

Sharing and Co-generating Knowledges: Reflections on Experiences with PRA¹ and CLTS²

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Abstract The evolution and spread of PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal or Participatory Reflection and Action) and CLTS (Community-Led Total Sanitation) have involved activities of sharing and co-generating knowledge which can loosely be considered a form of Action Learning. Key activities for this have been sequences of participatory workshops which have evolved as creative collective experiences fed by and feeding into wider networking and dissemination. These workshops have been occasions for sharing practice and collating experiences, and going beyond these to generate ideas and evolve and agree principles and good practices. Critical reflections concern power, planning and process, theory of change and impact, lessons learnt, and an ongoing learning process.

1 Introduction and purpose

The purpose of this article is to examine and draw lessons from experiences with two participatory methodologies – PRA and CLTS. While they have earlier roots, PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal or Participatory Reflection and Action) has evolved since 1989 and CLTS (Community-Led Total Sanitation) since 2000. Many actors and organisations have been involved in many countries, with much diversity and creativity. Both PRA and CLTS have been, and remain, continuously evolving and spreading. The approach and methods of PRA have diffused into many other methodologies and practices. CLTS is a more specialised movement that has drawn on the PRA tradition and practices.

What follows are my critical reflections as a participant in the evolution and spread of these methodologies. I have been exceptionally lucky to have had the freedom to be able to accompany PRA and CLTS and to be present at, and take part in, the activities described below. As an enthusiast for these approaches and methods, I am vulnerable to positive biases. While I try to offset these through critical reflection, there is no way I can fully succeed. In my view PRA and CLTS are enthralling in the potentials which they have opened up and continue to open up. At

the same time, much practice in their names has been and remains deeply flawed and must continuously be learnt from and improved upon.

In what follows I shall focus on those activities in the evolution of PRA and CLTS which concern combinations of sharing and co-generating knowledge and ideas about principles and practices. Co-generation has taken place most clearly in two contexts: in communities, and in workshops.

First, both PRA and CLTS have entailed participatory processes for innovation and the co-generation of knowledge with people in communities. Both were evolved interactively in real-life hands-on situations in communities and with community participants. They could not have come about otherwise. It is in the nature of a grounded participatory methodology that it is co-evolved in practice with participants. Those who made the first PRA social maps on the ground in India in 1989, after light facilitation to get things going, did it themselves and showed and found out for themselves what they could do, and which neither they nor the facilitators knew they could do. They demonstrated a striking and widespread phenomenon with PRA. This is how processes take off and facilitation is not only

then not needed, but can be a distraction. An outsider facilitator can observe and assess but usually does best by keeping quiet and being inconspicuous during group visual activities in which knowledge is being expressed, made visible and co-generated by those who are participating. For more on this and its rigour see *Whose Reality Counts?* (Chambers 1997: 117–61).

This article focuses on the second context. This involves practitioners, activists, engaged academics and others who are outsiders to communities. While networking and dissemination have been major activities in PRA and CLTS, the events that are most identifiable, creative and productive for these actors have been participatory workshops.

I am writing from my personal experience and fallible recollection, in part triangulated with recorded evidence. I am acutely aware of the fallibility of memory generally (see e.g. Schulz 2010) and my own in particular. I have several times found myself recounting a story only to find it contradicted by written or visual evidence from the occasion I am recollecting. It is also easy and tempting to forget or ignore negative cases where approaches and methods have not worked. I urge readers to reflect critically on my mindset and likely biases, to check with the written evidence, and other sources, and to assess for themselves the relevance of what follows for contemporary and future development practice.

2 Words, labels and action learning

Words and labels matter, so let me try to be clear about them at the outset. ‘Co-’ words are now much applied to knowledge. ‘Co-construction’ is perhaps the most common, and as a succession of IDS Annual Reports show, has for some years been part of IDS rhetoric and philosophy. It moves us forward from concepts of one-sided extractive research to the language of partnership and collaboration in research and in creating knowledge. As a term, though, co-construction invites deconstruction. Co-construction implies building. It evokes an image of people coming with their building blocks of knowledge, their bricks, or bits of Lego, and putting them together to make a solid structure. But knowledge is not like that: it is dynamic, provisional and changing, organic rather than mechanical.

Moreover, knowledge is not singular but plural. There is not one but a multiplicity of epistemologies and knowledges, with varied personal, methodological and contextual origins and situations. With participatory processes, we can find interpersonal and creative sharing of knowledges which in turn generates new insights and ideas. What emerges may be given temporary singularity when expressed in writing, diagrams or other records. But every participant carries away a separate personal knowledge, making plural *knowledges*.

The difference between the start and end of knowledge-generating activities can, in fact, be seen as threefold: multiple situated personal learnings and knowledges; a singular knowledge whenever there is a written or visual record; and, implicit and occasionally explicit, learning about process and learning itself. The written or visual record is fixed, though open to many interpretations. The situated and personal knowledges and learnings continue to develop and change. So what we are concerned with is not really *co-constructing knowledge* but better expressed as *sharing and co-generating knowledges*.

A question has been how to label these activities. In the research project on CLTS which led to the book *Shit Matters* (Mehta and Movik 2011) we were opportunistic in adopting *Action Learning and Networking* to describe activities in the project which were not what informally we called *classic research*. This was because we needed a label, and what we were doing was neither classic research, nor really the research of Action Research or Participatory (aka Participative) Action Research. It was more learning from experiences of action, of what worked and what did not, of approaches, methods and innovations. Also Action Research and Participatory Action Research had a formidable and daunting literature while Action Learning appeared to have less. The classic and authoritative collection *The Sage Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice* (Reason and Bradbury 2008) has 49 chapters, only one of which (Pedler and Burgoyne 2008), is explicitly devoted to action learning.

Action Learning (AL) does indeed provide a broad umbrella under which participatory learning methodologies can shelter and from which they can gain some legitimacy. A light scan of the literature shows that the AL label has been used

quite loosely and inclusively. Reginald Revans, regarded as the father of AL, and credited with having first used the term, wrote 'There can be no learning without action; and no (sober and deliberate) action without learning' (cited in Pedler and Burgoyne 2008: 320), an observation with a comfortably wide generality. At the same time those who write about AL practice can be very specific about how to do things in particular contexts. Pedler (1997) for example, giving an organisational example, specifies down to the detail of involving a set of six or so colleagues who meet regularly to support and challenge each other.⁴ Or for James Taylor and his co-authors (1997) the action-reflection-learning-planning cycle is at the core of action learning. For them, it is a facilitated process that can be applied at personal, organisational and community levels. They too present specifics such as a do-it-yourself guide to improving your organisation. What follows here in this article is different again but bears family resemblances. It too is specific on details of practice in participatory workshops. This is consonant with Pedler and Burgoyne's (2008) observation that Revans

eschews any single definition of action learning... This lack of precise definition may hinder transmission, but it also contributes to the generation of new practices and the renewal and re-vivification of the idea.

PRA and CLTS activities of sharing and co-generating knowledge and knowledges in workshops and other contexts have sought knowledges about principles, methods, activities in PRA and CLTS grounded in field and action realities and experiences. I hope it is reasonable to describe these as action learning.

3 Evidence and experience

Brief historical overviews of PRA and CLTS can set the context from which the evidence is drawn.

3.1 PRA

PRA is often described as an approach and methods. The approach critically includes behaviour, attitudes and facilitating participatory analysis and action. The methods typically involve, but are not limited to, small groups doing their own analysis with visuals such as maps and diagrams on the ground or on paper. PRA was pioneered in India and East Africa mainly in the very early 1990s, largely by Indians

and Kenyans. The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED, specifically Jules Pretty, Irene Guijt, Ian Scoones and John Thompson) were major actors and made a huge contribution, not least through training and innovating methods in many countries. PRA spread in the 1990s to over 100 countries, in at least 20 of which PRA networks were established. IDS was generously and flexibly funded to support the sharing and spread of PRA, without the constraint of logframes and the like.

Applications of the methods have been innumerable. Participatory mapping – social mapping, resource mapping, mobility mapping, vulnerability mapping, and so on – has been facilitated now in millions of cases. Other methods like pairwise ranking, matrix scoring, seasonal diagramming, wealth ranking (in practice better described as wellbeing grouping), Venn or *chapati* diagramming, and spider diagrams – have been very widely used, and are a standard part of the repertoire of many government and non-governmental organisation (NGO) fieldworkers.

Applications of the participatory approach with its behaviour, attitudes and facilitation, combined with the methods, have been myriad. They can be found extensively in many domains such as natural resource management, social protection, poverty appraisals, agriculture, health, women's empowerment, HIV/AIDS and other sectors.

3.2 CLTS

CLTS is a more specialised participatory methodology. It springs from the PRA tradition. Rural community members are facilitated to face the facts of open defecation, often leading to their immediate decision to stop it. It was pioneered by Kamal Kar, a leading PRA trainer and practitioner, in Bangladesh in early 2000. Through his efforts and initiatives of WSP (the Water and Sanitation Program of the World Bank), it was spread to India and then later with support from WSP, Plan International, WaterAid, UNICEF and other organisations, to other countries, now numbering over 40 (Kar 2003; Kar and Pasteur 2005; Bongartz and Chambers 2009; www.communityledtotalsanitation.org). Fifteen countries are reported to have adopted CLTS as part of their national strategy for rural sanitation.

CLTS requires radical and difficult changes in policy and behaviour. Former policies of hardware subsidy are abandoned: people dig their own latrines. Standard designs are abolished: local designs take over. Achievement is no longer mainly latrines constructed: it is communities credibly declared and verified as being open defecation-free. The idea that poor and weak people need help from outside gives way to the idea that primary responsibility lies with, and can be fulfilled by, others in the community.

3.3 Challenges shared by both

Both PRA and CLTS are radical. Both challenge power. PRA was revolutionary when it started, and still is in many places and for many people, presenting alternatives to established approaches and methods; CLTS is revolutionary, confronting embedded policies and budgets, and like PRA before it has proved hard for many to accept. Both PRA and CLTS have faced, and still have to confront, many personal, institutional and professional obstacles: personal mindsets conditioned by education and training; entrenched conservatism and vested interests in international agencies, governments, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and national NGOs; universities and training institutes and their curricula and faculty who are set in their ways and for whom change would be unsettling and entail extra work; embedded practices which favour questionnaire surveys over group visualisation and participatory statistics; top-down planning over bottom-up emergence; and attitudes and practices of teaching and instructing rather than facilitating. This last is crucial. Both PRA and CLTS require sensitive facilitation: lack of this has contributed to serious problems of quality when going to scale.

4 Sharing and Co-generating Knowledges (SHACK) in practice

Sharing and Co-generating Knowledges (SHACK) describes much of how PRA and CLTS have evolved and spread. When combined with innovation, PRA and CLTS have been grounded in interactions with people in communities as active agents, and have spread and developed through communications and workshops. The forms taken could be considered an extended epistemology in that they have combined at least three of the four ways of knowing posited by Heron and Reason (2008). Using their terms,

both PRA and CLTS have been based on: *experiential knowing* through face-to-face encounters – they have come about through interactions in communities; *presentational knowing*, being expressed through enactment – they are performative; and *practical knowing* through skills and competence – they are continuously tested by practice, ‘rooted in and continually refreshed through experiential encounter’ (*ibid.*: 378). *Propositional knowing*, which Heron and Reason describe as ‘intellectual knowing of ideas and theories’ with its product ‘the informative spoken or written statement’ (*ibid.*: 367) has been less significant. With both PRA and CLTS propositional knowledge in this sense has been secondary and inferred from the other ways of knowing (see Chambers 2008). In its place, as we shall see below, informative spoken and written statements have come less, if at all, from explicit theories, but instead from sharing and discussing experiences and insights and then going beyond them through brainstorming and debate to emergent consensus concerning new knowledge and to personal knowledges.

Reflection has also been significant in the sense that it is involved in much if not all experiential learning as a continuous process. The circularity of experience – reflection – planning – action, though traditionally presented sequentially in a circle, has not been how things have happened.⁵ All these activities have occurred concurrently as part of experiential learning and innovation.

5 Enabling conditions and activities

Significant conditions and preconditions have enabled PRA and CLTS to come about. Bearing these in mind will help in assessing the applicability of SHACK approaches and methods in other contexts. Seven enabling conditions and activities stand out.

5.1 Grounded innovations that work

Both PRA and CLTS grew from and were evolved out of innovations with communities in real time. The methods and approach were co-generated interactively with people. PRA exploded because visuals and group analysis worked. People in communities enjoyed making maps and representing their realities in diagrams. They showed and discovered for themselves that they were capable of far more complex representations and analysis than they or others

had supposed. And these visuals proved versatile and useful in many contexts for many people for many purposes. CLTS has been similarly grounded. It too showed that people are capable of analysis and action that neither they nor outsiders had any idea of. It has simultaneously turned on their heads the conventional ideas that poor rural people could not build their own latrines, had to be subsidised, and required a standard structure. Instead it relies on triggering awareness and action through facilitation: people are facilitated through CLTS exercises – they map their defecation areas, go and stand in them, calculate the volume of shit they produce, analyse for themselves the pathways of shit to the mouth, and so on – and are usually so disgusted when they conclude that they are ‘eating one another’s shit’ that they decide to stop open defecation and often start digging pits at once.

5.2 Training, facilitation, scale and quality

From the very beginning it was evident with both PRA and CLTS that facilitation, and the attitudes, behaviours and relationships, of facilitators were central to success and to spread. The same has been found with other participatory methodologies (see Brock and Pettit 2007 especially Nandago 2007). Two very widespread international movements – Reflect (*Education Action* 1994 – continuing; Archer 2007), which draws on both Freirian and PRA approaches, methods and traditions, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) (Pontius *et al.* 2002; Fasih *et al.* 2003) – both stress the critical importance of facilitators, their skills and behaviours. In Reflect, the facilitator is said to be the one in the group who talks least; in IPM it is said that you can tell the facilitator for he or she will be the first into the mud of the paddy field. In PRA and CLTS, training and mentoring have similarly been recognised as critical. Because they work so well when done well, both PRA and CLTS have been subject to pressures to go fast to scale, and trainers and training organisations have popped up who lack the vital orientations and abilities. In both cases, hands-on training in communities in real time has proved crucial. In both cases, donors and governments eager to go to scale either have not known this or have ignored it, and much training has been not hands-on and experiential, but classroom-based. The mislearning, passed on from trainer to trainer, has then been counterproductive, sometimes tragically so on a vast scale.⁶

5.3 Flexible funding, institutions and trust

To a gradually diminishing degree, both PRA and CLTS have been able to spread so dramatically because of donor understanding and flexibility. Funding for PRA reconnaissance and accompaniment in India in 1989–91 came from ODA (DFID/UKAid), the Ford Foundation and the Aga Khan Foundation. Originally work on participation in agricultural research was to have been a major part of the work I was funded for, but the donors gave me almost total freedom to follow the action where it led, which was to PRA. Throughout the 1990s, both IIED and IDS had flexibility in their funding. In the case of IDS, Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) and SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) allowed a substantial budget item for ‘unanticipated opportunities’ and were flexible about budget reallocations in the rapidly developing situation. There were no logframes. In the early 2000s this flexible funding was used to invite Kamal Kar to IDS to write his seminal Working Paper (Kar 2003) which did so much to launch CLTS on the international scene. Between donors and IDS there was free and frank interchange, open communication, an advisory group chaired and facilitated by colleagues from developing countries, and an atmosphere of trust. Without that, CLTS would not have taken off as it did.

5.4 Champions, energy and action

Because they were grounded in interactive experience and disciplined by what worked in real time, both PRA and CLTS fired the enthusiasm of champions who then spread them. For SHACK a fundamental has been that the sharing and co-generation have been driven not by academic analysis but by what works and does not work in the real world of practice. Enthusiasm and energy have been central drivers of innovation and change. Both PRA and CLTS opened up potentials that had not been dreamt of. This fired the imagination of champions who could sense that they were riding a new wave. They saw and knew from their experience that these approaches worked and could be empowering and transformative. The problems of scale, speed and quality have been immensely challenging, bringing dire threats as well as pointing to huge potentials, but many who engaged saw that by tackling the problems they could realise more of the potentials. Through their conviction, energy and commitment, champions have been crucial in making a difference.

5.5 Communities of commitment

Much has been written about Communities of Practice (COPs). What these may or may not have is commitment. It is almost a ritual now to set up a COP at the end of a successful workshop or conference. But on return to their offices, participants are faced by many other priorities. Good intentions drown and die in a flood of emails. There is nothing to my knowledge that calls itself a Community of Practice with PRA and CLTS. But they have had, and still have, communities of colleagues, or co-workers, of co-conspirators almost, who sense themselves to be outsiders sharing a common vision and passion, and united by the resolve to push over the walls of convention, vested interests and conservatism which block their path. These are more than Communities of Practice. They are communities of collaboration, of mutual support, of solidarity, of shared inspiration, communities of commitment.

5.6 Face-to-face meetings

Throughout their histories, meetings and workshops have been a vital part of PRA and CLTS and convening them a major activity both in time involved and in results. Activists have come together face-to-face from time to time. The significance of face-to-face meetings and interactions cannot be overstated. The PRA workshop held in Bangalore in February 1991 (Mascarenhas *et al.* 1991) was a key moment, a tipping point, when practitioner innovators who had been scattered in different organisations and parts of India and elsewhere came together and realised that they were not alone but a community with a common momentum and enthusiasm and many innovations to share. Through meeting face-to-face people got to know one another. The downside was the emergence of what others saw as a PRA in-group. The upside was continuity of learning, ease of communication, and frank sharing between colleagues and friends. And this has been true too of CLTS.

5.7 Networking, communicating, writing and disseminating

Complementing and articulating all the above and circulating energy, experience, innovations and insights, have been networking, communicating, writing and disseminating. These activities have been continuous and pervasive. Early PRA involved networking and helping networks to start, with encouragement and some small funds: this was notably led by

John Thompson at IIED, and some of the networks such as NEPAN (Nepal Participatory Action Network) in Nepal and PAMFORK (Participatory Methodologies Forum of Kenya) in Kenya survive to this day. IIED began as the global hub for the networks, but this then moved to PRAXIS (Institute for Participatory Practices) in India, and then to the Centre for Development Services in Egypt.

More recently, networking and communication have speeded up and intensified with internet and email. Simply putting people in touch with one another can have high payoffs, like finding CLTS trainers from Pakistan to go to Afghanistan. Writing to synthesise or provide guidance is another key activity. In 1996 Carolyn Jones put together guides on individual PRA methods and on the use of PRA in specialised fields like health, and these have stood the test of time and are still used. The *CLTS Handbook* (Kar with Chambers 2008) is another example, with at least 20,000 copies printed in eight languages. Petra Bongartz as Coordination, Communication and Dissemination Officer manages the CLTS Knowledge Hub in IDS with many parallel activities which feed into and support each other, most conspicuously the website, but also a bimonthly newsletter updating with hyperlinks to recent sources, sent to over 3,000 recipients. Then there are writing, synthesising, publication, translation, videos, blogs, workshops, country visits, email exchanges, and providing links with others' research and publications. These sharing activities also collaboratively generate new knowledges though trawls for information, requesting one-pagers from people with special experience, correspondence on hot topics as they surface, and proactively putting people in touch with one another.

6 Types and contexts of co-generating workshops

The co-generating workshops that have been significant with PRA and CLTS can be seen as seven types.

- 1 *Immersion workshops*. Immersions are a form of experiential learning in which the learner stays and lives for some days and nights in a community, living with them as a person, working with them, wandering around, and experiencing their life (PLA 2007; Birch and Catani 2007). In the early 1990s, three

South–South sharing workshops in India included participants from other continents for immersions and PRA practice in Indian villages, a tradition continued by Jimmy Mascarenhas and his organisation Outreach. Immersions tend to be intense and memorable. It is standard good practice to process the experiences of immersions individually and collectively, with facilitated critical reflection and learning shared mutually with host families and other participants.

- 2 *Training and innovating workshops and learning through training.* The PRA workshops of the early and mid 1990s, convened and facilitated by IIED and to a lesser extent IDS, held in many different countries, were thought of as hands-on training to spread PRA approaches and methods. The hands-on CLTS training workshops of Kamal Kar and others, from the early and mid 2000s onwards, have been the same (Kar 2010). These have also been occasions for innovation. IIED trainers were continuously experimenting and trying out new ideas, improvising on the run, experimenting, finding what worked, and pushing the limits to see what local people were capable of, as were many others in India and elsewhere. Learning through training is a phrase sometimes used. Innovating through training goes further, not just in how trainings are done, but substantive innovation in the hands-on activities themselves.
- 3 *Critical issue and topic workshops.* With PRA, three international workshops broke new ground by confronting urgent issues facing PRA: one in IDS in 1994 (Kumar 1997b), and two in India – in Bangalore (Kumar 1996) and Kolkata (Kumar 1997a). Then an international group was convened in 2000 to reflect critically on PRA, leading to the book *Pathways to Participation* (Cornwall and Pratt 2003). Other workshops also led to other books (see below). With CLTS topic workshops have begun to tackle and consolidate experience as needs and priorities have emerged, including School-Led Total Sanitation, and Going to Scale with Quality (Lukenya Notes 2011).
- 4 *Regular collegial meetings.* In the UK, throughout the first half of the 1990s, numerous, often monthly, workshops took

place in IDS with colleagues from IIED and others, with sharing and brainstorming, with the build-up of a powerful collegiality. With CLTS, the IDS hub initiated and convenes meetings of a UK CLTS Action and Learning Group of colleagues in other organisations involved with CLTS for very informal sharing of information and ideas on CLTS, hosted at different times by IDS, Plan, WaterAid and DFID.

- 5 *Research project workshops.* For the CLTS research and action learning research project led by Lyla Mehta there was a workshop in India for partners to meet and plan, and a final workshop in IDS for the presentation of findings, later published as *Shit Matters* (Mehta and Movik 2011).
- 6 *Regional workshops.* CLTS regional workshops have been co-convened in Southeast Asia with Plan, UNICEF, WSP and others, Eastern and Southern Africa (Mombasa with Plan), anglophone Africa (Lusaka with Plan and UNICEF), francophone West Africa (Bamako with UNICEF), and India (Nainital, Shimla – twice), and Gurgaon with variously the CLTS Foundation, the Key Resource Centre Nainital, and the Governments of Himachal Pradesh and Haryana. Other regional workshops have been one-day affairs on the day before the main continental biennial sanitation conferences – AfricaSans, SacoSans (South Asia) and LatinoSan. Many contacts and links have resulted, and much South–South meeting and collaboration.
- 7 *Writeshops for practitioners.* In writeshops, practitioners and others bring drafts and work together with editors to critique and redraft each others' work. One CLTS writeshop has been held so far, in Kenya, co-convened and facilitated jointly by IDS, IIED and Plan Kenya, and leading to Bongartz, Milligan and Musyoki (eds) 'Tales of Shit: Community-Led Total Sanitation in Africa' (2010).

7 Reflections on sharing and co-generating in the practice of workshops

Critical reflection on the practice and processes of SHACK workshops in PRA and CLTS raises issues of power, of tensions between planning and emergence, and of process – both preliminary and during the workshops.

7.1 Power

Power is exercised before, during and after workshops. Before workshops there is convening power: the power to determine and articulate the topic, to decide who to invite (with powers of inclusion and exclusion), to choose the venue and to plan the programme. During a workshop there is the power exercised by facilitators and others, not least influencing the process and the sorts of knowledges that are shared and generated and how this may be done. And then after a workshop there is dispersed power to disseminate, influence and follow up. Inclusive participatory attitudes, behaviours and practices can inform all of these. The various powers can be used well or otherwise.

The extent to which power is exercised centrally is a significant variable. A scales-from-the-eyes moment about power relations came in the mid 1990s. In IDS we saw ourselves as quite central to the dissemination of PRA and to supporting it; but we felt some discomfort with this. So when Kamal Singh and Heidi Attwood went from IDS to Nepal for an international meeting of the PRA networks they took with them the question: 'What should we do to hand over the stick?'. They came back with the salutary and memorable reply: 'Who are you to say that you have a stick to hand over?' We realised that our heads had been too big, we had overestimated our importance, and then that the reply indicated success.

7.2 Tensions and paradoxes: planning versus emergence

A prime tension with workshops is over pre-planning. Beforehand and at the start there is often pressure from participants or co-convenors for a fixed programme. This has to be resisted. To be sure, field trips must be arranged in advance, and excursions for shopping and the like. Also, if there are outside visitors (though it may be best to avoid the disruption to process they can cause), the times for their visits may have to be fixed. Beyond that it is best to leave the agenda open. Quite often though, the pressures are such that a programme has to be filled in to give participants a sense of order and predictability. One partial solution is to label a section 'Open Space'.

A significant paradox is that planning to have an output – a consensus statement, for instance, may reduce the chances of it happening. Too

much preparation and planning can constrain, conflicting with the principle of optimal unpreparedness. Some of the best outputs have flowed unpredictably from process and a coalescing sense that a statement of some sort is both right and feasible. A factor contributing to this is how participants come to know and respect one another, and how they find interactions and exchanges enjoyable and informative. This is part of an emergent workshop atmosphere or culture which cannot be assumed or assured in advance. Indeed, the chemistry may be such that it does not come about. The Lusaka Declaration (2010) was not planned. There was a participatory process that preceded it, with card writing and clustering leading to group discussions on the emergent topics. Then on the long bus journey of the field trip we held multiple discussions leading to agreement that a statement should be attempted. Had the trip not been so long, and had we not been on a bus with the freedom of movement and discussion it allowed, the Lusaka Declaration would probably never have happened. Once drafted it was displayed with participatory PowerPoint, amendments made, and agreement achieved. All participants then went back to their countries with a seven-page statement which they were able to use and distribute to influence policy and practice. Similarly, the Bamako Consensus (2010) was not announced upfront but emerged from the participatory process of the workshop, and was amended and agreed through facilitated debate of a draft which was displayed and amended on PowerPoint, a process of about three hours leading to a degree of consensus that took some of us by surprise.

In one workshop where an intention to have an agreed statement at the end was announced upfront, it proved out of the question. In both Lusaka and Bamako, had we announced at the outset that we were aiming for a declaration or statement of consensus, I think they would have been less likely; or if they had come about they would have taken longer and been less comprehensive and forceful.

7.3 Preliminary process

It has been precisely where the programme has evolved flexibly, adapting to energy, interest and flow, that workshops have been most creative and productive. While there are and should be many

variants, and each workshop process is unique, certain activities have been common, with four as fairly basic.

- 1 Preliminaries to establish mutual understanding, including so-called icebreakers and informality. This and other good workshop practices will not be laboured here, but are fundamental in setting the tone and nurturing a friendly and open culture and practices.
- 2 Facilitation and confirmation of a collective overall purpose.
- 3 Individual or small group writing on cards of issues or topics to be tackled. Sorting of the cards (usually on the floor) into emergent categories. Debate and discussion of these.
- 4 Either in plenary or groups, sharing, debating and brainstorming on the issues or topics. If groups are formed, and if the card clusters are roughly equal in size, groups of participants tend to self-select where they have written cards that they⁷ care and know about. The numbers in the groups then tend to be reasonably even.

This process has several advantages. All participants are able to contribute their ideas. It does not take long. It establishes a consensus agenda at the start. In a South Asia PRA three-day workshop retreat at Thakani in Nepal, this whole process took half an hour and established an agenda which worked well for the three days.

7.4 Sosotec (Self-Organising Systems On The Edge of Chaos)

Sosotec can follow on quite naturally from the preliminary process or can be introduced later. It can be thought of as a proactive variant on Open Space (Owen 2008). It worked well, for example, in the workshop which led to *Pathways to Participation* (Cornwall and Pratt 2003) when adopted unplanned on the run. While to a Neo-Newtonian mindset this will appear disorganised and messy, it belongs in a paradigm of complexity and adaptive pluralism (Chambers 2010). Simple rules, in this case facilitated activities, driven by the energy of adaptive agents, in this case participants, gives rise creatively to unforeseeable results and can be very productive.

A Sosotec process can be designed to collect and co-generate knowledges, leading to a written output. The first full example I know of was the international ABC (attitude and behaviour change) workshop held in Bangalore and Madurai in 1996 (Kumar 1996). Partly based on card writing and sorting, seven categories emerged, and participants volunteered as pairs to be recorders and hunter-gatherers for those which were highest priority. Each pair set up a station with a laptop in a different part of the room. Anyone could contribute anywhere at any time. Some went off and had intense discussions. Others were pulled in to make contributions. Remarkably, 18 participants in the heat of the moment wrote down their personal experiences of attitude and behaviour change (a riveting and revealing read). One went off for three hours and drafted 'Sharing our Experience: An Appeal to Donors and Governments' which was then discussed, amended and signed up to by all participants. In 36 hours in which the energy was such that some had little sleep, a small book was written (Kumar 1996) which remains in wide circulation.

Sosotec for a written output has since been used several times including the workshop that led to *Springs of Participation* (Brock and Pettit 2007) and the Lukenya Workshop that led to Lukenya Notes (2011). It can be vulnerable to participants who question the process (though they usually come to accept and appreciate it), or who would prefer everything in plenary, or who lack relevant knowledge, experience or commitment. Participants may also take on writing without the necessary aptitude or competence. Failure to complete drafting once meant that a key chapter of a book had to be abandoned: the would-be author who had collected and been given excellent material simply failed to deliver. Importantly, a capable editor who takes part in the workshop is needed with time free immediately after a Sosotec. Without that there can be a long delay. In sum, Sosotec is not a magic wand. When it works well, it can be brilliant. But success is not a foregone conclusion. It is sensitive to energy, commitment, capabilities and a sense of common purpose.

8 Knowledges, theory of change and impacts

A common theory of change is that written or other recorded outputs from workshops are read and used and influence policy and practice.

Written outputs are one form in which knowledge co-generated in workshops has been captured and expressed. Books following PRA and CLTS workshops include *The Myth of Community: Gender Issues in Participatory Development* (Guijt and Shah 1998); *Whose Voice?* (Holland with Blackburn 1998); *Who Changes?* (Blackburn with Holland 1998); *Stepping Forward: Children and Young People's Participation in the Development Process* (Johnson *et al.* 1998); *Pathways to Participation* (Cornwall and Pratt 2003); *Springs of Participation* (Brock and Pettit 2007); and *Shit Matters* (Mehta and Movik 2011) (an output of a research project at the end of which there was a workshop). Others have led to agreed documents as outputs. PRA examples were the 1994 statement about PRA (Absalom *et al.* 1994), which came out of an IDS workshop. Later examples of consensus statements from CLTS workshops have been:

- Nainital (2009) – a one-pager and subsequent four-pager
- The Lusaka Declaration (2010)
- The Bamako Consensus (2010)
- The Lukenya Notes on Going to Scale with Quality (2011).

These and some of their predecessors may be of interest for process and methodology (for '21 Tips' see Appendix).

We – convenors, facilitators and participants in these workshops – have shared the common aim of wanting to make a difference, most of all in going to scale with quality with PRA and with CLTS. Our implicit theory of change has been that if we bring together our experience and ideas and converge on a practical consensus, this can be influential. Reviewing the written outputs it is striking how practical and policy-oriented they are. Unsurprisingly this shows more in the statements than the books. With the books there are time lags, often two or more years, the content tends to be more descriptive and analytical than prescriptive and the writing is discursive with paragraphs and chapters. If they have impacts, they are long-term. The reports of PRA workshops – *ABC of PRA* (Kumar 1996) and *PRA – Going to Scale: Challenges for Training* (Kumar 1997a) – are intermediate between statements and books but were produced in a matter of weeks and have many recommendations. The statements and shorter outputs of CLTS differ even more sharply from

the books. They have been written and agreed during the workshops or very soon afterwards, and they have been heavily prescriptive. They contain introductory texts but are often organised and presented as a series of bullet points. To take the most recent examples from CLTS, the Lusaka Declaration has an introduction to each of its 11 sections, and 35 bulleted recommendations; the Bamako Consensus also has 11 sections, and a total of 94 bullets for 'What works', and 28 for 'Traps to avoid'; the Executive Summary of Lukenya Notes has 64 bulleted points for action, and the main text contains much empirical evidence which elaborates on and supports these.

What impact have these had? As ever it is hard to know. The statements have been immediately put on the first page of the CLTS website. Their hyperlinks have been in the bimonthly newsletter which is received by over 3,000 people. Inquirers are referred to them. But in our world of over-communication there has to be a nagging question about how much they are read, referred to, accepted, internalised and acted upon.

One set of impacts has, however, been clearer. It is on and through participants. Those of us who experienced these workshops learnt and internalised a lot. We could feel we owned the outcomes, and the consensual process generated commitment to them and enthusiasm. The issues which were most contentious and most difficult to agree on were revealing: in Lusaka they concerned field allowances for both NGO and government staff, and rewards to communities, leaders and Natural Leaders; in Bamako it was the timing and extent of training masons, which if too early could slow implementation and block villagers' creativity. With these and many other issues, the negotiated and agreed outcomes could be used by participants at once to confront the problems they faced. More generally, a number of participants, probably a majority, used the statements immediately in meetings and workshops on their return to their countries.

Attributing policy impacts is problematic for well-known reasons. With the Nainital workshop there was a Government of India request for a short statement. There were two: a one-pager agreed in plenary, and a four-pager written the next day. These were immediately used for a policy workshop in Delhi. The Lukenya Notes

cite three cases where African governments had faced down donors and lenders who were pushing the policy of individual household subsidy which impedes and even prevents CLTS. Ghana with the World Bank, Chad with the EU, and Nigeria over a period of months with the African Development Bank, had all managed to do this. Through the Lukenya process and Notes this was known in Mauritania when it renegotiated successfully the terms of a subsidy-based project funded by the African Development Bank. It would be gratifying to attribute this to the Notes but reportedly the main factor was the Minister's convictions about CLTS based on his field visits.

9 Lessons learnt for participatory methodologies

We can ask, now, what have we learnt about sharing and co-generating knowledges, based on the experiences with PRA and CLTS, which might apply to participatory methodologies (PMs) more widely?

From the point of view of a base or hub, wherever it is situated, that seeks to support the development of a PM, and its spread with quality, this can be answered at two levels. The first is about general principles and practices. The second is 21 more specific do and don't type lessons for Participatory Sharing and Co-Generating Workshops which are in the Appendix.

The principles and practices that follow are suggestions not imperatives and not set in stone: in the spirit of action learning, everything is open to questioning and improvement.

- Use *action learning* and *networking* as umbrella terms to describe the synergistic activities of evolving and sharing participatory methodologies. Action learning includes giving space, opportunity and occasion for practitioners and trainers to brainstorm, to record and exchange their experiences, and through interactions to go further in generating new knowledges and ideas. Networking includes a multiplicity of activities of linking, communicating and dissemination.
- Do many different things in parallel and try to optimise synergies between them, each feeding into and informing the other. Examples from CLTS are a website, a newsletter, writing, synthesising, publication, translations, videos, blogs, workshops, country visits, email exchanges, others' research and publications.

- Develop personal face-to-face relationships with champions and back them and put them in touch with one another.
- Listen to and learn from critics but do not spend too much time and energy in replying to them. Time and energy have opportunity costs. Examples and learning from practice that works can be more effective than academic debate.
- Encourage and support leading trainers and practitioners to go freelance and become full-time, while warning them of the dangers.
- Share without boundaries while trying to ensure quality in going to scale.
- Accept blame where justified, but aim and hope that others will take ownership and credit. When they do so, consider this success. With ownership goes commitment, energy, resources, innovation, local fit and much more potential learning.
- Encourage and support other networks, as feasible and appropriate, with a view to phasing out your own activities.
- Try to ensure flexibility in your budget. Unexpected opportunities can be expected. They have always occurred. Kamal Kar's initial visit to IDS to write his seminal 2003 Working Paper on CLTS was only possible because of the flexible funding we had then in IDS. Without that launching pad, CLTS could not have taken off as fast or as well as it did. Imprisoned by their frameworks, donors no longer allow that flexibility. It would be heavy-handed to underline the irony.
- Convene and especially co-convene workshops. Persuade co-convenors to leave much of the agenda open.⁸ As we have seen, such workshops have been key occasions for sharing experiences, co-learning and brainstorming to co-evolve insights and practical lessons.

10 Final reflections

In articulating and sharing in workshops, we have found that practices, experiences, ideas and principles become clearer to those who express them. At the same time they cross-fertilise and grow. The acts of articulation and the interactions of sharing, learning from and with each other, brainstorming and reflecting combine to generate new knowledge. Expressing knowledges, experiences or ideas becomes a creative process that gives them form. But it matters what sort of form it takes and how it is treated. If the form is bounded and fixed like a

physical thing, and more so if it is defended like a territory, subsequent learning is liable to be limited. If the form is more tentative and open-ended, and subject to continuing critical reflection and change, learning can be ongoing and evolutionary. When at their best, this is what workshops provide conditions for and facilitate.

This conclusion has then itself to be open-ended, pluralist and tentative. Adding activities to the repertoire that development professionals are comfortable to use, and affirming good ones already known, is more important than trying to define a cohesive new approach with a sharp identity. Let this then end with quotations from the consensus statement (Absalom *et al.* 1994) of one of the earliest PRA workshops:

PRA practitioners have come to stress personal behaviour and attitudes, role reversals, facilitating participation through group processes and visualisation, critical self-awareness, embracing error and sharing without boundaries.

We offer this statement of principles in the hope that others will share their experience, views and values in the same spirit so that we can all continue to learn from each other.

That is the spirit in which I have written this, hoping that it will encourage others to share, criticise and contribute so that together we can continue to find ways to do better.

Appendix: 21 Tips for participatory workshops for sharing and co-generating knowledges

There are tips specific to different types of sharing, learning and co-generating workshops. Most of what follows is generic and applies to all or most of them. See also *Participatory Workshops: A Sourcebook of 21 Sets of Ideas and Activities* (Chambers 2002) referred to below as PW. In the tradition of those 21s, here are 21 sets of tips, based on lessons I think we have learnt about how to do these workshops. There is much, much, still to learn. The tips are organised as (A) Planning and preparation; (B) The workshop; (C) Follow-up and actions.

A Planning and preparation

- 1 *Reflect on the 'why' of the workshop and the 'so what?' at the end.* What sort of workshop is it? What sorts of knowledges are you hoping will be shared, learnt about and co-generated?

Who might co-convene and co-facilitate? Who has what (including creativity) to share? Who can contribute to the content of the workshop and to its process and culture? Who needs to meet whom? How will participants benefit? What outputs, follow-up and impact might the workshop have? Who will any outputs be for? Who will be able and willing to follow up at once in preparing, disseminating and further developing outputs?

- 2 *Write or co-create a concise concept note.* This need not be long and should not be too detailed, lest it constrain flexibility and scope to seize emerging opportunities. Send the note out with invitations. For the more creative workshops say that the process may evolve and may modify the concept and purpose.

- 3 *Use workshops to get to know key players face-to-face.* There really is no full alternative to meeting face-to-face. Skype, teleconferences and group telephone conversations are not a substitute though they are more effective when you have already met face-to-face. The group immersions in villages of the first PRA South-Souths combined with the early PRA workshops gave many of us a sense of common identity, and we liked and respected one another. The numerous joint IIED-IDS workshops of early PRA helped us share and reinforce excitement and solidarity. They were occasions to look forward to. With CLTS, the WSSCC (Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council) Global Forum in Mumbai in September 2011, had for some of us a sense of reunion, almost of family, as we met again people we already knew from the regional sanitation conferences or in other contexts. The sense of common purpose and relationships that can result is precious.

- 4 *Co-convene.* Some workshops cannot and should not be co-convened, but co-convening has much to be said for it: it means co-commitment and co-ownership, brings in wider experience to decision-making, can share costs, and improves chances of follow-up. One, two or at most three, partners may be optimal. With more partners, transaction costs rise if they engage with the preparatory process. This happened when we had 5-6 partners for the South East Asia regional CLTS workshop in Phnom Penh, with a flood or storm of widely copied emails.

- 5 *Choose a fitting venue.* The venue should match the occasion, the participants and the purpose. This is easier said than done. For a participatory workshop, the usual conditions of space, furniture, wall space and equipment apply. Relative isolation, peace and good amenities matter for writeshops, and for sharing and brainstorming workshops which have the character of retreats (an ideal is the Lukenya Getaway near Nairobi where the Lukenya Notes were hatched and the *Tales of Shit* writeshop was held). One reason why NEPAN has survived for almost 20 years is that the founders had two or three quiet retreats staying outside Kathmandu to reflect, evolve and agree basic principles, plan, and decide how to establish it. At the other extreme, where ministers and senior officials are involved, it may be (but not necessarily is) advisable to move upmarket for the venue. Proximity to field visits matters, though (see below) longish journeys can be turned to good uses. The Gurgaon workshop in India was exceptionally difficult to locate, three earlier choices having had to be abandoned.
- 6 *Plan but do not overplan.* Distinguish fixed points from open time. Fixed points may be start, an opening if there has to be one, end and closing if there has to be one, field visits, and shopping or tourist time off. Then plan backwards with cards on the floor. List topics and activities on cards. Start with how you intend to end. Then add fixed points. Then continue planning backwards inserting and moving the cards around. Recognise rhythm and anticipate low points – usually around half time – Wednesday afternoon in a five-workday workshop. Wednesday is a good day for a field trip, or an afternoon off or doing something different.
- 7 *Be prepared and optimally unprepared with the programme.* Government people and some others often want a detailed programme. When there has to be a formal opening or closing this will be a little more needed than when there is not. The degree of pre-programming depends on the nature of the workshop. It is quite often politic to have a programme even though you know it will in the event not be followed. Be careful though if there are people coming for only one or a few sessions, or they may turn up to find you doing something else. One device is to label sessions, or half a day, or a whole day, or even more, as Open Space. This has the advantage of a meaning which is both specific (PW 125-6) giving legitimacy, and general, giving flexibility. Optimal unpreparedness means being open to an unfolding process that cannot be fully foreseen. Where possible avoid giving a closing time for the day – a good participatory process can stimulate energy, excitement and commitment which often should run its course.
- 8 *Be careful and thorough with invitations.* Some of those I invited to the first PRA South–South lacked relevant experience or were unable to follow up. It was a sadly wasted opportunity. The ‘wrong’ people can also be a distraction. On the other hand, and more important, failure to invite key people who should be invited, or who feel they should, can cause lasting resentment which can be deeply damaging if those slighted harbour their grudge. Be especially careful to inform and invite people in the host country, city or area. Check carefully and issue invitations well in advance if you can. This can matter a great deal with governments and government people.
- 9 *Be aware of government protocol.* When inviting specific government people, getting procedure and process right can be time-consuming and frustrating. To assure good government participation can require a lot of care and patience. Sometimes a person you want to invite can give informed advice on how to proceed.
- 10 *Act early for visas.* It is sad how often late applications for visas prevent participation in international workshops. Ease of obtaining visas may even be a necessary factor in choice of country for the venue. Some countries have few embassies in other countries, which can delay, complicate and add to the financial and transaction costs of getting visas.
- 11 *Identify key documents, encourage participants to study them in advance and have them available.* There may be research reports or summaries, websites, or other documents. Do not overload people but ensure that they have the opportunity to be informed and up-to-date. Where government policy is involved make sure that key policy statements and other documents are identified and available.

B The workshop

- 12 *Encourage multiple ownership and credit.* Do not seek a high-profile or institutional or personal recognition. Let ownership and credit be collective. Any impression that a workshop is a public relations exercise for an organisation is damaging and self-defeating. Do not allow yourself big ideas about yourself or your importance. (See above for an example).
- 13 *Set an informal atmosphere, and err on the side of informality.* There are several ways of setting the atmosphere at the beginning (PW 5–30). For CLTS, Kamal Kar’s ‘Greet others and tell them when you last did a shit in the open’ works well. Standing on a map and then making brief self-introductions is another good way. We used it in Nainital with mainly government people when waiting for the arrival of the VIP for the formal opening, and in Gurgaon after the opening with about 60 people. It is acceptable to senior people – Principal Secretaries in Tanzania were delighted and found it fun and interesting. ‘Busses’ is another – at AfricaSan in Kigali clustering by type of organisation provoked an instant animated buzz which ran on for almost ten minutes as government people met government people from other countries, and the same for separate clusters of people from international agencies, INGOs, and NGOs, and one group for freelancers.
- 14 *Make good use of car and bus journeys!* Car and bus journeys are opportunities. In Zambia we had a 3–4 hour bus journey from Lusaka to visit Chief Macha’s ODF (Open Defecation Free) Chiefdom. During the trip back we could move around and discuss. Out of those conversations came the idea of the Lusaka Declaration. Without the consensus and commitment that developed during the bus trip it would not have happened. With the Gurgaon workshop we went in smaller vehicles, but there were still opportunities to change seats and have long conversations. An advantage of vehicles is the lack of eye contact much of the time, and the lack of pressure to keep talking, giving time for reflection.
- 15 *Brainstorm to create the agenda.* This applies mainly with smaller workshops, with numbers of, say 10–50. A concept note, or a sense of common purpose, and a framework of timings may already exist. The agenda can be emergent through all participants brainstorming and/or individually writing on cards which are then sorted on the ground into emergent categories. These can then be discussed and agreed. The clustered cards can then provide the basis for plenary or group activities. In several cases they have provided the structure for a final output – *ABC of PRA* (Kumar 1996), the Lusaka Declaration (2010), the Bamako Consensus (2010), and Lukenya Notes (2011). Brainstorming to decide how to handle the emergent topics can lead to a variety of solutions – some in plenary, some in groups with feedback to plenary, some deferred. In a PRA sharing workshop in Pakistan seven topics coalesced. Three were cross-cutting. So four groups were formed, and each included in their agenda each of the three that cross-cut.
- 16 *Sosotec.* In the case of Sosotec (PW 93,103,105,116,123–8) it is best, if not vital, not to be pre-programmed. Brainstorming onto cards and sorting them sets a starting agenda (as in 15 above). Volunteers come forward to be champions (often for clusters of cards to which they have contributed). Ideally there will be two or three champions for each subject. Between them they combine and take turns as writers, interviewers, recorders, searchers and hunter-gatherers for their topic. Each topic group sets up shop with table(s), chairs and laptop(s), together with their cards. They plan their activities, and then work as a team to tap into their own knowledges, experience and ideas, and to seek and solicit contributions from others. The process then runs itself. Variants of Sosotec contributed to the *ABC of PRA* (Kumar 1996), *Springs of Participation* (Brock and Pettit 2007), the Lusaka Declaration and the Bamako Consensus, and were key to the Lukenya Notes.
- 17 *Declare a PowerPoint-free zone.* PowerPoint did not seriously raise its head until the 2000s. Now, unless warned in advance, participants are liable to go to pains to prepare presentations and feel hurt if they cannot deliver them. But (mercifully) ‘death by PowerPoint’ has become a cliché. PowerPoint can slow and stop a participatory process: it is preset and rather inflexible, interrupts flow, takes time (often more than allocated), induces passivity and cannot easily respond to

emergence. Very selectively and sparingly used it can be positive, especially with visuals – in presenting one or a very few photographs or key diagrams. To avoid its damaging distractions, some workshops have with good effect been declared PowerPoint-free zones (e.g. Nainital, Lusaka, Bamako, Kigali, Lukenya). Wherever possible, plan and announce this in advance.

- 18 *Use Participatory PowerPoint (PPP)*. Paradoxically, PPP is a brilliant, powerful and quick way of achieving agreement and consensus on a text. A fast and accurate typist familiar with the topic sits and writes, with the text appearing on a screen for all to see. The text can be composed jointly, or usually better and faster, as a draft which is then modified. Proposed changes can be entered in italics, and then changed to normal when there is agreement. If there is a serious debate or a deep disagreement, text can be abandoned, or a small group can be delegated to go off and hammer out a revision and bring it back. Without PPP we could never have achieved the Lusaka Declaration or the Bamako Consensus.

C Follow-up and actions

- 19 *Think in advance about follow-up and seek agreement on actions*. Follow-up needs to be planned for but announcing it upfront may be undermining. Ideally ideas and commitments emerge from the participatory process and come individually and collectively from participants. Far too often follow-up is lacking. Either it is promised and does not happen, or in the conditions of the end of a workshop (particularly if there is a formal closing)

Notes

- 1 PRA stands for Participatory Rural Appraisal (Chambers 1994, 1997 and Cornwall and Pratt 2003), sometimes renamed Participatory Reflection and Action. See also www.pnet.ids.ac.uk/prc. Participatory Action and Reflection would have been better but Participatory Action Research was already PAR.
- 2 CLTS stands for Community-Led Total Sanitation (Kar 2003; Kar and Pasteur 2005; Kar with Chambers 2008; Bongartz and Chambers 2009; Kar 2010) with rural applications. Now when applied in urban areas it takes a new form and has become

simply squeezed out of by lack of time. There was good follow-up from the first Nainital workshop with a one-page statement agreed by the workshop, a four-page summary written the day after the workshop, and a large follow-up meeting of about 70 people in Delhi about three weeks later. Follow-up on text, as with the Lukenya workshop on going to scale with quality, can involve time-consuming editing and iterations with the draft notes. Plan ahead and agree that someone will have the time.

- 20 *Ensure short prompt summaries of workshops*. It is widely considered good practice to have a detailed record of a workshop. If this is succinct, out in a matter of days, and widely distributed, it can be useful and multiply impact. But far too often laborious notes are taken, for example by a student who is not familiar with the subject, and then written up none too well, and much too long – a lead balloon that sinks without trace, read by no-one except those who want to be sure they are mentioned. A short, punchy summary of main points has more impact. Pre-plan for this. Have time after a workshop ring-fenced for this. The Nainital summary has already been mentioned. We did not plan for an executive summary of Lukenya Notes, but two people volunteered to produce one, and it is that summary that will receive the most attention, while at the same time pointing to the topics in the main text which can be consulted.
- 21 *Convene or co-convene in your own way, and share what you do and learn*.

Citizen-Led Total Sanitation. See

www.communityledtotalsanitation.org.

- 3 Constructive comments on drafts of this article have provoked major revisions. For these I am grateful to Petra Bongartz, Danny Burns, Naomi Hossein, Rosie McGee, Jethro Pettit, Patta Scott-Villiers, Stephen Wood and others. Special thanks go to Alfredo Ortiz Aragón for both his comments and the sources to which he referred me. The usual disclaimers apply.
- 4 In the chapter (Pedler and Burgoyne 2008) which cites this, the authors then make the point that AL has applications much more generally than just in organisations.

- 5 I owe this insight to discussion with colleagues who are authors of other articles in this *IDS Bulletin*.
- 6 With PRA an example was the Indian Watershed Programme of the mid 1990s with its cascade training of hundreds of trainers in a few months. With CLTS examples have been earlier cascade training in Nigeria and Tanzania.
- 7 For more on Sosotec see *Participatory Workshops* (Chambers 2002)
- 8 Unfortunately this is easier said than done. Co-convenors have repeatedly demanded a timetable which we well know will have to be abandoned.

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