

Dear Readers,

The cover of this Compas Newsletter shows a traditional Voodoo healer in Benin treating a woman. In this case, healing involves medicinal plants, consecrated powder, a sacred forest and a skilled healer. The back cover also shows practices used to heal the soil, crops and animals. The photograph on this page shows the 'pulse diagnosis', an important tool in Indian and Tibetan traditional health practices.



Photo: FRLHT

These pictures and the articles in this newsletter reflect the great diversity of concepts, approaches and practices that still exist related to healing people, animals, plants and environments. Vitality and health have a dimension beyond the purely physical and biological level. In most traditional cultures people believe that to maintain the vitality and health of human beings, plants, animals and environments, they have to address forces both in the natural and spiritual domain.

In their work, the Compas partners appreciate the strengths and challenge the weaknesses of traditional practices and cultural heritages. Understanding the cosmovision of modern and traditional cultures is a major challenge for anyone working with development. In each situation, the best combinations between traditional practices and practices from other parts of the world can be identified through a process of participatory assessment and development. Compas seeks to enhance this exchange of concepts and approaches between different cultures.

The views expressed in this Compas Newsletter may provoke readers to react, either in support of or challenging certain approaches or positions. We would like you to send us your reactions, opinions and contributions and become part of this intercultural dialogue. In this issue, you can find this discussion on pages 42 and 43.

Katrien van 't Hooft, Bertus Haverkort, Wim Hiemstra

### Call for contributions for next issue

#### Experiences with endogenous development

The Compas partners have now been collaborating for three years. Their experience with enhancing endogenous development continues to grow as they gain more insights in to indigenous worldviews, and learn from working with traditional practices. We invite all our readers to participate in an exchange of experiences, exploring the methodological implications of working with cosmovisions and endogenous development.

Questions to be addressed might include the following:

- Why and how have development agencies started to work with culture and cosmovision?
- What reasons do rural people have to avoid or to establish relationships with 'outsiders', to share their knowledge and to test and improve their traditional practices?
- What are the conditions for them to be open for such a collaboration? How do traditional leaders operate in this respect?
- What steps were taken to establish a fair and mutual working relationship between the rural people and outside development agencies?
- How can intellectual property rights be protected?

- Which indigenous practices have been documented, how was that done and how were they used to enhance endogenous development?
- How was the co-operation between traditional spiritual leaders and outsiders in documenting, testing and improving of indigenous practices?
- What were the different steps involved? Which participatory tools like for example PRA, PLA, PTD, or RAAKS, were found (not) useful?
- Which traditional practices have been put to test, and which methods were used to test and improve their effectiveness? Which criteria were used, how were the results assessed and measured?
- In what way can you show results?
- What are the difficulties, risks and pitfalls in enhancing endogenous development?
- Which traditional concepts and practices have been particularly relevant for wider sharing and testing?

Before writing a comprehensive paper, we invite readers to send an abstract or outline of the proposed paper. Please send your reactions as soon as possible. The next issue of the Compas newsletter will be published at the end of 2000. (E-mail: [compas@etn.nl](mailto:compas@etn.nl))