increases in the Level of Income.
- * Level of Record Keeping by Groups/Participants (eg. skill of handling group accounts or minute taking).
- * Groups' initiative to teach others.

It was stressed that the precise range of indicators to be used will always change according to the different context of particular projects. - and the general point was made that to fully evaluate the methodology it will be necessary to evaluate it in a wide range of different contexts (including urban areas, areas where there is no previous organisation etc etc).

A final indicator which was suggested during one of the Workshops was the level of take up of PRA techniques by the community in other fora or decision making processes. This will be a particularly revealing indicator as it will show the level of confidence that the learners have in the techniques by which they learnt and the value which they attach the techniques. If there is a wide take up then we will truly be able to say that PRA has been handed over to the villages rather than being used by an external agency!

18. REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON: REFLECT and Post-literacy

The Workshop opened with a presentation from Uganda which outlined the integrated post-literacy strategy of the Bundibugyo project:

- * formation of savings and credit groups out of the literacy classes to open up new opportunities;
- * second level / post-literacy classes with a focus on income generating activities and writing;
- * local publication of materials eg on health, agriculture, stories, civic life etc (in the local languages);
- * publication of learner generated materials (newsletter);
- * local language advocacy campaign - to get government agencies and others to use and print the local language
- * coordination with the Ministry of Education to introduce local languages in schools and produce relevant materials;
- * tape recording of oral histories of elders;
- * strengthening of the local post office system (creation of pen pals etc).

The discussion in the group centred on the following:

- * The role and risks of rural libraries (many stagnate as there is not an ongoing supply of materials and many are locked away); mobile rickshaw libraries can be a good idea.
- * The importance of creating a distribution or supply network - creating a market for books. If Coca-Cola can get everywhere so can the printed word.
- * Newspapers play a central role in creating a market for reading materials and reinforcing skills; regional papers could be subsidised for a few years to extend their circulation to remote areas (until the habit of reading creates a permanent market for the papers). If a real sustainable market is to be created it will be done by business not by NGOs!
- * People do not want to read serious books on health and agriculture. It is more important to supply entertaining books which people will read for pleasure - this way they will reinforce their skills and will therefore be able to read the more serious materials when necessary.
- * Low cost, appropriate technology printing presses should be a high priority - if possible at such a low cost as to be feasible to have in each village - so that literacy classes (and others) can reproduce and distribute their own materials - creating their own literate environment.
The REFLECT approach would be a strong basis for such a strategy.
- * Promoting literate habits like minute taking and account keeping is essential.

There are more literate Bangladeshis in Bangladesh than there are literate English people in England. There is no shortage of a literate environment (over 50 national newspapers!).

The problem is distribution - getting the materials down to the villages!

19. REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON: Adapting REFLECT for Urban Areas

Mariam Sekati from South Africa was the main Resource Person for this group.

First of all the different characteristics of urban living, as they would affect REFLECT, were discussed. People do not know their neighbours, and do not want to know them. There is no sense of belonging to a community, having a facilitator from the community, and transforming the reality of that community. People may be separated by language, or just by the fact that they have originally come from different parts of the country. Learners may also be separated geographically, and, as in South Africa, travel a long way to class. The space factor was also noted, in that in very over-crowded living conditions people may prefer to build a dwelling in a free space, rather than use it for construction of maps and matrices.

The suggested response to some of the above was as follows. REFLECT was thought well worth adapting to urban areas because it had the potential to raise both national political issues, and local issues of exploitation and repression. The easiest way of adapting was thought to be the identification of functioning communities within the urban setting. Suggestions were slum clusters (as in Dhaka); garment factory workers living together (Dhaka); compound hostels; commercial sex workers and prisoners.

In these situations the adaptation of units so that they were relevant to learners would be fairly straight forward. For example, in relation to mapping there would be a need to widen the household map but this could be done, including:

- * starting with the precise neighbourhood and major routes to other parts of the city;
- * adding map of employment opportunities in the city;
- * map of services - health, education, legal rights etc;
- * map to show the parts of the country where learners migrated from or have family;
- * mobility maps.

The group also agreed that the health matrices, and the role of traditional medicines and superstition were of significance to many urban dwellers. Other matrices which would be relevant include those exploring prices, sources of credit, preference ranking of employment or ranking of home-based income generation. Calendars of work availability and income / expenditure would all be relevant.

Using REFLECT in groups where the learners did not form a community was considered possible but would require a working party. The group recommended that a pilot REFLECT in an urban area be started in order to explore issues fully. The condition for any such pilot must be that learners were free to participate fully in REFLECT, and were not compelled (by, for example, an employer) to take part.

20. REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON: REFLECT and Empowerment

The resource person for this group was James Kanyesigye from Uganda.

The definition of "empowerment" was agreed as:

"a continuous process through which the powerless gain power, take control over their own situation, and decide to change the structure and power relation within that situation".

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * The initial dialogue/questioning should start with the existing structures through a visualisation process. This will ultimately raise consciousness. However, a pre-set theme could be limiting (though may be necessary) from the point of view of empowerment.
- * Break the culture of silence.
- * Remember the critical role of the facilitator in probing and instigating.
- * There should be a flexible course design which can be manipulated by the learners.
- * Priority should be given to learners' demands so that the process is sustainable in the long term and goes beyond literacy and numeracy.
- * The risk to empowerment of the use of REFLECT by mega NGOs, apex agencies and funding agencies must always be considered. Any methodology can be distorted if the political will is absent.

21. REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON: Scaling up / Replicating REFLECT

The participants divided into small groups to discuss whether it was feasible to scale up **REFLECT**; what adaptations would be necessary in different contexts; which organisations (including national governments) could use the new methodology, and what support would be necessary for replication. The general response to the idea of scaling up was very positive, and participants wanted to follow the continuing progress of the pilot projects. The following is a summary of their recommendations.

- * There should be a build up to national replication through dissemination and practice of **REFLECT** amongst grass roots movements and NGOs. National level advocacy was therefore the suggested approach.

- * The most appropriate countries for national replication would be those untouched by much literacy work, or past literacy campaigns.

- * Motivation of communities to take up **REFLECT** could take place through local political leaders.

- * Support in the form of a **REFLECT** network was recommended. Rigorous documentation of all aspects of the pilots was essential, and the periodic updates should be made available to all conference participants, and that these updates should be available in English and Bangla.

- * A national training workshop for Bangladeshi NGOs was recommended, as well as the possibility of making field visits to the Bhola pilot.


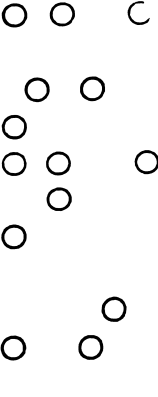
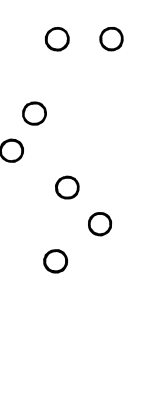
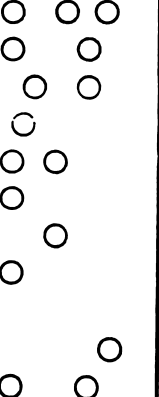
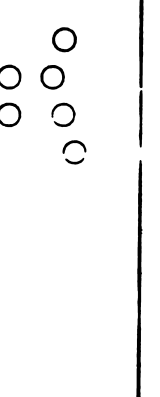
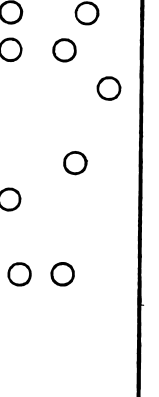
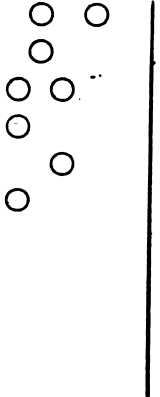


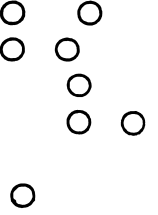
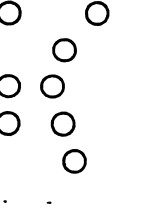
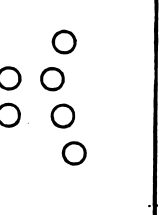
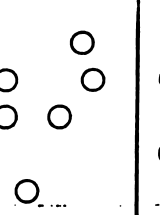
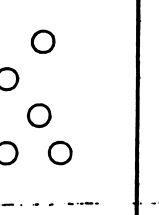
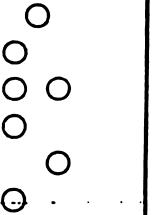
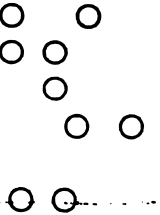


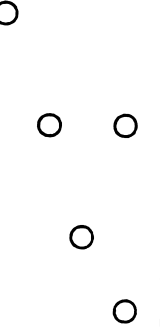
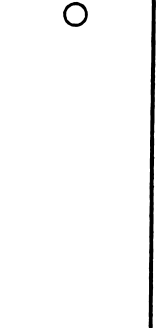
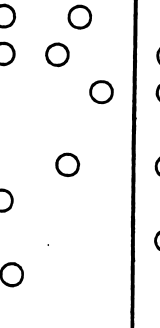
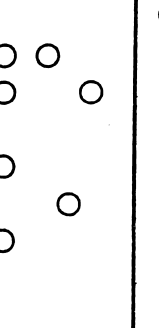
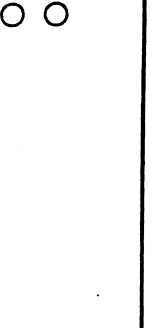
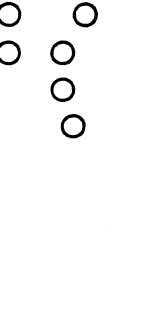







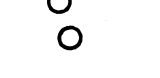








- * Information flow to other organisations could be best organised into the following categories: apex or umbrella agencies; thematic agencies; grass roots movements.


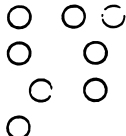


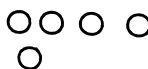
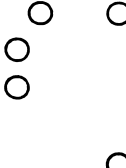
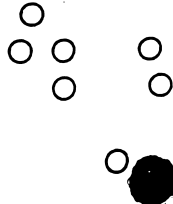

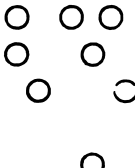
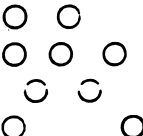
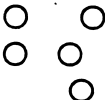
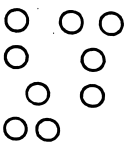
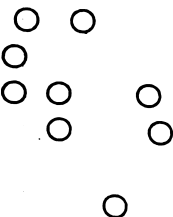
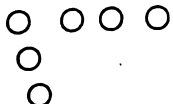

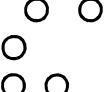
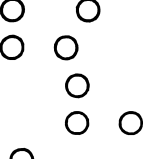
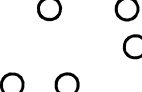

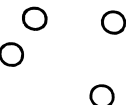
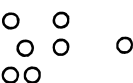













- * Essential support would be a manual on how to develop **REFLECT** in different conditions. It was suggested that this be divided into concepts and techniques. The training section should include the training of trainers; managers, and facilitators.

- * Separate manuals would be advisable for use with children, adolescents and in urban areas.

- * A Resource Centre would be an appropriate support. It should have adequate financing for employing personnel who could offer technical advice on the implementation of **REFLECT**; as well as training courses in its use.

- * The danger of distortion by agencies with no commitment to social change (and merely interested in the transfer of skills) was stressed.

November 1994	MONDAY 14			TUESDAY 15			
	AM	PM		AM		PM	
	Inauguration & opening presentation	Simulations	Uganda Presentation	El Salvador Presentation	Bangladesh Bhole Talk	VIPP on strengths & weaknesses	VIPP on choosing workshops
Very Happy Face 							
Happy 							
Quite Happy 							
Fair/OK 							
Unhappy 							

November 1994	WEDNESDAY 16				THURSDAY 17	
	AM		PM		AM	
	Groupwork Reading & writing Materials PRA theory/practice organisation & management	Training Facilitator	Groupwork Learner Assessment Gender	Monitoring & Evaluation	Groupwork Post-literacy Empowerment Reflect & Urban	Scaling Up Replication
Very Happy Face 						
Happy 						
Quite Happy 						
Fair/OK 						
Unhappy 						

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