

PLA Practical Techniques

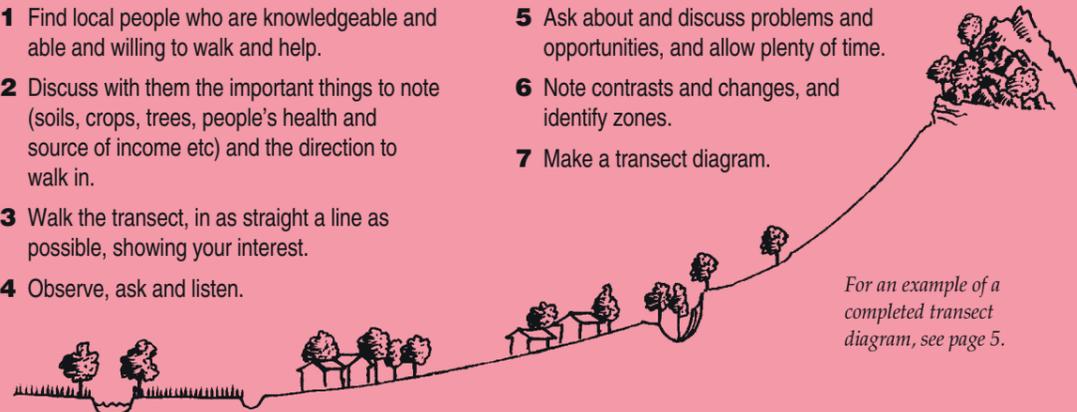
by James Mascarenhas

MYRADA in South India have done much work with rural people on participatory methods and provide training for other organisations in the use of these methods. They have produced a very helpful training video (see p15). Their address is...

MYRADA
2 Service Road
Domlur Layout
Bangalore 560 071
India

How to do a transect

- 1 Find local people who are knowledgeable and able and willing to walk and help.
- 2 Discuss with them the important things to note (soils, crops, trees, people's health and source of income etc) and the direction to walk in.
- 3 Walk the transect, in as straight a line as possible, showing your interest.
- 4 Observe, ask and listen.
- 5 Ask about and discuss problems and opportunities, and allow plenty of time.
- 6 Note contrasts and changes, and identify zones.
- 7 Make a transect diagram.



For an example of a completed transect diagram, see page 5.

How to do ranking ('matrix ranking')

- 1 Decide what should be ranked or scored (trees, fodder trees, fruits, income sources etc).
- 2 Find some key informants who have local knowledge and are willing to discuss things with you.
- 3 With them decide which items to rank or score.
- 4 For each in turn, ask what is good about it. What else? Then find out what is bad. What else?
- 5 List the criteria that have been identified.
- 6 Ask informants to rank or score each item. High scores mean a positive rank or score.
- 7 Ask other questions, such as which of these criteria is the most important. If you could only use one, which would it be?
- 8 Do follow up on points of interest.

	Mending shoes	Making tamarind paste	Making leaf plates	Selling custard apples	Brickmaking	Selling firewood
Time taken	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★	★★
Profits	★	★★	★★★	★	★★	★★★★
Labour needed	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★
Loan needed	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★★
Hard work	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★	★★

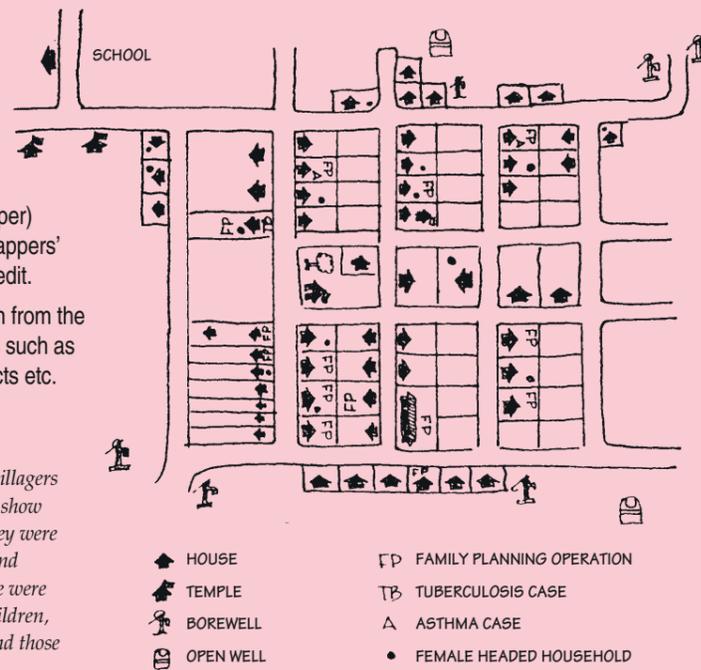
★★★★★ = best
★ = worst

How to do participatory mapping

- 1 Decide what sort of a map is needed...
SOCIAL – of the village houses
NATURAL RESOURCES – of the surrounding land.
- 2 Find local people with a good understanding of the area and who are willing to share their knowledge.
- 3 Choose a suitable place and materials that people will feel at ease with...
THE GROUND – using sticks, stones, leaves etc
THE FLOOR – using chalks, stones etc
PAPER – pens and pencils.
- 4 Help people get started by letting them do it. Be patient and don't interfere. It's their map.
- 5 Sit back and watch.
- 6 Encourage corrections and additions.

- 7 Keep a permanent (paper) record including the mappers' names to give them credit.
- 8 You may like to lead on from the map to other exercises such as wealth ranking, transects etc.

This map was drawn by villagers of Ramenahally village to show homes in their village. They were discussing health issues and showed homes where there were widows, malnourished children, cases of TB and asthma and those using family planning.



How to use seasonal charts

- 1 Decide who you hope will share their knowledge (women, children, men, landless etc) and explain what you would like to do.
- 2 Find a suitable place.
- 3 Ask when their year starts, the names of the months and seasons and choose which to use.
- 4 Mark the units on the ground or on paper.
- 5 Using stones or beans, ask participants to indicate the amount of whatever subject you are looking at (eg: rain, income, debt, food etc) for each month or season.
- 6 Encourage people to discuss and debate until they are in agreement.
- 7 Record their results on paper.
- 8 It may be helpful to use a definite number of stones or beans for each subject discussed. This will make it easier to compare with other groups' comments.

This seasonal chart was done by Bulamagi Women's Association in East Uganda.

The figures represent the number of beans placed for each month (out of a total of 48). For example, income is very low between February and April. In May there are early vegetables and maize to sell. The real income from harvest comes

	Ill-health	Income	Farmwork
Jan	6	5	4
Feb	2	1	6
Mar	3	1	9
Apr	3	1	8
May	7	3	1
Jun	8	4	1
Jul	3	5	3
Aug	2	8	7
Sep	2	3	4
Oct	2	2	3
Nov	3	5	1
Dec	7	9	1

in August. In November and December there is income from coffee and dried beans. After the rains begin in April there is much malaria.