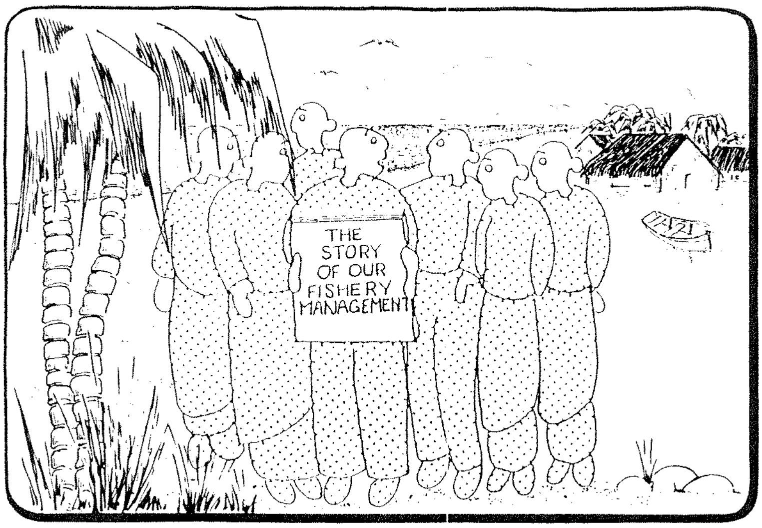
Community Case Studies

Description

A case study is a description and analysis of a specific situation or issue that is done by insiders and outsiders together to represent the insiders perspective. Information gathering and analysis can consider the cultural context, gender relationships, economic relationships, social and/or environmental aspects of a situation or issue.

Presentation can be in the form of drawings, popular theatre, songs, stories, photographs, slide-tape or video presentations. The community should present the case study in the form which is most comfortable to them.



Purpose

- Increases knowledge and understanding of any given community situation
- Provides information for Participatory Assessment, Baselines and Evaluations

Benefits

- Case studies (often called monographs) written in the local language, can be made into a reading book for local schools, increasing pride in local accomplishments and commitment to activities.
- The production of a case study helps encourage focused discussion, and is a powerful tool to build self-sufficiency. In the process of developing a case study, insiders must analyse the reasons for change, as well as the possible effects of change.
- Case studies encourage integrated thinking and awareness of the complexities of real situations.
- Information that is useful to both insiders and outsiders is provided .

Using the **Community Case Study** *tool*

1. There should be one main issue or theme of the case study. These issues or themes must be placed in context and clearly understood to ensure that they remain the central focus. It is easy to get side-tracked as other important issues arise.

2. While field staff should guide and encourage the process of developing the case study, responsibility should be assigned to one or several delegated community members who can gather information and then obtain "validation" of the case study from the rest of the community.

3. Outsiders can provide valuable information from government records or urban markets, which insiders may not be able to readily access. Outsiders can "translate" information so that it is useful to insiders.

4. The method of presentation for the case study should be chosen early in the information gathering and analysis stage.

5. Other information gathering tools can be used to develop the case study.

Precautions

The case study may take a long time and the initial enthusiasm may be lost. If one person provides consistent encouragement and support, this potential problem can be averted..

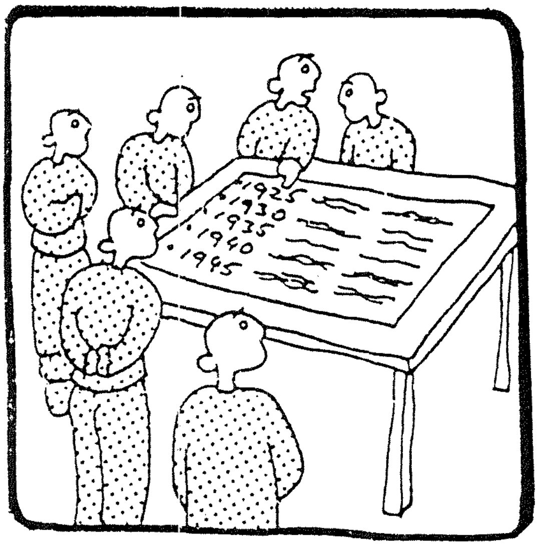
Historical Mapping

Description

This tool assists with the documenting of the history of the community or client group. It can do this either in pictures, writing or symbols. A timetable (either every five or ten years) is established, going back as far as people can remember. The timetable is focused on a specific subject such as changes in fishing technology or village growth and its effect on the surrounding environment.

Purpose

- Stimulates discussion of why and how a problem arose
- Provides community insight into the "root" of the problem



Benefit

Understanding the origin of a problem can provide both insiders and outsiders with a clean slate on which to start building activities.

Using the Historical Mapping *tool*

1. Create a timeline to follow, (every five or ten years) with events to be filled in through group discussion.

2. Allow ample time for discussion around each time period, and make sure that all relevant issues are recorded.

Precautions

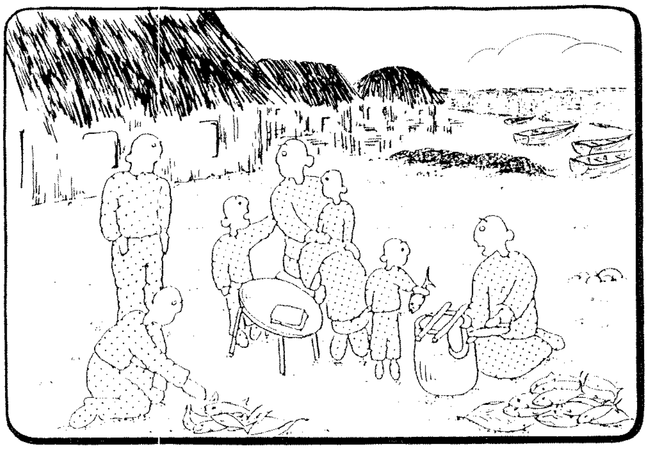
Sensitive issues from the past may be raised. If this happens, the facilitator can move to the next time period and return to the sensitive issue later on. The group should not get stuck in deep discussion over sensitive issues.

Semi-structured Interviews

Description

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with a fairly open framework which allow for focused, conversational, two-way communication. They can be used both to give and receive information.

Unlike the questionnaire framework, where detailed questions are formulated ahead of time, semi structured interviewing starts with more general questions or topics. Relevant topics (such as fish marketing) are initially identified and the possible relationship between these topics and the issues such as availability, expense, and effectiveness become the basis for more specific questions which do not need to be prepared in advance.



Purpose

- Obtains specific quantitative and qualitative information from a sample of the population
- Obtains general information relevant to specific issues, (i.e.: to probe for what is not known)
- Gains a range of insights on specific issues

Benefits

- Less intrusive to those being interviewed and encourages two-way communication. Those being interviewed can ask questions of the interviewer. In this way it can also function as an extension tool .
- Confirms what is already known but also provides the opportunity for learning. Often the information obtained from semi-structured interviews will provide not only the answers, but the reasons for the answers.
- When individuals are interviewed they may more easily discuss sensitive issues.
- Help field staff become acquainted with community members. Outsiders may be better at interviewing because they are perceived as more objective.
- Using both individual and group interviews can optimise the strengths of both.

Using the **Semi-Structured interview** *tool.*

1. The facilitator and/or interview team need to design an interview framework including topics or questions for discussion.

2. The sample size and method of sampling should be established.

3. Interviewers can conduct a number of practice interviews with each other and/ or with a few community members, to become familiar with the questions, and get feedback on their two-way communication skills.

4. Record only brief notes during the interview. Immediately following the interview elaborate upon the notes.

5. Analyse the information at the end of each day of interviewing. This can be done with the interview team or group.

6. Discuss the overall results of the analysis with community members so that they can challenge the perceptions of the interview team. This can make the process even more participatory.

7. Some, but not all questions are designed and phrased ahead of time. The majority of questions are created during the interview, allowing both the interviewer and the person being interviewed the flexibility to probe for details or discuss issues.

8. Interviews can be carried out with more than one interviewer and more than one interviewee.

Precautions

A lot of extra information may surface during interviews. Team meetings can help identify similarities in responses.

Assure that, in a personal interview, the person being interviewed understands and trusts that the responses will be confidential.

It may take some practice for the interviewer to find the balance between open-ended and focused interviewing.

In a semi-structured group interview people may interrupt one another or "help one another out," or not take turns. They may get off the topic completely.

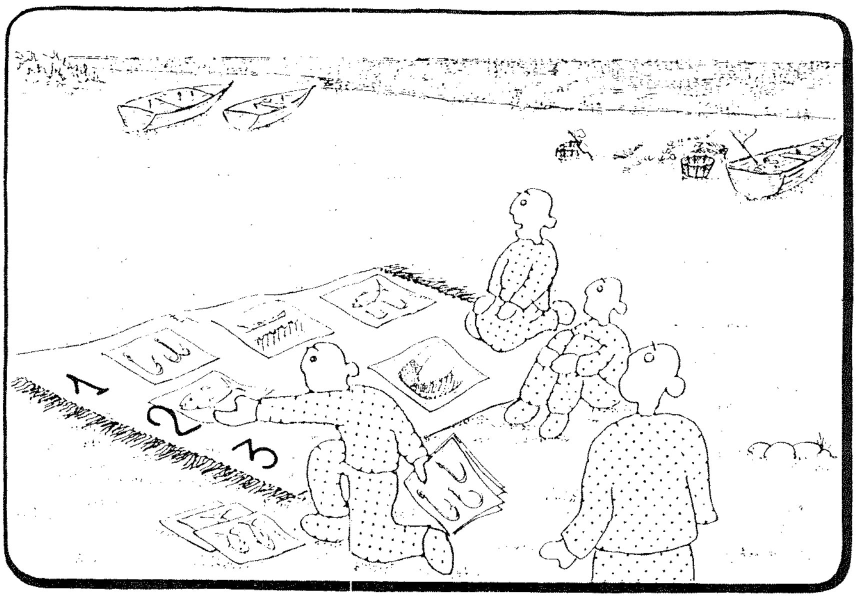
Interviewers need skills. The most common problem with interviewers is asking leading questions. Other problems are: failure to listen closely; repeating questions that have already been asked; failure to probe when necessary; failure to judge the answers; and asking vague or insensitive questions.

Ranking, Rating and Sorting

Description

The Ranking, Rating and Sorting tools are simple and inexpensive ways to obtain information about: why people make certain choices (or have certain opinions), how many people in the community make certain choices (or opinions), and the choices they make. For example, this tool can be used to gain information on the reasons why fisherfolk choose to use various types of fishing equipment; or why certain fishing methods are used in preference to others. The results and reasons for the choices/opinions are recorded and compared.

This tool provides insight to individual or group decision-making and identifies the criteria that people use or have used to select certain items or activities. When used with different groups and compared, it can pin-point the differences in perception between groups such as those communities or individuals who have engines in their fishing boats, and those who have not, or even between insiders and outsiders.



Purpose

- Identifies needs and priorities
- Monitors changes in preference
- Gathers qualitative and quantitative information
- Compares preferences and priorities between groups (boat owners/ employed fishermen; fish processors/local people)
- Facilitates discussions and analysis

Benefits

- These are flexible tools, which can be used in a variety of situations. They are fun to use.
- In Ranking and Sorting, handling the cards or objects involved in the use of the tool, encourages people to become more committed and involved in the process.
- Ranking provides information on both the choices and the reason for the choices. Sorting provides a community perspective on a topic. Rating is an effective way to quantify "opinions".

Using the* Ranking, Rating and Sorting *tools

1. Decide which of the tools, (ranking, rating or sorting) will be most effective at collecting the kind of information needed.

2. Whether you use the ranking, rating or sorting tool, select a sample that will be representative of the community or the group from whom information is required. See the beginning of this chapter for information on sample size and method.

3. Design forms to record responses. A team of at least two persons is required, one to facilitate and one to record responses. They should have a basic working knowledge and experience of the rating, ranking or sorting tool they are using.

4. Explain the tool to the individual or the group. Keep the choices straight forward and make sure that people understand what is required of them.

5. Summarise results using a format that is easily understood. The tally sheet described in Chapter Six might be useful.

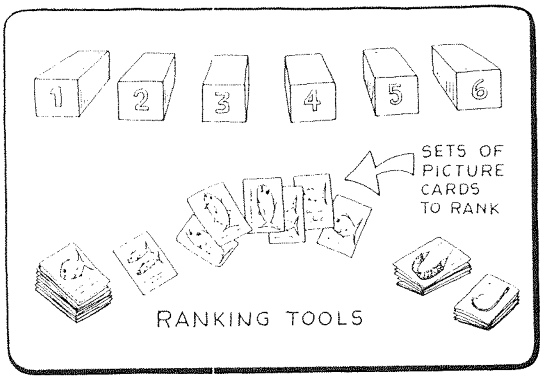
6. Present the results to the community or group.

7. The testing of the tool is important and must be clearly understood by those who are to make the choices. Carefully test the tool and eliminate any unclear methods and choices.

8. Design the exercise and collect the materials required. Examples of ranking, rating and sorting are described below:

Ranking

One idea is to make picture cards which people can rank from first choice to last choice. Generally it is not recommended that more than 6 items be ranked at any one time.



One set of picture cards might represent 6 local fish species. The cards are given to respondents to rank. Either each time a choice is made, or after ranking of each set," respondents are asked why they made the choice they did.

Sorting

The use of this tool is best described using the following method. In this example, we find there is a need to collect information on the general economic condition of households within the community. A list is made of the randomly selected households, and each household was assigned a number (the exercise works best with fewer than 150 households if the community has fewer than 150 households, all can be used and the result will provide an accurate rating of the community). The name of each household and the number from the master list was written on a separate card. Selected community members (a cross section shows interesting results, and exercise may be done in separate groups) were asked to sort the cards into three baskets (if the sorter is not literate, the name on the card is read, and then handed to them to place in the basket of their choice).

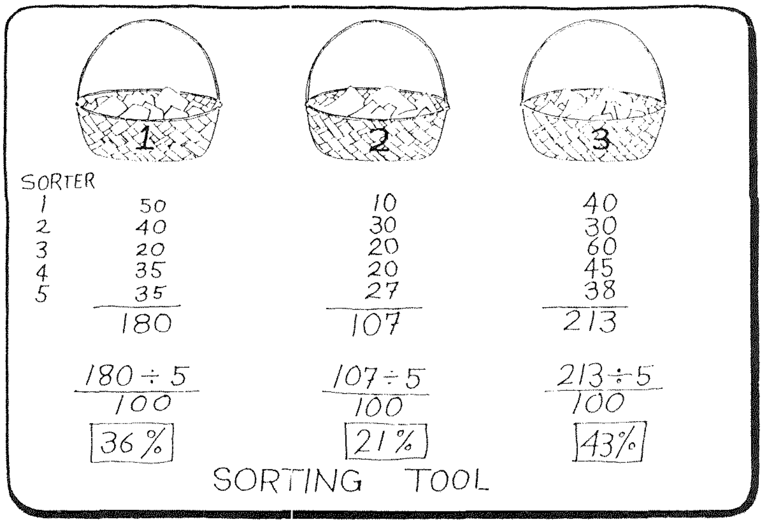
Each sorter places the card for each family in one of three baskets, which had been categorised as follows by insiders:

Basket One: families who have enough to eat, send their children to school, and are able to help relatives from time to time;

Basket Two: families who seem to make ends meet, have the basics to eat but live very simply. These families neither take assistance from others nor are they able to give it;

Basket Three: families who are very poor, they do not have adequate food or clothing, and frequently need assistance from others.

The cards are shuffled after each sorter has finished so that the next sorter starts with a randomly arranged pile of cards. The sorters should not distribute or discuss the ranking of individual families so as not to cause hard feelings within the community.



The "scores" for each basket added up and divided by the number of sorters to give an average score. This score is then divided by 100 to give the percent of the sample which falls within the category of that particular basket. As shown above, the 5 sorters in this example had the following "results".

Rating

Rating is a useful way to measure opinions, attitudes and perceptions concerning change. However, it requires a certain sophistication on the part of the respondent to understand the system of marking responses. Rating works best with literate people, and those more accustomed to structured answers.

To design a Rating exercise, a list of statements is produced. These statements touch on the aspects of the activities, topic, species or technologies being rated. In practice we have found that for any single Rating exercise, only a reasonable number of statements should be rated, and five statements at any time is generally sufficient

A five category scale of responses is devised to indicate how much the respondent agrees or disagrees with the statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Be careful that you keep the response category arrangement the same for each statement. If you start with "disagree" on the left, "agree" on the right, maintain that format throughout the exercise.

Code the responses 1 through 5, giving the high scores to those opinions that will require changes. If for a particular statement, Strongly Disagree would represent a greater degree of change within the community, then Strongly Disagree would be coded 5. Conversely, if Strongly Agree represents the greater change then it would be coded 5.

Pre-test the form to ensure that the statements are clear. Disregard statements that are too extreme or ambiguous.

STATEMENT #4
LOBSTERS WITH EGGS SHOULD BE THROWN BACK

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
CODE	1	2	3	4	5
RESULTS TOTAL SCORE	2	6	9	48	100 = 165
PERSONS RESPONDING	(2)	(3)	(3)	(12)	(20) = 40

SCORE FOR STATEMENT #4

$\frac{165}{40} = 4.1$

RATING TOOL.

Add up the points for each statement and divide by the number of responses for the item. For example, 40 people responded to the statement shown above, the average "score" for the statement was 4.1 Which indicated that most people Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the statement. For all those items which rate over 3.5 do further investigation to see what the problems are and how they can he resolved.

Precautions

Recording of the responses, if reasons for choices are required, may be difficult, especially in a group exercise. A tape recorder may help record responses.

The choices that are made are very specific to communities or individuals, so for the information to be reliable a relevant sample of the population must be chosen. As the results are subjective, findings may not be applicable to other areas.

Community Environmental Assessment

Description

A Community Environmental Assessment is used to gather information in order to analyse the environmental effects of planned and/or completed activities. The tool provides a framework in which insiders can make observations and judge the value of the change. The value is determined by giving a number value to each environmental factor. In this way an environmental score is established. It is not this score that is useful, but the way the number values show the importance of one factor compared to another. The values can also indicate which factors should be closely watched.

Purpose

- Provide systematic and consistent value judgements which can be compared over time
- Predict, as far as possible, the various positive and negative impact the proposed activities might have. When these are understood, trade-offs, which are favourable as possible to the people involved, can be made
- Identify where environmental problems may occur.

Benefits

- Community Environmental Assessments create an awareness of the potentially negative and positive environmental impact of activities.
- Provides "warning flags" for environmental factors which are potentially negative.
- This tool can be used periodically throughout the project, to monitor changes in environmental factors.

Using the **Community Environmental Assessment** *Tool*

1. In a meeting with concerned community members, discuss the purpose of this tool and how to use it. Determine a definition for the "environment, such as: "the environment of community is defined by the health, social, economic, broadly cultural and physical aspects of that community."

2. Introduce the value assignments in a chart form, so that they are easily seen. Value assignments may be made in the following way:

Very positive, clear and decisive positive image	+2
Some, but limited positive impact	+1
No effect, not applicable, no impact	0
Some definite, but limited negative impact	- 1
Very specific or extensive negative impact	- 2

3. Introduce the Community Environmental Assessment Worksheet, a sample of which is shown below. Descriptions of the categories are also given.

Community Environmental Assessment Framework

CATEGORY	Impact				Total Score
	People	Area	Short Term	Long Term	
Habit	+ 2	+ 2	0	+ 2	+ 6
Water	+ 2	- 2	0	+ 1	+ 1
Beach	0	+ 2	+ 2	+ 1	+ 5
Change in Environment	0	- 1	- 2	0	- 3
Food					
Disease					
Fishing					
Marketing					

4. Two separate operations are required: OBSERVATIONS (results from measurements or judgements, numbers 1-4 on the following page); and CALCULATIONS (numbers 5-12 on the following page).

5. Test the materials with a small group first so that the problems are worked out and facilitators become familiar with the tool.

6 Go through the exercise for each category asking the basic question "How will the proposed activity affect.. .... " The "answers" are the value assignments, as given above.

Some of the categories that can be discussed are:

1 - Sediment Runoff: Will/has the project create/created turbid coastal water?

2 - Habitat: Will/has the project destroyed natural nursery ground for wild fish/crustacea?

3 - Water: Will/has the project changed/changed the chemical composition/amount of water available for the community

4 - Beach: Will/has the project affect/affected sand movement causing landing sites to silt up or become more unsheltered/ disappear

5 - Other: Basic questions dealing with favourable or unfavourable changes in wildlife, forests, natural features.

6 - Food: Will/Do people have more food? Dry season foods? A more complete diet?

7 - Disease: Will/Has the project create/created more standing water? Will/Has the project increase/increased fast flowing water?

8 - Other: Basic questions dealing with toxic chemicals, exposure to animal borne diseases, etc.

9 - Fishing: Will/have per capita food production be/been affected

10 - Volume of goods Will/Has the project provide/provided more or fewer (fish, firewood, water)

11 - Common Resources: Water, fish, trees, etc. Will/Has the project eliminate/ eliminated community use of any of these resources? Will/ has it restrict/restricted access to these resources?

12 - Project Equity: How will/have the benefits been distributed? Who will/has profited from these activities. How "fairly" will;/have the benefits be/been shared?

Precautions

This tool will not provide exact, mathematically precise measurements, but will provide systematic and consistent judgements which can be compared over time.

Leave room for new categories and questions that might come up during the exercise.

This is a somewhat complicated tool, so be sure it is well understood before using it.

NEXT PAGE