

Compas Partner News

Pilot training on Participatory Video

The value of participatory video for documenting endogenous development has been discussed within Compas for some time. Compas has now teamed up with Prolinnova (a programme on promoting local innovations) to organise a pilot training: a small-scale experiment to gain hands-on experience with participatory video. The training took place in northern Ghana in November 2004, for field staff of two Compas partners and five Prolinnova partners in Ghana, one Compas partner from Southern Africa, and one Prolinnova partner from Nepal. Chris Lunch of Insight, an organisation specialised in the field of participatory video, trained them.

During the training it became clear that the field staff quickly grasped the technical aspects of filming and editing. Moreover, they were able to facilitate participatory video in nearby villages, which generated great enthusiasm. The rural people quickly engaged in filming their experiences, and the gadgetry did not pose any problems to them. The short films made during this training will be on the internet, as soon as technical facilities permit, and the communities agree to this way of sharing. Compas, Prolinnova and Insight are now exploring ways to continue the participatory video experiments. For information: Wim Hiemstra (w.hiemstra@etcnl.nl) or Chris Lunch (www.insightshare.org).



Women in Kalbeo in northern Ghana, filming their reality and concerns with great confidence during the pilot training on Participatory Video.

Compas partners Latin America produce calendar 2005 of 'indigenous concepts of time and space'

Under the guidance of Agruco in Bolivia, an intricate calendar was made by the six partner organisations in Latin America. In colourful symbols and clear texts, six representations of indigenous concepts of time and space are presented: from the Mapuche in Chile, the Amazonian indigenous groups in Colombia, the Quechua and Aymara groups in Bolivia, and the Maya indigenous groups in Guatemala.



All indigenous groups in the calendar express the intricate link between time and space, which is represented in Pacha, or Mother Earth. The link between time and space is often represented as a pyramid figure with building blocks, in black and white or a combination of colours. Circular movements of planets and other natural cycles are frequently represented. The various complex Maya calendars we know today are based on the intricate knowledge of astronomy of this ancient culture. Info at: agruco@agruco.org

FRLHT (India): a local enterprise for ethno-veterinary products

A project for Documentation and Rapid Assessment of Ethno Veterinary Practices (EVP) was initiated in 2002, as a collaborative programme of Compas partner FRLHT and National Dairy Development Board (NDDB). The objectives of the programme are to assess the ethno-veterinary practices for their efficacy and safety, based on evidence from literature on Indian Systems of Medicine (ISM) and modern pharmacology, as well as to promote positively assessed practices through various extension programmes. This includes the establishment of herbal gardens, training of village resource persons, publications, as well as product development through local enterprises. Many workshops and training programmes have been conducted in three states of southern India.

Recently, a community owned enterprise (manufacturing unit) was established in Dakshina Kannada, in the district of Karnataka, for the production and distribution of quality ethno-veterinary products. This enterprise is adhering to all the standards, while product development and marketing are done within the milk co-operative society of this area through women self-help groups. In this way, five effective herbal remedies short-listed during the rapid assessment workshops, were taken for product development. These formulations are prepared using locally available plants, and have now become popular among the milk co-operative societies. The most sought one is Mastinil, which is a cost effective remedy for Mastitis. Info at: unni.pm@frlht.org.in

Community radio initiatives by Cecik (Ghana) and Green Foundation (India)

As part of the effort towards alternative forms of communication, CECIK has added participatory video production to its forms of communication in 2004. For the year 2005, plans are far advanced to add radio to this. A framework to do the radio programme has been developed with URA-RADIO (a local FM radio that covers nearly the whole of northern Ghana). The first set of programmes will be in the area of agriculture and natural resource management, starting with a campaign on the management of bushfires. This is expected to start in March 2005. Green Foundation is also starting up activities on community radio. Info at: cecik@africaonline.com.gh/greenfound@vsnl.net



Tsunami relief in India

A.V. Balasubramanian from CIKS reports: The tsunami which hit the east coast of India on 26th December has left in its wake a devastating trail of death, disruption and dislocation. Ever since that fateful weekend, at the centre we have been deluged by emails and phone calls from friends and well-wishers in various parts of India and abroad, and offers for help with money, material and volunteers. As an immediate measure CIKS decided to take up some short-term relief work in the districts of Kancheepuram, where we have our experimental farm and field office, and in the town of Sirkazhi in Nagapattinam, where we have a field office. Currently the activities taken up by CIKS are:

1. Collection of material required for the relief camps, such as food and clothing
2. Assisting families staying either in temporary shelters or in their own villages, by arranging basic kitchenware and other provisions to help them get started again.
3. Coordinating with individuals and groups who are offering help, and directing them to suitable spots and agencies, where help is required.
4. In the Nagapattinam district we are working with other relief agencies to identify the areas where particular needs are felt, and carrying out surveys to identify the nature of the needs and to assist the people in preparing proposals and requests for relief-aid.

Long-term impacts on coastal agricultural activities and nature are foreseen, especially due to incursion of salt water. We are currently engaged in a preliminary assessment of this situation, and have been invited to participate in the effort of the Department of Science and Technology, to launch integrated multi sector projects for these areas. Our knowledge base on traditional Indian agriculture is likely to be very valuable in this context, particularly with respect to the use of traditional seed varieties tolerant to saline/alkaline soil.

A devastated Hindu temple in Kalmunai village in Ampara District, in eastern province of Sri Lanka. Every house around this temple was washed away and people died.



COMPAS network Sri Lanka and tsunami relief

Mr Kahandawa of FIOH in Sri Lanka reports: the tsunami attack on the 26th of December is the biggest natural disaster that has happened in Sri Lanka. The magnitude of it was unimaginable for a small country like us: it attacked more than 3/4 of our coastal area, and left close to 40,000 people dead and missing.

None of the Compas partners in Sri Lanka are working in the coastal belt, but as part of various networks, we have worked as civil society groups on relief and rehabilitation. The three Compas partner organisations FIOH, BRIT and FOL have been active in relief work from the beginning. They collected money and emergency goods from the local people in their working areas, and distributed it to the victims. We mobilised whatever the resources available at hand. For example all the left over funds of the partners of Operation Days Work programme, of which I am the country director, were utilised for relief work.



FOL is working on Tsunami relief in south coast, with the collaboration of Green Movement of Sri Lanka. FIOH is actively involved in the east coast. The following activities are being implemented in a selected village in the Kalmunai area, one of the worst affected areas:

1. With the collaboration of a few other NGOs and AusAid: cleaning the debris, housing, water supply and sanitation, assistance for school children.
2. Psycho-social work (trauma healing) for the school children and women with the assistance of Operation Days Work Programme.
3. Supporting school children with equipment, and financial assistance through individual donations received by FIOH.

Partner organisation FIOH in Sri Lanka providing emergency medical assistance to affected people in Kinniya, a coastal village in Trincomalee.