

LEARNING ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT



Learning Endogenous Development

Building on Bio-cultural Diversity

PRACTICAL ACTION
Publishing



Intermediate Technology Publications Ltd
trading as Practical Action Publishing
Schumacher Centre for Technology and Development
Bourton on Dunsmore, Rugby,
Warwickshire CV23 9QZ, UK
www.practicalactionpublishing.org

© ETC Foundation - Compas, 2007

First published in 2007

ISBN 978 1 85339 664 9

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without the written permission of the publishers.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

The contributors have asserted their rights under the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 to be identified as authors of their respective contributions.

Since 1974, Practical Action Publishing has published and disseminated books and information in support of international development work throughout the world. Practical Action Publishing (formerly ITDG Publishing) is a trading name of Intermediate Technology Publications Ltd (Company Reg. No. 1159018), the wholly owned publishing company of Intermediate Technology Development Group Ltd (working name Practical Action). Practical Action Publishing trades only in support of its parent charity objectives and any profits are covenanted back to Practical Action (Charity Reg. No. 247257, Group VAT Registration No. 880 9924 76).

Cover by Mercer Design
Indexed by Indexing Specialists, UK, Ltd
Typeset by S.J.I. Services
Printed by Replika Press

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ix
FOREWORD	xi
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: Principles of endogenous development	5
Polycrisis: problems and opportunities	5
Declaration on Endogenous Development and Bio-cultural Diversity	7
Endogenous development uses a diversity of methods	13
Code of conduct	18
Case studies	19
1-1 The work of Green Foundation in South India	20
1-2 IDEA's holistic approach to working with tribal communities in India	23
1-3 Community Organisational Development in Ghana	26
1-4 Growing to understand endogenous development in Bolivia	29
1-5 Grupo Semillas and its work with an Afro-origin community in Colombia	32
1-6 Endogenous development in the Netherlands: the VEL-VANLA environmental cooperatives	36
CHAPTER 2: Ways of learning in endogenous development	41
Introduction	41
Lessons learned	42
Towards learning forms in endogenous development	52
1. Learning about local worldviews	52
2. Reconnecting with one's own roots	55
3. Understanding traditional ways of learning and sharing	58
4. Dreams, trance and meditation techniques	59
5. Art, stories and symbols	60
6. Learning from past experiences, mistakes and difficulties	61
7. Understanding community events and activities	63
8. Understanding the subtle meanings of language	65
9. Preparing for community entry and building horizontal relations	67
10. Intra- and intercultural exchanges and workshops	69
11. Self-reflection and critique as a development practitioner	71

12. Learning from other innovative participatory methods	73
13. Making use of mass-media forms	75
14. Designing learning activities in endogenous development	77
CHAPTER 3: Appreciating the diversity of worldviews	81
Introduction	81
Case studies	
3-1 Classical and folk health systems in India	81
3-2 African ways of learning	84
3-3 Abraham Mwadiwa: between Christianity and African spirituality	86
3-4 Understanding local institutions in southern Ghana	89
3-5 Andean cosmovision and development concepts	93
3-6 Foundations of the Mayan worldview	96
3-7 Worldviews in Europe: two examples	99
3-8 The medicine wheel of North American Indians	101
Reflections on the diversity of worldviews	104
CHAPTER 4: Visioning and planning	109
Introduction	109
Case studies	
4-1 Transforming a hunting ceremony for natural resource management in India	109
4-2 Community Institutional Mapping as an entry point in Ghana	112
4-3 Using traditional festivals for planning, monitoring and evaluation in Ghana	115
4-4 PICADS and supporting community planning in Bolivia	119
4-5 From planning to collective self-learning in Colombia	122
4-6 Community Story Framework for visioning in Canada	126
Reflections on visioning and planning	127
CHAPTER 5: Supporting local learning	133
Introduction	133
Case studies	
5-1 Facilitating learning among snakebite healers in Sri Lanka	133
5-2 Documentation and rapid assessment of local health traditions in India	137
5-3 Reviving tribal traditional dormitory education in India	140
5-4 Mobilising indigenous knowledge in Bolivia	143
5-5 Supporting intercultural learning among the Mapuche in Chile	147
5-6 Farmers' learning groups in the Netherlands	149
Reflections on supporting local learning	153

CHAPTER 6: Supporting local initiatives	159
Introduction	159
Case studies	
6-1 Action research on grain storage in Nepal	159
6-2 Addressing savings problems of women in India	162
6-3 A mango competition in India	163
6-4 Local concepts and design of joint experiments in Ghana	165
6-5 Sirigu Women's Organization of Pottery and Art in Ghana	170
6-6 The real sheep of the Tzotzil in Mexico	173
6-7 Strengthening local markets in Bolivia	177
Reflections on supporting local initiatives	179
 CHAPTER 7: Strengthening local institutions	 183
Introduction	183
Case studies	
7-1 Building the <i>vaastu</i> resource group in Sri Lanka	183
7-2 Strengthening local organisations in India	187
7-3 Building a network of tribal leaders and experts in India	189
7-4 Local institutions and conflict transformation in Sudan	191
7-5 Strengthening the role of traditional female leaders in Ghana	194
7-6 Integrating local wisdom into primary schools in Peru	197
Reflections on strengthening local institutions	200
 CHAPTER 8: Creating an enabling environment	 205
Introduction	205
Case studies	
8-1 Transforming traditional leaders into effective lobbyists in India	205
8-2 Up-scaling traditional organic agriculture in Sri Lanka	209
8-3 Influencing wildfire management policy in Ghana	211
8-4 Intra- and inter-cultural education and university reform in Bolivia	214
8-5 Recognising the contribution of the Maya juridical system to the state of Guatemala	217
8-6 Marching for policy change in Nicaragua	220
8-7 Regional cooperatives bridge the gap between policy and practice in Spain	223
8-8 Building the Rural Parliament: structured policy dialogue in the Netherlands	226
Reflections on creating an enabling environment	229
 GLOSSARY	 235
 RESOURCES	 237

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book presents outcomes of a long process of learning by a large number of people, the start of which cannot clearly be defined. It is the result of the different ways in which people in different cultures have learned, shared experiences, tried new ways of supporting local initiatives and relearned. The pioneers in this field are many and their sources of inspiration diverse. Through the Compas programme, some important players in these fields have shared the lessons learned and enhanced their understanding of traditional knowledge and values and its complementarity with modern knowledge.

In the early 1990s, only a few organisations were interested in learning more about worldviews, culture and spirituality in relation to poverty alleviation or, better, the creation of well-being. It wasn't until 1996 that the first small case studies were carried out, leading to the first phase of Compas (1998-2002), during which the emphasis was on detailed field studies and documentation of endogenous development. The second phase of Compas (2003-2006) focused on showing the diversity of endogenous development methodologies and how endogenous development could be learned. As this book shows, the fruits of this learning process are not limited to field-based organisations, but are also gradually starting to feature in the university systems of a number of countries throughout the four continents where Compas is active.

Credit for the results of this Learning Endogenous Development book (LENDEV) goes to all those rural women and men, traditional leaders and carriers of ancient wisdom who have been willing to share their views on life with the Compas partner organisations. Staff of the Compas partner organisations reflected on how they have learned endogenous development and documented it. In 2005 they shared these experiences during LENDEV workshops in South Africa, Bolivia and Sri Lanka. Chesha Wettasinghe of ETC Ecoculture, the Netherlands documented the learning experiences of Sri Lankan Compas partners, and Mr O.B. Ramasubramanian and his team of the Samanvaya group based in Chennai, India carried out similar documentation of the Indian Compas partners. Early in 2006, Laurens van Veldhuizen of ETC Ecoculture and Stephan Rist of the Centre for Development and Environment of the University of Berne conceived the general framework for the LENDEV book. Later they were joined by Sara van Otterloo-Butler who edited the case studies that form the backbone of the book. The Compas international coordination team in the Netherlands finalised the book after an inspiring discussions with all Compas partner organisations in Poland in September 2006.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the book in whatever capacity. We hope that Compas partners will share the birth of this book with the elders, leaders and rural men and women in the different communities, and with their own colleagues and those from other organisations in their areas. We also hope that the book will lead to fruitful dialogues and

discussions about all that has been learned, and new experiences and insights that can be shared and discussed. Above all, we hope it will inspire you, the reader, to build bio-cultural diversity.

The editors

FOREWORD

Live the Culture of Life!

We have witnessed many declarations, movements, development programmes and international policies aimed at reducing poverty. However, we have witnessed no major progress: most western-based development approaches have a narrow material and economy-based vision. Such a narrow vision is not found in traditional cultures. Indigenous peoples' cultures, knowledges and languages are rich and diverse, but there is one important value that cuts across all: their



Rigoberta Menchu (centre) addressing the 'Conference on Endogenous Development and Bio-Cultural Diversity' in Geneva, 4 October 2006. On her left is Freddy Delgado, Compas Regional Coordinator for Latin America and on her right is A.V. Balasubramanian, Compas Regional Coordinator for Asia. www.bioculturaldiversity.net

relationship of harmony with the land, with Mother Earth. Indigenous peoples have a great deal to contribute to the new value system that humanity needs in order to achieve true sustainable development. They have depended for their livelihoods on Mother Earth for thousands of years, and as a result they have developed ethics, practices and values related to living in harmony with all living beings. There is enormous scope for including these values in academic circles, in economic systems and in political dialogues with the government. The knowledge developed by the ancestors forms an ancient yet living teaching tradition that is still profoundly relevant today.

Many of these values of humanity are not written in declarations, but are found in the hearts and lives of peoples. Maybe there we can find the secret of our humanity: where it is not written. Maybe there we can find some clarity concerning the spiritual value of our existence. We have to re-discover our values of humanity. These values cannot be found in the agenda of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs are like a reference, a pretext that people from the city, the government and NGOs can accept, and upon which they base their agenda for reducing poverty. We should not forget, however, that the MDGs have been designed and developed from above and not through a bottom-up participatory approach.

In Guatemala, those who are working with the MDGs can derive strength from the peace agreements, and also from elements of our ancestral knowledge and spirituality, so that we can build an agenda with a clear cultural dimension. However, we know that the MDGs alone are

not sufficient to transform poverty into well-being. We have to revitalise the values of humanity and turn to our lands, saying: *"Mother, forgive us for what we have done to you"*.

According to the sacred Mayan calendar, humanity is living at present in a time called 'No Tiempo' or 'No Time'. In 'No Time' there is more negativity and risk against life than in favour of it. We see this culture in all corners of the world: poverty, hunger, cancer, accidents, war, suicides, personal crises, loneliness, no common language among lobbyists to make a strong voice for humanity and solidarity. Amidst this global polycrisis, however, a message of hope emerges around 2012 when, according to the Mayan calendar, humanity will enter a new era with new visions of life: the life of the planet, linked to the cosmos and not only to us humans. An era of humanity and solidarity, an era of love as meant by our ancestors, in harmony with our Mother Earth. This new era will be a Culture of Life.

We have to prepare ourselves for this, as defending this Culture of Life will also require personal changes. But we will not necessarily need to read more books. The real challenge is to implement this Culture of Life in our daily life. My recommendation to Compas, the readers of this book and others who are engaged in endogenous development is this: rather than developing concepts, theories and texts for declarations, it is important to gather new experiences that demonstrate the collective benefits of the endogenous development vision. Live the Culture of Life in your daily life. Do not confuse cosmovision with vision. Cosmovision is much more profound as it includes the energies of the cosmos, the rivers, the trees, the animals, of Mother Earth. Discuss and share the Culture of Life, based on mutual respect for all living beings, so that we can make a strong voice for humanity and solidarity.

Rigoberta Menchú, campaigner for the rights of indigenous peoples in Guatemala and elsewhere, and winner of the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize, speaking at the conference on Endogenous Development and Bio-cultural Diversity, Geneva, Switzerland, 3 October 2006.

Fundación Rigoberta Menchú
www.frmt.org