



A CASE STUDY WRITING TOOLKIT

PEN TO PAPER: SHARING STORIES FROM THE FIELD

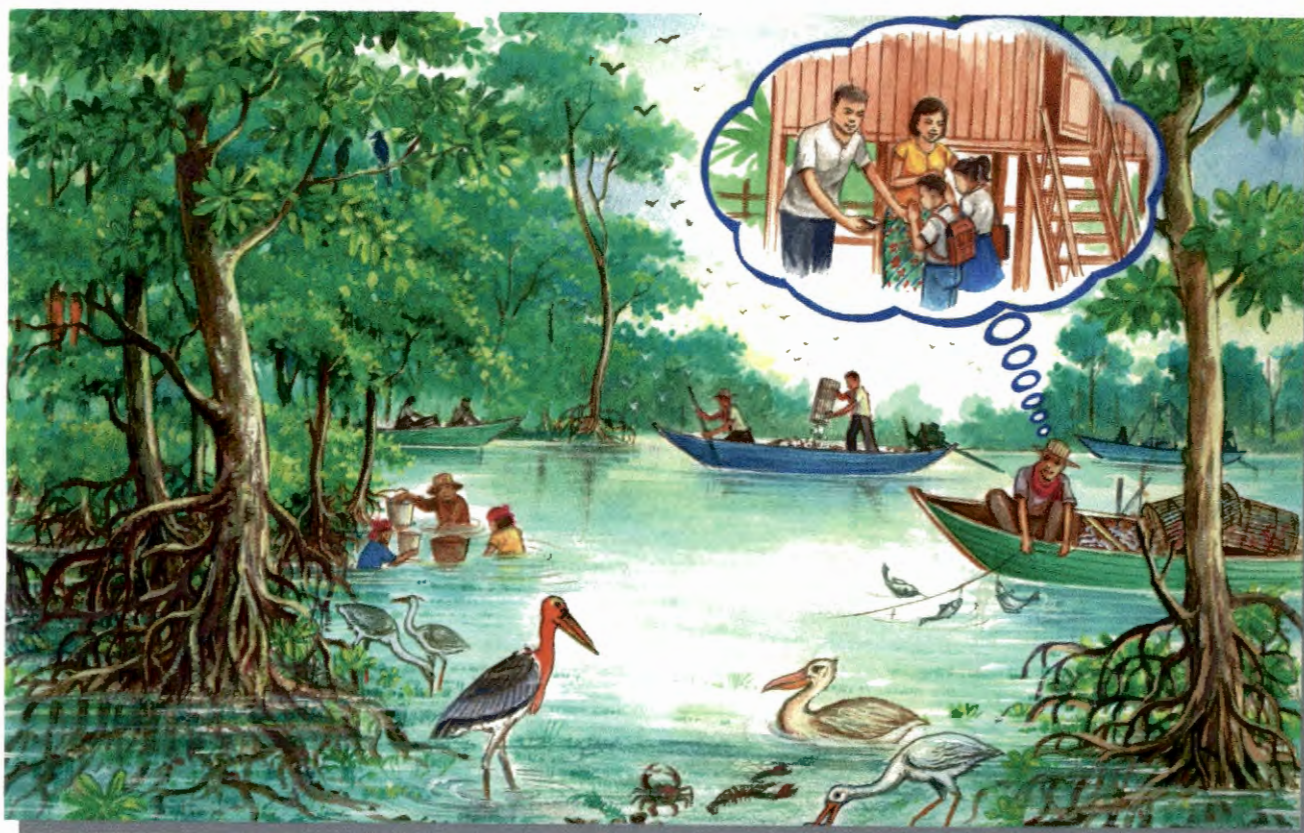


Photo Credit: PMMR

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FOR **THE CBNRM CASE STUDY WRITING AND
NETWORKING INITIATIVE**
(IDRC / WWF / OXFAM AMERICA)

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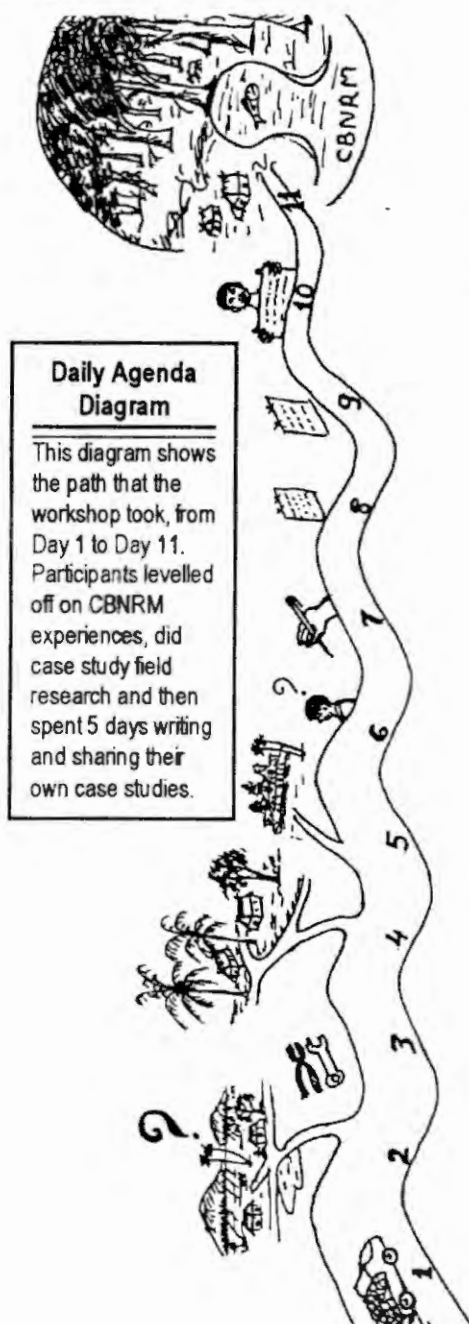
Photo of participants in the
Stories from the Tonle Sap:
case study writing for
Community Based Natural
Resource Management
(CBNRM) workshop, Seam Riep,
July 4th, 2001.



INTRODUCTION

Why this 'toolkit' was written

Writing can be a fun, creative process, especially case study writing which lets you explore more 'personal' stories. However, starting to write is often the hardest thing! Although lots of books have been written on 'how to' write a case study, they are often long and somewhat confusing. The best way to learn to write a case study is to try writing one!



After a successful ten-day case study writing work shop, **Stories from the Tonle Sap: case study writing for Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)**, held in Seam Riep in July 2001, participants asked for further notes that they could take back to their field sites with them. It made sense to combine the training materials, specifically the lessons and activities pertaining to writing skills, so that participants would have something to refer to when researching and writing their own case studies in their own field sites.

The Purpose of this Manual

- ⇒ to provide a basic, flexible framework for organizing research;
- ⇒ to help writers to write ideas more clearly and effectively;
- ⇒ to provide follow-up training materials for case study writing participants;
- ⇒ to facilitate better writing skills.

Target Group

The primary target group for this 'toolkit' is participants who have been involved in case study writing, either through trainings in Seam Riep or in Rathanakiri or through other work. However, it is hoped that this 'toolkit' is also useful for anyone interested in improving their writing skills!

How to Use this Toolkit

This 'toolkit' is designed to be easy-to-follow. 'What is a case study' is explored, as is 'good writing'. Ten steps to case study writing are outlined and explained. You can follow the book from front to back or just read specific sections that you wish to learn more about. Most importantly, remember that these are just guidelines, and it is up to you to write your case study in a creative, clear, interesting way!

WHAT IS A CASE STUDY?

IMAGINE THAT YOU ARE TRYING TO DESCRIBE, EXPLAIN AND ANALYZE THIS PICTURE FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS NOT SEEN THIS PICTURE BEFORE?!?! REALLY, THIS IS WHAT A CASE STUDY IS – AN IMAGE THAT YOU ARE PRESENTING TO SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T KNOW THE 'PERSONAL STORY' ABOUT THAT IMAGE!!!

A case study tells a story:

- ⇒ It is a chance to blend personal stories with project information;

It allows us to explore themes within CBNRM:

- ⇒ Gender, community, livelihood activities, forest conservation, fishing etc;

Case studies are creative:

- ⇒ Include photos, drawings, quotes and other information.



Why write a case study?

How you choose to present your writing often depends on WHY you are writing something. Are you presenting information to a donor or are you trying to interest others in an issue? Sometimes it makes sense to write in a less formal, more creative manner that lets you share people's 'personal stories' and really analyze an issue. This is when it might make sense to write a case study. Some differences between research reports and case studies include:

Research Report	Case Study
⇒ Tends to be structured i.e. follows a specific order;	⇒ Tends to be less structured i.e. it is up to you how you want to present things!
⇒ Focuses generally on many issues;	⇒ Focuses specifically on a few issues;
⇒ Provides limited analysis / detail per issue;	⇒ Provides detailed analysis on a few issues;
⇒ Not, always, so interesting for people to read!	⇒ Can be very interesting for others to read, especially if you include lots of photos, sketches, quotes and graphs.

Of course, sometimes you might need to write a research report; however, when undertaking CBNRM work a case study is often a more interesting, participatory way in which to involve people in your writing process and to share more personal stories. After all, CBNRM work is all about partnerships!

Different kinds of case studies

There is no 'right' or 'wrong' style in case study writing - what is important is to have a clear message and to present your ideas in an easy-to-follow manner. How you choose to organize your writing and your photos is up to you. For example, one case study might compare how two families approach their daily livelihood activities while another case study might focus on a village resource management committee. This 'toolkit' is designed to help you think about important steps that are part of case study writing - these are only guidelines!

AN INTRODUCTION TO 'GOOD' WRITING

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER WHILE WRITING?

- ⇒ Your paper should have one main thought or message;
- ⇒ Think about who you want to read this... write for your reader i.e. donors, gov't
- ⇒ Support your main message / thought with a number of points i.e. examples;
- ⇒ Make a point in each paragraph, and then support this idea;
- ⇒ Make your paper easy to read!

TEN STEPS TO CONSIDER WHEN WRITING A CASE STUDY

Whenever you are writing, there are some things that you have to do! What follows is a brief explanation of these different 'steps' to help get you started in your writing.

- STEP ONE: Preparing for Fieldwork;
- STEP TWO: Taking Field Notes;
- STEP THREE: Organizing Your Field Notes;
- STEP FOUR: Creating Your Main Message;
- STEP FIVE: Mapping Your Information;
- STEP SIX: Writing an Introduction;
- STEP SEVEN: Writing a First Draft;
- STEP EIGHT: Referencing;
- STEP NINE: Editing, Layout and Peer Review;
- STEP TEN: Final Presentation.

Step One: Preparing for Fieldwork

Good writing is a result of good research: this means planning your field work.

Know WHY you are going to the field and WHAT information you want.

How will you do your research?

Which PRA tools will you use? Are you comfortable with these tools?

For more information about possible PRA tools that you can use, see Appendix

A.

For more information about participation in case study research, see Appendix

B.



Step Two: Taking Field Notes

- ⇒ When you are in the field, you can never take enough notes;
- ⇒ Write down EVERYTHING (as long as the family or group you are meeting with does not mind!);
- ⇒ Know why you are going to the field, and what information you are looking for (generally);
- ⇒ Clarify points that you don't understand;
- ⇒ Be flexible, ask lots of questions;
- ⇒ Use pictures, games and humour to keep people interested;
- ⇒ Take a break when necessary!

Step Three: Organizing Your Field Notes

When you return from the field, or during an overnight stay in the field, it is important for you to look over your field notes.

- ⇒ Think about all the information that you have collected;
- ⇒ Be clear about what information you have and you do not have!
- ⇒ Review all of your field notes;
 - Clarify any points you are not clear about with your group;
 - Have you forgotten to ask anything?

⇒ Brainstorm your main points or findings from your fieldwork.

-
-
- etc.

Step Four: Creating a Main Message

A good paper has one main message. This is the paper's main idea, and all other ideas support this. Ask yourself the following questions:

- ⇒ WHAT DO YOU WANT THIS DOCUMENT TO DO?
- ⇒ WHO WILL READ THIS PAPER AND WHAT DO THEY EXPECT?

Imagine that you have started discussing your case study with someone. You better say something interesting that gives them an idea of what you will write about! Imagine the situation... what can you say to summarize the main idea?

Write down, in a single sentence, the most important point you want to make.

An effective message:

- ⇒ Expresses your purpose;
- ⇒ Makes a single point;
- ⇒ Is a sentence;
- ⇒ Should be around 20 – 25 words.

An example of a main message statement is:

The community in Fishing Lot # 3 has experienced many changes in fisheries management regimes; however, over time access to the fisheries has become increasingly difficult.

Step Five: Writing an Introduction

There are four parts to an introduction:

1. the SITUATION;
2. the PROBLEM;
3. the QUESTION;
4. the RESPONSE.

Case studies can easily introduce a situation, the problem faced and questions surrounding this problem (analysis); however, not all case studies will be discussing the response to a situation i.e. something has not always been started yet to solve the problem. This is alright, each case study is different. What a good introduction does is helps the reader to clearly understand what it is they will learn about when reading the case study. This is very important – a clear introduction makes your paper much easier to read!

MAIN MESSAGE¹: JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT SCHEMES SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED THE ILLEGAL DESTRUCTION OF TREES

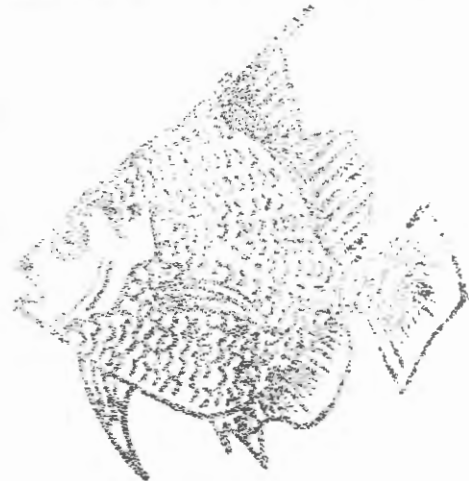
- ⇒ **SITUATION:** trees in government protected forests are cut by villagers for firewood and sold to the market, even though armed guards patrol the forests. Forests are threatened;
- ⇒ **PROBLEM:** the forest is the only fuel wood source for villagers, and gets a good \$ at the market. Poor farmers have no incentives to manage state forests;
- ⇒ **QUESTION:** could villagers be given incentives to manage forests with government i.e. co-management?
- ⇒ **RESPONSE:** study undertaken to improve forest management through introducing co-management schemes.

¹ Source: Barker, A., and Manji, F. 2000. Writing for change: an interactive guide to effective writing, writing for science, writing for advocacy. Fahamu / Oxford Learning Space. For more writing tips, see this CD Rom.

Think about your information and what you want to say. Try writing an introduction! Remember, write about the situation, the problem and the question you are looking at!!

Re-read your introduction.

Is your introduction clear? Have you given the reader a good idea of what the issue is and what you will analyze in your case study?



Step Six: Make a Map

HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR IDEAS Make a map!!!

Main idea that you will write about

Introduction
Background to situation

Different ideas that support your
main idea:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Any conclusions or recommendations?

What photos, PRA graphs, quotes or text boxes will you include?

Use a big piece of flip chart paper to make your map. It is important that you slowly work through your information, and begin to sort it out and think about where you will include it.

WRITE DOWN YOUR MAIN IDEA ON TOP, THE MAIN POINTS OF YOUR INTRODUCTION ON ONE SIDE AND THEN THINK ABOUT WHAT ELSE YOU NEED TO INCLUDE. MAKE BULLET LISTS ABOUT WHAT YOU WILL INCLUDE, AND IN WHICH SECTION I.E. BACKGROUND OR IN THE MAIN BODY OF YOUR CASE STUDY. DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCLUSIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS? WHAT PICTURES OR QUOTES WOULD YOU LIKE TO INCLUDE?

A good map makes a big difference in your writing. Take your time – planning is the hardest part of writing. With a good plan, writing your first draft will be easy!



Why do you make a map or outline?!?

1. To check that your plan makes sense;
2. To help you write your first draft;
3. To help organize your ideas.

Re-check your map or outline!

- ⇒ Is your message appropriate for the reader?
- ⇒ Does your message still make sense?
- ⇒ Do your key points answer the question?
- ⇒ Is anything important missing?

Step Seven: Write Your Story

It is time to start writing!!! Allow yourself a few hours to sit down either with a pen and paper or in front of a computer to write a first draft of your case study. It is easiest to just write and write and write – you will edit your work later on. Just try to get the important ideas down. The following writing tips might help you:

WRITING TIPS:

- ⇒ Write quickly;
- ⇒ Write simply;
- ⇒ Write without interruption;
- ⇒ Write without editing;
- ⇒ Keep to the plan of your map / outline;
- ⇒ Have a notebook to make notes of other points you might want to include.

There are different ways to analyze and share your information in a case study.

For example, you can:

- ⇒ DESCRIBE i.e. outline something;
- ⇒ EXPLAIN i.e. compare, summarise, discuss;



- ⇒ REASON i.e. suggest, argue, advocate;
- ⇒ NARRATE i.e. tell stories.

Step Eight: Quoting and Referencing

Quoting and Paraphrasing

Whenever you use someone's EXACT words, then you need to use a quote them (place their words in "quotations"). Quotations of three or more lines are always indented. For example,

"I am one of a few deep sea fishers in Koh Kong. I am able to earn a good living from this livelihood – more people don't do it because they do not know how to dive. For those fishers without boats or fishing expertise, it is difficult to earn enough to survive (Wayne Som Sak, 2001)."

OR

"Fishing in the Tonle Sap is now more difficult (Marschke, 2001)".

If you don't want to use someone's EXACT words but you want to use their idea (perhaps from a book or summarizing what someone has said), then you must also give credit. For example,

According to one local fisher, one can earn a good livelihood from deep sea fishing although most people do not practice this technique because they do not know how to dive (Wayne Som Sak, 2001).

OR

According to Marschke (2001), it is harder now to catch fish in the Tonle Sap Lake.

Referencing

You must always give credit to someone else's ideas!!! Therefore, you must have a REFERENCE section in your case study or report. When you are reading a book, make note of:

- ⇒ Author(s);
- ⇒ Year;
- ⇒ Name of article / book;
- ⇒ Place it was published (written);
- ⇒ Who the publisher was.

For example,

Nooyens, T. 2000. Seeds for Sustainable Community Natural Resources Management the Rathanakiri NRM Action Research Project. Phnom Penh: UNDP / CARERE.

Step Nine: Editing, Layout and Peer Review



Tips for effective editing

- ⇒ Take a break;
- ⇒ Get a second opinion;
- ⇒ Edit on paper (not on screen);
- ⇒ Edit for clarity, content and plain Khmer / English;
- ⇒ By systematic.

YOU MUST EDIT ON THREE LEVELS:

CONSTRUCTING EFFECTIVE PARAGRAPHS;
IMPROVING YOUR SENTENCES;
CHOOSING YOUR WORDS.

EDITING YOUR PARAGRAPHS

1. Use topic sentences;
2. Manage paragraph length;
3. Link paragraphs together;
4. Use key words;
5. Use bullet point lists.

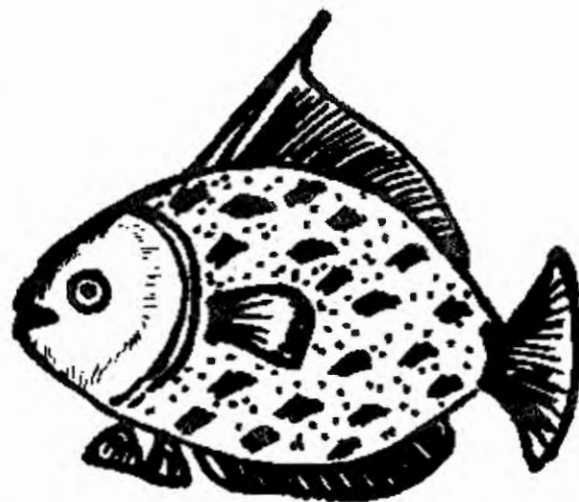
For more information on paragraph construction, see Appendix C.

EDITING YOUR SENTENCES

1. The best sentences are easily understood by the reader.
2. Don't make sentences too long (around 20 words) and mix up short and long sentences;
3. Don't include too many ideas in one sentence i.e. keep it simple!

EDITING YOUR WORDS

1. Use simple Khmer / English;
2. Use strong, clear, specific words;
3. Remove unnecessary words;
4. Use short words.



Layout

Think about the pictures, drawings, graphs, charts, quotes, PRA diagrams etc that you want to include in your case study. Where will they best fit? Take some time to think about your layout. Pictures need to be placed near the words that describe the picture, quotes should be included when discussing a particular issue and charts need to be included near the discussion or analysis of the chart results. Layout is important – good layout is pleasing to the eye and easy for the reader to follow.

Peer Review

Once you have edited your writing and are happy with your layout, share your case study with your peers. Ask for feedback – the best way we can learn is from each other. Having someone else read your paper helps to make your paper more clear – they can ask you questions if they don't understand something and this helps you to think about how you have written or presented an idea. After all, you want your writing to be easily understood so that people will learn from your case study!

Step Ten: Finalize

Once you have finished your case study and asked for peer comments, it is time to finalize your case study – allow time to make changes and to follow-up on the feedback given to you by your peers. It takes a while to get photographs in the right place, to change a few words here and there and to finalize your case study. And, don't forget to read your case study carefully one final time!

NOW YOU ARE FINISHED. CONGRATULATIONS!!!

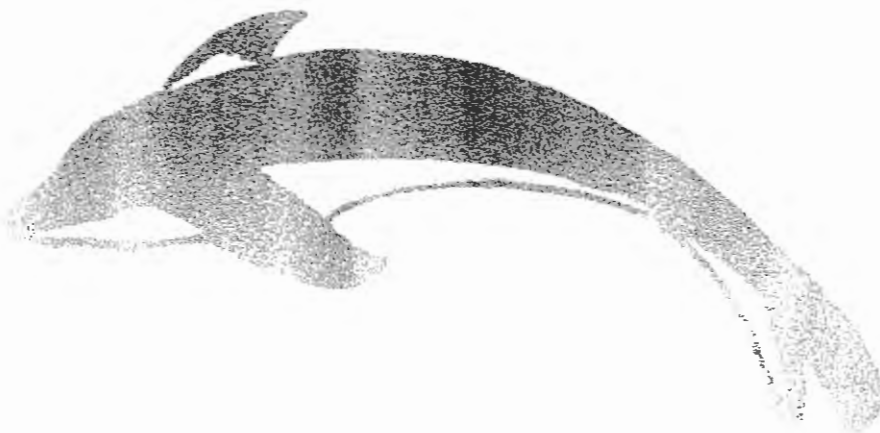
CASE STUDY DO'S AND DON'TS

Do

1. Think about what you want to write;
2. Organize your ideas. Take time to think about what you are writing and to make an outline that includes all the points that you want to include!;
3. Tell a story;
4. Write clearly and in an easy to read manner;
5. Think about WHO you are writing for, and write in a way is easy to follow for that reader i.e. government staff; village leader;
6. Edit your draft;
7. Reference and give credit to other sources;
8. Have someone else read your paper to make sure it makes sense!

DON'T

1. Begin writing your story without a plan i.e. always organize your ideas first;
2. Tell a story without being clear about what the main point of your story is!;
3. Use big words that are difficult for others to understand;
4. Only write one draft;
5. Forget to reference other sources of information;
6. Hand in your draft without first editing it and asking for feedback from someone else.



NOTES TO FACILITATORS

A lot of the work that you will be doing when working in a community on your case study research is facilitation. Communities are complicated, and your role as a researcher is to work with different members of the community. This is known as facilitation. Good facilitation skills will make a big difference in terms of the type of information that you are able to collect!

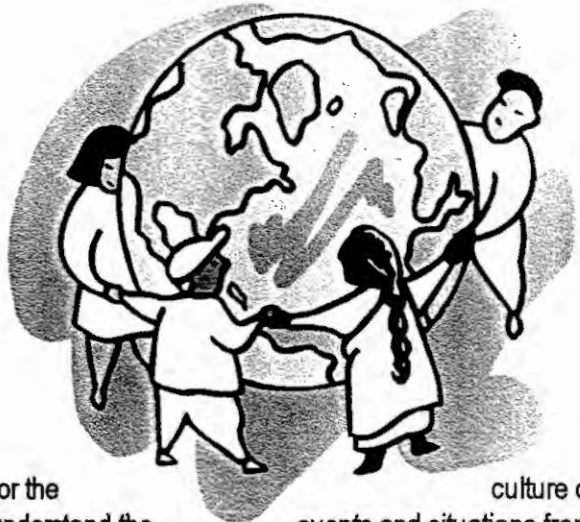
WHAT ARE SOME IMPORTANT ASPECTS TO FACILITATION²?

Facilitators are respectful of others.

Facilitators need to respect the views and voices of whomever they are working with. Good facilitation is about allowing people to develop their own skills and potentials. Different views should be encouraged!!!

Facilitators are sensitive to local cultures.

This means that facilitators should have basic respect for the the people we are working with. Facilitators can try to understand the a community perspective, and can build upon the positive aspects of people's ways of life, skills, technology, traditions, beliefs and customs.



Facilitators are gender sensitive.

A gender sensitive facilitator is concerned with the empowerment of women and men; issues are considered from the point of view of women and men. For example, facilitators can ensure that women's voices are heard, and that women play an important role within community resource management.

Facilitators care for the environment.

Facilitators need to show that they care for the environment! This includes being a role model i.e. not throwing garbage onto the ground! People and nature are interconnected, and the environment provides us with opportunities to achieve our goals.

² This section on facilitation is adapted from notes prepared by Becky Riviera-Guibé for the Community Fisheries Management training in Sihanoukville, April 2001.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Case study ~ a short description of a situation, condition or particular project that tells important stories to the reader. Case studies are commonly used to document experiences which are then shared more widely through training's, workshops, CD Roms, books etc.

Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) ~ communities working together to take care of their environment. This form of resource management emphasizes a local perspective.

Community ~ an association of people living in an area or who share something in common. An ecological community refers to an association of plants and animals living in an ecosystem.

Facilitator ~ guides people to work together as a group, to have access to data, knowledge and resources, and helps to develop linkages and support.

Gender~ the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men, in a given culture or location.

Organization ~ a group of people who come together because of a common interest.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) ~ a series of tools that enable researchers to work with community members in a participatory, interesting manner. Instead of only discussing ideas, researchers and community members can draw pictures and maps to support and focus their discussions.

Protected Area~ the term used to describe an area of land or sea that is governed by some form of protection from use or degradation.

Stakeholder ~ usually groups of individuals, within a larger community, that share a common interest, perspective, worldview or background.

Tools ~ specific analytical techniques that assist in the collection and analysis of information.



Woman collecting non
forest timber products
(NTFP's).

APPENDIX A: PRA TOOLS THAT ARE USEFUL TO USE IN CONDUCTING CASE STUDY RESEARCH³

Family Portrait

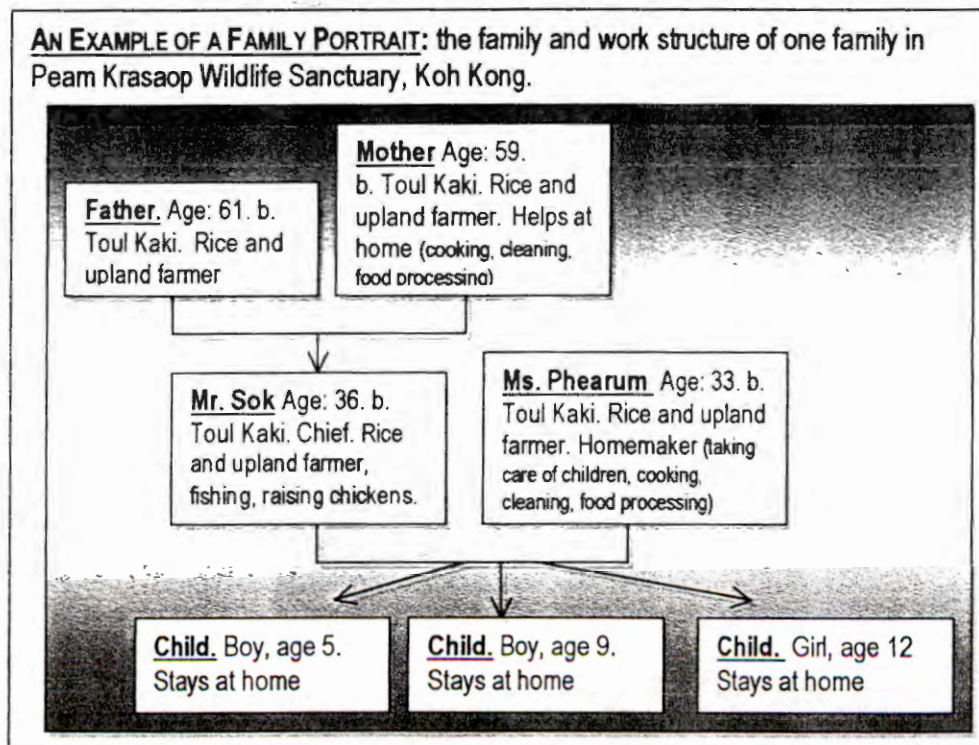
- ⇒ A Family Portrait is a detailed family description. Family Portraits present in-depth accounts of family interactions with their local environment: bio-physical, socio-cultural, economic and political. This tool helps to understand how different family members, and the family as a whole, make decisions related to resource use.

What you need:

- ⇒ colored pens, flip chart paper and a sense of humour.

Approach:

1. Before doing a Family Portrait, be clear about what type of information you would like to learn. For example, are you interested in determining factors that families consider in deciding how to use resources or are you interested in determining the reasons for participation or non-participation in CBNRM projects?;
2. Prepare a set of guide questions to ask the families;
3. Select several different families to get different perspectives on an issue i.e. fishers, part-time fishers, farmers, business people;
4. Use a family tree to get the entire family involved in discussing each family member, their occupation and their relationship with the environment. It is useful to draw out the family tree, and to spend some time on each member of the family;
5. Family Portraits are excellent for generating informal discussions!



³ For more PRA tools, see IIRR. 1998. Participatory methods in community-based coastal resource management. 3 vols. International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, Silang, Cavite, Philippines.

Historical Transect

- ⇒ Historical Transects are pictorial representations of resources in an area over time. It can be used to show trends in both bio-physical and socio-cultural conditions using variables such as land use, aquatic or animal diversity, vegetation, income, health, education and population. Historical Transects help establish correlations between various parameters over time e.g. the relationship between fish catch decline and the incidence of poor health.

What you need:

- ⇒ colored pens, flip chart paper.

Approach:

1. Think of what you would like to compare over time, or brain storm with a group about what should be compared i.e. population, # of trees, # of fish, income;
2. Have the group(s) divide the flip chart paper into rows and columns. Write the variables at the top of the first row. Write the date or seasons along the first column.
3. Using symbols (trees, money, fish etc), have the participants draw the trends of the variables focusing on the quantity of the variable;
4. Clarify pictorial representations i.e. what does the size of a tree mean?
5. Ask the groups to think about reasons for the trend. This is an excellent time to hold a group discussion!

AN EXAMPLE OF A HISTORICAL TRANSECT: population, money, aquatic life, mangroves and charcoal were compared between 1970 and 1998.

		Population လူဦးရေ	Money ငွေ	Aquatic Life ငါး	Mangroves ပင်ပင်	Charcoal မုန့်
30/09/98 ~ Historical Resource Transect of Toul Kaki Village တိုင်းကန်ခရိုင်တွင်းရှိ 30/09/98 ~ ဇာတိကန်ခရိုင်တွင်းရှိ	1970		\$ \$			
	1975					
	1980		\$ \$			
	1985		\$ \$			
	1990		\$ \$ \$			
	1995		\$ \$ \$ \$			
	1998		\$ \$ \$ \$ \$			

Historical Story Telling

- ⇒ Historical Story Telling is personal stories that share details about past events and conditions. These stories are first-hand knowledge of individuals who were participants or witnesses to events. This is one way to document the oral history of a community and helps to examine the impact of major historical events on the life of local individuals. This tool is excellent for transferring history, stories, folklore information and lessons of specific events from generation to generation. Explore Elders knowledge about their relationship with the environment and changes over time!

What you need:

- ⇒ pen and paper.

Approach:

1. Think about who you want to talk to and have a general idea about what you would like to learn about. Elders or people who have lived in the community for a long time are excellent to do oral histories with. Talk to the village headperson about who has lived in the community, but also talk to other people to get a sense of who else you should be talking to!
2. Begin your Historical Story with easy questions that people like to answer i.e. how long have you lived here, where were you born and then lead into your topic. Make sure people feel comfortable to share their story, and once they begin sharing try to get people to tell their story in somewhat of a chronological order.

AN EXAMPLE OF AN ORAL HISTORY: An oral history generates information that can be placed into a family history.

Year	Family History
1985	Pao joins the army in Kampong Cham.
1988	Pao comes with the army to work on Koh Kong Island.
1990	Pao stops working for the army and begins working as an administrator in Koh Kaptic commune; begins fishing in his free time.
UNTAC	Pao begins to fishing for a livelihood.
1995	Pao and Onn marry; Onn leaves her job as a butcher at the Olympic Market in Phnom Penh to live in Koh Kaptic.
1996	Pao becomes Chief of Koh Kaptic.
1998	The family continues to fish.

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPATION IN CASE STUDY RESEARCH⁴

"Research begins with the conscious asking of questions (Wadsworth, 1984)."

In participatory research, we emphasize:

- ⇒ Local knowledge;
- ⇒ Local priorities;
- ⇒ Findings are used to address local problems and needs;
- ⇒ Information is not taken away from the community.

WHAT ARE SOME KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER BEFORE BEGINNING CASE STUDY WRITING RESEARCH WITHIN A COMMUNITY?

WHY?

Why am I doing this research?

WHAT?

What do we really want to find out?

What is the real problem?

What are the specific research questions?

FOR WHOM?

For whom is this research?

Who will the research benefit?

Who will use the research findings?

Who will be influenced by the research findings?

Who will participate in the research?

How will they participate?

WHAT type of information do we want to emphasize in a case study?

⇒ Local priorities; Local needs; Local knowledge; Local solutions; Participation.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Who in a community participates in your research? Remember, local people includes:

⇒ Farmers, fishers, men, women, youth, the elderly, middle class, poor, marginalized, local authorities, different governmental levels, academics and scientists.

How can local people participate in your research?

- ⇒ Helping to identify the focus of your research i.e. what would they like researched;
- ⇒ Planning and designing the research;
- ⇒ Providing background information;
- ⇒ Being part of your research team;
- ⇒ Helping to facilitate and collect information;
- ⇒ Attending meetings about the research;
- ⇒ Etc.

⁴ Information in this section was prepared by Becky Riviera-Guieb for the Community Fisheries Management training in Sihanouville, April 2001, referenced from Stoecker, R. 1997. Are Academics Irrelevant? Roles for Scholars in Participatory Research.

APPENDIX C: PARAGRAPH CONSTRUCTION⁵

TOPIC SENTENCE

A well-structured paragraph usually begins with a TOPIC SENTENCE. The topic sentence tells the reader a) what the subject of the paragraph is and b) what *aspect* of the subject is to be discussed (the 'controlling idea'). The paragraph should not include comments on anything else.

Underline the subject and box the controlling idea in these sentences.

1. Hunting seems to be the immediate threat to wildlife in this area.
2. Surveys were usually carried out on foot during the day.
3. One of the significant effects of the civil war in Cambodia was the devastation of forests and wildlife.

THE BODY OF THE PARAGRAPH

After the topic sentence, you should present the SUPPORTING IDEAS. These tell you more about the topic, but relate only to the controlling idea.

Which of these sentences probably follows which topic sentence? Choose 1 sentence for each topic only.

- a) The results can therefore not be seen as representative.
- b) In many areas anarchic logging practices resulted in massive habitat loss.
- c) Although there is a Prime Minister's decree that bans the hunting and trade in wildlife, it is not sufficiently enforced.
- d) Only a few surveys have been carried out in the northeast.
- e) This involved the patrolling of the main logging road, skidder tracks and trails.

It is very important not to include information that is not relevant to the paragraph as defined by the topic sentence.

In these two paragraphs, which sentences should not be included?

1. Wildlife hunting and trade would significantly reduce if demand was removed. Hence law enforcement activities should focus on restaurants, markets and international border crossings. You can get a very nice meal of leopard with onions in the restaurant in Kompong Speu. Penalties should be severe and part of the fines (as incentives) should go to the individual/individuals involved in bringing the offenders to justice. The percentage should be high enough to prevent enforcement officers from receiving bribes from offenders.
2. Abandoned or active campsites encountered were investigated for any remains of wildlife consumed. Specimens such as skulls, horns and plaster casts were also collected as future reference material. Such items also serve as important museum pieces and conservation awareness materials. If a tiger is stuffed and mounted in a glass case it looks very lifelike. Besides recording information on wildlife, observations on human activities and impacts in the forested areas were also made, and similarly recorded onto data sheets.

CONCLUSION

The concluding sentence(s) may

⁵ This paragraph construction exercise was provided by Rosie Ounsted, English Language Teacher.

- 1 refer back to the beginning of the paragraph to remind the reader of the topic (especially if the paragraph was a long one),
- 2 present a summary of the points made,
- 3 lead on to the next paragraph,
- 4 simply round off and conclude the paragraph.

What type of conclusions are these sentences? (Match a, b, c and d to 1, 2, 3 and 4)

- a) Taking all these factors into consideration, it is clear that much progress remains to be made in controlling anarchic logging.
- b) However there are many other points to be considered when discussing wildlife trade in Cambodia.
- c) A list of current logging concessions is given in Appendix 1.
- d) Thus it is clear that the villagers' claims, that wildlife was hunted for domestic use only, cannot be believed.

Note that not all paragraphs have concluding sentences. Very long paragraphs should be broken up into smaller sections; the sections do not then need their own topic sentences but the last of the sections ought to have a good concluding sentence to make it clear that everything relating to that controlling idea has now been presented.

