



mother **MANUAL**

REGENERATED FREIREAN LITERACY
THROUGH EMPOWERING COMMUNITY TECHNIQUES

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Preface

This *Reflect* Mother Manual is now 16 years old – which means that the *Reflect* approach is now in the prime of its youth. This feels appropriate in a world where we are witnessing a resurgence of youth activism whether in struggles for democracy or fights against austerity cuts.

Reflect has spread phenomenally since 1996, being used in at least 75 countries by hundreds of different organisations, including NGOs, social movements and governments. Since 2003, five diverse programmes using the *Reflect* approach have won UN International Literacy Prizes.

Whilst many excellent resources have been produced over the years (for example *Communication and Power* in 2003 and *Counting Seeds for Change* in 2009), the most regular request that we receive is for this original *Reflect* Mother Manual. It is tempting to update it in the light of so much innovation in practice over the years – but we have resisted as this represents a core foundation and reference point. We urge you to use it in the way that it is conceived – as a ‘mother manual’ that will help you to produce your own local manuals – which should always be adapted to your own unique context. Inherent in *Reflect* is a compulsion for innovation – the essential need for you to creatively adapt the approach, not to follow it.

You can find many more resources on the reflect-action website – or by linking with other *Reflect* practitioners in your own country – or by connecting internationally through the *Reflect* Basecamp network. We are all in a continual process of learning and I hope that you can both contribute to and draw on the ever-growing pool of innovative resources.

The name *Reflect* has been a strength not least because it roots the approach in the work of the inspirational Brazilian educator Paulo Freire – who was so supportive in the development of *Reflect* from 1993 through to his untimely death in 1997. The name has helped to build bridges between committed practitioners in different institutions and across different countries. However, any name brings problems: there are those who will identify with it and others who feel excluded from it. There is a terrible risk of a proliferation of ‘brands’ – that fragments efforts rather than unites them. We need to be sensitive to this at all times and look to build bridges and work together with others who are committed to transforming power. Indeed, naming a process is often a critically important step – with significant power implications. As much as possible each *Reflect* circle in each community should define its own name – as this is a process that should be fully owned by participants. Over the years, I have come across dozens of names in dozens of languages ... and people only use *Reflect* as a shorthand for exchange, which is as it should be.

Naming is also powerful in other ways. One of the prime motivations of many participants joining early *Reflect* programmes was to learn to write their name. One of my critical reflections on this manual is that it fails to outline one of the best responses where literacy is a prime motivation for participants – which is for the facilitator to show each participant how to write their own name in the first week of the process – and ask them to practise it.

People will be motivated to practise copying their own name – which helps them to develop the manual skills – and people rapidly become familiar with the shapes in their own name. Within a week you then have the capacity for any group of 20 or 30 people to read collectively almost any text ... albeit very slowly at first (as 20 or more names usually cover almost every letter in the alphabet). This collective power builds confidence and can itself be transformative.

Since the early days, *Reflect* practice has evolved widely and some programmes now have no explicit focus on teaching literacy. Indeed participants may already be literate or have varying degrees of literacy. The process is thus more concerned with conscientisation, mobilisation and the transformation of power. However, in any empowerment or transformation process, strengthening people’s capacity to communicate is an important element. It may not be about teaching literacy (or language or communication skills) – but strengthening how people use these skills more effectively to raise their voice is often an integral part of the transformation process and warrants our reflection. Literacy is a continuum and there is a continuum to all communication skills – and the *Reflect* process will always contribute to advancing these in one way or another.

I hope that you find this sixteen-year-old activist youth a useful companion and inspiration to help you advance whatever process of change you are engaged in.

Take care

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Further Information

For more information on *Reflect* visit the website:
www.reflect-action.org

You can also find us on Facebook:
www.facebook.org/ReflectAction

Or join the *Reflect* Basecamp practitioner networking and files sharing site (invitation only, follow the link at www.reflect-action.org/basecamp)

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Acknowledgements

The authors of this manual would like to thank:

- All three sections of the ODA that helped to fund this work (the Education Advisers, the Aid Management Office in Bangladesh and ESCOR).
- The staff of ActionAid Uganda, including the Country Director, Anthony Wasswa, James Kanyesigye, Judith Bakirya and the Bundibugyo team; also LBE and participants in the international workshop of July/August 1995 in Kampala and Jinja.
- The staff of ActionAid Bangladesh, particularly the Country Director, Ton Van Zutphen, the previous Director, Bob Reitemeier, Mukul Rahman and the Bhola team; also Ratindranath Pal, Habibur Rahman of CAMPE, Nilufer Rahman of INFEP; and participants in the international workshop held in Dacca in November 1994.
- The staff of AYUDA EN ACCION El Salvador, particularly the Country Director, Carlos Hernandez, the previous Country Director Eduardo Moser; the staff of CIAZO, the staff of COMUS and Sandrine Tiller of WUS.
- Past and present staff of ActionAid UK, particularly Nigel Twose, Robert Dodd, Candice Macqueen, Maxine Riddick, Katlin Brasic, Antonella Mancini,
- Sandra Clarke for her design and layout.
- Alice Welbourn for valuable advice and editing.
- The *Reflect* facilitators and participants in the three pilot programmes who gave their time freely to the evaluation teams.

A note on methodology

Language must always be handled carefully and in the process of preparing various drafts of this manual we have become aware of the sensitivity of certain language. Words such as ‘teacher’, ‘learner’ and ‘class’ are the easiest to use (and even easiest to understand) but bring with them a range of images, memories or associations which we wish to avoid. We have therefore replaced these (respectively) with ‘facilitator’, ‘participant’ and ‘circle’, each of which carry more positive associations. In the context of *Reflect* we are confident that this is more than just a change of jargon.

However, doubtlessly we have used some jargon in this manual. We have tried to pick out as much as possible, but it may be useful for you to have the following list of words and acronyms, in alphabetical order, to refer to:

Circle	a literacy class or group
Facilitator	the literacy teacher/instructor
Facilitator's manual	the teaching guide for the facilitator; a manual may include details of about twenty or thirty Units
Freirean	following Paulo Freire, the renowned Brazilian educator
Graphic	map, calendar, matrix or other diagram
Matrix	a type of chart in which items are compared or contrasted with one another
Module	a series of <i>Reflect</i> Units on a particular theme (e.g. five Units on health issues)
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
Participant	learner in a <i>Reflect</i> circle
Participant-Generated Materials	materials produced by the learners in a <i>Reflect</i> circle (in other contexts called Learner-Generated Materials)
PRA –	Participatory Rural Appraisal – a philosophy and set of practical methods for consulting with non-literate communities about local development
Primer	basic textbook used in traditional literacy programmes (see Section 2.2 for details)
Reflect	Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
TOT	Training of Trainers
Unit	a section of the facilitators’ manual (which may have 20 or 30 Units); each Unit in a <i>Reflect</i> programme involves the participants constructing a graphic, discussing issues arising from the graphic and using the graphic for literacy and numeracy work. To complete one Unit may take several meetings of a <i>Reflect</i> circle over several days

Section 1

Introduction – how to use this manual

1.1 What is *Reflect*?

Reflect is a new approach to adult literacy which fuses the theory of Paulo Freire and the practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal.

In a *Reflect* programme there is no textbook – no literacy ‘primer’ – no pre-printed materials except a manual for the literacy facilitators. Each literacy circle develops its own learning materials through the construction of maps, matrices, calendars and diagrams that represent local reality, systematise the existing knowledge of participants and promote the detailed analysis of local issues.

These ‘graphics’ can include maps of households, land use, or land tenancy; calendars of gender workloads, illnesses or income; matrices to analyse local crops, credit sources/uses or participation in local organisations. A graphic is initially constructed on the ground (using whatever materials are locally available) promoting everyone’s active participation. It is then transferred to a large sheet of paper/card using simple pictures. Words are then introduced on the graphics, initially as labels, later as commentaries. The graphics are used to stimulate discussion, participant-generated writing, related numeracy work and action to address local problems.

A range of other participatory approaches can also be interwoven with the strong participatory structure of *Reflect*, including the use of role play, drama, songs, dance, story-telling, visualisation, radio, ‘real materials’, games or proverbs.

By the end of the *Reflect* process, each circle will have produced between 20 and 30 maps, matrices, calendars or diagrams representing a detailed analysis of their community. They have a permanent record of this analysis which can be used for planning their own local development initiatives. Each participant has a copy of each graphic, together with their own phrases and sentences, amounting to a real document – a small book which they themselves have produced. Meanwhile, the organisation which has promoted the literacy programme can (by asking facilitators to copy each graphic) also end up with a detailed survey of the conditions, needs and attitudes of people in every community (which might take years to produce using other methods).

The fact that participants construct their own materials in

Reflect circles leads to a strong ownership of the issues that come up – which it would be impossible to achieve through introducing issues in a primer. This has led to local action and a strong link between the literacy programme and other development activities. *Reflect* circles can be catalysts for wider processes of change.

1.2 What are the origins of *Reflect*?

Reflect started in October 1993 when ActionAid began a two year action research project to explore the possible uses of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques within adult literacy programmes. This led to the development of the *Reflect* approach (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques).

The *Reflect* approach was first piloted in three projects in Uganda, El Salvador and Bangladesh. In Bundibugyo, Uganda the pilot was in a multi-lingual area where neither of the two main local languages was previously written. In Bangladesh the pilot was with women’s savings and credit groups in a conservative Islamic area and in El Salvador the pilot was with a grassroots NGO, ‘*Comunidades Unidas de Usulután*’ (supported by the national NGO, CIAZO) which is led by ex-guerrillas converting to peaceful methods after 10 years in arms.

The three pilot programmes were evaluated (compared to other literacy programmes using traditional methods in each country) in the first six months of 1995, with significant results. *Reflect* proved to be both more effective at teaching people to read and write and much more effective at linking literacy to wider development (see ODA Paper 1996).

Reflect has now been taken up in more than twenty countries around the world, and by many different organisations. The demand for training is considerable. This first edition of the *Mother Manual* aims to be a user-friendly training document for *Reflect*. Training courses will also be run through Regional Training Centres presently being established (e.g. in Bangladesh and Uganda).

The *Reflect* approach is still evolving, with innovations and adaptations constantly being made. The results look

very promising so far, but as organisations apply the approach in different contexts and in different ways there is much more that will be learnt. The International *Reflect* Network (see Appendix 2 for address) will support a continual process of mutual learning between *Reflect* practitioners so that the approach is constantly being strengthened and renewed.

1.3 Who are you?

This Mother Manual aims to enable you to adapt the *Reflect* method to your own situation. You may be the coordinator or education adviser of a grassroots organisation, a Non Governmental Organisation or a national, regional or local Government department which is planning a literacy programme.

You may be planning a very small scale literacy programme in 10 or 20 communities, or a larger programme for a hundred, a thousand or even 10 thousand communities. This manual aims to be relevant to all of you!

Some of you may have experience of other literacy programmes, using traditional methods. Others may have no previous experience of adult literacy. This should not be a problem. Indeed, the greater difficulty may lie with those familiar with a primer-based approach to adult literacy who may need to un-learn some past practices.

Ideally you will have heard of ‘*Participatory Rural Appraisal*’ and may have some experience of using PRA techniques. If not you will find that this Mother Manual provides a good introduction to PRA though you may wish to find out more (Appendix 3 gives details of training courses and publications on PRA).

1.4 What is the aim of the Mother Manual?

The purpose of this Mother Manual is to help you produce a Facilitator’s Manual adapted to the social, economic, political and cultural conditions in which you work.

The Facilitators’ Manual is the core material for a *Reflect* programme. It has a sequence of ‘Units’ (perhaps 20 or 30). Each Unit in the facilitators’ manual outlines how the participants in a literacy circle can collectively construct a graphic (e.g. a map or matrix) which they can then ‘reflect’ upon, discuss and analyse. The facilitators’ manual gives

clear guidelines on how to coordinate this process and how the facilitator can use the product of each Unit (e.g.a household map or crop matrix) for doing basic work on reading, writing and numeracy.

In the three pilot programmes, the facilitators’ manuals were each prepared in rural areas on a portable computer by a small core group (of between four and eight people) working over three to four weeks. Most had not been seriously involved in literacy work before.

The product in each case was very different. The facilitators’ manual for Usulután in El Salvador for example, included land tenancy maps, displacement maps and matrices on human rights; in Uganda the manual included gender workload calendars, crop matrices and resource maps; and in contrast in Bangladesh the manual had a focus on numeracy, with income and expenditure calendars, projections of loan use and household decision-making matrices.

The facilitators’ manual will be different for every different country, region or major cultural group. A manual for an urban area will be different from a manual for a rural area. Fishing communities will want to address different themes to pastoralists. Young people have different interests to older members of the community.

1.5 What are the contents of this Mother Manual?

The core of this Mother Manual is a set of sample *Reflect* Units (some developed in detail, some only outlined) from which you can select, adapt and sequence Units to make your own local manual. These appear in Section 5.

None of the Units outlined here are intended to be directly reproduced. Rather, you will need to adapt them to your own needs.

This Mother Manual starts with an introduction to the theory and philosophy of *Reflect* (Section 2). This is probably the most difficult section to read as it involves some complex theoretical language, particularly regarding the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. It is not necessary to understand every word of this and, if you have difficulty you may wish to leave out reading this section until a later point. It is not essential to understand all the theory.

Section 3 provides a detailed introduction to the *Reflect* method. This looks at the various stages in the functioning of a *Reflect* circle:

- constructing a graphic on the ground;
- copying the graphic to paper using visual cards;

- using the graphic to introduce reading and writing;
- developing numeracy work arising from the graphic;
- how discussion and local action emerge from the process.

Section 4 explains in detail how to implement the *Reflect* approach.

- 4.1 Some basic steps (such as developing a local strategy, budgeting etc) and answers to some basic questions;
- 4.2 How to do local research on socio-economic conditions, language, literacy use and numeracy – so that you are ready to adapt the approach to the local area;
- 4.3 How to develop a local facilitators’ manual drawing on and adapting the sample units in Section 5;
- 4.4 How to produce visual cards;
- 4.5 Training *Reflect* trainers;
- 4.6 Selecting and training facilitators;
- 4.7 Monitoring and evaluation;
- 4.8 Using participant-generated materials for planning;
- 4.9 How to strengthen the literate environment.

The sample units in Section 5 are the most extensive part of this Manual, giving practical examples of how to use the *Reflect* approach. This starts with a sample set of 10 basic units (5.2) laid out as they might be in a facilitators’ manual. This will give you a sense of how to sequence your own manual. In Section 5.3 there are then many other sample units organised by theme (economic issues/health/socio-political issues).

This is followed in Section 6 by ideas for adapting the *Reflect* approach to different communities, giving suggestions of Units for urban areas, fishing communities, pastoralists and refugees. Section 6.2 outlines how the approach can be adapted to work with children. Finally Section 6.3 explores ways of integrating other participatory approaches (role play, dances, song etc).

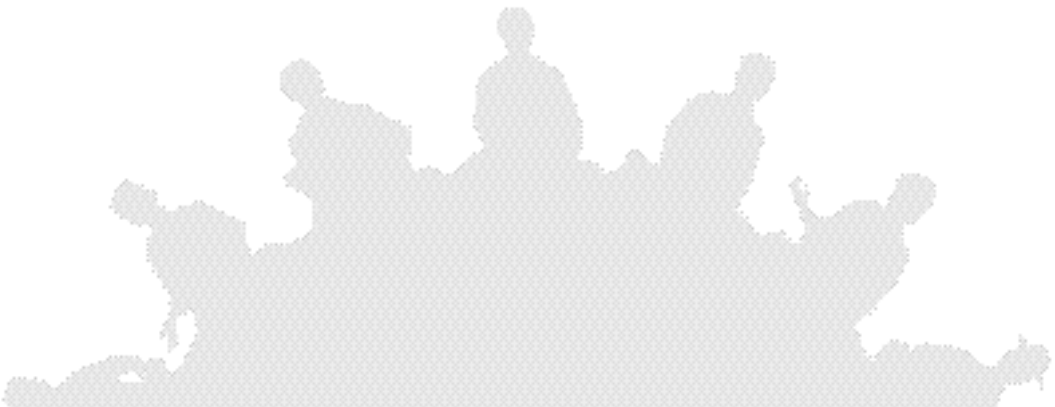
1.6 End-note

The strategies outlined in this *Reflect* Mother Manual represent the accumulated learning from *Reflect* field programmes to date.

However, *Reflect* is not a pre-packaged approach, it is not something that you can simply pick up off the shelf and adopt. Rather you need to invest some time in adapting the approach to your own environment and needs. Although there are certain core principles in the *Reflect* approach there is always the opportunity for creative input and innovation which will strengthen the methodology and inform future editions of this (and other) manuals. To date, for example, *Reflect* has been applied mostly in rural areas. As urban programmes are started up they will advance the *Reflect* methodology and bring in new ideas.

However, whilst *Reflect* should be flexibly interpreted it can also be distorted. Taking on *Reflect* needs commitment to handing over the control of development to local people themselves. The starting point needs to be respect for the existing knowledge and skills of adults. The *Reflect* process focuses on promoting the exchange of experience and the collective construction of new knowledge. Traditional ‘primers’ are rejected because they prevent this process, providing learners with a pre-packaged product. The facilitators’ manual, whilst being highly structured, aims to promote a participatory process through which people can develop their own learning materials. Reading, writing and numeracy work flows from these materials, rather than being regarded as something separate. Integration is the essence of the approach.

We hope that you enjoy this manual and can find creative and effective uses for it. Good luck!



Section 2

Background theory/philosophy

2.1 Why literacy?

We cannot start a literacy programme without being clear about the key question: What is the purpose of literacy?

Literacy is a way of:

- remembering;
- recording;
- representing reality;
- communicating across space and time.

People whom we conventionally regard as ‘illiterate’ have many means for doing these things already, whether through music, drama, songs, drums, cloth patterns, oral histories etc. All of these are based on structured patterns that help people to remember and/or communicate. Non-literate people are not ignorant. They have innumerable skills and extensive knowledge: for example in rural areas they have complex knowledge about how to plant, care for and harvest a wide range of crops, how to tend different animals, build houses and make various crafts. They have the knowledge necessary to survive in what are often very harsh conditions. In many respects it is sometimes literate people who are ignorant (even ‘illiterate’ in a broader sense of the word) – particularly about rural life.

Knowledge of formal ‘literacy’ is not necessarily a good or a practical thing for people living in rural communities. Many people have survived quite comfortably without literacy and have evolved effective strategies for dealing with reading or writing (‘literacy events’) when they have to (e.g. by taking letters to literate friends or relatives, or using a scribe). In such a context is it worth teaching literacy?

If life remained unchanged and there was no prospect of change then there might indeed be little use in teaching literacy. But most communities have changed and are changing and there are few places in the world where literacy has not ‘intruded’ as part of this process of change. The need to read and write is becoming more important all the time and it is therefore increasingly a felt need by those who are non-literate. Where there is no demand for literacy it would be wrong

to force literacy on people. It is not for us to judge that it might be ‘good’ for others – and indeed if people are not interested it will almost certainly not be good for them! However, more and more often there is a demand. Some of the reasons why adults might want to learn include:

- To acquire status/be respected by other people.
- To learn new skills.
- To take positions of responsibility in organisations.
- To keep basic accounts.
- To start up a small business.
- To read and write personal or official letters.
- To help children with their homework.
- To have access to information e.g. about agriculture or health.
- To read instructions of medicines/prescriptions.
- To read directions, signposts and posters.
- To understand labels on fertilisers/pesticides.
- To keep records e.g. of children’s vaccinations.
- To avoid being cheated.
- To read newspapers.
- To get a new job.
- To read religious texts.
- To read for diversion/entertainment.

It is clearly not possible to list the full range of reasons that might motivate adults to learn basic literacy. In fact the most important motivating factors may remain hidden from planners of literacy programmes. Each cultural group or community will find its own uses for literacy (over and above certain obvious uses) and we cannot (and should not try to) anticipate fully or control these uses.

The moment of deciding to join a literacy class is an important one for an adult. It represents a decision to invest time and energy in trying to change something in their lives. In many cases it represents a strategic decision to try to change their position, their status or their ability to cope with a changing environment. Time is scarce for most people in such a situation, so dedicating any time represents a serious commitment. Some of course may be drawn in by false promises or expectations (for instance that they will learn in a matter of days) and their motivation can thus fall rapidly. Indeed, in most cases the process of learning is harder than people would expect, so sustaining motivation must become a central concern.

It does not help the motivation of adult participants if the

literacy teacher looks down on them. In a surprisingly large number of programmes literacy teachers are very arrogant and see literacy as the solution to everything, considering people who are not literate as ‘stupid’ or backward. The primer-based teaching approach often reinforces this. Such an approach to literacy can do more harm than good – it can undermine people’s existing skills and knowledge – and by doing so can undermine any development process. We must respect people who are not literate as knowledgeable and capable so that the literacy programme builds on their existing knowledge rather than seeking to replace it.

Literacy is simply another skill – another type of ‘pattern’ to help people remember, record and communicate. It is not the only way, nor always the best way, but in the changing world it is becoming more and more of a necessary way.

2.2 Past failures

In recent years there has been a growing disillusion with adult literacy work. The United Nations ‘*Education for All*’ conference in 1990 aimed to raise the profile of education as an international issue – but since then, worldwide, the emphasis has been on improving primary education for children.

There has been very little investment in adult literacy (with some notable exceptions such as Ghana and India). In many cases governments and international agencies are forgetting a whole generation and aiming to reduce illiteracy by focusing on children. The tragedy is that without parallel investment in adults, the prospects of increasing school enrolment (and quality) are slim! It is parents who decide whether to send children to school and it is parents who increasingly have to pay for that education. A literate home environment can be fundamental to consolidating a child’s learning and the organisation of parents into PTA’s can be one of the best means to improve the quality in primary schools. An ‘inter-generational’ approach to education is vital.

So why is there so little investment in adult literacy? A recent World Bank Discussion Paper provides a clear reason. Helen Abadzi, on reviewing literacy programmes worldwide over the past 30 years estimates an average effectiveness rate of less than 12.5%. This figure is arrived at as follows:

- on average 50% of those who enrol in adult literacy drop out within a few weeks;
- of those who remain, on average 50% fail to complete the literacy programme successfully;
- of those who do complete, about 50% lose their skills within a year for lack of follow-up.

Why do literacy programmes fail? Surely this must be a serious failing of literacy methods used world-wide? Although some level of drop-out at the start of a literacy programme may be understandable (it is after all hard to learn something so new, and besides, some people will enrol on anything without much commitment), beyond that point the failure can only really be blamed on the literacy programmes.

The one almost universal feature of adult literacy programmes world-wide is a ‘primer’ in one shape or another (and most primers have very similar shapes and forms). Even radical literacy programmes often depend on a primer. If most literacy programmes have failed then perhaps abolishing the primer may be one of the keys to success.

Adult literacy primers are like basic textbooks. Most of them have 20 or 30 lessons and each lesson starts with a picture which is supposedly based on the local reality of the learners – addressing social and economic issues. The learners are supposed to discuss these pictures and then a key word (or phrase) is given to them that relates to the picture. That word is then often broken down into syllables and the learners practise writing them and make new words. There are some variations but this is the standard model.

Most people who design these primers claim they are using (at least in part) the so called ‘psycho-social’ method of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. They call their pictures ‘codifications’ and the key words ‘generative words’. They claim that there is discussion or dialogue in their literacy classes based on these pictures and that the learners go through a process of ‘conscientization’ or awareness raising.

2.3 Introduction to Freire

The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire radicalised a whole generation of literacy workers in the 1960s and 1970s, linking literacy to social change.

Freire’s work has a reputation for being almost impossible to read or understand! We have tried to present some of his basic ideas here as simply as possible but inevitably this involves a lot of complex concepts and difficult language. Do not worry if you cannot understand all of this as it is only provided as background. It is not essential for using the *Reflect* approach!

Freire criticised existing literacy teaching which was based on primers: “*There is an implicit concept of man in the primer’s method and content, whether it is recognised by the authors or not ... It is the teacher who chooses the words and proposes them to the learners ... the students are to be ‘filled’ with the words the teachers have chosen. It is the profile of a man whose consciousness ... must be*

filled or fed in order to know”. (Freire 1985)

Freire condemned this ‘banking’ concept of education: “As understood in this concept, man is a passive being, the object of the process of learning to read and write, and not its subject”. (Freire 1972)

Freire recognised that the people who were normally the passive objects of literacy classes should be seen differently: “Agronomists, agriculturalists, public health officials, cooperative administrators, literacy educators – we all have a lot to learn from peasants, and if we refuse to do so, we can’t teach them anything.” (Freire 1985)

However, for Freire most non-literate people were unable to assert themselves. As a result of oppression they were immersed in a ‘culture of silence’: “In the culture of silence, to exist is only to live. The body carries out orders from above. Thinking is difficult. Speaking is forbidden.” (Freire 1972)

In this context there could be no such thing as neutral education: “Illiteracy is one of the concrete expressions of an unjust social reality. It is political ... it is a process of search and creation ... [which must] develop students consciousness of their rights”. (Freire 1985)

Through what Freire called “the pedagogy of the oppressed” the students would “perceive the reality of oppression, not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform”. (Freire 1972)

Freire called this ‘conscientization’: the process of learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and of taking action against the oppressive elements of reality.

But how could adult literacy work be linked to conscientization? Freire recognised that learners needed to “gain a distance from” their everyday lives so that they could see their situation in a new way. The means for doing this was called a ‘codification’.

‘Codifications’ are pictures or photographs produced after extensive research in a local area which, in their images, capture essential problems or contradictions in the lives of the learners. The learners reflect upon these images, first of all describing them and then through ‘problematising’, analyse their deep structure, until they come face to face with their own lives. The codification is thus an “instrument for this abstraction” – being able to see reality clearer by taking one step away from it. The process of analysing a codification is called ‘decodification’ and involves ‘dialogue’.

Freire saw dialogue as fundamental. He construed this as a coming together of the teacher and learners/students: “We are advocating a synthesis between the educator’s maximally systematised knowing and the learner’s minimally

systematised knowing – a synthesis achieved in dialogue”. (Freire 1985)

‘Dialogue’ is sometimes mystified by Freire. Effectively it is a discussion, but not just any discussion: rather it is a discussion where people, in a trusting environment, reach beyond everyday life, open up, and come face to face with new understanding and awareness.

But why link literacy to all of this? Freire was adamant about the need to learn to read and write the world at the same time as learning to read and write the word: “Learners must see the need for writing one’s life and reading one’s reality.” (Freire 1985)

Freire believed that literacy alone is of no use if there is no other process of change which can help to lift the culture of silence.

Having engaged in dialogue over a codification, the next step for the literacy class is the introduction of the word. Not just any word is chosen, but a carefully selected ‘generative word’ which is arrived at after ‘investigating the vocabulary universe’ (or ‘minimal linguistic universe’) of the learners. The word itself is the focus of further dialogue.

Once a generative word has been introduced, Freire advocated breaking the generative word into component syllables and syllabic families – but always asking questions of the learners, not doing it for them (only “having prepared the learners critically for the information” so it “is not a mere gift”). Having done this the educator should ask the learners something like: “do you think we can create something with these pieces?” For Freire (1985), “this is the decisive moment for learning” as the learners “discover the words of their language by putting them together in a variety of combinations”. This ends the mystique of written language.

For Freire, the process outlined above would lead to conscientization, giving students a sense of purpose so that they would really be able to ‘know’ the world: “The act of knowing involves a dialectical movement that goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action”. (Freire 1972)

This was the struggle which could result in political change. The process is called ‘praxis’ and Freire stressed that: “Action of men without objectives is not praxis – it is action ignorant of its own process and of its aim”. (Freire 1972)

In summary for Freire: “If learning to read and write is to constitute an act of knowing the learners must assume from the beginning the role of creative subjects. It is not a matter of memorising and repeating given syllables, words and phrases but rather, reflecting critically on the process of reading and writing itself and on the profound significance of language”. (Freire 1985)

2.4 Limitations and distortions of Freire

Elements of Freirean thinking are now everywhere – even in literacy programmes which have no commitment to promoting social change. In many respects Freire has ironically become the traditional approach. Although there have been many new ideas and methodologies developed since Freire, it is Freire who is still most widely quoted and referred to. But in most cases this can best be described as ‘pseudo Freireanism’, stripped of its radical potential. Why?

Although Freire criticised primers, in fact most people who say they use his methods use primers. To a certain extent this was his own fault. Not only was his writing so difficult as to terrify most readers (so few practitioners have directly read his work) but also, having criticised past primers he ended up re-inventing them. The new primers replaced bland phrases such as “Mary likes animals” with “Juma is oppressed by the land-owner” but they were still primers. They were no longer developed by authors in isolation, but instead were produced following local socio-economic and linguistic research. Nevertheless the re-invented primers were still very prescriptive: “The first generative word should be trisyllabic ... Having chosen seventeen generative words the next step is to codify seventeen existential situations”. (Freire 1985)

Those who now claim to use Freirean methods have simply replaced meaningless or empty words with more socially-based words, phrases and pictures – whilst retaining the same essential structure and vehicle – the primer. Although supposedly based on local research, increasingly literacy planners have argued that a detailed survey in one rural community reveals a reality typical of the region or even country – so large-scale, centrally printed primers are said to be justified. This ignores the fact that, as Freire himself observed about generative words, “variation in meaning can occur even within the same city”.

The product is the same “mechanical practice of literacy” which Freire himself condemned – but this time done in his name. In practice, despite the declarations and rhetoric of literacy planners, in 95% of cases there is no dialogue in literacy classes. Time and time again, when it comes to the classroom situation, literacy teachers sidestep dialogue (or any effective discussion) and fall back on what they see as the ‘meat’ of teaching literacy – simple exercises of rote reading, writing and mathematics. The cases where this is not true tend to be highly politicised literacy programmes, which have a tendency to impose a new

consciousness on learners rather than generating a truly critical consciousness. There are two main reasons for this:

- In the (new) primers the ‘codification’ is usually just a picture and the ‘generative word’ is just a word. Sometimes almost magical powers are attributed to them but the magic rarely works.
- The literacy teachers using primers around the world are not the highly trained ‘educators’ (or members of the enlightened intelligentsia), implied by Freire, but are local people who have often only completed primary (sometimes lower secondary) education themselves, working as volunteers (or with low pay) and receiving very little training or other support.

It is difficult to develop a dialogue. To expect largely untrained teachers to do so with just a picture and a word to structure the process is unrealistic. Teachers might have a list of questions in a guidebook (e.g. What do you see in the picture? What does it mean?) but the learners normally shift around awkwardly, look embarrassed, remain silent or give simple responses to the questions (trying to keep the teacher happy or give the ‘right’ answer). Even if the codifications have been skillfully developed locally and the questions are very relevant to learners’ lives, developing a dialogue is still not easy. The primer appears in the class from ‘outside’ and feels ‘external’ to the lives of the learners.

The result of this lack of dialogue is that literacy becomes a technical process of teaching syllables and the mechanics of reading and writing (often with rote methods, chanting from memory and repetitive copying). Lacking a reasonable alternative, teachers re-enact their own experiences of education in primary school and treat the adult learners like children. There is no link to local issues, local development or social change. Learners feel ashamed, annoyed or simply bored. Many drop out and others struggle on but fail to learn because reading and writing is not meaningfully related to their lives.

There are exceptions to this bleak scenario: occasions when a literacy programme appears in the right time at the right place with the right people. But even here there can be problems. In some places literacy programmes have raised considerable awareness of injustice and oppression but have failed to channel that awareness into effective change. Learners have ended up either disillusioned (when the government and the international capitalist system fail to collapse) or repressed (as they mobilise without a sufficient focus on achievable change built from below).

Many people have criticised Freire. For example, Brian Street questions how well the Freirean approach “really takes account of local meanings and of cultural and ethnic variations within a nation state and how far teachers can

and do give up their position and adopt an equal facilitating role with students". Reading Freire we may sometimes feel that non-literate people are being respected and regarded as knowledgeable, and at other times feel that they are being portrayed as powerless and ignorant, submerged in a "culture of silence" and suffering from a "fatalistic consciousness". Feminists have also condemned Freire for his persistent references to 'man' when he is referring to 'people' or 'humanity' (and although this is more a matter of linguistic convention than sexism, Freire certainly fails to address gender issues in his earlier work).

Despite these shortcomings the philosophy of Freire has a lot to offer. The most serious problems i.e. with Freire's failure to present an effective literacy methodology.

2.5 Introduction to Participatory Rural Appraisal

Participatory Rural Appraisal has roots in a reaction to the Western model or the 'modernisation' approach to development. It is an approach to use against those who believe that there are simple or pre-packaged technological solutions to development which can be imposed by external professionals.

PRA practitioners have a desire to start from the lives of communities themselves. But what tools are there to find out about the priorities of the poor themselves? Questionnaires are clumsy, structured from outside, take up a lot of people's time for little or no obvious result and often collect a lot of irrelevant information. Participant observation from the school of anthropology is often too long and drawn out – and is still 'extractive' – often being used for academic papers rather than feeding into local knowledge and action.

PRA practitioners start from the recognition that poor communities have a wealth of local technical and social knowledge. They have survived often through centuries in difficult environments with limited resources. What is needed are techniques to enable non-literate people to articulate their knowledge – as building on this knowledge and the reality of the poor must be the starting point of any effective development programme.

PRA practitioners have developed a wide range of techniques based on the idea that visualisation can help participation. The starting point is thus the collective construction of maps, matrices, calendars and diagrams on the ground using whatever materials are locally available.

However, PRA is not just a set of techniques, it is an approach. If those who practice the techniques do not have

a real respect for, and a real commitment to, the priorities of the poor then it is often still 'extractive'. Some PRA facilitators make copies of the maps constructed by the community and simply take them away for their own planning purposes. In such circumstances there is often a big gulf between what the community articulates and what the external agency then designs. Some agencies nominally use these methods to say they have consulted with communities (in order to impress donors) – but then proceed with their own priorities. Moreover, PRA is often, or even usually, done only on a short-term basis, for example over just two or three weeks – and is usually done only in selected communities.

The techniques and approach of PRA have been applied to broad appraisals, to detailed diagnoses of health needs or local agriculture but they have not been applied in the past in literacy programmes. The three pilot projects outlined in this report are the first attempts to use PRA systematically for adult literacy.

This may seem surprising because the link between PRA and education would appear to be strong. As David Barton (1994) says, "*Learning is the active construction of knowledge*". PRA has developed a range of techniques which facilitate this construction. Why not use these techniques in an extended learning process? Perhaps the links have not been made because we have come to see education as something different. Barton (1994) points out that with the coming of the printing press: "*The pursuit of truth ... became the discovery of new knowledge rather than the constant effort to recover and preserve traditional knowledge*".

If education includes both new and old knowledge, then PRA can play a useful role. Andreas Fuglesang (1982) is helpful on this point: "*Western educationalists have been blind to the oldest and truest pedagogical rule: start with what the students know, not with what you know*".

2.6 Tensions between Freire and Chambers

Robert Chambers (1983, 1993) is the key figure behind PRA, having written and trained a lot in its philosophy and methods. He has often spoken of the origins of PRA and refers to Paulo Freire's work on dialogue and conscientization as one of the central influences:

"Participatory Rural Appraisal belongs to, draws on, and overlaps with other members of a family of approaches that have been or are

participatory in various ways. These include the community development of the 1950s and 1960s, the dialogics and conscientization of Paulo Freire, participatory action research, and the work of activist NGOs." (Chambers 1991)

David Brown (1994) however, argues that there are some serious contradictions between the work of Chambers and Freire.

For Chambers 'culture' is "*a positive social force exemplifying valid beliefs and attitudes already possessed by the peasantry, though blocked by external political controls*". Chambers believes in "*the capacity of the underclasses to initiate valid social actions on the basis of their existing knowledge and beliefs*".

To Freire, in contrast, 'culture' is "*fundamentally problematic*". Underlying Freire's writing are many references to cognitive barriers (in his descriptions of naive/magical consciousness). Although he blames these on external forces of oppression (rather than blaming people themselves) and regularly refers to the importance of 'love' for the people, Freire appears not to trust their existing knowledge and beliefs – seeing them as needing to be 'transcended'. Freire implicitly praises 'rational knowledge' and considers local knowledge systems as less valuable. This (according to Brown 1994) can "*only reinforce whatever ideological biases exist within both the extension agency and the wider society, cutting the intervention off from any capacity to draw upon the positive elements in the claimed dual consciousness of the oppressed*".

In a later paper Brown (1995) concludes that "*In Chambers' writings, the balance of the evidence is largely in favour of populism [faith in the common man] with occasional centrist leanings [the denial of faith]; in the case of Freire, it is arguable that the balance is reversed*".

The *Reflect* approach is rooted in a faith in people's existing knowledge and beliefs as a starting point. This comes as much from Chambers as from Freire. However, for Freire 'consciousness' concerns much more than people's knowledge (which Brown fails to acknowledge sufficiently). Freire provides a social, political and economic analysis of the processes which affect people's knowledge and beliefs (forming their 'consciousness' of their situation). For Freire no educational or developmental process can be neutral. This goes beyond Chambers who sometimes has a rather rosy, a-political view of culture and development.

There are then, tensions between Chambers and Freire. *Reflect* draws on aspects of each.

2.7 New concepts of literacy: the ideological approach

In the introduction we have referred to some of the present debates about literacy. Literacy is no longer seen as a simple skill or competency but as a process. It is more than just the technology by which we presently know it (whether pen, paper, computer etc).

Brian Street argues that it is a social process in which particular socially constructed technologies are used within particular institutional frameworks for specific social purposes. This is the "*ideological view*" of literacy. Literacy cannot be so clearly seen as "*an externally introduced force for change*". Instead the individual must be "*an active actor in literacy learning – not just a passive recipient of an externally defined and introduced technique*". (Caxton Report 1994).

This ideological approach has certain implications for literacy methodologies. The primer as a pre-fixed 'external' text would appear to limit literacy practices and be consistent with the traditional or autonomous approach, seeing the need for a fixed body of knowledge to be transferred. To be consistent with the ideological approach a methodology would have to, for example:

- emphasise writing rather than passive reading of fixed texts;
- emphasise creative and active involvement of participants;
- build on existing knowledge of participants, respecting oral traditions and other 'literacies';
- focus on learner generated materials (not pre-packaged texts)
- ensure that the process is responsive and relevant to the local context.
- address the 'literacy events' in the wider environment rather than regard literacy as just a classroom activity.

Reflect has attempted to build on these elements in order to develop a methodology which is consistent with the ideological approach.

2.8 Visual literacy

Much work has been done by Andreas Fuglesang (1982), UNICEF Nepal and others (see Murray Bradley 1994) – exploring people's abilities to read and interpret pictures.

In development work we take a lot for granted. We assume that people can understand the posters and leaflets we

produce if we use lots of pictures instead of words. The images we use seem obvious to us. However they are often not clear to people with little exposure to seeing two dimensional visual images and who are unfamiliar with their conventions. Photos are often too cluttered. Line drawings and cartoons are full of conventions whether speech bubbles, arrows or other symbols.

As a result of these analyses some work has been done on how to deliver development communications most effectively – how to make pictures easily recognisable or ‘readable’ to people with little exposure to two-dimensional visual images. However, no concerted attempt has been made to develop a programme which will in the process help to make people visually literate.

The link between visual and alphabetic literacy is much more clearly argued by Fuglesang (1982) in the following quotes:

“At the basis of all writing stands the picture.”
“What medium may enable the community to evaluate its own reality in a way that will precipitate new judgments or formulations about it? What medium will trigger in the community a dialogue about its reality that will possibly lead to decisions and actions to alter that reality? In my experience the issue of literacy and social transformation must start with the picture – the imitative reproduction of reality.”
“[The picture] is the link between the oral and the written lifestyle and the first step on the way to written abstraction. The picture is the bridge from a basically imitative to a digital mode of communication” ... “When you live in reality sometimes you are not able to see it. The picture lifts the mind out of reality. The picture makes the event into an object. The next step is to link the first written concept, the word, to the picture. The picture is the visual environment of the word.”

“People learn to read pictures just as they learn to read the pages in a book. This is not recognised because education in reading pictures is an informal process. It goes on automatically in societies where a variety of pictures are presented daily through a variety of media. In social environments with no pictorial tradition or very few pictorial representations – the situation in remote African villages – the informal process of learning to read pictures simply does not occur. It is important to understand that perspective is nothing more than a pictorial or artistic convention which appeared in European painting as late as the Renaissance.”

With the *Reflect* pilots we have aimed to develop a method which builds on these ideas in a practical way, bridging the gulf that has developed between visual and alphabetic literacy.

2.9 Numeracy

Most literacy programmes either overlook numeracy or treat it as being of secondary importance to read-ing and writing words. Even the more radical and progressive literacy programmes rarely adapt the teaching of numeracy to adults and most fall back on traditional methods – treating adults like children.

This is a serious problem because most adults already have considerable numeracy skills. Adult learners know oral counting and some mathematical structures and have an art of mental arithmetic more or less adequate for their daily life. Often non-literate people (especially those involved in trade) may be much better at mental arithmetic than ‘educated’ people who have come to depend on written sums or calculators.

You do not have to teach people to speak before you teach them to read and write. Likewise you do not need to teach people to count or add up before you teach them written numeracy.

So what is the value of written numeracy? It is necessary primarily because people are aware of the limitations of memory for keeping numbers in mind and for memorising daily events involving numbers. With complex calculations people lose track of the sub-totals in their heads. Being able to write down numbers in such situations is a huge help – but it is not a matter of knowing how to write 1 or 6 or 10 – rather, the need is usually to be able to write down larger numbers. A numeracy programme must reach this level of teaching useful skills at an early stage. It should also focus on numeracy in written form which people may use in their daily lives and on helping people with different types of record keeping that might be of practical use to them (household accounts/small scale business accounts/projections etc).

To develop a numeracy programme suitable for adults, the starting point should be people’s daily experience (the actual situations and types of calculation they have to do). This requires a socio-mathematical survey prior to starting the numeracy programme – but this is very rarely done. Efforts should be made to reinforce (rather than undermine or replace) mental arithmetic skills, so that there is a substantial improvement in the way that people carry out existing required calculations at the point in everyday life that they need to. A well targeted numeracy programme drawing on such approaches may be just as empowering or more empowering than literacy – as it can give people very practical skills for their everyday life. The *Reflect* approach seeks to build in such elements, respecting adults as adults, and focusing on practical numeracy.

2.10 Gender

Until recently, targeting literacy programmes at women was not a particular priority, despite the fact that, of the one billion non-literates in the world, two-thirds are women. However, policy makers are currently more inclined to listen to the practical arguments for women’s literacy as a critical contribution to development.

Women’s literacy has been linked to lower child mortality rates and healthier children; higher enrolment in school; more efficient farming; more advanced savings and credit activities, and to lower population growth rates. The latter has proved very attractive internationally, and the UN World Conference on Population, agreed that increasing women’s literacy rates, was one of the most effective ways to reduce population growth.

Many links have not been proved, and it is not clear whether being literate is the reason a mother enrolls her child in school; whether it is her more secure socio-economic background that enabled her to go to school when she was a child (and which has continued as a mother), or whether it is a behaviour change brought about by a dynamic adult literacy process.

What is clear is that there is an increasing demand for literacy by women (especially in an economic climate where women’s work burden is always increasing), and many women appreciate its potential for personal empowerment. Non-literacy is one of the factors which marginalises women, and makes access to basic human rights difficult. In Asia and Africa (and, in the last five years, in Latin America), women tend to form an enthusiastic majority in literacy classes. This is in situations where a significant number of men are also non-literate.

In fact the recent evaluations of the literacy programmes in Namibia and Uganda (see Appendix 4), show that men’s unwillingness to attend excludes them from both practical and empowering benefits of literacy. It also makes a positive dialogue, between women attending classes and male community members, very difficult to start. These two evaluations report men as unwilling to attend for fear of being mocked by other men; a greater price to pay in status if they admit to being non-literate, and being, in addition, unused to sitting together and discussing issues with women since childhood. Often it is only a small number of older men, (to whom these criteria do not apply), that attend.

In effect, the current situation is that many literacy programmes involve women participants, and the materials and approach are therefore aimed at women rather than men. Two main approaches are common. The first

approach is the pragmatic one of supporting women’s Practical Gender Needs through literacy. Practical gender needs are to strengthen women in their performance of existing (and often subordinate) roles as mothers and wives; workers (producers), and community members (contributing labour and time on a collective basis). Examples of women’s work in these roles include: child-care; growing food, food processing, water and fuel collection, and cooking; producing crops or goods for sale; school or road building and so on. Literacy primers might contain information on farming, nutrition or health in order to assist them in these multiple tasks.

The second approach is to focus on women’s Strategic Gender Needs to challenge the unfair and subordinate nature of these ‘traditional’ social roles. These might include community cooking and water collection arrangements (to save women’s time); protection from domestic violence; ownership of assets such as land, or money in a bank account; keeping the profits of their own labour; the right of access/ custody of their own children; inheritance rights; control over their own body (number of children, freedom from sexual harassment and rape etc.), and the willingness to organise around injustice (e.g. women’s anti-alcohol movements in India). Literacy primers may try and tackle these issues; giving information on legal rights, or promoting discussion of the problems amongst the women.

There are difficulties with both approaches to women’s literacy. A focus on Practical Gender Needs can lead to primers which lay down in writing that it is women’s duty to serve others, do an enormous amount of work without complaint and so on. Useful nutrition tips may be accompanied by advice on how to cook a good meal so that your husband will not beat you – without any challenge to men’s right to behave violently in their family!

A focus on Strategic Gender Needs in primer-based programmes has also been problematic as it has proved (as in other contexts) very difficult to stimulate dialogue in the classroom and subsequent social changes outside it. Lessons such as ‘What can you do if your husband injures you?’ are difficult to discuss in a meaningful way – especially when the conclusion is often pre-decided in the primer. The literacy teacher will either use the opportunity to deliver a lecture, or alternatively may turn with relief to reading and writing work!

Some literacy programmes for women combine the two approaches; and this is consistent with good practice in Gender and Development. This is a way of thinking about women and men in development which starts with people’s practical everyday problems, and can move (if they wish) to challenging some of the causes of these problems. It recognises that both men and women have practical and

strategic gender needs; and that although in most societies (both North and South!) women tend to be subordinate to men, and to have a heavier workload; both men and women would benefit from a more equitable balance in gender relations.

Reflect is part of the above model. Literacy participants, both male and female, have the chance to discuss a range of issues (from nutrition to income and expenditure) in open-ended but well structured discussions – rooted in their own experiences. There is no pressure to reach a pre-decided conclusion. Results in the pilot projects have been very encouraging. In Uganda, for example, both men and women have benefited from practical agricultural improvements such as terracing, and from changes in the division of labour, so that men help with fuel and water collection to free women for agricultural work (a strategic issue). The dialogue between men and women, (in mixed circles or between single-sex circles and the wider community) can be structured and strengthened by the *Reflect* literacy process.

(See Appendix 3 for further reading).

2.11 Pulling it all together: the theoretical development of *Reflect*

The *Reflect* approach seeks to pull together the theoretical strands that have been described above. *Reflect* draws on the theory of Paulo Freire, of Brian Street and of Gender and Development, fusing these with the practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal to produce a ‘structured participatory methodology’ which can respond to the practical needs of literacy programmes internationally.

One of the fundamental premises of the *Reflect* approach is that literacy techniques in themselves do not empower people. In itself literacy will not bring dramatic benefits in respect of health, productivity, community organisation or good governance. The elaborate claims made for literacy in the past are largely myths based on correlations (e.g. that literate people are more healthy or productive). There is little evidence of causal relationships: their literacy is not shown to have caused their better health or productivity – and indeed the reverse may be true: because they are healthier and wealthier they have had more access to education.

In order to achieve some of these benefits (to make the literacy programme a ‘cause’) it is necessary to have two parallel and interweaving processes: a literacy process and

an empowering process, based on people-centred grassroots development. These can become mutually reinforcing, with empowerment creating uses for literacy and literacy providing practical skills for advancing empowerment.

Many literacy programmes in the past have attempted to fuse these two processes but most have failed as they have not been able to keep the two processes in balance. Either literacy has become the dominant focus (when dialogue has proved too difficult to generate) or empowerment has become the focus of all attention (often leading to a process which diverges from dialogue into indoctrination). *Reflect* keeps the processes in balance through using a well structured participatory methodology. It has often been assumed that ‘well-structured’ and ‘participatory’ are contradictory. *Reflect* seeks to prove otherwise.

To develop an effective participatory approach the starting point must be to recognise people’s existing knowledge and skills. *Reflect* is rooted firmly in a belief that people have this extensive local knowledge. This knowledge, whether inherited, passed down through tradition or acquired through experience is rarely reflected upon systematically, discussed openly or positively developed. Sadly most literacy programmes, which are a rare opportunity to build upon this knowledge base, either contradict or undermine it. Many literacy programmes are used as vehicles for disseminating government messages about ‘development’ which have changed little since the colonial period.

Reflect conceives literacy as something which people can use on their own terms to explore, develop and apply their existing knowledge or skills. In this respect *Reflect* is a methodology consistent with the ‘Ideological’ view of literacy. Different cultures will define and form literacy in different ways, creating different literacy events for different functions. Most literacy programmes seek to impose uses and forms of literacy based on pre-defined texts (primers etc). *Reflect* in contrast focuses on people producing their own ‘texts’ and places particular emphasis on meaningful creative writing rather than passive reading.

As two interweaving processes *Reflect* is concerned with much more than just literacy in the traditional sense. The *Reflect* process seeks to be a catalyst for local development based on people’s own agenda. Freire organically linked literacy to social change but tended to see the only path to development being through direct confrontation with the ‘oppressors’. *Reflect* takes a wider analysis of development drawing on the language and concepts of ‘Gender and Development’. Through collective and individual reflection and analysis men and women can mobilise to address some of their practical needs (which do not always involve challenging the oppressors). They also

have strategic needs which require deeper structural change – but not just changes at a national or international level (which some more ‘authentic’ Freirean programmes have tended to focus on, leading to rapid frustration and sometimes even worse oppression). There is oppression within most communities (e.g. by caste/social status/age) and within most households (especially by gender). By undergoing detailed local analysis and organising to address local issues, some of these local structures of oppression can be realistically and effectively challenged.

In the process of addressing practical needs and local (or more immediately feasible) strategic needs, people can build the confidence, skills and organisation necessary to address larger structural change which will inevitably take time. To achieve such change sustainably (and to ensure it is not a change that is ‘betrayed’ by leaders at the top) a strong base must be built from below. This base is something which a *Reflect* process can help to build. The starting point must be people’s own analysis, on the basis of their immediate environment and experience, not someone else’s imposed analysis of their problems, international capital or cultural imperialism.

Reflect aims to stimulate effective development that responds to both individual and community needs. The initial motivation of many people joining a literacy programme will be self-improvement. The *Reflect* process allows considerable scope for this self-improvement but ensures that this is not done at the expense of others. There is a considerable inter-dependency in most communities. So, as well as facilitating change on an individual level, collective change is also important. To make change effective and sustained the role of community organisations cannot be under-stated. Whether working with existing community organisations or creating new ones, the strengthening of these is fundamental. Literacy can play a key role here, enabling secret ballots, minute taking, better account keeping, etc, thereby facilitating greater democratisation and greater accountability of those in power.

A *Reflect* process is not then just about what happens within the literacy circle. It is a process which reaches out and touches the wider environment. It is not simply about giving people new attitudes or skills but about creating new literacies within the wider community. If literacy is to be consolidated and sustained it will be by and within the local environment – so the *Reflect* process must touch that environment and address the literacy ‘events’ and ‘practices’ which are generated in that environment. In the process, literacy itself is re-defined in each new context and it becomes clear that literacy in more than just a set of techniques – it is a measurement of the nature of the relationship between people and the world in which they live

With the *Reflect* approach, each literacy circle produces their own learning materials analysing their own village and their immediate circumstances. This replaces the use of a primer. The key printed material in *Reflect* is a Local Facilitator’s Manual which gives clear guidelines on how each literacy circle can produce its own materials.

Instead of starting each lesson with a ‘codification’, each Unit in the Local Facilitator’s Manual starts with the construction of a graphic (a map, matrix, calendar or diagram).



Section 3

The *Reflect* approach

With the Reflect approach, each literacy circle produces their own learning materials analysing their own village and their immediate circumstances. This replaces the use of a primer. The key printed material in Reflect is a Local Facilitator's Manual which gives clear guidelines on how each literacy circle can produce its own materials.

Instead of starting each lesson with a 'codification', each Unit in the Local Facilitator's Manual starts with the construction of a graphic (a map, matrix, calendar or diagram). These are constructed on the ground using whatever materials are available locally. Once everyone has agreed that the 'graphic' is complete it is transferred to a large sheet of paper using simple visual cards. The completed graphic is then used for the introduction of reading and writing as well as numeracy work. The whole process involves the Reflect participants in a clearly focused dialogue which can lead to the identification of local action for development.

These various steps are outlined in detail below:

3.1 Constructing graphics

There are many different types of graphics which can be constructed by the participants in a *Reflect* circle (see box opposite).

These techniques come from practitioners of Participatory Rural Appraisal. It is essential to recognise that the maps and matrices are not ends in themselves. They are means to an end. The focus should always be placed more on the participatory process of producing them, rather than the end product.

The facilitator needs clear guidelines on how to facilitate the participants in the construction of each graphic. These guidelines need to be included in the Local Facilitator's Manual (and examples of these guidelines can be seen in the Sample Units in Section 5). The facilitator should play as small a role as possible – guiding the participants but not dominating the process.

It is useful for each literacy circle to have an identified area where they can construct their graphics. In the Uganda pilot each literacy circle built their own literacy shelter and next to the shelter cleared an area of ground which they called the '*mapping ground*'. Much can be gained by leaving the interior 'classroom' setting (even if the 'interior' is in fact just beneath a tree or in a makeshift shelter. The group dynamics change once people are on their feet, moving around to construct a graphic. Participants feel and behave differently when walking around in the open air, working on a task which draws on their own knowledge. In the rainy season, however, outdoor work on mapping grounds may be limited. In such circumstances it is worth seeking a shelter which incorporates an open area with sufficient space to construct the graphics.

It can waste a lot of time if, for each map and matrix the participants have to go out and find 'locally available materials' to do the initial construction. The facilitator can speed things up by having a series of pots (or tins or baskets) with different types of seeds or beans or leaves etc, which can be used for constructing graphics. The preparation of these containers could be part of an initial training programme for facilitators who should be actively involved in deciding which materials are used and how to store them (to ensure cultural sensitivity). It should not involve any significant expense.

When first constructing a graphic, the participants should develop and agree their own '*codes of representation*' in using the local materials. For example, in constructing a household by household map of the village the circle may use sticks to represent the roads and paths, stones to represent houses, beans to represent the number of men in each house and seeds to represent women.

All participants should be encouraged to help actively in constructing the graphic on the ground. For example, one or two participants may lay down the sticks to show the main roads and paths on a household map (though others may intervene if they think that it is inaccurate); then each participant may put down stones to represent the location of their own house and then that of immediate neighbours. There will often be a lot of shifting around and correcting before everyone agrees that the map is accurate. The process of constructing the graphic is more important than the finished product.

In most cases there will be a lot of discussion in the

process of constructing graphics. Indeed, the process of construction in some cases actively structures the discussion. For example, in producing a calendar, (whether of rainfall, food availability, illnesses or agricultural workload) there are likely to be at least 12 fundamental steps (the completion of each month), each requiring reflection on experience and comparative analysis. The facilitator does not constantly have to pose

questions as the task of completing the calendar becomes self-evident and this serves to structure the interaction between participants. With matrices or preference ranking, as with calendars, there are very clearly defined steps (the completion of each 'box') which develop a momentum of their own (often enabling the facilitator to take a back seat).

Maps

Household Maps – showing all the houses in the community and, for example, the number of people in each or the type of housing.
Agricultural Maps – showing the location of different crops and, for example, changing trends over the years or the level of productivity.
Natural Resource Maps – identifying access to or control of sources of wood and water, to lead into discussion of environmental issues.
Land Tenure Maps – to represent the ownership of land, whether individual, cooperative, large landowners and, for example to match land ownership to land use (and access to or control of produce).

Note: "*Maps are a central part of literacy. Literacy partly originated in such design and layout, and is still embedded in it.*" (Barton). In China, for example, one of the earliest uses of writing was for the construction of maps.

Calendars

Rainfall Calendars – which represent climate patterns/trends and can lead to discussion of responses to droughts, floods. **Agricultural Work Calendars** – on which the different activities (e.g. clearing, planting, weeding, fertilising, harvesting, storing, selling) associated with each major local crop are plotted.
Gender Workload Calendars – which represent the main activities of men and of women plotted through the year and which can lead to very structured reflection on gender roles.
Health Calendars – on which all principal local illnesses are identified and their relative occurrence through the year is represented (leading often to very focussed debate on why different illnesses occur more often at different times).
Income and Expenditure Calendars – to explore patterns for a typical family through the year, itemised by source of income and type of expenditure.

Note: one of the earliest uses of writing was in Egypt where considerations were economic but also "*involved the development of a calendar for predicting the floods*" Similarly calendars were one of the earliest forms of literacy in pre-Columbian America. (Barton)

Matrices/Charts

Crop Matrices – in which participants analyse each crop they grow against a set of criteria which they decide for themselves
Health Matrices – where participants describe the curative strategies they follow for different illnesses (e.g. herbs, medicine, traditional healer, hospital) or analyse their understanding of the different causes of illnesses.
Credit Matrices – which involve participants listing the sources of credit that they have (e.g. family, friends, money-lender, credit union, bank) and the uses they make of the credit.
Matrices of Household Decisions – on which, for example, women tabulate their involvement in discussing, planning and carrying out decisions in different areas of household life.

Diagrams

Chapati diagram of Organisations – where participants represent on a sort of venn diagram all the organizations within the community and those external organisations with an influence.
Diagram of Informal Power Relations – which explore the powerful individuals within the community and their groupings, splinters, inter-relationships etc.

Other Techniques

Timelines – of a village or an organisation or individual.

Transects – cross-sectional walks.

Flow Diagrams – to represent different processes.

3.2 Transferring the graphics onto paper

At the point when every participant is happy with the graphic that has been constructed on the ground, a large copy of it needs to be made on paper or card. But how? We can’t use words immediately and we can’t just put sticks and stones. We need pictures.

Pictures are needed on small cards which can be used to help the transfer from the ground to paper. They may initially be used as a ‘key’ or ‘guide’ to the graphic on the ground (e.g. putting a stone next to the simple picture of a house; a seed by the picture of a woman and a bean by the picture of a man). Once the link has been made, the simple pictures can be used to make a copy of the whole graphic onto paper.

But how are these pictures to be produced? There are various options:

1. Participants draw their own cards

Many PRA practitioners are confident in the ability of participants to produce their own simple drawings, inventing their own symbols and codes. Although unable to read and write, in many cases participants may be very good at drawing. Participants can be given blank paper and asked to draw simple pictures to represent all the items on the graphic they have produced on the ground. The pictures drawn by different participants can be discussed and the best ones drawn onto cards for actual use with the graphic being produced (and for use with future graphics where the same item appears). Over time each *Reflect* circle will build up their own set of visual cards (in a sense, creating their own written language!). This is the ideal as participants will have complete ownership of their pictures and full control of the process.

2. Using pre-drawn visual cards

In some circumstances literacy facilitators may be nervous about depending entirely on the participants’ own pictures. In the early stages it may take time to build up the facilitator’s confidence in the process and the participant’s confidence in their own drawing. There may then be a need for some pre-drawn visual cards. Fortunately we can anticipate many of the crops, illnesses, objects and activities which will come up in the construction of the different graphics. If the group is constructing a calendar of agricultural work we can anticipate that the calendar will include activities like clearing

land, planting, weeding, fertilising, harvesting, storing and selling. We would also be able to anticipate the major crops. Having anticipated many of the pictures that will be required, each *Reflect* project can develop a set of example visual cards. These cards can be produced at the same time as the Facilitator’s manual and should be drawn by a local artist (and should always be tested with local people to see whether they are recognisable). They should not be elaborate or detailed but rather, they should be very simple outline drawings which can be easily copied. Detailed recommendations on these cards and some examples can be found in Section 4.4). Each time such a visual card is introduced for the first time the facilitator should discuss it with the participants to see whether they recognise what it is and accept that it is a reasonable representation. This will not be automatic as many of the pictures may be so simple as to be symbols rather than realistic drawings. If the participants are not happy with a visual card they can reject it and make their own alternative card (a large number of blank cards should be supplied). As the course progresses the participants should be urged to draw their own cards more and more.

3. Providing a reference list of pictures

The production of visual cards may be costly – especially if they are to be printed on actual card. An alternative is for the facilitators’ manual to include examples in each Unit of how the relevant graphic may look (like those in Section 5 of this Mother Manual) or to have a reference list at the back of the manual of some simple drawings or symbols which facilitators can use if participants do not come up with ideas of their own. The advantage of having some examples of simple drawings of symbols may be that it will help the *Reflect* participants to think creatively about how to represent something in an abstract or symbolic way rather than with life-drawing or social realism!

Whichever approach is used, participants should always be urged to do their own drawing (whether correcting the pre-drawn card, improving it, or doing a picture from scratch on a blank card). One phenomenon here is that drawing humbles the facilitators as usually they can’t get things to look right. The experience is much like that of participants who can’t get letters to look right and for whom the pen is a clumsy tool at first. So even in the supposed area of expertise (with pen and paper) the facilitator is not seen as the only expert. Indeed often the other participants, though illiterate, are better at drawing. In the process there is also often a lot of humour.

Encouraging the participants to draw is, in itself, a useful activity. Participants who are not familiar with holding a pen

will take time to develop the muscle control in their hands which is necessary for writing. Drawing is an easier activity initially and can help to build their confidence. Increasingly these visual cards (whether pre-drawn or produced by participants) can be used to help construct graphics on the ground, particularly for matrices and calendars. For example, in constructing a health calendar it might be hard for participants to develop and remember a code for each of 10 or more local illnesses. In this case, visual cards can be used directly on the ground to help develop the calendar. The construction of maps, however, is more likely to require other local materials. Even when copying simple pictures, the process of transferring a graphic from the ground to a large sheet of paper (e.g. manila paper) or card (for durability) does require some practice – particularly with complex maps (which can be spatially confusing). If necessary the facilitators may do a basic outline (e.g. drawing in the main roads/paths in pencil), which they can practise in their initial training. All the participants can then help in adding pictures to the graphic. Using a lot of different coloured pens can help make the end product visually interesting and give participants the chance to add interesting detail. The facilitator must not dominate this process – s/he must be willing to hand over the pen to the participants! This translation of the graphic from ground to paper is very important. After all, the shift from three to two dimensions, using pen and paper, is the first fundamental step of literacy. The process will strengthen visual literacy skills and acts as a smooth bridge to the introduction of alphabetic literacy. The completed graphic on paper should always be kept on display and should be used as the focus for subsequent discussion and literacy or numeracy work (as outlined in the following sections). It is a good idea to ask participants to make a copy of each graphic in their own book so that they have a permanent record of it. In some cases participants may wish to re-do the graphic, showing their own perspective on the specific graphic concerned. The facilitator should also make a copy of the finished map in their notebook or on a sheet of A4 paper – which will then be taken to the exchange workshop where it may in some cases be lent to the programme planners for photocopying. This will ensure that the organisation planning the literacy programme can use the material for feeding into wider development planning (see page 68). This copy may need to include more writing (or a full key of all pictures used) so as to be easily understood by outsiders.



Reflect circle in Bangladesh

Notes from the evaluation of Reflect in Bangladesh

“One remarkable feature of *Reflect in Bangladesh* is the quality of the maps and matrices produced by the learners. These are usually kept in pristine condition and are full of colour and detail. In most cases the learners themselves have drawn them, having initially etched them in the mud of the compound and illustrated them with seeds and other materials. The learners’ books are also full of drawings whether of birds, animals, flowers or ornate patterns. There is a feeling of ‘release’ – a sense of wonder at what can be done just with a pencil and a blank page – and there is a real joy in many of the images.

“The learners’ books in the control groups have none of these pictures and seem full of copied words in comparison. The value of allowing, indeed encouraging, the development of drawing skills within a literacy class is not usually recognised – but the evidence here seems to strongly indicate a role for drawing – both for increased motivation of learners, enabling them to have fun, and at the same time providing them with the manual dexterity skills necessary for writing.”

3.3 Structuring reading and writing

Introduction: the theory

In *Reflect* circles reading and writing work arises either directly or thematically out of the graphics produced by participants. The maps, matrices, calendars and diagrams, and the structured discussions based on them, provide rich source material for developing literacy practice in a meaningful context. The emphasis is placed on production, creation and action – not passivity, copying or absorption.

A range of different approaches to literacy are drawn upon in *Reflect* circles. All the work arises from the ‘*language experience*’ of the participants; what is traditionally called ‘*learner generated writing*’ is given priority; the process is certainly ‘*learner-centred*’; elements of the ‘*key word*’ and ‘*generative word*’ methods appear; even such archaic methods as ‘*look and say*’ may be given a small space.

It is through a diversity of activities that participants will consolidate their skills so there should be a space for promoting everything from: individual reading, group reading, reading the board, reading texts, reading with comprehension, reading one’s own writing and reading that of others; writing creatively, writing by copying, writing from dictation or writing for a specific purpose. To keep participants motivated all this work must be done in a meaningful context. The graphics and associated thematic discussions provide that context.

The precise range of activities and approach to literacy will depend on the language used. A language with an ideographic script (like Chinese, where the symbols represent meanings more than sounds) will require a different emphasis than one with a phonetic script (where symbols relate to sounds). A syllabic approach will be more relevant to a language with a very regular phonetic script but will be wholly inappropriate in other circumstances.

Although there is a space for a full range of activities, the emphasis in *Reflect* is more on writing than reading. Participants are encouraged to produce their own texts for reading practice. The graphics are the first stage in that creative process. Reading and writing are not regarded as artificial activities (which primers or textbooks sometimes make them seem) but as activities which will enable participants to create a record of their socio-economic environment and help them take control of ‘*the word and the world*’ in one process.

The problems with primers

Primers are often obstacles to learner-controlled literacy because their simple words and sentences encourage rote-learning and teaching. The instructor tends to read aloud syllables and sentences and the learners repeat meaninglessly. There is no progression from word-by-word reading in the first units, to fluent reading at the end of the course, and there is no reading with understanding. If the instructor frequently asks learners to copy from the primer into their exercise books – in the belief that this technique teaches writing skills – most learners will never learn how to write independently. Primer-based approaches rarely stretch learners to do work which is constantly more difficult – as the focus is often on repetition. This limits learners’ progress and under-estimates their abilities. The only way to learn how to write is to practice, and many activities must be devised by the facilitator which give participants a chance to do just that.

Reading and writing at the beginning

Different approaches to reading and writing will be used at different stages in a *Reflect* programme – as the abilities of participants are built up.

In the earliest part of a *Reflect* programme the focus is on drawing. Participants need to develop the manual skills of holding a pen or pencil and moving it. Drawing is a much better place to start than writing as it is fun and more satisfying more quickly – with little association of getting things wrong. Learners can draw faces or local objects copy visual cards, and throughout the programme every single map and matrix should be copied by learners into their books to keep them warmed up, and ensure they have a permanent record of everything they have discussed.

Once the first graphic has been produced and copied on to paper using simple pictures, the first words can be introduced. These may first appear as labels directly on the graphic. The participants may choose which items on the graphic they wish to label and the facilitator can write the words. However, in the first Unit probably only one of these words should be selected for particular attention. In a phonetic script this word would be used as a ‘generative word’ in that it would be broken into syllables and used to introduce the relevant syllabic families. The emphasis would be on creating new words from these syllables (see box)

So if the word ‘*kiti*’ is chosen, the syllables ‘*ki*’ and ‘*ti*’ would be introduced and then placed with each vowel:

ka ke ki ko ku
ta te ti to tu

Participants would then be encouraged to form new words from these syllables, such as ‘*taka*’ or ‘*koko*’ etc. It is useful to cut out cards with each syllable on a different card so participants can actively move cards around to make new words. Repetitive chanting of syllables must be avoided as it serves no learning function.

In the initial Units the selected word may have been pre-determined by the facilitators (or the programme planners) who will have been able to anticipate which words are highly likely to appear on each graphic (e.g. a natural resource map in certain contexts is likely to have a ‘tree’, ‘mountain’, ‘water’, ‘well’, ‘river’ etc). This will enable the planners or facilitators to ensure that all the common syllables are covered and that the early words that are used are regular. Alternatively the participants may choose which word to focus on and the facilitator in each circle then needs to keep a record of the syllables covered.

In the second and third Unit, two words may be the focus of attention in each graphic (though many others may have been written on the graphic next to the pictures); by the fourth and fifth Units, three words may be chosen for special attention in each case. The exact pace of development will depend on the language being used.

In a non-syllabic language (or one which has a non-phonetic or very irregular script) the first Units may focus on whole words and how they are formed.

Even in the very earliest part of a *Reflect* programme a range of different approaches can be used to develop the reading and writing work. Establishing the principle of writing can be useful. The facilitator can, note down phrases from the circle’s discussions and write them up on the board, perhaps ensuring that one or two key words are included. The participants can be asked to identify syllables or words they know (and can be asked, for example, to underline them). The text can be used for practising reading. The facilitator can extend this by offering to write down anything on the theme which participants want (in other words to act as their scribe). These sentences can then be used for reading practice, clarifying that anything spoken can be written and that there are certain conventions (such as writing left to right).

Reading and writing beyond the basics

After about five Units (perhaps one or two months depending on the regularity of meetings) the reading and writing work should move on. Syllables should no longer be used (except in exceptional circumstances, or briefly when new letters appear or double consonants are needed). The focus should (in most languages/scripts) shift fully to whole words and phrases.

From this point on, each graphic is used to generate a wide range of vocabulary around a theme. Many more words should appear directly on the graphic, with any pictures being labelled (and some words progressively being used directly in producing the graphics). The spatial location of the words on the graphics will help participants to remember them. This is a small but important help, particularly if the graphics are on permanent display – as participants can look for a word they know from a past graphic when trying to remember how to write a certain sound or word.

Further language on the theme addressed by the graphic is produced by the facilitator noting down points made in the discussions.

The range of reading and writing activities that can be developed using this graphic-generated language as the basis include:

- Participants read language from the graphics (labels and key) and copy it into their books.
- Facilitator transfers word from graphic to a series of flash cards or writes them randomly on the board; participants try to recognise them and can even compete over speed of identification.
- Circle generates as wide a vocabulary as possible around the theme of the graphic (e.g. names of as many crops and agricultural activities as possible in an Agricultural Matrix). This can be done individually, in pairs, as a group etc.
- Participants read phrases, sentence or paragraph based on the discussion, written up on the board by the facilitator.
- Each participant writes a phrase (or more) describing the graphic, using some of the words on the graphic as a basis. The phrases may literally describe the graphic, or each participants response to it or thoughts on it, or any observation made by the participant during the discussion. These phrases can be read out in turn and each can be written up by the facilitator on the board. Each participant can then copy all the phrases down in to their books (or just write the ones they like/agree with).
- Participants read a ‘*real text*’ on a related theme (for

- instance health leaflets or pamphlets if dealing with health units) – either as a group (written up on the board), or if there are many copies, reading individually. Appropriate documents/materials should be identified in the research phase (see page 40). Practise in skimming for information should be encouraged (for instance spotting selected words in a text).
- Participants are asked to find and bring in their own written materials which relate to each theme – and use these for practice.
- Facilitator ‘dictates’ words and phrases from the discussions for participants to write down (or participants dictate to each other).
- Participants fill gaps in sentences written on the board by facilitator.
- Participants write joint agreements about local actions identified by the circle through the discussions. These agreements can include details of who will do what, by when, how much it will cost etc – and can then be signed. A range of other ‘documents’ can be produced relevant to different themes.

Some small but important pieces of advice

- The facilitator should ensure that s/he write clearly on the graphics and board – and particularly that there are clear spaces between words.
- The facilitator should be sensitive to the pronunciation of words (particularly when teaching syllabically at first).
- The facilitator should always use lower case letters (small) not upper case capitals (BIG letters) – and should only introduce capitals at a specific point.

The facilitator should not write anything on the graphics without the consent of the participants (for example, dates, titles)

- The facilitator should avoid referring to letters by their ‘names’ and should instead refer to the sound of the letter.
- It may be useful to permanently display the full alphabet in the literacy circle (perhaps even with full syllabic families) – so that the full range of what needs to be learnt is clear from the first day (and letters can be ticked off as they come up on the graphics)! This will be particularly relevant in more literate environments (e.g. in urban areas) or

- Participants making lists/prepare budgets.
- Participants practise minute-taking from short discussions on relevant issues (and extend this to any meetings they attend).
- Participants collectively write letters to local officials or agencies regarding issues discussed or requesting help etc.
- Participants write to people in other literacy circles to exchange experiences. A system of ‘*pen-pals*’ or ‘*circle-twinning*’ should be encouraged where possible – particularly if it means people have to post their communications.
- The participants should always make copies of the graphics in their own books and write associated phrases next to the graphics. They should be encouraged to share these with other members of their family or other interested people. This will encourage reading outside the circle and create new ‘literacy events’.
- Participants write anecdotes, oral histories, stories which relate to the themes of each Unit.

where many participants have some knowledge of literacy already (e.g. from first grade primary school years ago).

- In some languages words can be written in simple or compound letters (e.g. Bengali). Every effort should be made to avoid unusual compound or complex letters (unless essential) until an advanced part of the course. Facilitator’s may need to practise strategies to avoid compound letters.
- The choice of which language to use in the circle should be given to participants – and should be the subject of extensive prior consultation (see Section 4.2). It is possible to use *Reflect* for bi-lingual teaching and to leave the choice of language to each circle – as there is no printed primer.
- Where there are dialects, in general it is important to start by writing the colloquial forms of speech that participants use – their everyday language – the words they use in their discussions. Facilitators may feel that they should only use formal or mainstream dialects and must be urged to respect the wishes of participants (who may in fact also prefer to use formal language if it is what they will have to use in practice).

One of the most useful activities is independent writing by the participants. Every opportunity must be found to encourage people to do this. The facilitator should be available to help people individually and correct their work where necessary (though an obsession with spelling must be avoided early on). As the participants make progress with their writing, the facilitator should ask them about the things people wanted to do with literacy when they joined the *Reflect* circle (and refer to the background research), and give participants some regular space in the circle to practice. Examples might be writing a letter to a husband working away from home; writing price labels for the market; writing items for a budget; writing notices of meetings.

Strategies which address literacy in the wider environment (see Section 6) will help to reinforce the work in the circle. Every effort should be made to link the work of the circle to the environment outside and to people’s daily lives. The circle itself should also be seen as a resource which produces and disseminates materials to extend the availability of written products for the wider community.

Learner centred techniques to help teach literacy and numeracy

It is important to integrate learner-centred teaching techniques to strengthen the *Reflect* process. Facilitators should build from where the participants are and adapt according to their learning needs. Some of the approaches outlined may seem strange at first, and take a lot of time to explain, but once established they become the regular practice of the circle, and are an enjoyable and more efficient way of learning. They help to vary the pace and type of activity in two or three hour meetings of the circle. Doing everything together as a complete circle may become boring. Whilst different activities are carried out, the facilitator should move informally around the circle assisting and encouraging individuals, pairs and groups.

Pair Work

Participants work in pairs (two people together) in order to get more time for practising, than if the whole circle stays together. Participants can stay with the same partner (who they get to know and can trust not to laugh at them) or can change partners depending on who attends that meeting. They can do things such as test each other on new words (one has the words written down and reads out words for her partner to try writing); write a short sentence and exchange exercise books so that they can get extra reading practice with their partner’s writings, or write the first half of a story and exchange for reading and writing the second half. All the pairs in the circle can also work on the same

task (such as making words out of syllable cards) and can then share their work with the whole group at the end of the activity. This is very useful for giving every participant the chance to practise – without having to try something alone in front of the whole circle. It is also a way of creating more ideas (and energy) in the circle. For example, every pair might brainstorm on possible Action Points, and can then discuss them as a circle.

Small Group Work

Participants can work in small groups of 4–6 in much the same way (and with the same advantages) as in pairs. For example, a group of participants can discuss the correctness of one another’s writing and have a chance to read six exercise books. This encourages participants to generate their own materials and to be self reliant – not depending on the facilitator to do everything for them. It should be noted that group work means participants have to be willing to be mobile and change places.

Mixed Level Circles

In every circle, there will be participants of different abilities, those who are short sighted, those who are irregular attenders, and those who have already been to one or two years of school. It is important to accept this situation as natural and adapt facilitation techniques accordingly.

Pair work and group work are useful ways of doing this, because although the graphic construction and main discussion should be done as a whole circle, there are a variety of literacy activities which can be done at different levels in pairs/groups. Either the facilitator can ask participants to divide themselves according to how they see their level (in order to avoid treating them like children) and design different tasks to suit different levels; or s/he can ask participants to sit in pairs or groups of mixed levels so that the stronger participants can help the weaker ones.

The latter strategy is a good way of learning for the stronger ones, and a chance to get more individual attention than the facilitator can manage, for the weaker participants. For example, in pairs, one partner can read out a sentence with a key word in it from the board, and the other partner can try writing the key word (without looking at the board).

Buddy System

Irregular attendance is always a major problem for adult participants, and one way of lessening the effects is for the facilitator to encourage a ‘*buddy*’ system in the circle. A pair of participants (preferably friends or ‘buddies’) can help each other by visiting one another if they miss one or two meetings. They can explain what has been covered, let them copy it, and most importantly give some idea how

some practice with the new literacy or numeracy components can be done. In the case of a regular attender and a very irregular attender, the regular attender should feel confident enough to take the role of facilitator with her buddy. However, it should at all times be stressed that participants are responsible for their own learning.

Concluding remarks on reading and writing

It is important that the reading and writing activities in *Reflect* circles are closely linked to the graphics and the discussion. This integration is important to maintain motivation and relevance. If reading and writing becomes divorced from the graphics and the themes, the overall process will be undermined. The graphics provide a rich starting point. Developing literacy work based on them should not require too much preparation and the in experience of the pilot programmes has proved simple for facilitators.

At the end of a *Reflect* course each participant should have a book which has about twenty or thirty graphics about their lives and community, together with their unique phrases and commentary on those graphics. This amounts to a detailed diagnosis of their community and should be a document about which the participants will feel a strong sense of ownership. As a concrete product of literacy this is much more valuable than an exercise book of scribbles and copied words which is the normal product of a primer-based course.

Note: Further ideas on reading and writing are to be found throughout the Sample Units in Section 5. There are also a number of Word Games (in Section 6.3, page 173) which can be introduced to keep the learning environment stimulating.

Reflect writing group in Uganda



Actionaid

Designing different tasks is hard work at first, but as the *Reflect* course continues, the same basic activities can be repeated! For example, after constructing a matrix on Preference Ranking of Sources of Credit, participants could divide themselves into four groups for reading and writing.

- Group One could jointly write a letter of application for a bank loan;
- Group Two could practise filling in a form to open a bank account;
- Group Three could write down a short sentence from the discussion about each source of credit mentioned on the matrix, and
- Group Four could practise writing the new words on the matrix and make more words out of jumbled syllables.

After a set period of time, the groups can come back together and share their work. This provides extra reading practice (if exercise books are exchanged), and can generate materials which could be of practical use to every participant (such as the letter of application).

3.4 Numeracy

In a *Reflect* programme, numeracy work avoids the pitfalls of many traditional programmes which ignore people’s existing mental arithmetic skills. The focus is placed squarely on written numeracy and providing practical, satisfying skills which will help people deal with actual situations in which they may need to use written numeracy.

The numeracy work arises directly out of the graphics that the participants have produced. Many of the graphics are mathematical in themselves, providing a way of recording and analysing data.

A socio-mathematical survey (see page 47) before the *Reflect* programme starts helps to identify the uses of numeracy locally and the state of existing skills and practice. This survey should also generate a wide range of practical examples which can be woven into the manual.

It should be noted that the three original pilot projects were not the best examples of adult numeracy programmes (there are very few model experiences to follow – only a large number of poor experiences which need to be avoided!). The Bhola programme in Bangladesh, linked to Savings and Credit Groups, did however develop some innovative approaches and helped to identify the potential for using *Reflect* to do effective numeracy work.

There are three main ways in which numeracy arises out of the graphics in a *Reflect* programme:

Literal/Direct: the maps and matrices produced by participants will often include countable things e.g. households, people, scores of matrices, ratios of occurrence on calendars etc. These can be used as a starting point for practice with written numbers. Asking participants to write numbers everywhere to replace bars or tally marks or figures can be useful practice in writing numbers and in rapid number recognition. Adding up totals and estimating distances (e.g. on maps) can be useful. Even learning percentages (from pie-charts) can come at a later stage. Some Units might directly involve relevant calculations, for example:

- Income and Expenditure Calendar.
- Projection of Loan Use.
- Calendar of Prices of Basic Commodities/Market Prices.

Thematic: each graphic is a means of exploring a particular theme and so the ‘integration’ of numeracy can come through the theme – drawing on examples which illustrate the theme. For example, if an agricultural calendar has been constructed and planting has been discussed then examples

can be developed based on plant spacing, the numbers of seeds per row or seeds in a certain area. If a crop matrix has brought discussion around to pests then the examples can be based on the preparation of pesticides. There are countless examples like this, for example:

- Credit Matrix – calculations of loan repayments.
- Land Tenancy Map – land areas/distribution statistics.
- Mobility Map – distances/time/cost of travel.
- Crop Matrix – weights of crops/prices.
- Agricultural Calendar – mixing fertilisers /quantities.
- Health Calendar – child growth monitoring.
- Health Matrix – costs/dosages of medicines.
- Hygiene Map – cost of building a latrine/digging a tube-well.
- Herb Matrix – recipes/quantities for local medicines.

Practical Record-Keeping: Arising from the thematic work, participants can be encouraged to learn and practise basic forms of record keeping involving written numbers. These might include:

- Basic household accounts (e.g. linked to a Household Decision-making Matrix or an Income/Expenditure Calendar).
- Accounts of community organisations (e.g. linked to a Chapati Diagram on Community Organisations).
- Small business accounts.
- Credit records e.g. pass books for individuals/ consolidated group accounts/loan application forms/bank forms such as cheque books or paying in books (e.g. linked to a Credit Matrix).

In introducing these forms of record keeping, the formats should be directly taken from ones in use locally. For example, the accounts of a community organisation could be used, or the actual pass-books from a local credit programme. In the case of household accounts, attempts should be made to build on any existing practice. The process of teaching these different forms of record keeping should involve both:

- Reading: that is, understanding the layout, interpreting completed forms/accounts, identifying errors etc.
- Writing: how to complete the forms/accounts and do any relevant calculations.

It is important to **sequence** all of the numeracy work carefully so that you are building from relatively simple numeracy to more complex numeracy. However, the progress must not be too slow. For example, the first Unit or two may focus on introducing the reading and writing of numbers 1-10, with a lot of practice directly on the graphics. The following Units should however proceed to introducing large numbers very rapidly (the size of the numbers introduced might be

determined by the largest currency notes used locally – in some cases perhaps 1,000 but in others which have suffered severe inflation up to 10,000,000!). In order to do this it can be useful to have sample photocopies or pictures of the actual monetary system used locally (the coins and notes) – which people can use for practical calculations. Once participants can read and write the numbers 1-10 and have understood the principle of the layout of larger numbers, the emphasis should be on practice and practical application.

At all times, participants should be encouraged to use their **mental arithmetic skills** – and even to strengthen them. Find out which participants are best at quick mental calculations and ask them to share with the others the strategies they have for doing such calculations.

Similarly in introducing **basic functions** (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) it is important to respect the fact that most people are able to do basic calculations (sometimes with approximate answers) – and to give participants an opportunity to discuss the times when they need to do these and how they go about it mentally. Encouraging people to do approximate calculations in their heads (and on paper) is important – because, for example, they are unlikely to perform a full written calculation in the market place when planning to buy something. It is also useful for checking answers. All practice of the basic functions should be based on examples arising out of the graphics (either literally or thematically) so that it is always rooted in and integrated with the wider process.

In a basic numeracy programme it is probably not worth explaining how to do difficult multiplication or division – as people are unlikely to use these in practice. If participants are going to be doing such calculations regularly (e.g. if they are traders) then there is a strong argument for introducing calculators. Calculators are now widely available and relatively cheap and as such are becoming a form of appropriate technology. The socio-mathematical survey should identify whether it is suitable to introduce calculators. If so then the *Reflect* programme should consider the feasibility of supplying calculators at low cost (perhaps selling them to participants) and most of the numeracy practice in the *Reflect* circles should be based on how to use the calculator:

- how to identify the appropriate calculations from a real-life problem or situation;
- how to turn it on and off;
- how to enter numbers;
- how to use the function keys (+, −, x);
- how to do long calculations (more than three stages);
- how to cancel a wrong entry;
- how to record totals;
- how to do basic estimation so that results can be double-checked mentally.

In Bhola, Bangladesh there was initially some doubt about whether women needed numeracy skills in their daily lives, as they rarely left the homestead and never went to market. However, a short socio-mathematical survey showed that they were using numeracy on a regular basis on a normal day particularly in dealing with travelling salesmen. All of the women could do basic calculations in their heads and some women could calculate complex sums. However, there were specific difficulties that many women encountered with the calculation of equivalences between the traditional systems of weights and measures and the metric system which had imposed in 1987. Numeracy work was designed around such examples and around practical record keeping.

3.5 Dialogue, action and development

In spite of the rhetoric, dialogue has been uncommon in most adult literacy programmes and without dialogue the link to any wider development process is usually lost. In *Reflect*, dialogue is central to the whole process.

The production of the maps and matrices themselves depends on discussion and dialogue – and is structured by the task that the group collectively face. The literacy facilitator does not have to constantly guide or push the discussion in an artificial way – as the discussion gathers its own momentum around the task.

Focussed questions: Once the graphic is completed (either when it is completed on the ground or when a copy has been made on paper), focussed questions can explore key issues. These questions are always directly related to the participants' lives and their community because the framework for the discussion is the map, matrix or calendar that they have produced themselves. Participants feel the issues are theirs, not someone else's, and as a result the discussions are much more likely to lead to the identification of local solutions and local actions.

For example, if the participants were simply looking at a primer with a picture of a deforested area and a key word 'tree' or 'deforestation', experience shows that they would be unlikely to engage in substantial discussion. However, if they construct a natural resource map of their village identifying, amongst other things, where there are trees –

and if they then construct a comparative map to show how their village was 20 or 30 years ago – then they themselves will arrive at the problem of deforestation and in doing so will recognise it as an issue which directly affects their community. In such circumstances they are much more likely to do something about it – and this indeed has been the case in many communities where, after the construction of such maps in *Reflect* circles, participants have organised village tree nurseries and tree planting programmes.

Whether the issue addressed is deforestation or soil erosion, health problems or community organisation, agricultural practices or population growth, the starting point for discussion is the participants' existing knowledge. This generates a strong sense of ownership of both the issues discussed and the graphics produced. The graphics represent a systematisation of local knowledge which in many cases is permanently recorded and displayed for the first time.

By focusing on this local knowledge (whether traditional, inherited knowledge or knowledge acquired through personal or direct experience), a *Reflect* programme avoids the pitfalls of other literacy programmes, which all too often treat reading and writing as if they were the only real skills. In other programmes it is not uncommon for literacy teachers to look down on their participants, regarding literacy to be the only worthwhile knowledge and thereby, in the process, invalidating the knowledge that participants possess. By respecting the knowledge of participants, a *Reflect* programme is more likely to make literacy skills fit into an existing framework of other skills – as another capacity or technique which will help them to systematise, analyse and apply their knowledge.

Reflect is a structured participatory approach. It is sufficiently structured to be relatively easy to use (for facilitators) but it is highly participatory in that it depends on inputs from each participant's experience to construct the basic learning materials. *Reflect* does not give answers or solutions to people but it encourages and facilitates people's own analysis and search for solutions. It is an approach that can be particularly effective for addressing issues such as gender roles and relations where there is a danger of education workers preaching or lecturing to people, leading to negative reactions and defensiveness. By stimulating people's own analysis in a balanced and structured environment there is a much greater prospect of change coming from within.

The process of discussion and reflection in a *Reflect* programme should not end within the circle itself. Each participant, by copying the graphics in their own books, can share them at home or with others to develop discussions outside the circle. In some contexts *Reflect* circles can

present their latest graphics at regular community assemblies. In cases where this stimulates interest or is felt to be of practical use, the wider community can then repeat the process of constructing certain graphics (without the focus on literacy). In the three pilot projects, by the end of the *Reflect* programme, each village had between twenty and thirty graphics produced by them about their own village. In many cases this proved to be a wonderful resource for the community to establish priorities and plan appropriate activities.

Those who organise a *Reflect* programme, whether NGOs or government, also end up with a detailed survey of the area. This can serve as the basis for planning health, agricultural or other development programmes – knowing the starting point, knowing the existing knowledge of the communities, the gaps, the priorities, the attitudes of people and even their prejudices. The potential link to other aspects of development is clearly strong.

Actions arising from *Reflect* circles in the pilot programmes

Most *Reflect* circles in the El Salvador pilot mobilised at a community level on several occasions to address problems identified through their graphics. The most common actions included: repairing local roads, constructing grain stores, establishing tree nurseries, terracing (or putting bunds on) hill-sides, using organic fertiliser, planting fruit trees, diversifying crops, organising nurseries of medicinal plants and herbs, school enrolment campaigns, developing training programmes on aspects of health or agriculture etc. In the evaluation of pilot programme in Uganda the participants related the actions they had undertaken to different graphics they had constructed, for example:

- **tree planting arose from construction of a Natural Resource Map;**
- **establishing non formal education centres for children often arose from a Mobility Map;**
- **terracing hill-sides occurred after the Rainfall Calendar and related discussion of soil erosion;**
- **crop diversification arose from the Agricultural Calendar or Crop Matrix;**
- **changes in gender roles occurred after the Gender Workload Calendar.**

Some suggestions for maximising dialogue and action

Listening and Encouraging

The most important skills for a facilitator to develop in order to promote good discussion are listening skills. This is what will mark out *Reflect* facilitators from traditional teachers. The processes of facilitator selection and training must be particularly sensitive to this. The methodology itself certainly helps this changed role, as the process of collective construction produces a momentum which is focussed on the graphics rather than on the facilitator. But facilitators need to be trained not to feel threatened by what some might regard as a loss of control or power. Facilitators should be urged to listen to participants and to encourage those who are quiet. However, attempts to force people to talk should be avoided as this can sometimes become very intimidating and lead to embarrassment and shame. It is not a question of force but a question of tact – of being perceptive of the different interests of different participants – and of observing when different participants are ready or willing to contribute.

Open Questions

One of the best ways to promote discussion is to ask open questions (not ones just requiring a yes/no response) which are focussed (not so general as to be unanswerable) and relevant (arising out of the graphic constructed and of real local issues). The training manual needs to include example questions of this type in each Unit, relating to the graphics constructed. These questions should be reviewed by facilitators in ongoing training exchange workshops and re-formulated, removed or added to where necessary. The facilitators should never simply run down the list of questions, but rather should seek to insert the questions at key points in the development of the discussion. The aim is to avoid a discussion between the facilitator and participants – and rather to encourage horizontal dialogue between the participants themselves.

The Past and Future

Almost every graphic which is constructed can be discussed in relation to time. How was it twenty or fifty years ago (or in their parents’ time or grandparents’ time)? How might it be or how do we want it to be in 10 years time? Keeping the time continuum in mind, facilitators can push the discussion beyond the here and now and can explore issues at another level. Sometimes this may even lead to participants producing (perhaps in outline form) a second or third copy of each map, calendar or matrix, to show how things have changed or may change.

Local Action

The facilitators’ manual can also include a range of suggestions for local action which might arise from the discussion around each graphic. The emphasis should be on actions that do not require external support (unless that support is realistically available). These suggested actions should never be mentioned directly by the facilitator as the ideas must spring from the participants themselves, if they are to take ownership of the ideas. It is much harder to mobilise people around something that you suggest than it is for them to mobilise around something they themselves have arrived at. Moreover, if actions are suggested by the facilitator, there is more likelihood of the participants expecting external support for the action (as the facilitator is, at least in some respects, likely to be identified with an external agency, even if always a local person). The process is fundamental here. If suggested actions are included in each Unit of the facilitators’ manual, they must be regarded simply as ideas towards which the facilitators might guide the discussion and not as definite plans.

Alternatively, to avoid the risks of facilitators ‘introducing’ or ‘imposing’ actions (or feeling pressurised to push the circle to agree on actions), the facilitators’ manual can avoid all mention of actions. Instead, the facilitator’s on-going exchange workshops (see page 63), might discuss possible actions that might arise locally from each Unit. This approach then involves local facilitators more actively (allowing local variations) and avoids the temptations that the printed word might sometimes present to them!

Raised expectations

One of the risks of the *Reflect* approach, if badly managed, is that it will generate a lot of expectations but not bring solutions in itself! Participants address a wide range of local issues and may identify many solutions/actions. But if those solutions cannot be implemented, then disillusion will surely follow. This disillusion could extend beyond the area of community action and affect the whole progress of the literacy circle. The danger of disillusion is perhaps the most important reason why facilitators should never suggest actions themselves. The suggestions must come from the participants and the facilitator should seek to focus their attention on what is locally feasible (ideally not requiring external support, except where it is available).

Obstacles to Action

One of the obstacles encountered in some areas has been that the literacy circle is only one part of the community and yet most of the issues addressed affect the whole community and require all the community to act. The literacy circle cannot indefinitely act for the rest of the community

and sometimes lacks the authority to act at all (if there are democratic community committees or clear traditional leaders). In these cases the first action which literacy circles may take is to share their discussions with local leaders or the whole community (in community assemblies). They can present their graphics to these wider meetings to help make their case. Indeed, in many cases the first action on any issue for the literacy circle is one of dissemination and lobbying within the community. This makes the circle a catalyst of change but does not force the literacy participants alone to carry out all the actions for change. In El Salvador some literacy circles found it useful to arrange formal monthly meetings between the circle and the community leaders so that there was a clear means of moving forward!

Written agreements

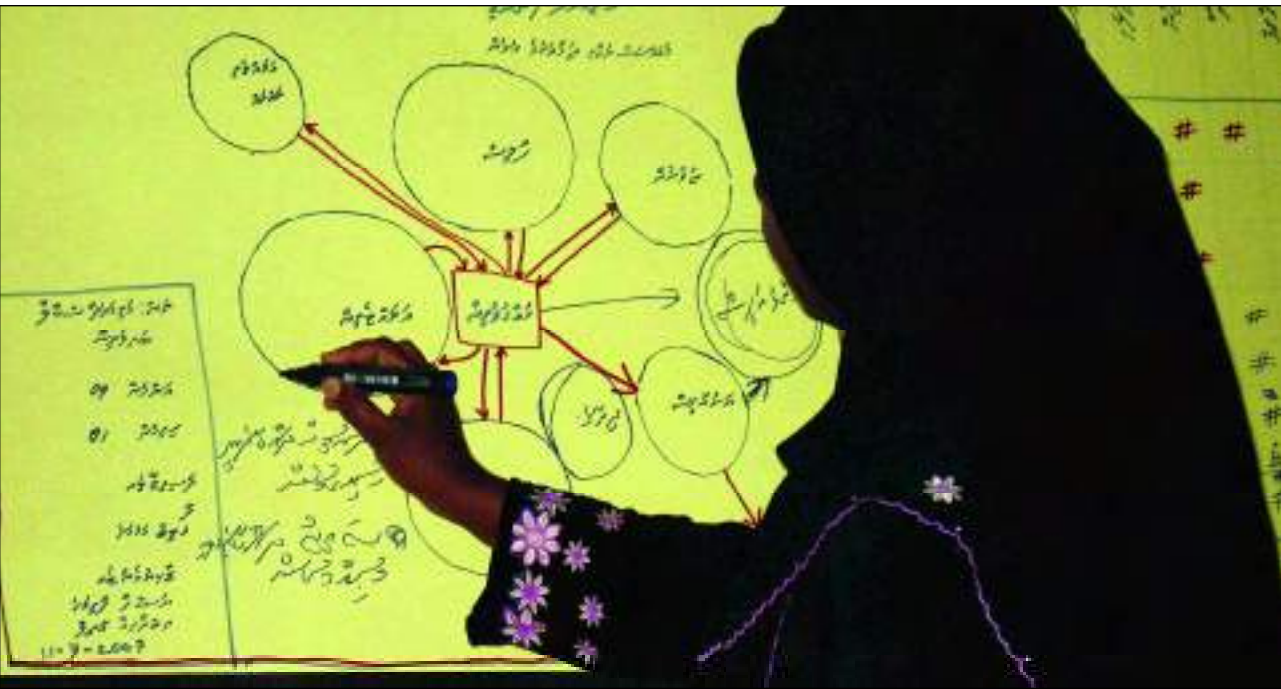
It is perhaps inevitable that people will agree to do more than they will actually do. Certainly the transition from agreement to action is a difficult one. One step which has helped to make this bridge in some communities using *Reflect* has been to record written agreements or contracts between literacy participants. These ‘*action agreements*’ identify what will be done, all the steps needed, who will do what and on what date – and the agreement is then signed by all who agree. Such documents serve both as reading and writing practice, and as permanent records. Each participant can copy it into their books. The written word often has a strange power to make people do things which they would not get round to if they had only agreed verbally! Referring back to past agreements can be a regular part of the literacy circle.

Building from Below

A *Reflect* circle in isolation will be limited in its capacity to initiate substantial change. However, various steps can be taken to develop a larger capacity for change:

- A *Reflect* circle can be encouraged to formalise regular meetings with the wider community (as noted above).
- Where there is more than one *Reflect* circle in a community (e.g. a men’s group, a women’s group, a group of young or old people, or groups from different parts of the community) the different circles can formalise regular meetings with each other to discuss their work and present proposals for action to each other.
- *Reflect* circles in different communities can be ‘twinning’ so that they correspond with each other and develop a sense of the priorities of other communities. Exchange visits and joint meetings can be arranged.
- *Reflect* circles in a particular area/district (for example fifteen circles) can meet for large assemblies to mobilise together on issues which they could not address alone. Representatives can be sent from each circle to engage in planning meetings.
- The *Reflect* circles can establish links with district level organisations promoting change.

In all the above cases, the graphics produced by each circle can be used as a vehicle for communication between circles. Some of the *Reflect* approaches can also be used at the district level to help participants from different communities to discuss issues and reach agreements.



Woman from Maldives using tools

ActionAid

Impact of a *Reflect* circle in El Salvador

Las Conchas is high up in the hills in an area which, up until the late 1970s was a huge coffee plantation. During the civil war it was abandoned owing to conflict. The coffee became overgrown as did the buildings of the old hacienda. In 1991 a group of landless families from elsewhere in Usulután came to the area in a desperate search for land. In the past some of them had worked on harvests for the previous landowner in the area, receiving a pittance. They cut down some of the coffee and started planting maize and beans for subsistence.

In 1992 these families formalised themselves into a cooperative and started to clear the brambles which had over-run the hacienda. With the peace accords and agrarian reform, by 1993 they were able to gain legal recognition and titles to 200 manzanas of the land. Part of this has been divided up between the 35 families in the cooperative, giving each two manzanas, with the rest being left as coffee to be worked collectively. Much of the coffee is still overgrown and un-productive.

There are many serious problems still faced by the community, perhaps most notably, soil erosion (on the slopes) and the shortage of water. They have to walk long distances (up to an hour) to collect water.

The *Reflect* circle opened in early 1994 and rapidly became a focus for many discussions of local issues. Through construction of a natural resource map they were able to have an active and focussed discussion of the water problem. They organised to seek and obtain funds from Asay, a national NGO. The literacy circle then acted as a focus for planning daily work groups of four people for three months to repair four large water tanks. They are now awaiting

the rains to fill the tanks! They are also planning to rehabilitate an abandoned well, concreting the walls and cleaning it out.

The household map produced a focused discussion on access to the community which led to mobilisation to repair the main access road. The agricultural map produced discussions around the theme of soil erosion. The circle recognised the problems associated with cutting down coffee on slopes to plant maize and beans – gulleys have started to appear and the soil is being lost. As a result coffee is no longer being cut down in the hilly areas and strategies to save the soil through grass bands and the planting of strips of pineapple across the slopes have begun. Other actions that have emerged from the circle include organising the preparation of organic fertiliser and planting tomatoes.

As a product of the literacy circle, many of the learners are now more active in community organisations, even taking up formal positions of responsibility. One learner is now treasurer for the cooperative, one is president of the credit committee, one is coordinator of the women's group, one is active in the education committee and one is active in a new committee on soil conservation. These are all new positions taken up in the past year, since the start of the literacy programme, and represents a dramatic democratisation of the community.

Many problems still remain. There is no school in the area for the 20 children of school age and there is little prospect of the Ministry of Education providing one in the near future for so few people. The nearest school is over an hour's walk away. In this context, teaching the adults to read and write is vital, to enable them to pass on skills to their children.

CASE STUDY

3.6 A final note: on motivation

Sometimes we miss out the most obvious. Perhaps the most important factor about the new *Reflect* approach is that it is extremely enjoyable. *Reflect* circles are relaxed environments, not threatening ones, and the learning is done alongside much good humour and laughter.

Participants remain motivated and even excited by the literacy circles and, in the process, they build up a lot of self-confidence – particularly confidence in dealing with group situations. This is of fundamental importance, particularly for women. Learning to read and write is a difficult process and adults will not persevere unless they remain motivated and enjoy the wider group dynamics.

"People realise themselves in social transformation and economic productivity not through better knowledge but through more confidence. When people confront a situation where they need specific knowledge they acquire it." Fuglesang

3.7 Observing a circle in practice

To give you a flavour of a *Reflect* circle it is worth recounting the experience from a visit to one in July 1995 in Uganda. The circle was in a small village called Sala City in Bundibugyo and participants had just met when we arrived. They were sitting, literally in a circle, under a circular shelter that they had built themselves. The facilitator explained to the participants that today they were going to construct a calendar which would identify the times of the year when there was plenty of food or income and the times when there was little or no food or income. The participants stood up and left their shelter to stand in a semi-circle around a cleared area of ground, which they have come to call their '*mapping ground*'.

One participant wrote the numbers one to twelve on the ground with a stick and other participants then drew a large framework for the calendar. The facilitator asked whether there was a lot of food or income available in January and there was some discussion before one participant volunteered to indicate by lines that there was indeed a fair amount in January. The facilitator asked about February –

whether there was more or less and why – and the participants started talking to each other about different crops and sources of income in February before agreeing there was less. The facilitator then asked month by month, with the discussion for each month lasting between three and five minutes and all twenty participants having something to say.

The calendar, once completed, showed there was almost no food or income available between May and August. The facilitator thus asked what they did to survive in those months – and then, what they could do to be able to survive better. The ensuing discussion was remarkable for the level of detail and the range of ideas that emerged, with different participants drawing on different experiences to make their contributions. Some suggested late planting of different crops like rice, cassava or beans; others emphasised storing of crops (which led to detailed exchanges on advantages and disadvantages of storing different crops and how to do so effectively); one man spoke about drought resistant crops like yam; a woman emphasised the impact of family size on food availability; an older man spoke about different planting practices he'd learnt when living in the mountains, including inter-cropping; whilst a younger woman challenged the traditional practice of giving away surplus crops at harvest time to relatives. Most of the participants were talking to each other, with the facilitator simply helping to stimulate or structure the discussion with the help of the calendar.

After an hour or so of discussion the participants returned to their circular shelter and started doing reading and writing practice drawing on key words that had come up from their discussion. The facilitator moved back outside to make a copy of the calendar on a large sheet of card, whilst the participants continued practising their writing. Unfortunately we then had to leave but I imagine the participants would have proceeded to share what each had tried to write and perhaps they would then together collectively write up an action plan or set of recommendations based on their discussions. It really was a wonderful process to observe. The participants, most of whom were women, were finding a voice and exchanging experiences which were of fundamental importance to their daily lives – indeed to their very survival – and the literacy work was arising directly out of that context.

Section 4

Implementing the *Reflect* approach

4.1 Introduction

Each organisation interested in using the *Reflect* approach will start from a different position. In some cases there may be just one or two people who take the initiative to explore the use of *Reflect* whereas in other cases there may be a team of six or 10 people or more. We have tried to make this manual useable for you, whatever your starting point.

4.1.1 Basic steps

1. The very first step is to form a core *Reflect* Planning Team. This may be just two or three people or it may be many more. You do not need to be literacy experts! Each person on the team should read this Mother Manual carefully. The team should then discuss in general terms, whether there is a demand for literacy in the area and if so, how the approach could be used.

Remember, literacy must never be imposed on people! It is not in itself a good thing and is not something that we can feel is good for others if the people themselves do not see the value. *Reflect* programmes should only be started where there is a clear demand from people for literacy.

2. In order to establish whether there is a demand for literacy, some research may need to be undertaken. Local research into literacy rates (by gender, age, livelihood, mother tongue) and the level of interest in learning (within different groups) is vital. This research may also explore the oral and written uses of different languages and the interest of potential participants. (see page 40)

Other socio-economic research will provide important information for developing a facilitators' manual, relevant for the local environment. Research into local organisations/resources (see page 45) and a socio-mathematical survey (see page 47) should also be considered. In some cases you may already have information available without needing to engage in extensive new research.

3. On the basis of the local research you should outline your strategy for introducing *Reflect* into the area. This will need to consider the following:
 - a) Are *Reflect* circles to be formed or can *Reflect* be added on to the activities of existing community organisations (such as women's groups, savings and credit groups, cultural groups, cooperatives etc). Either approach is possible.
 - b) Who else may collaborate in establishing *Reflect* circles? What additional expertise needs to be drawn on?
 - c) What will be the scale of the programme (what number of literacy circles may be opened and over what time period?) A slow start up might be considered advisable, to consolidate your skills, before working on a larger scale.
 - d) What language(s) will be used (based on analysis from the language survey see page 40).
 - e) What will be the profile of most participants? (based on the literacy survey).
 - f) What will be the profile of most facilitators. Will they receive an incentive/honorarium/salary or will they be volunteers?
 - g) When might circles meet? (an approximate calendar of activities should be drawn up to fit around and not clash with peak work seasons – though each circle should subsequently agree its own calendar).
 - h) What range of issues/themes should the facilitators' manual address (based on the socio-economic survey and the projected profile of participants)?
 - i) What strategies for creating a more literate environment would be most effective locally? (see Section 4.9)
 - j) What will be the overall timetable? There are many steps that need to be considered, for example:
 - preparing/printing (and translating?) facilitators' manual;
 - preparing visual cards (if considered necessary);
 - arranging supply of other basic materials;
 - training of trainers (depending on scale of programme);
 - selecting facilitators (linked to initial research?);
 - training facilitators;
 - pre-literacy campaign (local promotion etc);
 - start up of literacy circles;
 - first on-going workshop for facilitators etc.

- k) How will the monitoring and evaluation of the circles be undertaken? (see Section 4.7)
- l) How will the materials produced by participants in the literacy circles be used for planning future development programmes in the area? What systems will be set up to analyse these materials and channel the information effectively? (see Section 4.8).
- m) What will be the cost? A budget would normally need to consider the following elements:

General: training of trainers, initial and ongoing training for facilitators, monitoring and support costs.

Per circle: blackboard, facilitators' manual and notebook, visual cards (if used), facilitator's pay (if any), 100 large sheets of card/thick paper, 12 thick marker pens, supplementary reading materials, pens, lantern (if needed), coloured chalks.

Per participant: large exercise book for writing in, pen/pencil, rubber.

The costs involved in creating a more literate environment should also be included in this budget from the start. Clearly it is necessary to balance the costs against the income and at this stage you may need to consider whether participants should be asked to share some of the costs.

Although the costs of a programme will inevitably vary according to the location, it is worth noting that the cost per participant in the Uganda pilot was £11, in Bangladesh £12 and in El Salvador £34 (ironically the programme which used volunteers proved most expensive because of the small size of *Reflect* circles and the high cost of living in El Salvador!).

- Who will write the strategy, what consultation processes will be involved and how will it be reviewed/approved?

4. Your strategy document should in itself lay out subsequent steps to follow and the timetable to do so. However, the central task of the planning team will now be to produce the local facilitators' manual (see Section 4.3 and the sample units). The rest of this Mother Manual focuses on how to do this.

Be prepared for problems

Good planning will help to reduce the number of problems that you face, but inevitably problems will arise on a day to day basis. Perseverance is important. In the pilot programme in El Salvador there were a huge range of problems and obstacles including:

- tensions between and within the implementing organisations;
- controversial national elections within a month of start up leading to widespread depression and disillusion;
- a high turn-over of volunteer facilitators who were faced with severe economic problems;
- inadequate transport for promoters and trainers who were unable to visit some circles;
- the failure of a related credit programme to distribute any loans, despite promises;
- a poorly written, over-technical facilitators' manual;
- inadequate and un-useable visual cards.

Despite these and a huge number of other problems the *Reflect* programme in El Salvador persevered and proved successful both in respect of literacy (65% of those enrolled completed successfully compared to 43% in local control groups and a World Bank estimate of 25%) and in respect of wider empowerment and community development.

4.1.2 Some considerations in getting started

Below we will discuss the following basic questions which often arise at this stage:

- What skills are needed in the planning team?
- How long will a *Reflect* literacy course take?
- How regularly should circles meet?
- Should literacy shelters be built?
- If so, how and by whom?
- Is it better to work through existing community organisations?
- Should we pay facilitators?
- What should be done in a Pre-Literacy Campaign?
- How should we promote the *Reflect* circles?

- Should we hold women-only circles?
- Can children join?
- Are older people able to participate?
- What is the ideal size of a *Reflect* circle?
- Is *Reflect* only suitable for completely illiterate people?
- Can it be used with those who have basic literacy or are semi-literate?
- In what other contexts may it be used?

What skills are needed in the planning team?

- The planning team should seek to include people (or draw on people)with the following:
- Knowledge of primary health care.
 - Knowledge of local agriculture/income generation.
 - Experience of using good PRA (which is gender sensitive and aware of other axes of difference).
 - Knowledge of local languages chosen.
 - Experience of other adult literacy work (but critical of past practice and not dogmatically attached to primers!). How long will *Reflect* take?

Reflect is a process which should not be rushed. Although participants may be able to acquire basic literacy skills within about 200 hours (or less) it would be inadvisable to stop the programme and declare that people are literate. The longer participants continue to learn and the more work is put into creating a literate environment, the more consolidated people’s literacy will become. In the Uganda pilot, after an average of 100 hours of attendance, participants could read an unfamiliar passage on a subject they knew, write a paragraph on their own and do the four basic calculations in written form. Circles were still meeting beyond this point, in order to continue strengthening the skills (and because participants were enjoying the wider process).

How regularly should circles meet (and for how long)?

In the pilot programmes, different approaches were followed according to the different local conditions. In Bangladesh the circles met on a daily basis for two hours, six days a week. In El Salvador they tended to meet two or three days a week (for two or three hours each time – though sometimes meetings would go on for four or five hours where participants became very engaged in the work). Clearly the more often a circle meets, the more rapidly they will advance. However the choice of timing must be left to the participants in each circle. One recommendation which arises from the experience of *Reflect* in El Salvador is that circles should be encouraged

to meet more regularly at times of the year when there is less agricultural work and less often at peak times. However, if at all possible, even during the peak work season, circles should be encouraged to continue (if only for one hour a week) in order to keep some momentum going and not be faced with the problems of re-activating circles. This may not be possible where people seasonally migrate (e.g. to mines, plantations or pastoral feeding grounds) unless the facilitator migrates with them. However, if the participants have agreed a calendar in advance (and can review it themselves if conditions change) they will be prepared for anything.

Should we build literacy shelters? If so, how?

The organisation supporting the literacy circles should in general avoid directly constructing shelters. The literacy circles themselves should choose where to meet (in Bangladesh they met in an open courtyard, in El Salvador they borrowed community buildings and in Uganda they started under trees before building their own shelters). Often buildings which might appear suitable for a literacy circle such as churches or schools or large houses are not – as some people will feel excluded or alienated. Meeting under a tree may be less sectarian. If there are no suitable buildings available and a building is needed (such as in the rainy season) then the participants should be encouraged to build something themselves out of local materials. They should also be encouraged to think about other functions that the shelter may have (for other community groups/meetings) rather than be possessive. If special shelters are being built it can be a good idea to have a competition over the design of shelters between literacy circles – to see who can build the most appropriate style of shelter (e.g. a circular design with lots of air and light but which prevents disturbance, and with plenty of space for mapping work either inside or outside). The winning design might then become recommended as a guideline for future constructions.

If the *Reflect* circle is to meet in an existing building (such as a school) then the layout of the room must be carefully considered. Rows of desks must be avoided. A circular or semi-circular arrangement should be encouraged.

Is it better to work through existing community organisations?

There are advantages and disadvantages to working with existing groups rather than setting up circles which are open to everyone. An existing group (e.g. cooperative, women’s group, dance group, income-generating group) has the advantage of having an on-going group dynamic and shared interest which may make the group more sustainable. The

Units chosen for the facilitators’ manual can start with those which address the common interest/issues of the group. However, in most cases Units should be included which seek also to draw on wider community issues that are shared beyond the specific focal activity of the group. One disadvantage of working with existing groups can be that the group dynamics may be already fixed and thus be difficult to break. For instance the chair, secretary and treasurer may be the three most literate people and be reluctant to shift the power of the group by sharing their skills with others. Moreover, most groups have a restricted membership in one way or another and this can exclude other people in the community who are keen to learn to read and write. Existing savings and credit groups may, for instance, include the relatively better-off people in the community who can afford to join a credit group. The poorest people may be excluded by working with or through such groups.

Should we pay facilitators?

Paying facilitators even a basic honorarium/stipend is often the major cost in an adult literacy programme. The first consideration must therefore be your budget – what can you afford to do? This must be asked not just in the short term. If you pay facilitators in the first year then you will have to continue doing so until the programme ends. There are many other considerations. If literacy facilitators have been paid in the past it may be difficult to break the mould and not pay (indeed you may have to pay the ‘going rate’). If facilitators of other similar local activities are paid (such as health promoters), it may also be hard to avoid paying something. In all cases we have recommended that the literacy facilitators should be local people (see section 4.6). This increases the chances of them being willing to work on a voluntary basis for the good of their community. However, working with people who are volunteers can lead to a high turn-over of facilitators, causing problems for continuity and training. It can also make it hard to recruit capable facilitators. One option is to explore the feasibility of the participants/participants making a contribution to the facilitator (usually in kind e.g. by working on some land for her/him or giving some basic grains).

Update: *The International Benchmarks on Adult Literacy (see Writing the Wrongs, GCE / ActionAid 2005) produced since this Mother Manual was first published recommend paying facilitators the equivalent of a primary school teacher for the hours worked. Well-trained facilitators are the most important factor in a successful Reflect programme. So, we would now recommend, wherever possible, paying facilitators in line with this benchmark.*

It is often a disaster if you have, on the one hand, facilitators who are only in it for the money (and are not committed to their community) or, on the other hand, facilitators who are committed, but who are struggling so hard to survive that they cannot afford the time to work well as volunteers. A common conclusion is that facilitators should receive some nominal amount as an incentive (but not anything like a salary) or that they should be paid for the days when they are attending training and that they should be given small signs of appreciation of their work at different intervals. It is worth noting that in the pilot programmes, facilitators were volunteers in El Salvador, were paid a nominal amount in Uganda and were paid a going rate for such work in Bangladesh. The different settings required a different approach. In all cases the fact that facilitators were from the same community as the participants was felt to be a more important factor in ensuring that they were well motivated – their prime concern was the development of their own community and not money. Most facilitators also felt that they learnt a lot in the process – which provided another form of motivation. The on-going contact with other facilitators was also felt to be a key factor in keeping facilitators motivated: they did not feel isolated, but rather felt part of a wider movement and developed a strong team spirit.

What should be done in a Pre-Literacy Campaign? How should we promote the *Reflect* circles?

Reflect must never be imposed on people. There must always be an initial interest in literacy. However, it is increasingly uncommon to find communities with no interest in literacy. Most people do see some value and would like to learn something (if only to sign their name) and so announcing the literacy programme and motivating people to join does have an important role – participants should enter with a positive frame of mind. In a *Reflect* programme it is essential that the initial promotion also clarifies that the literacy circle will be not only about reading and writing; but that it will be an opportunity to discuss local issues and to develop a detailed diagnosis of the community’s needs. Many different media may be used to promote the literacy circles. These may include TV (perhaps portable with a generator such as those on a rickshaw in Bangladesh) or radio, music groups (singing specially designed songs) or theatre groups (with sketches that illustrate the value of literacy – but with the emphasis on entertainment). One or two PRA techniques could also be used (such as construction of a map – as an illustration of the approach to be used). The way in which the literacy programme is promoted

can have a fundamental impact on attendance – particularly in relation to gender. If it is promoted actively for women then men will almost certainly not attend. If nothing is said about women, in some cases none will attend. The balance is a difficult thing to find and much might depend on the initial research and prior discussions by the literacy planners. In this pre-literacy phase it may be necessary to address certain issues which prevent women attending, such as child-care.

Should we hold women-only circles?

There are no absolute rules about how to organise *Reflect* circles. In some respects the ideal may be for a mixed group of 50% men and 50% women, representing a cross-section of the community, so that all perspectives can be heard on all the issues that come up. This, however, will rarely be possible and may not always be desirable. In some cultural contexts women-only groups are almost essential (e.g. in strict Islamic communities). In many other contexts women-only groups may be desirable as women may feel inferior in front of men and men may feel embarrassed to show their ignorance in front of women. The same may, incidentally, apply to younger and older people.

In circumstances where women-only circles are set up, what is often overlooked is the scope for setting up parallel men-only circles in the same communities. The circles can then work on addressing the same issues and might be able to exchange materials and even meet on certain occasions. Indeed, circles may start as single sex and then merge into mixed circles once women have gained confidence and the men have gained respect for the women. If men are not included in the process at all there may be a limit to the achievement of change in gender roles and relations.

Men and women are rarely able to meet easily at the same times of the day (owing to different workloads) – so even the timing of the literacy circle may exclude women and promote men’s attendance – or vice versa. The aim should be to include as many people as possible – if necessary holding two or more circles at different times of the day, or the week, for different groups over the same overall time period. This will help to build a large enough force for change in the community. The interaction between parallel groups can also be a stimulating and creative process.

Should children be allowed to join?

In many countries there will be problems in trying to mix adults with children. Many adults may be keen for children to join, but if they do so then other adults may feel ashamed to be learning alongside children. Moreover, if *Reflect* circles are to succeed in generating dialogue based on people’s

experiences and then to promote local action for development, the process may be inhibited by the participation of children, whom the adults may regard as lacking in relevant experience. Adults rarely respect the views and knowledge of children – and it will not be possible to change such deeply held views overnight. In most cases it is therefore preferable to start the *Reflect* circles with a minimum age (e.g. no-one under 14) based on whoever is considered adult in the society (perhaps linked to whether they are marriageable/circumcised etc depending on local culture).

If the demand for education from local children is high some separate provision should be promoted. It is possible to adapt *Reflect* to work with children and this could lead to a parallel circle in some cases. Most children will be able to engage in structured dialogue about their experience (just as much as adults – but less so with adults). Children will often have complex work experiences to draw on, whether in the home, the fields or in factories. The range of graphics required to stimulate discussion will be different with children but the overall *Reflect* approach can be broadly the same. Section 6.2 provides some guidelines on how to adapt *Reflect* for work with children. See also, ‘*Listening to Smaller Voices*’ (Appendix 4)

It may not be realistic to set up parallel circles for children immediately owing to a lack of community organisation or doubts about the relevance of the approach to children. However through focusing the adult *Reflect* circle on education provision for their children (e.g. through an education matrix/map) the need for similar work with children may emerge as an action point. In the Uganda pilot programme this happened spontaneously, with one third of the adult *Reflect* circles setting up their own community schools; local parents paid the *Reflect* facilitator to teach their children using the same approach.

In some cases adults will bring young children to the *Reflect* circle, not because they want their children to learn but because they have no other alternative child-care. In such circumstances the possibility of a creche (perhaps run by a husband or wife of one of the participants) should be considered. Different approaches will be suitable in different settings.

You may need to develop a position also on babies who are still suckling. This can be done in each *Reflect* circle by the participants. However, in general it might be important to encourage inclusion of babies who are suckling as the alternative in many cases will be the exclusion of the women involved – which should be avoided. Again, this may be a good reason for the need for women-only circles. In Uganda, women did not regard a healthy pregnancy and delivery as an obstacle to learning and many continued in the *Reflect* circles with no problem, pen in one hand and baby in the other.

Should older people be able to participate?

An upper age limit on participation should be avoided except in exceptional cases. The contributions that older people can make, drawing from a lifetime of experience, will often be extremely important. Grandparents often do a lot of child-care which can also make them an important target for discussing health, education and social issues.

One factor to consider if there are many older people participating will be eye-sight. Indeed eye-sight may be a problem even amongst younger people. Some attempt should be made to do a basic eye-test very early on (even in the pre-literacy phase) to determine who has problems of seeing. Various strategies can then be followed. There are many organisations who specialise in providing low cost spectacles or eye operations (see Appendix 5). If such support is not available, then the facilitator should be sensitive to allowing those with sight difficulties to sit near to where they can see everything best (in a semi-circle or circle there will be no front or back, but there may be certain points where it is easier to see everything). In some cases, people’s eyesight may be so bad as to make any learning almost impossible. Nevertheless they should be allowed to continue attending if they are keen to do so – as they can still take part equally well in the discussions and other activities.

What is the ideal size of a *Reflect* circle?

It will be useful to have arrived at certain decisions regarding class size prior to promoting the *Reflect* programme. Fewer than 10 might rapidly become difficult if some drop out (though if the facilitator is motivated and the participants keen then why not continue?) More than thirty might be unwieldy and would limit active participation.

Bear in mind, however, that it is very likely that more people will enrol than will attend. Initial drop out, within the first two or three weeks, or even before the circle has started, is very common (some people will sign up for anything!). It is best to plan or allow for this rather than seeing it later as an indicator of failure. However, drop outs after the initial stage, though common in many literacy programmes, should be seen as a real cause for concern and, where possible, should be followed up to determine the causes. The facilitator could try to ask other participants if they know why someone is not there – or try making home visits if the person does not attend for several days. This is made easier if the facilitator is always a local person (as is recommended in Section 4.6). Such visits should, however, always be done in a supportive, non-threatening way.

Is *Reflect* only suitable for completely illiterate people? Can it be used with those who have basic literacy or are semi-literate? In what other contexts may it be used?

Reflect is a very flexible approach which can be adapted for work with people at different levels. If people have no previous experience of literacy then *Reflect* can be used at the very basic level to introduce the written word for the first time. Most of this manual is design to address the use of *Reflect* in such a context.

However, in many communities, it is increasingly common to find that many people have attended school for one or three (or even six) years, but left before they developed sufficient literacy skills. Particularly where people live in largely non-literate environments, they will not be called upon to practice their basic skills and, without practice, will lose their skills over time (indeed, often very rapidly). These people may be labelled ‘semi-literates’ or ‘non-literates through dis-use’. *Reflect* is able to work just as effectively with these people, whose progression in learning may be rapid with the first graphics being used to quickly refresh people on the basics and the focus then being on the practice and use of literacy.

In practice, of course, circles may often be ‘mixed-ability’, having some people with no previous exposure to literacy and others who are ‘old school drop-outs’. The flexibility of the *Reflect* approach does allow for teaching people with such different abilities.

The *Reflect* approach may also be adapted for use as a post-literacy course, after a basic adult literacy course (which will probably have used a primer-based approach). In such a circumstance the focus would be on using the graphics to generate written materials from the start (perhaps removing the need for any visual cards/pictures). The amount and type of reading and writing work in relation to each graphic would change, but the basic method would remain the same.

There are many other contexts in which *Reflect* may be an appropriate participatory method to employ. In multi-lingual areas *Reflect* could also be used in the context of second language teaching (either as a post-literacy course or as a course on its own). The ability of the graphics to generate vocabulary and the focus on participants constructing their own phrases and sentences makes the basic approach very suitable for introducing a second language in a meaningful context. The focus on structured dialogue can help people to develop oral skills in the second language as well as written skills. The type of graphics selected would have to be adapted in line with the contexts in which people use, or wish to use, the second language (to ensure that relevant vocabulary was introduced).

4.2 Background research

Prior to starting up a literacy programme it is of fundamental importance that a significant level of local research is undertaken. For many organisations some of the ‘information’ which we recommend for collection in the following pages may already have been collected. However, there is also an important process involved in some of this work and so some level of new research is still recommended.

For those organisations which have not previously used a PRA approach, the research process can be a means to develop basic skills and practical experience in doing PRA so that there is an in-house capacity which can be used for training the literacy facilitators (and which can then be used for other projects). Some of the Sample Units in this manual may give ideas for additional PRA techniques to use in the research. Other sources of information and training on PRA are listed in Appendix 3.

We have divided the research into three sections: literacy and language survey, socio-economic research and socio-mathematical survey. This is for ease of explanation and to ensure a comprehensive coverage. In practice, there are overlaps between these areas of research and each does not have to be carried out separately.

4.2.1 Literacy and language survey

The objective of this research is to determine who is interested in literacy, why, and in what type of literacy. Within this, often the fundamental concern is that of language (that is, which one should participants learn in).

The information that needs to be collected includes:

What is the literacy rate?
(divide this up by age/gender/livelihood/language)

Who wants to learn?

- gender;
- age;
- livelihood?
- mother tongue (and other languages spoken well).

What are the main motivations or aims of potential participants (for each of the above groups)?

What is the status of each local language?

What written/printed materials exist (by language)?

- newspapers/newsletters/magazines;
- books;

- pamphlets/leaflets;
- posters;
- libraries – fixed/mobile etc
(this will overlap with the survey of local organisations mentioned on page 45).

What language/s do participants want to learn in? Why?

What uses do people who are literate have for their skills?

- reading;
- writing;
- numeracy.

In looking at the uses of literacy, it is interesting to distinguish between imposed uses (usually of a dominant language/the language of power) and self-generated (or vernacular) uses of literacy. Imposed uses might include government forms or legal documents where people have to use a certain literacy. Self-generated uses might include personal or local record keeping or communications.

Some techniques of PRA could be used for collecting this information.

Example 1

Matrix of languages and their uses

This matrix can be constructed on the ground with a cross section of people from the community, without any need for reading or writing. Ask the participants to identify something to represent each language (some symbol of their choice) and something to represent spoken language (perhaps a picture of a mouth) and written language (perhaps a pen or some chalk or a book). Participants should do all the scoring themselves, representing quantities with sticks or stones or seeds or beans – or whatever is available. The researcher may ask questions like:

- what languages do you speak?
- what languages can you read and write?
- when do you speak each language? who to?
- when do you read or write each language?

Once this is completed, it is important to ask participants who are not literate, which language(s) they would be interested to use in literacy circles. Having reflected on the existing situation, they should be more ready to answer this than at any other time. Their answers may be very different from what current practice is. In the above example, the ‘future’ column shows a great demand for learning in Lubwisi even though nothing is presently written in the language.

Example 1

The resulting matrix may look something like this (10 = used a lot; 0 = never used)

	Government offices	School	Bank	Trade/shops	Home	Church/mosque	Future
Spoken word							
Lubwisi	4	1	3	7	10	3	10
Rutoro	8	10	5	3	1	9	0
Kiswahili	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
English	2	2	2	2	0	2	5
Written word							
Lubwisi	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Rutoro	6	10	5	2	3	4	3
Kiswahili	2	0	0	4	0	0	2
English	5	4	3	2	0	8	7

Example 2

Calendar of time availability to learn

This calendar might be done separately by different sub-groups – for example men and women, young and old men or people of different religions or castes. The example below only looks at men and women. The researcher should ask local people to decide which month of the year to start the calendar (e.g. with the first rains, with the harvest rather than assuming a Western calendar year. In the example below, the calendar starts in March. Some communities may choose to complete the calendar by seasons rather than by months. It may be completed (as below)with simply a mark to represent each item – or a more complex version would involve each month being scored out of (for example) 10 for each activity.

The calendar above would lead one to consider running a very intensive literacy programme ideally starting in July and running to September (perhaps meeting five days a week), then reducing during October to January (for instance to one or two days a week), reactivating in February and March (to five days a week) and then closing for two or three months until the following July. Although the overall pattern would be similar, there would be variations if there were separate circles for men and women. Each literacy circle, once started up, should do its own calendar to decide it’s own timetable.

Example 2

	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F
Women												
Outward migration		X	X									
Peak agricutural work				X				X	X	X		
Peak other work				X						X	X	
Lower workload	X				X	X	X					X
Men												
Outward migration	X	X	X									
Peak agricutural work									X	X		
Peak other work												
Lower workload	X				X	X	X	X			X	X

Example 3																	
	Morning								Afternoon								
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Women																	
Agricultural work			X	X	X	X						X					
Other work	X	X	X				X	X					X	X	X		
Least work									X	X	X					X	X
Men																	
Agricultural work			X	X	X	X	X				X	X					
Other work													X				
Least work									X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X

Example 3

Daily routine diagram

It is important to match the calendar above to the daily timetable of different people. Again, ultimately each literacy circle should be given the choice over when they will meet (so that very local variations can be accounted for) but some initial indication from preparatory research may be useful for planning purposes (for instance to determine if it is feasible to hold mixed circles or whether women-only/men-only circles would be better). It is very rare for people to say they have ‘spare time’

In this example, women might best be able to meet from 2-4pm, while men might prefer an evening meeting, at 7pm. However, it is for the people constructing the calendar to suggest times and the men may also prefer 2-4pm so that they can go drinking in the evening!

It may be advisable to do different charts for young and old men and young and old women. It may also be advisable to do charts for different times of the year. For example, based on the calendar in Example 2, it would be good to do separate daily routine charts for May and for December – as there may be significant seasonal shifts owing to climate (affecting the time of work/water collection/etc) or workload etc.

Example 4

Survey of literacy levels

This can be constructed as a large table, marked out on the ground with sticks, with a symbol or picture (agreed upon by the participants) to represent each item. Whoever participates in this should be asked to consider the whole community village in giving their answers. Different age ranges may be used. The participants should be asked what age ranges make most sense to them (they may decide to have just two or three categories). Answers might be approximate particularly when it comes to who may be interested in learning, as you will be asking people to speak on behalf of others. This should only be done on a sample basis in a few communities. The result may look like this:

A more complex table might try to identify levels of literacy (for example, out of a score of ten, where 10 means they are completely literate, how do people rate their literacy skills?). This would provide information on whether it would be appropriate to establish two levels of literacy circle – one for basic literacy and one for ‘intermediate’ literacy (traditionally called post-literacy). Information may also be collected for boys and girls to determine the level of demand for literacy from children (the Education Matrix on page 132 may be a useful format).

Example 4											
	Men				Women						
	15-20	20-30	30-40	40+	15-20	20-30	30-40	40+			
Number literate	14	12	6	8	10	5	3	2			
Number not literate	12	31	40	?	17	42	40	?			
Number interested	10	15	10	–	15	20	5	–			

Example 5						
Uses of literacy	Literate (do use)		Non-literate (would use)			
	Men	Women	Men	Women		
Orientation (signs/directions)	6	6	5	7		
Bank/credit (access to)	9	2	9	8		
Business (accounts etc)	5	1	15	20		
Letters (personal)	3	9	4	9		
Letters (official)	8	2	7	0		
Newspapers	6	4	2	0		
School texts (e.g. of children)	1	8	2	9		
Organisation (minutes/records)	8	2	4	1		
Health (leaflets, presc. etc)	5	7	0	2		
Agriculture (fertiliser, training)	5	4	3	1		
Legal (forms/advice etc)	8	2	4	3		
Religious	3	8	3	4		

Example 5

Survey of the uses of literacy

As an immediate follow up to the above, people can be divided into two groups: those who are literate and those who are not literate but interested in learning (or three groups to show levels of literacy). The first group can be asked: “*how do you use your literacy skills (for what different activities and how much)?*” The second group can be asked: “*how do you think you would use literacy (for what and how much)?*” Below is one example of such a matrix, where a score of 10 means that people do (or would) use literacy a lot and 0 meaning they do (or would) not.

The larger the group doing this the more representative the answers will become. This could be done by age-group again but that may produce too much unnecessary detail depending on the area. A gender breakdown will reveal that literacy is perceived and used differently by men and women.

Example 6

Local literacy walk

A related area of work to the above might be the collection of local samples of actual materials which fit into each of the above categories. This can be done in a walk through the community or by asking people to search their homes for examples of written materials. Bringing out onto display the breadth of materials (which are often hidden) can be revealing. This can also be useful for the literacy facilitator who may wish to draw on ‘real materials’ from the local environment when the literacy circle starts.

The information collected on local literacy practices from the above work will also be a useful foundation for developing strategies to help create a more literate environment (see Section 4.9).

A follow up activity to this collection of materials might be a systematic review of the materials to determine the simplicity or complexity of the language that they use. Many publications use unnecessarily complex language and constructions. If this is a common problem then newly literate people will have difficulty reading them. If you are working on a large scale literacy programme there will then be a case for targeting some resources at providing an advocacy programme and support service to people producing written materials (to encourage and help them use plain, clear language in their publications).

Further reflections on language

The question of which language to use to teach literacy is sometimes very straightforward but often very difficult. It is frightening to learn (see Barton 1994) that 50% of the world’s 6,000 languages are dying out and will disappear as the current speakers die. About 40% of languages are endangered, lacking the support needed for long term survival, leaving just 10%. The reasons vary from: “*outright genocide, social or economic or habitat destruction, displacement, demographic submersion, language suppression in forced assimilation or assimilatory education, to electronic media bombardment, especially television*”. As Barton exclaims “*this is an environmental disaster on a global scale!*”

It is certainly true that “*Literacy can have a role in slowing down a language death*” (Barton) but we cannot justify imposing literacy in a non-written language if participants are not interested and if their desire is to access the language of power. At the end of the day participants must be given the choice of which language they learn in (with the clarification that it is possible to learn in their mother tongue – as many people do not believe it is possible if there is no written tradition). Consultation should take place both in the initial research phase and when each literacy circle first meets.

Generally speaking there is a strong case for teaching in people’s mother tongue as they are more likely to be able to learn more quickly. It is a different process teaching in a second language if the participants are not fluent in the language concerned. Indeed, unless fluency skills in the language are high then it should probably be avoided for the literacy programme (and perhaps introduced at a later stage). If people learn more easily and quickly in their mother tongue, through this they will gain the confidence and skills to then move on and learn other languages. Although teaching in the mother tongue can seem to be marginalising people, in practice it can also be providing strong bridges to other languages.

If the local research identifies that there is interest in learning in a previously un-written mother tongue then the preparatory phase of the literacy programme needs to be extended. However, writing a language for the first time is not as complex as it may seem. Linguistics is often over-mystified.

In practice it is relatively easy to make progress. The easiest first step is to identify mother tongue speakers of the language who are literate in another language (it will be extremely rare that none exist!). Ask them separately to write out a few pages of text in their mother tongue on issues to do with the local area (you might ask for direct translations

plus some creative writing). Ask them to write the words in the way that appears most simple to them and most phonetically accurate, using whatever script is most commonly used in the area. In practice they will usually draw on conventions from other local languages. Then collect these papers together and review them to see what different means are used to spell different sounds. An initial agreement on spelling conventions can be reached with remarkable ease!

This can be formalised over time with local leaders and through practical use – though at some stage support/ advice from a professional linguist (for example from a relevant department of a national university) should be sought.

If the writing of a language for the first time is pursued, then it is important to have a strategy for developing the uses of the written language, perhaps publishing books (oral histories, translated manuals), bi-lingual dictionaries or local newsletters, and advocating the use of the language by different local organisations (see page 73). A strategy along these lines was developed in one of the initial *Reflect* pilot projects, in Bundibugyo, Uganda, and further details of their approach can be obtained.

If the language chosen is phonetically (more or less) regular in written form, it is worth doing a syllabic survey – to determine which syllables are most common in the language. This is useful so that you can select key words for the first few Units which contain regular syllables – so that when words are broken into syllables many new words can be rebuilt and participants have a sense of rapid progress. A syllabic survey can be done by simply taking a couple of pages of written text and noting down how often different syllables occur.

If the language has a non-phonetic script then the syllabic survey is irrelevant and the approach to reading and writing to be used is more likely to be based on whole words. *Reflect* is able to work with phonetic or non-phonetic scripts with only a small variation of methodology. Syllabic breakdown in the initial units will not be relevant for non-phonetic scripts but almost all the other strategies for introducing reading and writing (as outlined in Section 3.3) would be the same. Contact ActionAid UK for further ideas on language issues.

4.2.2 Socio-economic research

The sort of information which needs to be collected on socio-economic conditions should include the following (though the precise categories of information needed will depend on the area where you are working). The focus of attention should be placed on the livelihoods of the future participants in the literacy circle (following the research outlined above).

In other words, if the participants are expected to be mostly women, the focus should be on women’s sources of employment and income etc. To undertake this research it will be useful to have a multi-disciplinary team (including, for example, an agronomist, a health worker etc.).

Here are some of the more obvious types of information you will need:

- What are the axes of differences within the communities: by gender, age, well-being, ethnicity etc.
- What are the major crops?
- What traditional forms of income-generation are there?
- What non-traditional forms of income are feasible locally?
- What are the major sources of employment?
- What are the most common illnesses?
- What education provision is there?
- What % school enrolment (for boys and girls)?
- What are the priority problems of local communities as expressed by different groups (young/old/men/women)?
- What are practical and strategic gender needs locally?

All of the above issues can be analysed in relation to the basic axes of difference (gender, age, well-being, ethnicity etc). For example, different groups of people will tend to grow different crops or have different sources of employment. For help with this, and particularly with the analysis of strategic and practical gender needs, see the references in Appendix 3.

Some of this information (such as main crops or illnesses) will help you in determining what types of Units to develop (for instance based on priority problems identified); some of the information will also be valuable as baseline information for a future evaluation of the impact of the literacy programme; and some may help you in the process of preparing visual cards if you feel a need to prepare them in advance;

It is logical to use participatory means to collect much of this data, particularly using techniques of PRA, so that you become familiar with these techniques and are developing both your skills and the skills of the participants in the

process of gathering information. Some of the examples of maps or matrices constructed in the research period can be useful as illustrations for subsequent training programmes with facilitators. (see box opposite)

Community organisations

A separate area for research concerns the key organisations in the area and an analysis of their areas of concern (and capacity) so that if demands for external support come up from the literacy circles not everything falls onto your own organisation (so you do not create a dependency).

What government agencies/NGOs are active in the area? What does each do and under what conditions will each support/be able to help a community initiative? Find out names, addresses and functions of key sympathetic people?. What other individuals can be useful resources? What printed materials does each agency produce?

Again, techniques of PRA might be useful in collecting data on organisations. For example you could ask people to construct Chapati (or Venn) Diagrams in selected communities to explore organisations internal to the communities and external organisations with an influence on them (see page 136). Matrices to evaluate the perceived effects of these different organisations might also be useful (see page 138).

You could publish a short directory/list of key organisations (with names and addresses) and even include this in the appendix to the local facilitators’ manual that you develop, so that the literacy facilitators can pass this straight on to the participants. This information might also help you to identify agencies with whom you can collaborate in running the literacy programme.



Zenia Rueben a member of the *Reflect* circle in Mwanza, Malawi

ActionAid

The use of PRA for research

The sample units presented later in this manual provide details of some of the possible uses of the PRA approach for research into different aspects of community life.

The PRA approach when used for research needs to be handled carefully. Once the maps or matrices have been constructed on the ground in the participatory way outlined in the sample Units, copies should be made in notebooks by the external facilitators/researchers. However, it is important not to forget to give time for participants to make large copies which they can use to present back to their own communities. This is not only good practice but would also ensure that communities are not alienated from the research process. If the product of their work in constructing maps and matrices is ‘extracted’ (in a notebook) without leaving any feedback or permanent record for themselves, the practice could affect how participants perceive the use of the same methods when they join the literacy circles.

During this research phase you should be developing participants’ confidence in drawing simple pictures or symbols to represent their surroundings. Pre-drawn visual cards by a local artist will only be necessary in the literacy circles if there prove to be difficulties with people drawing their own in this research phase.

It is clearly not necessary, in this research phase, to introduce literacy or numeracy work based on the maps and matrices.

In order to avoid any alienation, the use of PRA in the research (and training) period should be restricted to sample communities and should not be over-done. PRA can demand a lot of people’s time and we must respect and not abuse that. If circles are later established in communities where research has been undertaken, the literacy circle should be asked before each Unit, whether they have done a similar graphic before, and if so, they should be given the option of using the graphic they produced before or re-doing it. This will at least give participants a level of control over whether or not to repeat a graphic.

One technique of PRA that may be particularly useful in this phase of socio-economic research is problem-ranking. Ideally this should be done by sub-groups within the community so that the different perceptions of people can emerge. Groups of at least five people of the same age/sex (and perhaps caste/ socio-economic status) should be asked to identify the problems which they face and to prioritise them. This can reveal widely differing priorities and the *Reflect* programme should seek to adapt its learning Units to the priority concerns of those who are interested in joining a literacy programme. For instance, the following different priorities could emerge:

Young men	Old men	Young women	Old women
lack of credit low wages low prices pests drought erosion HIV/AIDS lack of training health	lack of work no credit ill health lack respect poor soils climate poor roads	water supply low productivity lack of education low prices large families over-work health of children deforestation pests poor storage	ill health low income drought

Note on “the poorest of the poor”

In many cases the poorest sectors of any community will be the hardest to access. Those most likely to participate or cooperate with researchers (and subsequently with the *Reflect* programme itself) are those who have a little time available and who can therefore think beyond the next meal. This may distort any research results as the very poorest people (perhaps the poorest 10%) will tend not to have the luxury of time to be involved in any research – and they are most likely to be overlooked or ignored by others when responding to any research questions.

Where possible, efforts should be made to identify the poorest and to make special provision (*Reflect* timetables and calendars suitable for them). If they are excluded at the beginning there is a danger that the mobilisation of the *Reflect* circle will further marginalise them from community affairs, increasing the differentials between the ‘poorest’ and the ‘not-so-poor’.

This does not mean that *Reflect* should be focussed only on the poorest. Far from it! A critical mass (and cross-section) of people from a community will be needed to instigate any process of change. However, *Reflect* should seek to be inclusive from the start and this principle must be clear in the research phase.

4.2.3 Socio-mathematical survey

The main objective of a socio-mathematical survey is to find out the uses people have for numeracy skills in their daily lives and the limits to their existing skills.

The sort of questions which need to be answered are:

- Where and when do (different) people do sums (home/fields/market etc) and what type of sums?
- What mental processes do people use to do daily calculations?
- What are the limits of people’s mental arithmetic skills? (which calculations can they do accurately/approximately)
- What tools are used locally to help people with calculations? (abacus, slide rule, calculators, fingers – who uses which, in what contexts and what for?). It is worth noting that in Bangladesh many people can count and calculate up to 400 just using their hands).
- What words are used for different processes (multiplication, division, addition, subtraction), in what context is each used? How is each most easily recognised or understood?

- What games are played using numbers (dice/cards)?
- What is the number base used in different areas? (e.g. monetary system may be decimal – to base 10 – but weights may be to base 4).
- What denomination notes are used most commonly?
- What formats are used for numeracy (e.g. savings and credit/bank forms)?
- What are the prices of main products sold by people? (in local markets/larger towns/the capital – in different months?) In what quantities or weights are they sold?
- What are the prices of the main items purchased by local people (and in what quantities/weights)?
- What traditional and modern systems are there for weighing/measuring? Are there simple calculations of the equivalences? Do people know the equivalences? Which systems are used in different contexts by different people?
- What are the numeracy skills which people most feel the lack of or most desire?

Clearly the people who have been identified as motivated to attend a literacy programme should be the prime focus of this socio-mathematical research. The information may be collected by:

- observation of transactions in market places;
- accompanying people (e.g. traders in the market) through a day;
- semi-structured dialogue;
- collection and review of materials (e.g. bank forms).

In the process of doing this research and reviewing materials it may become clear that certain formats are unnecessarily complex (e.g. in a savings and credit programme). If so, where possible, action should be taken to simplify forms, making their presentation more logical or easy to use. This will inter-relate to the review of literacy materials (particularly as most materials will have written words and numbers together). The information collected during the socio-mathematical survey should feed directly into the development of the local facilitators’ manual.

4.3 Developing a local facilitator’s manual

At the back of this Mother Manual there are many ‘sample units’ for you to review.

The first 10 are laid out as if in a real facilitators’ manual (with literacy and numeracy work starting from basics and becoming

more complex). Then there are a large number of additional sample units (on agriculture, health and socio-political themes) and ideas for Units which might work with different communities (with fishing communities, with pastoralists, with refugees or in urban areas). None of these Units are for you to use directly. Rather you should produce your own sequence of Units adapted to your own local environment, which may also involve creating new types of Unit.

Your socio-economic survey, together with the literacy survey, should enable you to determine who is interested in learning, what their background is and what issues are of particular importance to them. This information should be used as the basis for producing ‘Units’ which will be relevant to their needs and interests. You will need to develop around 20 or 30 Units.

Each ‘Unit’ in your local facilitators’ manual will consist of basic guidelines for facilitators, which will enable them to mobilise the participants in their literacy circles to construct a specific ‘graphic’ (map or matrix etc). It will outline possible areas for discussion and analysis based on the graphic and will then give clear suggestions on how the graphic can be used to introduce reading, writing and numeracy work.

You may choose to structure each Unit in a different way but it is likely that each Unit will have the following elements:

- Objectives
- Notes on Preparation
- Constructing the graphic
- Discussion
- Action
- Reading and writing
- Numeracy.

Objectives: it is always useful to state in a couple of lines what the core objectives of the Unit are in relation to the themes to be addressed, for instance: *“to promote discussion of deforestation, practice construction of phrases using vocabulary about natural resources, and introduce the measurement and calculation of areas”*.

Notes on Preparation: in order to help the facilitator it is worth listing any materials that may need to be prepared, such as containers of seeds/beans, visual cards (if used), manila paper and marker pens, supplementary reading materials etc.

Constructing the graphic: this needs to outline clearly the steps that need to be followed to construct the relevant graphic. Some will need more explaining than others. The first time that you do a calendar or matrix a lot of explanation may be needed, but the second time you can

take more for granted. It always helps to have an example of the graphic – even a rough sketch of how it might look – as this will aid the explanation – although it carries the risk that facilitators will try to copy the example too closely (so always leave the example incomplete!)

Discussion: following on from the graphic it is useful to have a list of example questions which can help the facilitators to explore specific themes more fully. This should be like a list of ideas or questions, not something which facilitators are required to go through one by one. A lot of discussion will have taken place in the process of constructing the graphic so the aim of these extra questions is to probe deeper and learn more (not to start from scratch).

Action: Some Units will be designed to address local problems for which the organisation planning the literacy programme can see immediate solutions or actions which can be a first step to finding a solution. These might be mentioned in the manual as suggestions. However, there is a risk of pre-empting what the participants in each circle conclude for themselves, so these should never be read out by the facilitator. Rather they might act as a guide. It is generally better to stress actions that can be locally managed and do not require external resources – otherwise expectations may be roused which cannot be fulfilled. Where actions might need outside inputs, it can be helpful to identify where they can be obtained (in a local resource list – see page 45).

Reading and writing: The precise suggestions for reading and writing will of course vary according to the point in the literacy programme – early on the focus will be on individual words, later it will be on phrases or sentences and finally on free writing of paragraphs etc. (see Section 3.3)

Numeracy: The essential things to consider are that numeracy should arise either directly out of the map/matrix constructed or out of the themes addressed. It is vital to plan the learning so that it is gradual. Do not to teach adults like young children. Respect (and build on) their mental arithmetic skills! (see Section 3.4)

Although it is necessary to have clear instructions on the different steps that need to be followed in each Unit, it is equally important to ensure that there is an integration of the different steps. Every effort should be made to ensure that all the discussion and reading, writing and numeracy work relates to and arises out of the initial graphic – and weaves into a whole – rather than being a series of separated lessons.

It is worth noting that when producing Units the sequence is very important. The easiest starting point is usually some kind of basic map (such as household map/ neighbourhood map), often followed by other maps so that the participants gain confidence in the techniques involved. An attempt should also be made to build a sequence which does not jump around between themes too often. Rather it is better to introduce a theme and then explore it in more and more detail before moving onto another theme (for example having a sequence of five Units on agriculture and then a sequence on health, rather than inter-mixing them). However, similarly you should avoid going into too much detail on one theme (e.g. 12 Units on agriculture – which may take several months to complete), which might lead to repetition of discussion and frustrations amongst those who would rather address another theme (e.g. health).

Some flexibility is of vital importance. Although you may wish to have a fairly tight structure for the first few Units (with pre-selected key words based on regular syllables etc), once the literacy circles and the facilitators have gained momentum they should be given the chance to change the order of Units, reject Units or even (perhaps particularly) develop new Units. This is especially important for responding to the annual calendar. There is no point in addressing a theme regarding the harvesting of crops six months before or after it has happened. Certain Units can be flagged as having particular relevance at particular times of the year whereas many will be very general and flexible. The choice can be based more on the present interest of the group.

In a sense, then, the manual you create should be regarded as modular, with a core starting module (for example, with five or 10 Units) and then a range of options from which facilitators and participants can choose. In some cases you might find a strict sequence more necessary (for example, it can help with ongoing training if all facilitators are doing the same Units and are around the same point in the manual). But flexibility should always be encouraged: the more that facilitators feel they are able to influence the course, the more they will feel ownership and be committed to the process.

At certain interludes there ought to be revision Units to go back over the past few Units (such as at the end of a theme, a module or a compact sequence of Units). It can be useful to refer back to maps and matrices produced in past Units, as participants can see how much they have progressed and can often add further writing in the process. These revision Units can also offer an opportunity for facilitators to pick up on any unresolved issues or any serious mis-understandings which arose during the Units.

This may be particularly relevant in the area of health,

where mistaken beliefs may be life-threatening and where the circle’s beliefs may have been reinforced by putting them on paper. For example, a circle may have indicated on one of their graphics that *“stagnant water is healthy”* or *“flies should be encouraged because flies bring luck”*. The facilitator may have lacked the confidence to challenge this at the time (after all, the facilitator should not be expected to know the answers). However, in On-going Exchange Workshops (see Section 4.6) with other facilitators, the facilitator would present the statements and ask advice. Certain facts about mosquitoes might then be prepared and relevant reading could be identified. These can be brought to the circle by the facilitator at the time of the Revision Unit. If the participants still hold on to their beliefs (and the beliefs are really endangering their health) the facilitator can seek further advice and might request a visit to the circle from a good health education worker.

4.4 Producing visual cards

It is not essential to use visual cards. In many respects it may be better to give participants blank cards, on which they can then draw their own pictures. This will give greater ownership of the images and involve participants more actively. However, in some circumstances it can help the facilitators to have some visual cards to introduce to the circle, particularly in the early stages – until participants develop confidence to produce their own.

The research phase (see Section 4.2) offers an opportunity to see whether local people take easily to drawing their own pictures (in the process of constructing graphics). The facilitator’s training (see Section 4.6) will also be an opportunity to develop the confidence of the facilitator’s in producing their own pictures/visual cards.

If it is concluded that participants will not be able to produce their own cards then there are two options:

- have a selection of sample pictures at the back of the facilitators’ manual; or
- prepare some visual cards.

The three pilot *Reflect* programmes all prepared some visual cards but there were many problems with them. A review of these experiences has led to the following recommendations for people planning to produce such cards in future:

- It is important not to produce too many – and to leave a lot of scope for participants to produce their own additional cards.

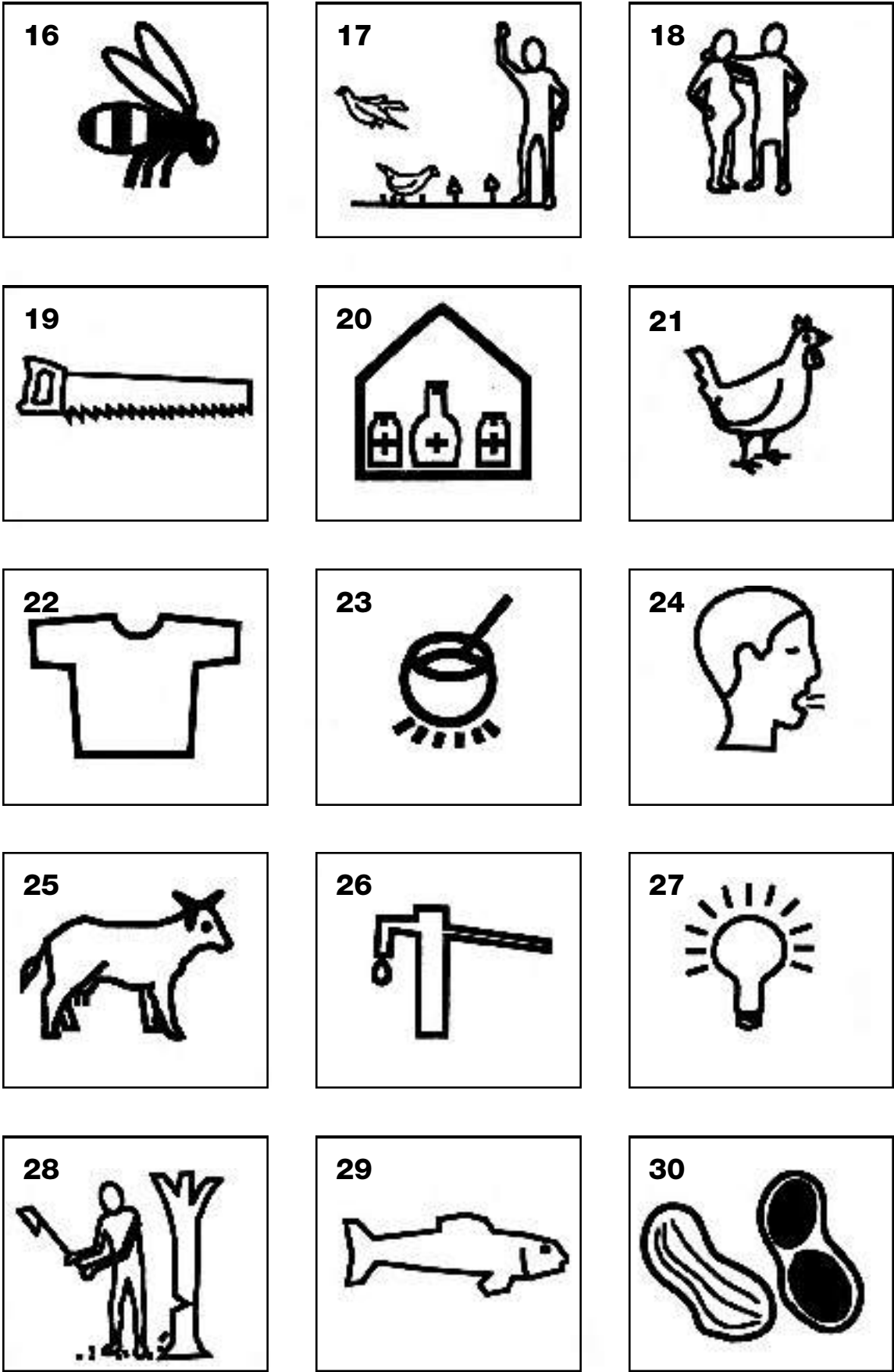
- Visual cards should be regarded as ‘symbols’ not pictures. They should be like logos – massive simplifications of images – not realistic representations. They must be very easy to copy. Ideally a facilitator can copy each image within 10 seconds!
- Where possible, avoid three-dimensional images (the use of perspective) as these become more complex to understand. Experience to date has shown that when participants in PRA produce their own images they tend to be two dimensional, flat images.
- The cards must be locally designed or at least locally relevant (done by an artist who visits the area – but beware the artist who wants to put in too much detail!) – and locally pre-tested to ensure that they do not contain mis-leading or prejudiced images.
- The cards should be very bold (black and white), at least 12cm by 8cm (otherwise they won’t be clearly visible) but not bigger than 20cm x 15cm (otherwise they are unwieldy and occupy too much space).
- The cards should be on card – not just ordinary paper. They should be colour-coded (e.g. light green card for agriculture cards; light red for health; light blue for activities) and they should be numbered so that facilitators can find the cards they need easily. ‘index’ cards found in some stationery shops might be ideal.
- The bottom quarter of each card must be left blank for the word/s to be written. There are some who feel cards should have words printed on at first – associated with the picture. This will make participants familiar with the sight of words (particularly important when languages are not phonetic). Others take the view that the picture should be presented alone until all the syllables in the word are learnt and then the word can be written. This latter approach is particularly appropriate in multi-lingual areas where the language learnt is decided by the circle once it starts.
- Visual cards can be fun – and every time one is introduced it should be discussed – what does it represent? Could we draw it better? The cards should not however be over-used and once participants have gained basic literacy they should be weaned off the images and on to pure words.
- There must always be lots of blank cards for participants to draw their own alternative (and additional) cards.

The examples of Visual Cards shown overleaf are not to scale. We have removed the names/words so that you can test to see whether or not you understand them (the numbers by each picture relate to the reference list below). Inevitably certain cultural assumptions are involved in these cards and they are not intended for use by you. These examples (hopefully) show that a simple visual image can be designed for almost anything. You may not be able to work out what each one is immediately. However, once you know what it is (once you have looked it up, in this case) you will probably be able to remember it easily. If you had produced the picture yourself then you would have no difficulty remembering it!

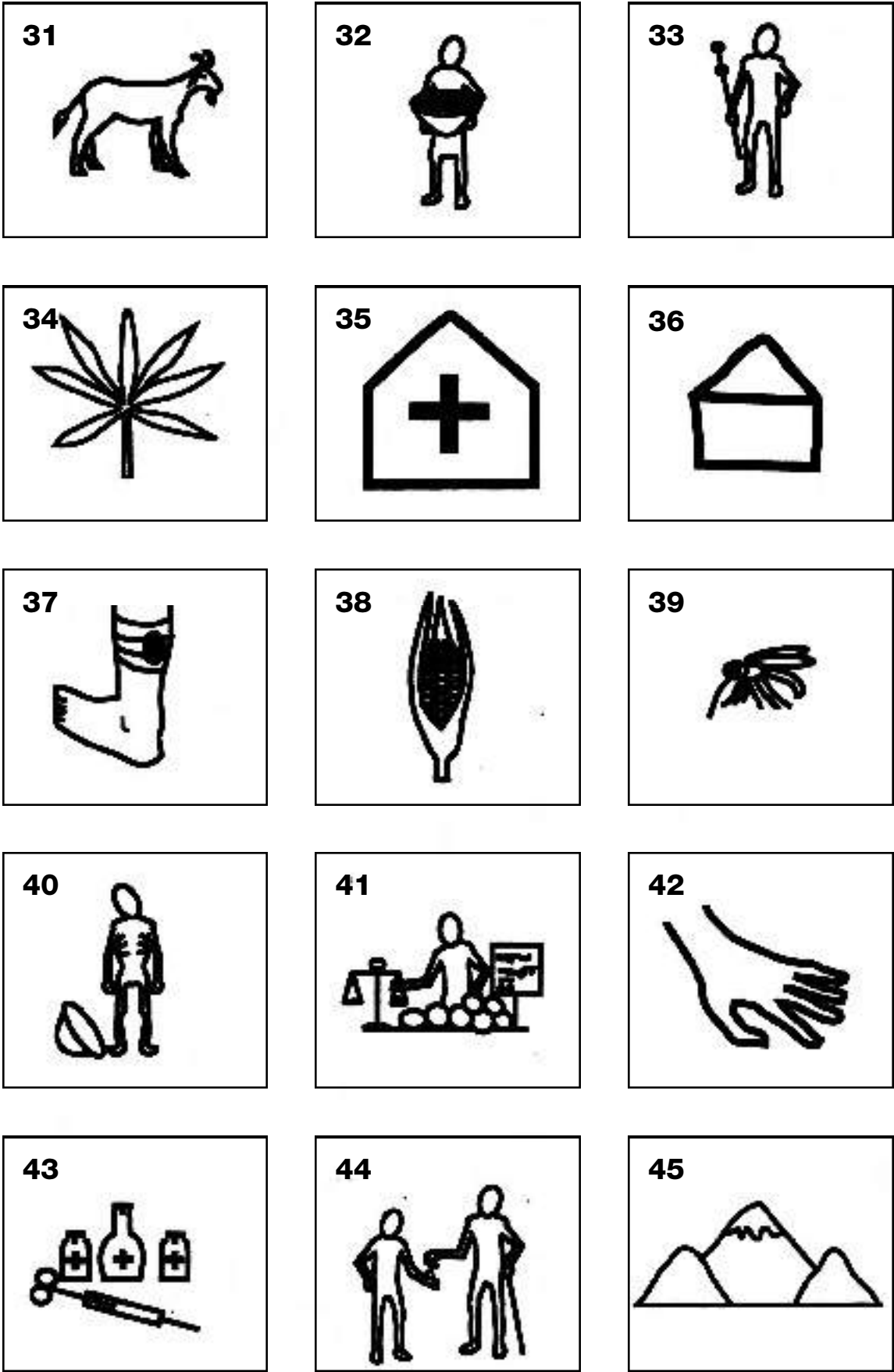
Sample picture cards



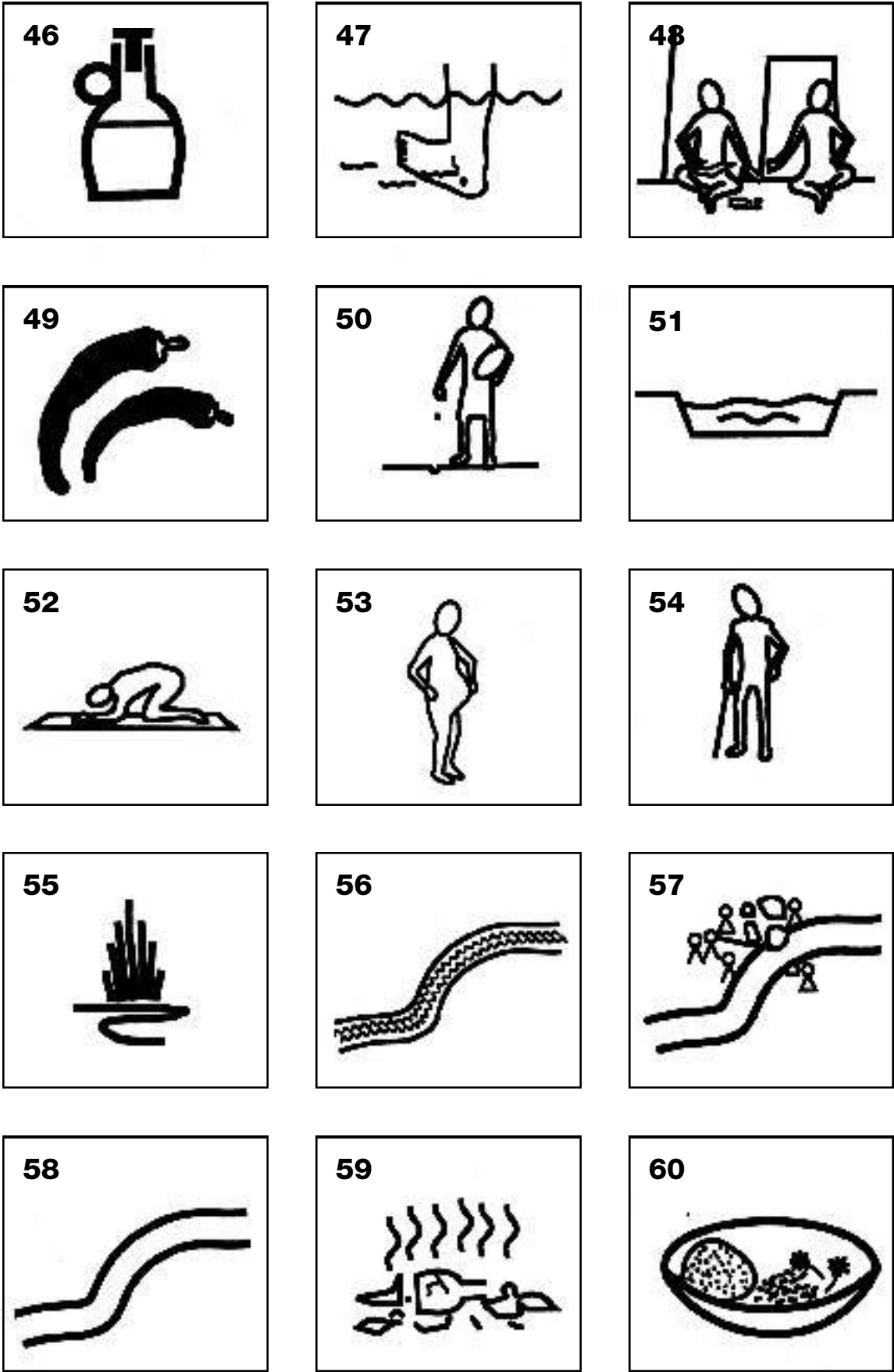
Sample picture cards



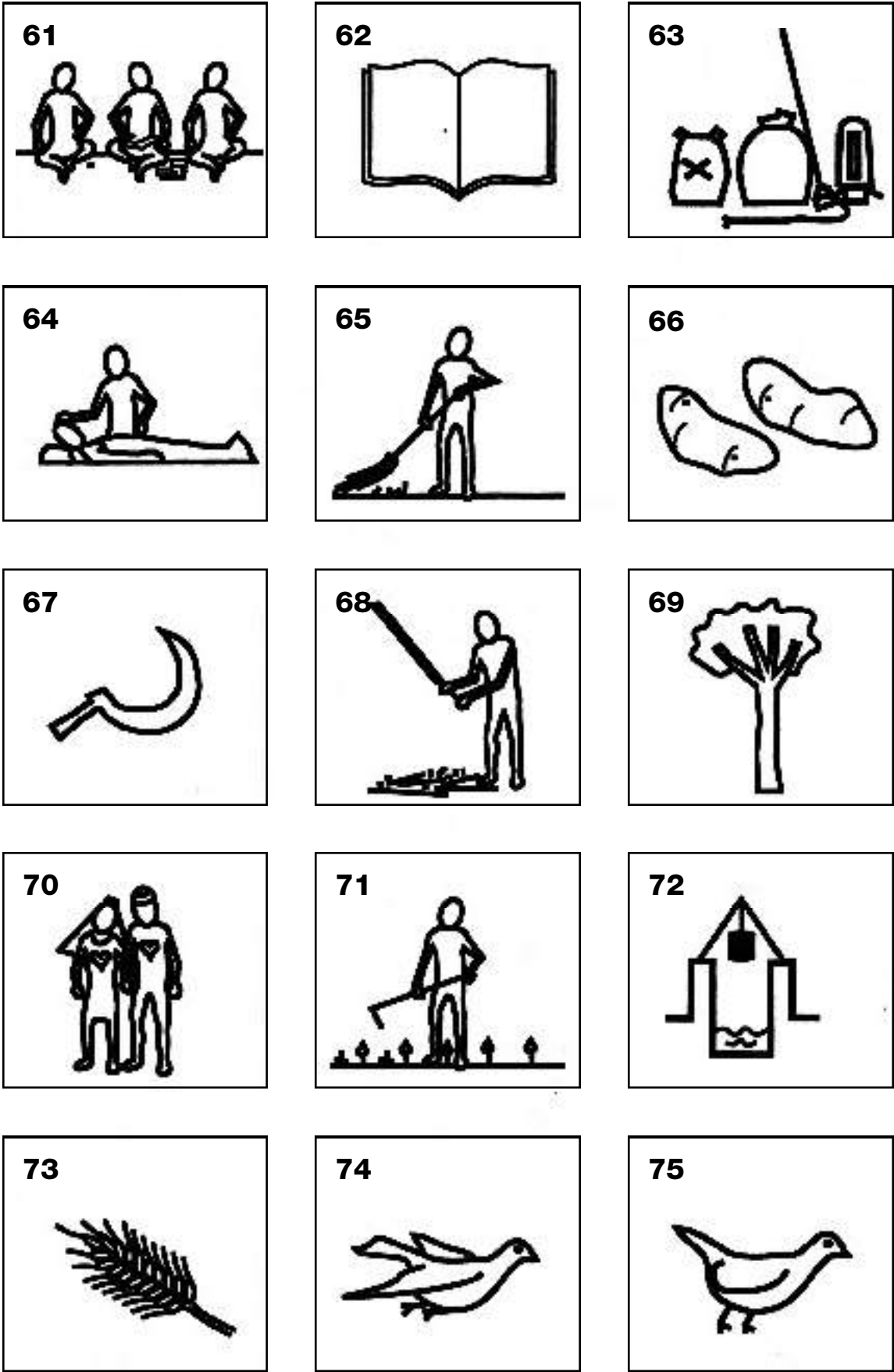
Sample picture cards



Sample picture cards



Sample picture cards



Sample picture cards key

1. alcohol

2. bank

3. beans

4. bridge

5. building a house

6. chapatis

7. chicken rearing

8. child care

9. clearing land

10. coffee

11. collecting firewood

12. collecting water

13. digging latrines

14. dysentery

15. fertilising

16. bee keeper

17. bird scaring

18. traditional birth attendant

19. carpenter

20. chemists

21. chicken

22. clothes

23. cooking

24. cough

25. cattle

26. water pump

27. electricity

28. felling trees

29. fish

30. ground nuts

31. goat

32. harvest

33. traditional healer

34. medicinal herb

35. hospital

36. house

37. infected cuts

38. maize
39. malaria

40. malnutrition

41. market

42. masseur

43. medicines

44. money lender

45. mountains

46. oil

47. parasites

48. peer group lending money

49. chilli peppers

50. planting seeds

51. pond

52. prayer

53. pregnant woman

54. rheumatism

55. rice

56. river

57. road clearing

58. road

59. rubbish

60. spices

61. savings and credit group

62. school (education)

63. agricultural equipment

64. caring for the sick

65. sweeping

66. sweet potatoes

67. scythe/machete

68. threshing

69. tree

70. wedding ceremonies

71. weeding

72. well

73. wheat

74. wild bird in flight

75. wild bird

4.5 Training of Trainers

One of the main purposes of this Mother Manual is to provide the information, ideas and model units necessary for a team of people to design a new *Reflect* programme. The Training of Trainers (TOT) also has the same purpose, and would be a very valuable exercise for *Reflect* planning teams.

The fundamental objective of a TOT course is to enable different organisations/people to adapt *Reflect* to their own conditions and produce their own local facilitators’ manual.

The ideal course would be divided into two parts with the first part introducing basic principles of *Reflect*, and the aims of the participatory background research. The second part would focus on writing materials for a new *Reflect* programme. There might be a gap of three months between the two parts to allow participants to carry out participatory research in their communities, and to then come back to the training course with the necessary information. This may not be feasible. If it is not, then a single course will be needed

Trainers: The ‘trainers’ (who we will call ‘the participants’ in this section) are anybody who wants to design a *Reflect* course and manage its implementation. They may be leaders of community organisations who want to start literacy work or civil servants with responsibility for a large scale programme. They might be new to adult literacy, or experienced practitioners.

The Course: Co-ordinators should be people with practical *Reflect* experience so that participants can tap their knowledge. A good number of co-ordinators is desirable (up to four). The literacy facilitators from existing *Reflect* programmes could make very good facilitators of different sessions.

Length: Suggested length – approximately 14 days.

Number of Participants: Suggested number – 20 to 30 participants.

Approach: The basic techniques of co-ordinators should be similar to *Reflect* (and good PRA), as this would enhance the training process. Examples of such facilitation skills are:

- listening;
- avoiding domination by one or two strong participants;
- planning activities which can be done in pairs or small groups for maximum involvement;
- keeping to objectives but encouraging maximum input from participants;
- preparing sessions with the specific needs and

- experience of the participants as a starting point;
- transparency with local people who are involved in the training exercises.

Place: The best place for a course (whether rural or urban) would be residential and near existing *Reflect* circles. This is suggested as it is important to be able to practice techniques of PRA in a real context during the course. However, experience has shown that, if there is a good relationship with the local community, the course does not have to be near to actual *Reflect* circles. Communities can simulate *Reflect* activities and will often readily participate in PRA. The important thing is to ensure that communities know and agree in advance that they are part of a training exercise for future trainers.

Language: In order to highlight the value of using people’s own languages, courses should be run in the national or local language wherever possible. This may necessitate translating materials from dominant international languages.

Large Scale Programmes: In large programmes (for example at a national level), Training of Trainers (TOTs) may be required at various levels. Although there is no detailed section dedicated to this area, advice is available through the International *Reflect* Network in the UK. In brief, there are two main options. One is to produce a national manual with strong modular elements, and then to run local/regional TOTs in which participants can select a set of relevant units, and write their own supplementary units as necessary. The other option is to produce local/regional manuals from scratch, but with technical and logistical support from the centre.

Contacts: Please see appendix for names and addresses of *Reflect* contacts both regionally and internationally who could help with materials or human resources for TOT.

Objectives

The activities in the training course will vary according to the needs of the group, but the objectives guiding the topics suggested below are as follows:

- Participants should have the capacity to design their own *Reflect* course, created to meet their own needs, and with a local facilitators’ manual. At least some writing should be done on the course itself, and, if possible, they should leave with a complete local facilitators’ manual for using *Reflect* in their own area.
- Participants should have the capacity to train other literacy organisers/promoters, especially literacy facilitators.
- Materials, resources (including human!) and practical

- Reflect* experience should be accessible to participants. They should have all the information they need to make their own choices about putting it into practice after the course.
- Both course co-ordinators and participants should increase their commitment to people’s indigenous knowledge, and their awareness of the importance of equity between rich and poor, women and men, different social groups and so on.
 - The way the training course is conducted should be consistent with the participatory approach of *Reflect*.

An Outline Course

The topics suggested below are a menu from which both course co-ordinators and participants can select. The relevant sections of this manual (which can be used as handouts and preparatory reading) are marked. The topics follow a logical sequence, as they are written here.

1. Introduction

The aim of this initial session is to share expectations and to plan the course. It is also the first chance to get to know each other (with an appropriate ‘icebreaker’). The course co-ordinators need to introduce the objectives of the course, and before explaining exactly what is on offer to the participants, should give space to brainstorm participants’ expectations. It is important that different expectations are transparent and matched to the extent possible at this early stage. Within the plan for the course it may be useful to leave some free slots for extended work on interesting topics – or for one of the participants to run a session themselves.

2. The adult literacy context

Several issues can be tackled under this topic. Participants can share their experience in adult literacy and their particular interests and expertise which can be a resource for the course. This can lead to an activity exploring positive and negative attitudes to non-literate people (especially women), and discussion of the purpose of adult literacy. It is important to explore the links between literacy and wider development, empowerment, status etc; as well as benefits to individual learners. In more inexperienced groups, the participants might appreciate background reading or a briefing on commonly-used approaches to literacy.

3. Literacy and gender

Although gender analysis should be integrated throughout the training course, the aim of this initial (brief) session on gender is to introduce the concept of

women’s and men’s differing and unequal social roles. The effect of these gender relations on their uses for literacy can be discussed. This could be done in the form of a matrix – which would be a useful way of structuring the discussion as well a warm-up activity for introducing *Reflect* (see Appendix 3 for training resources on gender).

4. The *Reflect* methodology (see Section 3)

This is the first major topic, and it is important that participants have access to materials for personal study, as well as a presentation, simulation or whatever activity will give a clear introduction to the *Reflect* process.

5. Observation of *Reflect* circles

The observation of *Reflect* circles would aim to consolidate what has been explored in theory in the previous topic; as well as bring up issues which arise in practice. It may be followed by sharing of experience amongst participants when they return from the field. Where there are no *Reflect* circles, then other literacy classes can be observed, or a simulation arranged.

6. Experience in Participatory Rural Appraisal (see Sections 2.5 and 3.1)

The aim in this topic is to give participants practical hands-on experience of good PRA in the field. After working with experienced PRA practitioners, and practice in the training centre (e.g. producing maps of their own community), it is important that the participants themselves work with local people using appropriate techniques of PRA. They should seek to draw on themes which are likely to occur in their *Reflect* programmes, and practice a range of graphics (at least one map, matrix and calendar). At least three sessions would be necessary. The philosophy of PRA and the facilitation skills required should become clear by practice, rather than by spending a long time discussing theories of participation in the training centre! Background materials can be provided on these theories. Strategies for involving women equally in PRA activities should be discussed within this topic.

7. Research and *Reflect* (see Section 4.2)

This is a topic to assist with planning. The basic techniques of participatory research methods can be introduced, particularly the use of gender disaggregated techniques. The participants should be able to train others in collecting information in this way.

8. Designing *Reflect* Units (see sample Units in Section 5)

Ideally this would take place when participants return

from a period of participatory research with their communities; this topic can start a design process, the results of which can actually be used as materials for a *Reflect* programme. If there has not been a gap in the training and participants have not yet consulted with communities, then they will only be able to work on draft Units and will have to do the real writing outside the supportive framework of the training course. Based on the results of socio-economic research (or their own knowledge) in their own area, participants can pick five appropriate themes for units, and try writing them. They should focus initially on planning graphics, explaining how they would be constructed and providing possible ideas for discussion. Everything they produce should be shared with the co-ordinators and the other participants for feedback. A useful activity would be to practise facilitating these units in the field.

9. Reading and writing strategies (see Section 3.3)

After designing the first part of these five units, participants can add ideas for the development of reading and writing. This can be combined with further observation of *Reflect* circles, (which can be critically discussed by the group) and, where possible, trying out the reading and writing ideas with a suitable *Reflect* circle.

10. Numeracy Strategies (see Section 3.4)

Similar work as the above may be done for numeracy.

11. Visual Literacy (see Section 3.2)

The aim is to discuss the concept of visual literacy, and to practise drawing visual cards. The field experience of PRA should already have involved some practice of drawing pictures but this can be extended in this session, addressing also whether or not visual cards should be prepared in advance of a programme.

12. Action Points (see Section 3.5)

After talking to *Reflect* participants in the existing circles and looking at the suggestions in the sample units, it should be possible for the participants to experiment with different ideas for Action Points for the *Reflect* units they are producing themselves. The wider implications of such changes and list of possible development agents with whom to forge alliances can also be discussed. It is also important to discuss how the facilitator can avoid dominating the circle in this sensitive area.

13. Planning a *Reflect* course/developing a Local Facilitator’s Manual (see Section 4.3)

Following on from the last topics, the purpose of this activity is to pull together the writing of individual units by putting them into the context of a complete course. Participants will need to select and sequence units they want to use with their communities. Participants who have not had the chance to do participatory background research can tentatively plan their own *Reflect* course, on the basis of existing knowledge. This is an opportunity to spend a lot of time on writing units and getting feedback and ideas from the other participants and the co-ordinators. People may work in pairs or small groups to get support. This activity must be given a considerable amount of time. It might help if there are portable computers available, so that participants can write up and revise Units quickly, particularly if the training centre has a wide range of sample Units on disk.

14. Post literacy (see Section 4.9)

Many groups of participants may wish to discuss their experiences and, overall aims in strengthening the literate environment in their area.

15. Management issues

Participants may vary enormously in their needs for this topic, especially in the projected scale of their programmes. Generally speaking, it will not be possible to replicate the way in which *Reflect* programmes to which they have been exposed are run. Only certain core concepts, such as women’s participation in decision-making, community selection of facilitators etc. can be retained. The aim of this activity could be to pool useful ideas! It is worth stressing the importance of securing wider management support (for example, in the context of an integrated development programme) as *Reflect* will require commitment, support and follow up from all sectors.

16. Monitoring and Evaluation (see Section 4.7)

Some outline ideas on monitoring and evaluation should be introduced, particularly with respect to collection of base-line data. Follow up workshops may address this in more detail.

17. Post-Training Plan

The purpose of this session is for participants and the key course co-ordinators to discuss if there is any need for a timetabled follow up to the training course. This will depend on the geographical distribution of participants, but could take the form of support for the writing and printing of local facilitators’ manuals; access to a central database of *Reflect* materials; a newsletter to exchange

experiences; meetings to share experiences with the *Reflect* programmes started as a result of the course; follow up workshops; support visits by course co-ordinators, or nothing at all!

18. Evaluation of the TOT course

The purpose of the final session would be for participants to evaluate the methods and content of the training course, making suggestions for improvement. It would be useful if this was in written as well as oral form for future learning. The participants can evaluate each others’ contributions, as well as the co-ordinators.

4.6 Selecting and training facilitators

Selecting facilitators

Various workshops have attempted to list what makes a good *Reflect* facilitator. This is not an easy question and there may be no universal truths but some guidelines are suggested below:

- The facilitator should be local to the community (from the same village or neighbourhood) in order to promote an internal and sustainable community process.
- If possible, the facilitator should be of a similar socio-economic level to the participants to promote understanding and harmony. This will not always be possible, for example if working with the very poorest sectors of a community.
- The facilitator should respect participants, and not regard her/himself as superior on grounds of education, caste, class or gender.
- The facilitator should be chosen after a process of community discussion, but the final decision should i.e. with participants.
- The facilitator must show commitment to her/ his work.
- Communication skills are essential; as well as a willingness to attend, and learn from, training.
- The facilitator should have basic literacy skills (see below).

Educational Level

The facilitator's educational level is a complex issue. Someone who is highly educated is perhaps less likely to share the socio-economic conditions of the participants – and this can cause problems. However, someone without a basic education may struggle so much with their own literacy as to find it hard to teach (though in some respects

they may have a better understanding of learning difficulties if they are still learning themselves). The El Salvador pilot programme worked well in communities where facilitators had been through six years primary education themselves – but problems were encountered with volunteer facilitators who had been through just three years of primary education. However, the whole programme was coordinated by someone who never went to primary school and only learnt to read as an adult! In the Uganda pilot the facilitators had between six and 10 years education themselves (up to upper primary/lower secondary); in Bangladesh they tended to have reached 3rd grade secondary. In both cases all facilitators proved more than capable.

In respect of formal educational level there may then be no absolute rules. As a guideline, facilitators may find it hard if they have not completed primary school themselves but the real issue is not how many years they were at school but whether they are basically literate and whether they have the other qualities of a good facilitator.

Men or women?

In a *Reflect* programme where the community has asked for women-only or men only circles, the facilitator would most naturally be of the same gender as the participants. In a programme with mixed circles, it would be ideal to have a 50/50 balance of men and women facilitators. Female facilitators have been shown to be a very positive role model for both male and female participants. Women then believe they too can succeed in literacy, and take an active part in the discussions, and men are able to relate to a woman in a role other than that of wife and mother – perhaps for the first time.

In addition, the exchange of experience during facilitators’ training and the further development of the *Reflect* course is much richer where there is input from both men and women. Where there are not enough women with the educational level necessary to qualify, a short upgrading course should be run for potential female facilitators. The promotion of female facilitators has been shown to make a significant contribution to women’s empowerment, particularly women’s leadership.

To pay or not to pay?

One of the most important questions you will address is whether to pay facilitators and, if so, how much? For a debate on this, see page 37. Clearly your decision on whether to pay or use volunteers will influence the type of facilitator that you are likely to recruit.

Initial training of facilitators

- The general objectives in training facilitators are to:
- Ensure a full understanding of the *Reflect* methodology.
 - Enable trainees to acquire excellent facilitation skills.
 - Build a team of facilitators.
 - Use participatory training methods which will stimulate creativity and self-reliance in trainees.
 - Give space to the discussion of gender issues, with the goal of raising gender awareness.
 - Ensure that trainers show respect for trainees’ existing knowledge and abilities.
 - Spend more time on hands-on practice than theoretical discussion.

Although many sections of this Mother Manual can be adapted for training facilitators, programmes need to be designed and planned at local level – so that they are relevant to the facilitators involved. The recommended minimum length is twelve days, and, if possible, it should be a residential course where facilitators can more naturally become a team able to work together in the future. The language likely to be used in the circles should be used for the training course.

The topics below are suggestions for selection, adaptation and addition. The actual training methods to be used are not described in detail here, but in general they should be drawn from participatory approaches to training in order to help trainee facilitators internalise new ideas about teaching /learning roles. The use of pair and group work will also help facilitators to see how they can use these techniques themselves. There should be a pre-training needs assessment survey so that the course starts from what trainees already know, and trainers have a clear idea of their role.

Handouts and background materials developed to help with training should form part of the local facilitators’ manual (easily done if it is loose-leaf) so that individuals and exchange groups have a permanent reference point. Facilitators should also be encouraged to use their *Reflect* notebooks to record useful ideas for their work. These can feed into future training programmes. The facilitators themselves are a developing human resource who will make a big contribution to the sustainability of any *Reflect* programme.

Suggested topics

1 Adult Education Methodologies

It is important for the trainees to discuss their own definitions of a ‘good teacher’ (perhaps from their own

or their children’s experience), and to consider the differences between teaching children and facilitating adults. The aim would be to stress the ‘humble’ role of the *Reflect* facilitator, and the fact that the circle will be a two-way learning process. Practical conclusions can be drawn about the importance of encouraging all participants to speak and to have a try at all activities. Techniques to practise listening skills should be included (see IIED materials in Appendix 3). You could also brainstorm and share conclusions on the purposes of literacy work and in particular the links with development.

2 The Reflect Methodology

The aim is to introduce the trainees to the basic *Reflect* process, preferably through practical exercises such as role play/simulation, observation of another *Reflect* facilitator etc. If trainees have much experience of a primer-based approach to literacy, then this is a good time to look at primer materials and compare with *Reflect* units. Trainees should have access to the units in the local facilitators’ manual from the early stages of the course. Their manual should be clearly introduced to them with an explanation of how it was designed and by whom.

3 Gender awareness session

The aim of this session on the initial training course can only be to open up a debate which can be continued through future exchange workshops. It is not intended to be a personal challenge to each trainee! Discussions can revolve around the different social roles of women and men (perhaps constructing the appropriate version of the gender workload calendar); the reasons for greater illiteracy amongst women, and women and men’s uses for literacy. It would form a useful preparation to PRA fieldwork, and trainees’ perceptions can be shared in the follow-up discussions.

4 Hands-on PRA experience

In preference to spending long hours discussing facilitation techniques, the trainees should spend at least five days in the field working on PRA exercises alongside good experienced trainers. They should aim to cover the commonest graphics – map; calendar; matrix; preference ranking – used in *Reflect*. Although they will not be doing literacy in the field, trainees should facilitate the transfer of the graphics from the ground to large sheets of paper or card (using pictures improvised by the participants). Copies of these graphics will be used in later training sessions on reading, writing and

numeracy. The most important thing is for trainers to facilitate a critical follow-up discussion of these exercises with regard to:

- confidence of trainees in interacting with community members;
- active participation of women and men;
- guiding or dominating role of facilitator;
- probable results in terms of community mobilisation;
- handling issues which come up in a participatory discussion;
- potential of PRA for literacy (i.e. *Reflect* methodology).

Trainees may keep a diary of the course to record their personal impressions.

5 Reading, writing and numeracy

The graphics drawn by the trainees after the PRA work, can be used as a starting point for collecting reading, writing and numeracy strategies. Each of these skills can be taken in turn. The trainees can draw together the largest possible number of ways to teach each one. This will range, for example, from early work with pictures or syllable cards to strengthening independent writing skills. The basic principle of rooting literacy work, either in the language/calculations used by the participants during the construction of the graphic, or in related topics and materials should be stressed. There should be plenty of opportunity for trainees to practise on each other (micro-teaching), building up to practice in the field with community members. They might start by trying out some units they would use early in a facilitators’ manual, and progress to later units so that they get an idea of the range of possible activities. Some trainees will be able to apply what they have learned, and think up their own strategies in a given situation.

6 Teaching techniques

The aim is to introduce the ‘*learner-centred*’ techniques which can be a good practice base for facilitators in their circles. Consolidating the previous topic, examples of literacy strategies can be taken and ‘taught’ in different ways; for instance group work, pair work, mixed-ability work, buddy work, can all be covered. The difference between *Reflect* and the trainees’ own formal educational experience might usefully be discussed at this stage.

7 Unit planning and preparation

The aim is to show trainees how to prepare for facilitating a range of units – without being put off by the heavy task. For example, trainees can prepare their

containers of materials (and cards if required, etc.) together. The benefits of mutual support through on-going training can be emphasised. Hints on personal time management may be welcomed here!

8 Management of Circles

The purpose of this topic is to discuss ways in which the *Reflect* participants can take maximum responsibility for all aspects of *Reflect* – from looking after the literacy shelter; storing materials such as cards; keeping the attendance register, and following up participants who have not been attending regularly. The planning of the pre-literacy campaign and the facilitators’ part in this can be included here.

9 Assessment of participants

This should be introduced on the initial course and followed up through on-going training. It is important that the facilitators have realistic expectations of the progress of participants (should they, for example, just be writing their name or writing a whole letter in the first six months?), and know how they themselves will be asked to document their participants. It should be stressed that there are no rewards for finishing the course more quickly. The role of self-evaluation by the participants themselves should be outlined.

10 The facilitator and action points

The purpose of this topic is to introduce the idea that the facilitator could be a communication ‘*bridge*’ for the *Reflect* participants when they are trying to resolve issues arising from discussion in the circle. This is critical to avoid participant disappointments, the trainees will need a thorough briefing on the resources and agencies operating in the area (and on what each can and will not offer). At the same time it must be emphasised that, as facilitators, they should never suggest Action Points, and that the success of Action Points is not their responsibility. Their position as literates with direct contact to the organisation implementing *Reflect* is merely another way of helping their community if they so wish. This can be followed up in on-going training.

11 Evaluation of the training/discussion of future support from the trainers.

The conclusions from the initial training course about the strengths and weaknesses of the training process, and the strengths and weaknesses of the trainees themselves, will guide planning about future support. The activities to take place in the first exchange and support workshops may range from basic drawing of

visual cards, making syllable cards and so on to more work on mixed level teaching strategies. It is important to decide on a plan together, and to know how often the trainers can take part in these meetings. Facilitators should also know if they expect any support visits to their circle, and what is the purpose of these visits. Clarity and sufficient control over the training process can help to motivate facilitators; as well as preventing future meetings being mainly about pay and conditions!

On-going training/facilitators exchange workshops

On-going training is vital to the facilitator’s success, as they do not know the problems they will face until they have started work. Any amount of initial training (even six months) will be inadequate if there is no follow up.

The on-going training can most easily take the form of exchange and support meetings for facilitators who live in the same area. Facilitation skills can be improved through these sessions, and common issues emerging in the discussions in each unit can be brought up. Joint action can be taken on any particular problems that have arisen or may arise. The workshops must fundamentally look backwards and forwards.

All three pilot projects arranged regular workshops between facilitators – initially fortnightly, and later monthly. In these workshops the facilitators discussed the problems they have had over the previous weeks and prepared themselves for the work of the coming weeks (focusing on practising forthcoming Units and anticipating any difficulties). They also addressed logistical issues and had monitoring and evaluation functions.

At first, these ongoing workshops might depend on the presence of the original trainers, but as the team develops, some facilitators will develop a leadership role, and all will grow in confidence and skill as facilitators. The development of an organisational structure, perhaps with a secretary and a chair, has proved useful to group solidarity and sustainability.

Accompanying initiatives to these on-going workshops could be the forming of a facilitators’ Savings and Credit Group (or Revolving Fund), a shared labour group, or any small enterprise. This helps to maintain the momentum of the workshops; as well as to optimise the benefits of being a *Reflect* literacy facilitator.

One particular role which the On-going Training or Facilitator’s Exchange Workshops can play is with respect to addressing misconceptions or prejudices which have arisen in the literacy circles. In respect of health issues this can be particularly important as misconceptions may be life-threatening and yet may be re-inforced in a *Reflect* circle if

they are put on paper. Facilitators may not be ready to challenge misconceptions at the time but can make a note of concerns they have and bring them to the workshops to share with other facilitators. Action can then be taken to address the misconceptions either in a revision unit or a special training programme.

The pilot programmes all found on-going training workshops to be important in developing the facilitators’ confidence and abilities, and in maintaining their motivation. Regular contact helped to build a team spirit. The workshops also helped to advance the facilitators’ own learning. The evaluators in Bangladesh noted: “*There was some impact on their own families as they [female facilitators] were now able to advise husbands, fathers or brothers about profitable activities and the best time to invest in different things*”. The role of these on-going workshops was therefore very varied: providing some training, some opportunity for personal development, some social contact and perhaps most of all a regular boost to their morale and motivation.

Refresher workshops

After the first three months, and then after every six months, the facilitators should have the chance to attend Refresher Workshops. This is a valuable opportunity for the managers and trainers to assess the success of the *Reflect* programmes so far; to improve upon the weakest areas of facilitation with more training, and to develop further the Facilitators’ Manual.

These workshops can be the ideal time for the facilitators to adapt the manual and thus take full ownership of it. The workshops can be used not just for re-ordering the manual, but also for or preparing new Units to respond to emerging issues. It should be a basic principle to update the manual. So, once more, regular workshops are indispensable! The Local Facilitator’s Manual will be more easily updated and revised if initially produced in a modular form (or in a folder within which sheets can be re-arranged or replaced).

Final note

The ideas above are for situations where money; time; material and human resources etc. are all sufficient. The success of the *Reflect* programme does not depend on heavy investment in training. Different levels of support will be possible in different circumstances If choices have to be made the ongoing training is probably the top priority (even if not led by external trainers). This does not require the input of many external resources but can have a significant impact.

In order to find out what help is available from regional and international sources, please see the list of contacts in Appendix 2 of this manual

Dealing with high turnover of facilitators

In any literacy programme there is going to be some problem with turn-over of facilitators. This may be most common where facilitators are volunteers and are under extreme economic pressure. This was the case in the pilot programme in El Salvador. It can cause serious problems as it is usually not possible to repeat the initial training for each new facilitator.

In order to address this, in El Salvador, two facilitators were trained for each circle. They were then able to help each other, do joint teaching or teach on alternate days. If one dropped out there was some back up and time to plan for a replacement. Such an approach may not be realistic in some contexts.

If a facilitator does drop out and there is no trained replacement, various strategies can be used. A facilitator from a neighbouring community can offer some cover or, if there is a participant from the circle who has advanced rapidly, s/he can play a facilitation role. The best way to train a new facilitator may be to arrange for them to live and work alongside a good facilitator for a week or two – so that they can participate in and observe a *Reflect* circle, and discuss wider issues with the facilitator. Attendance at the on-going workshops will also offer a way to address some specific aspects of the approach and to rapidly bring new facilitators into a team.



A village meeting takes place in Tanzania

4.7 Monitoring and evaluation

Developing an efficient monitoring and evaluation system is important if you wish to understand the outputs, outcomes and impact of your *Reflect* programme.

This can help you to respond to changing needs, fill gaps, learn from experience, make adjustments and improve future practice. Moreover, as the *Reflect* approach is still evolving, it will be useful internationally if programmes are well monitored and evaluated so that the process of learning, refining and improving the *Reflect* approach can continue. The International *Reflect* Network in ActionAid London provides a contact point for you to share any learning and can also give more detailed advice on approaches to monitoring and evaluation. Further support is available from the Regional Training Centres (see Appendix 2). The evaluations of the original pilot programmes are also available from these sources. Most of the observations here are based on the experiences from those evaluations.

What level of learning should be expected?

The progress of participants in developing literacy and numeracy skills will vary considerably from one country to another, depending on the language, the complexity of the script and the wider context. An example, however, may be useful. In the Uganda pilot, where a previously unwritten language (Lubwisi) was used, in a Roman script, an average participant after actual attendance in a circle for 100 hours (over a one year period), could:

- Read a paragraph aloud and understand it (though would have difficulty with silent reading);
- write a letter on a familiar topic, with clear hand-writing;
- copy and calculate, in written form, the four basic numeracy functions (with numbers up to four figures).

Who monitors and evaluates?

There will be many different people with a stake in monitoring and evaluation:

- **Participants** – who informally monitor and evaluate their

- own progress (and that of the facilitator) but who can be encouraged to become more aware of doing so – and helped to do so more systematically.
- **Facilitators** – who follow the performance of participants in their circle and collectively may monitor the progress of the *Reflect* approach in their exchange workshops.
- The Community outside the circle, which may monitor and evaluate both the circle and the implementing organisation, (though this should be done within limits because there may be elements outside the literacy circle who feel threatened by the empowerment of participants)
- **The Implementing Project** – to make decisions on how to improve the project; this may involve field supervisors or support workers (who monitor the circles), trainers, programme managers etc.
- **External Agencies/Donors** – who have funded the work and wish to know whether funds have been spent well.
- **Other *Reflect* practitioners elsewhere in the world** – who may wish to learn from you experience to improve or adjust their own practice.

Ideally each of these stakeholders should both be involved in the process of monitoring and evaluating *Reflect* and be the subject of monitoring and evaluation. There will of course be different issues or questions raised by each stakeholder and asked of each stakeholder, sometimes requiring different approaches or types of evaluation.

If any stakeholders are given particular priority it should be the participants themselves – who should be urged to develop their own indicators and take control of their own process of evaluation. This requires considerable flexibility and may be frustrating for agencies who still wish to ‘control’ or ‘manage’ the process from outside. The expectations of participants may change rapidly through a *Reflect* course, making some baseline information irrelevant and requiring a constant re-definition of indicators. This can mess up the tidy plans of any outside agency! However, this shift of focus is consistent with the *Reflect* approach and should be pursued where possible. This is not, however, to suggest that the other stakeholders should be ignored!

What to monitor and evaluate? Some possible indicators

In a *Reflect* programme it is important to evaluate not only the impact on people’s literacy and numeracy but also the impact on wider empowerment. Ideally all stakeholders should have some involvement in determining the range of indicators to be used (and also in collecting, analysing and using the resulting data). Circle participants specifically

should be asked to identify indicators which they can monitor themselves.

The range of indicators that you decide to use will be determined by who is doing the evaluation, what for and after what time period. The following suggested indicators, broadly divided between monitoring (outputs) and evaluation (outcomes and impact) might be useful:

Monitoring/basic outputs

- attendance;
- drop-out;
- content and quality of participant’s books;
- participants ability to read and write (including numbers);
- participant’s self-evaluation of progress in reading, writing and numeracy;
- development of literate habits (who reads what /how often);
- the quality of each graphic produced;
- level of participant’s ability to analyse/interpret their graphics;
- time use in the literacy circles;
- level of participation in, and quality of, discussions;
- supply of materials to the circles/logistics;
- the number of people from the lowest socio-economic groups who are involved in circles;
- effectiveness of the facilitator/relevance of training to facilitator’s needs;
- level of satisfaction with the implementing organisation;
- costs.

Evaluating outcomes and impact

- self-confidence/dignity/self-esteem;
- ability of circle to resolve internal conflicts;
- number of actions taken by each circle (and number of participants/level of success of each action);
- membership of *Reflect* participants in other community organisations (where they were not involved before);
- changing role of literacy in community organisations;
- changes in local literacy ‘events’ and ‘practices’;
- impact on children’s education (increased enrolment/attendance of *Reflect* participant’s children?);
- impact on participant’s income/control over income;
- new areas of knowledge;
- change of behaviour/habits/attitudes (in respect of agriculture/resource management/health etc);
- mobility of women;
- status of *Reflect* participant in family/community;
- patterns of intra-household decision making;
- impact on facilitators themselves;
- cost effectiveness.

How to collect the data

- There are many ways of collecting this data, for example:
- Review of existing statistics/basic data (from registers, record books, accounts, facilitator’s notebooks etc).
 - Traditional tests of literacy and numeracy.
 - On-going assessment (by the facilitator/review of participants’ books etc).
 - Systematic review of graphics produced by circles (and collective discussion based on the graphics).
 - Observation of literacy circles – either short term by field workers (observing the circle in operation) or longer term by outsiders (over a week or a month living in a selected community so that detailed case study information can be collected, observing how the *Reflect* circle relates to other aspects of community life).
 - Semi-structured dialogues with individuals/small groups/ whole circles. See PLA, IIED 1995 for practical suggestions and ideas.
 - Questionnaires (e.g. for facilitators, trainers, planners, some community leaders) – though these are rarely as effective as semi-structured interviews.
 - Construction of ‘graphics’ with participants (see below).

The set of tools you use to collect data will be determined by your context (again, who is evaluating and for what?) It is crucially important however to avoid collecting unnecessary data. Data collection can become a habit which serves to console the collectors (and make them feel self-important) rather than provide meaningful information. At least as much time and effort must be put on data analysis as data collection. Without analysis (and then feedback to the field) collecting data can easily become pointless.

The uses of graphics/evaluation matrices

Reflect has the potential to develop an evaluation methodology which is participatory and which is itself empowering. The *Reflect* approach draws on PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) and PRA is increasingly used for evaluations.

One advantage of the *Reflect* approach is that much of the baseline information can be collected within the learning process of the circles. Each graphic that is produced systematises existing conditions, knowledge or attitudes at a particular moment in time – and is permanently recorded. Each can therefore be repeated after a time lapse. A comparison can then be done to determine whether there has been a change. This approach may be particularly useful for impact evaluations carried out after a significant time period.

For example, a health and hygiene map which is done within the *Reflect* circle may be repeated after a three year gap. This may show whether there has been a change in the number of latrines, in the location of waste, in the amount of stagnant water or the prevalence of certain pests. Discussion comparing the two maps by the participants themselves will enable them to observe the changes and explain the causes – to determine whether the change was linked to or caused by the *Reflect* circle or not.

- Other examples might include:
- **An education matrix:** showing attendance at school or non-formal education centres and the grades of each child. If repeated this can provide concrete data which can then be linked causally (or not) to the *Reflect* circle by participant discussion.
 - **Agricultural calendars:** by repeating an agricultural calendar after a time lapse it may be possible to trace changes in the crops grown, in the time that crops are planted, when they are fertilised (and how) and when they are sold (for instance revealing whether people are storing crops to wait for better market prices).

The need for advance planning

The use of the participant-generated materials from *Reflect* circles as a basis for monitoring and evaluation has considerable potential. One limit is that some of the impact of the *Reflect* process may be seen within a few weeks of the circle starting – so graphics produced after (say) six months will not be a perfect baseline for later comparison. For example, having spent six months in a *Reflect* circle, participants may have been sufficiently excited about education to send more children to school; an education matrix constructed at this time will reveal in part the result of the *Reflect* circle rather than the conditions prior to the *Reflect* circle. In order to avoid this effect, certain graphics considered particularly valuable for evaluation might be introduced early in the *Reflect* course, so as to serve as an effective baseline.

- If no baseline data exists, some of the graphics can still prove to be very useful to evaluate the impact of a *Reflect* programme. For example you could ask participants to construct the following matrices:
- A table/matrix showing participation in community organisations – which lists all the organisations in the community and asks people whether they are members/ attend meetings, whether they feel involved in the decision-making process or whether they have any position of authority (e.g. secretary, treasurer or chair). Each question can be asked for the time before the

	Attend meetings/ member		Involved indecisions		Hold position of responsibility	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Community assembly						
Community council						
Parent-teachers						
Church group						
Sports group						
Women’s group						
Credit committee						
Health committee						
Education committee						
Other						

- Reflect* circle and the position after the circle. In the El Salvador pilot this showed impressive results, with more than 60% of participants having assumed positions which previously they had not held.
- A self-evaluation matrix on participant progress. This can be built into the *Reflect* course (perhaps after every 10 or 20 Units) or done afterwards for evaluation purposes. Participants are asked whether they are happy with their progress in different areas (in relation to their own initial expectations). A scale of three is the easiest to use (happy, OK, unhappy) though a scale of five can give more detail (very happy, happy, OK, unhappy, very unhappy). Simple faces can used instead (or as well as) words. The areas for self-evaluation may include reading, writing, numeracy, discussion:

ReadingWritingNumeracyDiscussion

😊 Happy

😐 OK

😞 Unhappy

This may be filled in individually – with each participant coming up to a copy of the matrix and putting a mark (perhaps in a different colour pen for men and women so gender trends can be monitored). However, such a way of completing the matrix can in some circumstances lead to distortions, with everyone following the first person’s marks. An alternative is to have the matrix prepared and to ask people to copy it and put their mark by ‘secret ballot’ in their own exercise books – which they will then copy up onto the

large matrix later. This has the advantage of encouraging the principle of secret ballots!

This type of self-evaluation matrix can be used with different questions. For instance facilitators could ask whether the *Reflect* process has helped participants develop their self-esteem, problem-solving, knowledge of health, of agriculture etc (whether it helped a lot, helped a bit, or did not help at all). One advantage of these matrices is that they can be analysed in a statistical way (for instance, “70% answered that it helped them a lot to develop problem solving skills”).

Control groups

Evaluating *Reflect* circles against other circles which are using more traditional literacy approaches is important for all programmes which are trying to determine whether the *Reflect* approach is suitable for long term or large scale use. You may be interested by the contents of this manual but you may also want to test *Reflect* in practice in your own area before making a large scale commitment. If so, then the use of ‘control groups’ will be important to help you decide. The three original pilots all used control groups of other literacy programmes in similar conditions, using different methods but working over the same time period and with similar objectives. The ideal must be to use a literacy programme in the same physical area, run by the same organisation – but this is not always possible.

The advantage of using a control group in any evaluation will be that you will be more able to isolate the impact of *Reflect* from the impact of other development initiatives or other processes of change. No community is static and establishing cause-effect relationships is often the most difficult task. Using control groups will help.



Photo: Anuman Photo/ActionAid

Members of the women's *Reflect* circle in Uttar Pradesh, India

Linking monitoring and evaluation to empowerment

Monitoring and evaluation is often regarded as an extractive activity (done by outsiders) and as something with no real relationship to the actual practice of empowerment. However, control over information flows is increasingly important; handing control over the generation and use of information to people who have historically had no control over that information can be a contribution to empowerment.

Beyond the level of an individual *Reflect* circle, the process of gathering together information/data from many circles across an area, district or region is often considered to be the job of the outside agency. However, this stage of analysis can play an important role in mobilising people and building up a grassroots movement. If the *Reflect* participants are involved in reviewing the graphics produced by other circles, this can advance their own analysis. Clearly, where there are two or more circles in one community, regular exchange should be encouraged. Another step can be to promote the twinning of circles from different communities – so that each gets to know (and is involved in the evaluation of) another community in similar (or indeed different) circumstances to their own.

At the end of a particular module (such as one on health – where several different Units have been covered) a workshop could be arranged inviting participants from across a wide area – so that they could analyse together the work they have done and plan solutions. Similar workshops can be held at the end of work on any theme or at the end of the *Reflect* process as a whole. Exposing people to others who are doing similar work in other communities will always be helpful for building a second layer of grassroots organisation. Involving people in monitoring and evaluation in this way makes the process inseparable from the wider process of empowerment. This theme is discussed further in the next section.

4.8 Using participant generated materials for planning

The maps, matrices, calendars and diagrams produced by the *Reflect* circles represent a detailed internal diagnosis of community problems and a systematisation of local knowledge, experience and attitudes.

This is a valuable resource for development planning which should not be lost. Whilst each community will hold onto the original graphics and be able to use them for their own planning, there is also a role for secondary analysis across communities by the organisation which has planned the *Reflect* programme.

In order to do this secondary analysis, copies of every graphic need to be made. This is not as difficult as it may sound. Once a circle has produced a graphic, each participant is encouraged to make a copy (or do their own version from their own perspective). At this time the facilitator can do a copy on a sheet of A4 or in their own notebook (which should ideally be in A4 format). They should also make a few notes about the major discussions that took place. This notebook should routinely be brought to the on-going exchange workshops with other facilitators, where they review the experiences of the past weeks and discuss or prepare for the coming weeks. At this point, if a photocopier is available, a copy can be made of the graphics recently produced by each circle. If no photocopier is available locally then, at the end of the course, or at certain intervals, the facilitator's books can be collected and taken somewhere for photocopying before being returned. The name of each circle and community, and the date, should always be written prominently on each graphic to avoid confusion. If a photocopier is used, the facilitators must use black or blue ink, otherwise it will not copy properly.

Once the graphics have been collected they can be analysed and used in two major ways:

By community

The collected work of each community can be reviewed to identify major issues. Ideally this should be done by people from the community, with the organisation who have coordinated the *Reflect* programme. It should lead to a community assembly where all the graphics are displayed and used as a basis for an overall review of local development priorities. Representatives of all significant agencies (government and NGOs) should be invited to these meetings and the product should be an action plan with clearly allocated responsibilities.

By issue

This would involve the organisations who promoted the *Reflect* programme looking at all the graphics of a particular type produced by all circles. Representatives from the circles and their communities should be centrally involved as presenters, as should any other relevant agency. Some preparatory work for each meeting may be required, with major trends or patterns having been already identified. You may need to arrange a pre-meeting planning session with *Reflect* circle representatives to discuss these trends.

For example, a review of all the crop matrices produced might be undertaken, inviting local representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and any other organisation working in the field. This might yield interesting information on the crops grown and the reasons why people are growing them, as well as the reasons why they do not grow certain crops which external agencies have tried to promote. If carefully presented, this could lead to a change in the strategy of the external agencies; or to a well-targeted training course (for agency staff or for communities – or both!) to challenge certain myths or beliefs.

An analysis of all the health materials produced by all the circles might be a particularly rich area for analysis, providing a detailed overview of the illnesses that are common, the curative strategies generally taken, the level of understanding of the causes and prevention of illnesses etc. This should certainly help to fill gaps in the knowledge of local health educators and should help to ensure that future health education programmes focus precisely on the gaps in people's knowledge, supplementing what they already know and do. To ensure that the secondary analysis does not go astray, all workshops of this type should include representatives from the communities and health professionals (including traditional birth attendants, traditional healers, government and NGO health staff). Each *Reflect* circle may nominate individual participants to play a role in presenting their materials to the external agencies. Such meetings will also be opportunities to address any serious misconceptions or local myths about health which have come up in the *Reflect* programme.

It is important, however, to be aware that some of the biggest health myths may be those promoted by local health professionals. These myths should also be addressed in these meetings.

One other way of leading in to local development planning after the *Reflect* course is to collect representatives from the circles together and promote a process of negotiation over major development initiatives which are needed locally (and which require coordination between communities). The use of graphics can help in such a process, even in the simple format laid out below which may help to sequence actions:

When	Now	Soon	Later
What			
Where			
How			
Who			

4.9 Strengthening the literate environment

Many adult literacy programmes focus only on what goes on in the classroom, making no attempt to address literacy issues in the wider community.

In rural areas where the written word is rarely seen or used, people will not develop literate habits simply by being taught basic literacy. Even in urban areas where there is a more literate environment, non-literate adults have learnt to survive without literacy and will continue to do so unless there is a strong bridge between what they learn in the circle and their wider lives.

Consolidating people's new literacy skills through creating literate habits is probably a greater challenge than teaching them the basics. Attention must be paid to the literacy 'events' that people will encounter in their daily lives. How many demands will be put on their literacy skills? How many practical opportunities will they have to use their new abilities? Will they develop literate habits?

It would be entirely artificial to change people's environment or lives in respect of literacy if nothing else changed in that environment. Though some measures can be taken specifically to introduce literacy 'events' within the existing environment, these might have a limited effect because people have survived as non-literates in the environment and could continue to do so. A more effective approach is surely to ensure that there is a wider process of positive social change stimulated by the literacy circles – so that the environment is seen to be changing for the good and genuine new demands for literacy are made of people.

The *Reflect* approach seeks to interweave a process of empowerment with a process of literacy learning. One of the best examples of how this can work came from the *Reflect* pilot in El Salvador where, within a year, 61% of participants in *Reflect* circles assumed formal positions of responsibility in local community organisations for the first time. This democratised the organisations, giving them new life and generating new opportunities for local action and change. At the same time, each individual who assumed a position of responsibility would be required to use their literacy skills in a practical way on a regular basis, whether for taking minutes, keeping accounts or writing letters etc.

Many of the local actions that may be generated from discussion in a *Reflect* circle may play a similar function, involving participants writing letters to officials, keeping records, documenting events, planning collectively, monitoring changes, accessing new information, going on training courses, organising campaigns, starting up new

activities, setting up new groups etc. Seen in this way the discussions in the literacy circle are not a distraction from literacy. They can have a clear function in helping to lead to the creation of a new, and more literate, environment.

The link between literacy and empowerment in a *Reflect* process does not mean you should sit back and let the process do all the work in creating a more literate environment. Many well-planned interventions can also be considered and some of these could even be introduced before the *Reflect* circles start. The target of these initiatives should not be seen as only those adults who have been in the literacy circle but also existing literate and semi-literate people, perhaps particularly school drops-outs.

Establishing a local library:

Many attempts have been made to establish rural libraries and many have failed as they have become frozen in time (not receiving new materials) and are not widely used or easily accessed. It is essential to address these problems if they are to work. On-going supply of materials through links with a wider network are vital.

Establishing mobile libraries

Mobile libraries may involve the use of a motor vehicle or just a cycle rickshaw. Their advantage is that they are more likely to ensure a continual supply of new materials to each community.

The books to be carried by such libraries should not just be the 'worthy' and rather dry texts on health and agriculture, but should focus on stimulating materials which are in a form that makes them accessible to newly literates, particularly stories which will engage people.

Extending newspaper distribution

The best means of constantly supplying new reading material is perhaps through extending newspaper distribution to rural or marginal urban areas. This might involve subsidising existing newspapers for a fixed period until they cultivate and consolidate a market.

Creating a market for reading materials

If *Coca Cola* can reach every village surely books can too! The key would seem to be using existing mechanisms (like travelling salesmen in Bangladesh). Setting up a stall in all local markets where reading materials are available (either for purchase or for reading on the spot) can be a useful

starting point. Other stalls and shops where people have to wait for service (e.g. at a barbers or shoe-polishers) can also be encouraged to stock reading materials. Another option is to set up stalls which provide literacy services, whether in respect of drafting or checking official documents for people, typing letters or producing signs and labels. Many of these can be established as sustainable businesses.

There are more literate Bangladeshis in Bangladesh than there are literate English people in England. There is no shortage of a literate environment (with over 50 national newspapers!). The problem is the size and distribution – getting the materials down to the villages!

Creating a Literacy Support Service

As well as servicing people's needs in the market place, organisations who publish materials may require support. In many cases, organisations who publish leaflets or pamphlets (whether government agencies, NGOs, banks or businesses), will produce unnecessarily complex materials which are unsuitable for newly literate people. Providing an advice and support service to such organisations, emphasising the need for simple language with clear and large print, will help to make the materials available for reading easier to use.

Strengthening the local postal system.

People often have to travel a long distance to post or receive a letter. If a named person in each community can take on an outreach role linked to the postal system this can increase the use of the system. Setting up a pen-pal system, or links between literacy circles in different areas, can help to kick start a system. If a post-office network does exist, means can be sought to extend the range of services that it offers, such as covering legal forms and financial services.

Printing for the 'project' level

The organisation promoting the *Reflect* programme locally should look at the feasibility of setting up an open-access low-cost printing service, covering the local area. Medium sized quantities of printing could be undertaken, of say a local newsletter (drawing on inputs from literacy circle participants). The use of a duplicator, perhaps with layout done on portable computers, is sometimes feasible.

Community newsletters can include sections on local news, announcements (weddings, achievements, births, deaths), sports news, upcoming events, items for sale, training courses available, competitions, games, job vacancies, commodity prices (in different markets), recipes, poems, jokes, advice columns, weather forecasts, stories, religious columns, campaign updates etc. Regular production and good distribution must be established and a nominal cover price should be considered. Wall newspapers are an interesting alternative (or addition) making reading a more public or collective event. The printing of *Reflect* participants' writing on local or oral history (or personal testimonies) is a good means to motivate participants and develop their self-esteem.

Printing at the village level

The ideal must be that each community, each literacy circle, can reproduce its own materials. This will help to create a literate environment from 'below'. The key factor here of course is cost. There are some very low-cost technologies such as silk-screen printing developed with local materials (as developed in the present Ghanaian National literacy programme) or gelatin-based printing. However these require good initial training, on-going maintenance and usually depend in part on some materials which are not available locally (such as ink or stencils) – so a good supply system of certain inputs is vital. The use of village level printing seems to be particularly consistent with the *Reflect* approach, with its emphasis on participant-generated materials and creative writing. *Reflect* circles could be encouraged to exchange materials.

Promoting literate habits

The focus on creating a more literate environment 'from below' might also include the promotion of habits, such as, record keeping, the maintaining of accounts and minute taking in all community organisations. This can extend to include decentralising the monitoring and evaluation of local development projects, so that local people assume responsibility. The increased use of road signs, directions, etc can also make a small contribution.

Community Boards

A large blackboard can be placed in a strategic place in the community (with some partial shelter), to be maintained by the *Reflect* facilitator or local school teacher. This person should be trained in editing news heard on the radio and picking out items of local interest (whether significant

weather forecasts, market prices, political developments etc) – and they should write up a few lines each day. This helps to make all people in the community use their literacy skills on a daily basis (creating a daily literacy event). Once these boards are established, many other uses are found for them by government agencies, NGOs and community members to publicise different events (or put up wall newspapers/posters etc). Madagascar has had particularly positive experiences of using such boards.

The location of the boards is of vital importance – a place where people will routinely pass on a daily basis (mapping in the *Reflect* circles could help communities determine this). It might be interesting to explore a series of different boards in each community, each one targeted at a different audience (for instance, one for youths by a football pitch; one for women on the path to water collection points; one for men in the local bar). This would require having different groups in the community involved in managing the boards.

Popular cultural centres/Information or Resource Centres

There are many variations on this idea. The essence is to set up a Centre which will go beyond the traditional function of a library to become a focal point for the local production and circulation of information/culture. The Centres should serve all existing community groups/interests. Second hand books from government departments, NGOs, shops, publishers and individuals can be gathered. If done on a larger scale, as in Madagascar, there can be collection points on specific days. At the community level all individuals who have books in their homes can be urged to place them in the Centre (though they still retain property rights over the books). This can enable communities to collect old documents, records and hand-written testimonies or histories that families have kept in their households over generations, which serve as the basis for establishing a broad range of reading materials (with the centre becoming a place like a local museum).

Old newspapers can also be collected for distribution and used in these centres, particularly as most newspapers include not only news stories but features, many of which may be of enduring interest. The question of how these are classified arises – and who is the person/’librarian’ responsible. Some sort of ordering and selection is required – otherwise the Centres could be filled with old piles of papers which no-one ever reads. In the case of newspapers and books collected in this way, other issues are logistical ones of ensuring efficient collection, storage and distribution.

The *Reflect* approach could be a very effective

foundation for such a centre, given the focus on circles producing their own materials which amount to a detailed diagnosis of their communities. The maps, matrices and calendars can be stored (or better still, displayed) in such centres and the presence of these materials could be used as a foundation to attract other materials, as described above. To be effective, it might be good for such centres to have certain fixed opening hours and certain regular events like bi-weekly discussion groups, reading circles, training workshops (in conjunction with health or agricultural personnel etc), writers’ groups, training sessions on traditional song and dance (for local performance) etc. Whether such centres need paid staff or can function with volunteers is a management issue which will depend on the context. Voluntary commitment would appear to be the ideal.

Radio

If local radio stations exist, then encouraging people to make contributions, prepare scripts, do interviews etc, can help to broaden the literate environment. Regional or national radio stations may also include educational or training programmes, often linked to a distance education course. Helping people to enrol on such courses (or, if their literacy level allows it, on correspondence courses) can further consolidate their literacy skills.

Children’s books

Most rural libraries or resource centres do not include good children’s books and yet these can be one of the best means to promote regular literacy events within households. When parents read to their children, the literacy of both adults and children is being strengthened. The supply of children’s books should therefore be a priority. Where there are not many to choose from (and those that exist are expensive), the local production of such books should be promoted. Children’s books could be produced within the *Reflect* circle as they do not involve writing long texts and should have a strong focus on illustration (so the visual literacy and drawing skills come in helpful). Books may be based on traditional stories or any imaginative idea of a *Reflect* participant. At first the whole group may try to produce one book, but then sub-groups or individuals can produce more. If village-level printing is available, the books can be distributed to all participants – and an exchange system can be set up with neighbouring communities.

Although we may work to create a more literate environment we will never be able to anticipate the uses for literacy which people will find. People will create their own ‘literacies’ or

their own functions for literacy over and above what we may seek to define. There is a case for doing initial research into the uses that people have for literacy (particularly uses that they have, in a sense, created) and to base some of our support to the literate environment on reinforcing (or building on) these uses.

Note: Advocacy for minority or unwritten languages

If the *Reflect* circles are working in a minority language or a previously unwritten language, a number of additional issues arise with respect to creating a literate environment. This was the case in the *Reflect* pilot in Bundibugyo, Uganda, where the main language used, Lubwisi, had never previously been written. The *Reflect* manual for the facilitators was the first written document in the language. The observations here are drawn mostly from that experience.

Coordination with as many local agencies as possible should be encouraged as early as possible, to promote the use of the local language in areas of life where it is not presently used. This might include:

- government agencies (to work in the language);
- courts (at least to allow people to testify in their language);
- schools (gradually to introduce the language in the lower years of primary school);
- banks (to print forms/documents in the language);
- businesses/traders;
- newspaper/book publishers (to translate/publish materials);
- nearest university (to get support from linguists if needed).

This local language advocacy with multiple agencies will be essential if a literate environment in the local language is to be genuinely established. A single organisation cannot do it alone. This may take some time, as it represents a major change, as well as local and national political will. If agencies are reluctant to change, then the *Reflect* circles may be mobilised to demand change where they want it. In most cases, once a critical mass of people have been made literate, most agencies will accept the logic of change. However, there may be serious obstacles in some countries with a rigid language policy.

In many cases where a mother tongue language is used in the *Reflect* circles, there will be an interest in also learning a second language (the ‘*language of power*’ locally). After the initial literacy phase, the *Reflect* circles may shift to working bi-lingually – which can be done flexibly in the absence of pre-printed materials. There is often a strong

case for producing local publications (such as community newsletters) in both languages so that the readers can develop their language skills alongside their literacy skills.

The maggot and the dove

Be faithful to your friends!

This is a translation of a story from the Lubwisi oral tradition (written by a *Reflect* participant in Bundibugyo, after one year). A dove is usually a worldly-wise creature, and a maggot is slow and helpless.

“Once upon a time, I knew a maggot who was the friend of a dove. One day, the dove went to visit the maggot to borrow some drums. Shortly after that, the maggot’s friends also decided to organise a dance, and the maggot had to say that his drums were still at the dove’s place.

There and then, the maggot sent his children to go to the dove’s place to collect the drums. They eventually reached the place and delivered the message.

‘Go back!’, the dove said, ‘Your father’s drums will be brought tomorrow. My children will bring them.’

They went back to their father, and told him what the dove had said. They waited for the drums, but in vain. Then the maggot befriended the spider, and asked for her help in reaching the dove’s place. The spider agreed and drew up the maggot on her web.

When they reached there, however, the dove again refused to give back the drums. The maggot heard that, and immediately entered the dove’s ears. The dove cried out in a panic. His ears really hurt!

The children of the dove decided to go to the traditional healer. He told them that it seemed as if the dove had deliberately decided to take the maggot’s drums, and that was the root of the problem.

The dove’s children delivered this verdict to their father, and he decided to give back the drums. The maggot left the dove’s ear, and he felt much better! Myself, I left when the maggot and his friends were dancing, and I came home”.

4.10 A note on post-literacy

Post-literacy is supposed to be the transition stage between participant acquiring basic literacy skills and then applying them in a practical way in their everyday lives. In practice, post-literacy courses often appear to be a reflection on the failure of the basic literacy stage – which has failed to consolidate literacy skills or to relate the skills to their daily lives.

In a *Reflect* programme, post-literacy is abolished! By abolishing the primer the *Reflect* approach aims to apply literacy skills in a practical way from day one. *Reflect* should be a single integrated process, which works through from initial literacy to developing sustained capabilities, which are practically used in people’s everyday lives.

However, a *Reflect* process should not be rushed. It should not be just a six month or even one year course. Rather it should be a process which continues until the point that people have achieved a sufficient level to be self-sustaining. For this to succeed, systematic work on creating a more literate environment is essential (see Section 4.9). It is this wider environment which must provide the continuing stimulus and support – not just for the *Reflect* participants but for school drop-outs and any other neo-literates in the community. The work on creating such an environment should have started in parallel with the *Reflect* circles (or even before-hand, so that what was ‘post-literacy’ becomes ‘pre-literacy’)

With *Reflect* the question of “*what next?*” must apply not just to consolidating and applying alphabetic literacy skills, but also to the wider process of change (or empowerment) encouraged by the approach. The strengthening of community organisations is perhaps the critical area to consider here. This reinforces alphabetic literacy skills, because it is only if there is a continuing process of change that the literacy skills may become relevant. Accessing resources from outside the area (from external sources) may be a fundamental need if the empowerment process is to be continued. Providing people with relevant information about opportunities or the means to access such opportunities (such as a service to help them prepare their own planning documents appropriate for funders) can be means to bridge the gap. End-of-course workshops with external agencies (see Section 4.8) will also help.

If the *Reflect* approach was introduced with an existing community organisation, then the group itself will have an on-going reason for meeting, ensuring some sustainability to the group processes initiated by *Reflect*. If the *Reflect* circles were newly formed by a community, then the circle may still

wish to continue in some form. This may happen in various ways. One option, if the support is available, is for the group to become a savings and credit group. This may start before the end of the *Reflect* process and contribute to some of the processes of change discussed in the circle. Another option is for the group to become an adult education group which helps to plan or access training courses facilitated, where necessary, by external people (but on their own terms). On-going courses may take various forms. In Uganda, an on-going curriculum was designed with *Reflect* circles, based on strategies for income generation. A micro-economic survey was undertaken, covering a wide range of traditional and non-traditional approaches to income generation. The pamphlets produced on each could then be used for study and discussion. If such courses are run, a decision needs to be taken as to whether they are only open to the original *Reflect* group (to keep the dynamic going) or open to the wider community (where there may be considerable interest).

Note: There is often a demand for a shift in the language used between literacy (which may often be in the local language) and post-literacy (when people may wish to learn the ‘*language of power*’ – a national or dominant regional language). Within *Reflect*, this transition may take place at any stage (decided by each group – as there are no pre-printed materials to constrain them).

There is, however, a need to separate out the teaching of language from the consolidation of literacy skills (though the first may help to reinforce the second). This is particularly the case if participants are not fluent in the ‘*language of power*’ and the focus might thus be on teaching oral skills as well as reading and writing. The issue becomes more complex if one of the languages is not phonetic or if there is a different script! The *Reflect* approach, by promoting dialogue, can certainly be used for developing language skills as much as literacy skills.

***Reflect* could be used as a teaching methodology for adult education programmes with adults who are already literate or semi-literate. In this sense, *Reflect* could be used in the stage which is traditionally ‘post-literacy’ after an initial primer-based literacy programme. This has not been done to date but it would be interesting to pilot such an approach. The emphasis would be on using the graphics to generate vocabulary for literacy practice in a meaningful context (without the need for work with syllables). Do let us know if you do this!**

Section 5
Sample Units

5.1 Introduction

This section of the manual aims to provide a clear idea of the wide range of possible Units, which can be adapted, completely changed or just used as examples of Unit structure, when you are writing your own local facilitators’ manual. It is a section to be dipped into, not read from front to back. There are opportunities to create and innovate at all levels in a *Reflect* programme – for each participant, each facilitator (and groups of facilitators meeting regularly), and each planner or coordinator concerned with implementing *Reflect*. **It is not intended that any of these Units can be simply translated directly from this manual and applied.**

Section 5.2 consists of the first 10 units of an imaginary local facilitators’ manual. The aim is to show how facilitators’ guidelines for each unit can be clearly written out. This sequence of 10 Units builds up, both in terms of analysis, and in respect of literacy and numeracy activities. By reviewing this sample sequence you will see how this accumulation works. Your own local facilitators’ manual will use a different sequence of Units and the Units will probably build upon one another in a different way.

- The 10 Units from the imaginary facilitators’ manual are based on an area with the following characteristics:
- The area is in an African country.
 - People’s mother tongue is a language called Spangla – written phonetically in a Roman script.
 - People use base 10 for arithmetic. The currency is called ‘*spangs*’.
 - People are living in relatively close knit rural communities, sharing many beliefs and values.
 - The climate is hot and there is one long rainy season and one short period of rains. There are two planting seasons.
 - The annual calendar is divided into 12 months.
 - The people are settled agriculturalists. Seasonal migration is not the norm.
 - Rice and coffee are the main cash crops.
 - Women are in a subordinate role, and have low self esteem. They do most of the work, especially agriculture.
 - Background research has shown that health, agriculture, gender relations, and credit are seen as priorities by the local communities.



Members of the Engalawenin *Reflect* circle, Malawi

Section 5.3 provides ideas for Units on a variety of themes (economic, health, socio-political). They include maps, calendars, matrices, diagrams, timelines etc. and are not sequenced. Some of these are presented in detail. In order to help you adapt them for your own manual, a number of alternative ways of developing and using the core graphic are suggested; as well as literacy and numeracy activities for different stages of the course. Other Units are presented in a short form to give you a flavour of the range of possibilities.

All the Units in this section are based on approaches that have worked in practice. All of the illustrations are based on real examples but are adapted so that they appear to be from a single community (all the maps, for example, have the same basic features). We have presented them in this format to make them easier to read and understand. In actual *Reflect* circles, the graphics produced on large sheets of paper will be much larger and will have the advantage of using thick marker pens of different colours. What appears in the illustrations here as standardised or formalised will be very different in practice, with each and every *Reflect* circle producing unique illustrations about their own immediate community in their own distinctive style!

This, then, is the practical section of the manual. It aims to give you a range of stimulating ideas and methods which you can refer to, adopt and adapt. We hope you enjoy reading about these methods as much as people will enjoy putting them into practice!

5.2 Detailed examples

The first meeting

The first meeting of the learners and their facilitator is an opportunity to discuss the aims of participants; agree on the way the circles are conducted, and to begin the literacy process. At the beginning of the course, it is important to establish an equal relationship between the facilitator and participants.

Aims of participants

It is valuable at this early stage to discuss with participants what they would like to achieve in literacy and numeracy. This could vary from keeping accounts to reading sign posts (see page 8 for more possibilities). Whilst the participants are mentioning their aims, the facilitator should note them down in her/his book. S/he can explain that it will be interesting to discuss this again after a few months, and reflect on progress (see page 68 for ideas on self- evaluation activities). Further discussion should aim to confirm that the language in which the community has chosen to learn is agreed by all participants. If it is not, then changes such as splitting into two groups or adopting a bilingual approach need to be discussed.

Circles

It is not useful to explain *Reflect* in detail to participants, but it is important to outline future activities such as working together on graphics and discussing local issues and problems. Ideally these messages will build on the pre-literacy campaign.

This is a good time to discuss practical details such as sitting in a circle to help everyone contribute fully, or checking that the proposed meeting times and days are

convenient for participants. Certain ground-rules may also be discussed and agreed (such as, listening to one another, mutual respect, being punctual etc).

Beginning literacy

Make sure that everyone in the circle has a pen (or pencil and rubber) and paper. Draw a simple face on the blackboard and ask the learners to try copying it. Explain that the muscles in their hands are not used to writing, but after practising holding a pen, they will find it easy. For more practice, ask them to draw the face of the person next to them or of a man and then a woman. This will probably cause some laughter!

After a while, ask them to draw smaller faces so that they have to make more detailed hand movements. Move around the circle, helping individuals to hold their pen correctly. Experiment with drawing animals or birds, and ask participants to practise drawing for fifteen minutes each day before the next meeting.

An interesting extension to this activity can be to refer back to the ‘aims’ that the participants identified and to any ‘ground-rules’ they agreed – and to ask whether they can draw any of these. Participants can try to do this individually and then as a group. This may help the participants to think about the representation of things by ‘symbols’. Making pictures on paper which represent real things is very much the first stage of the literacy process. It is a skill which will be regularly reinforced and extended in a *Reflect* circle.

Note: Take the opportunity during this early period to write each participant’s name, the name of the circle or village etc. in lower case letters in her or his exercise book. Ask them to practise copying this and explain that after copying many times they will be able remember how to write their name, as well as write it clearly on the front of their literacy exercise book.



Hafeza Khatun facilitates a *Reflect* circle in Bangladesh

G.M.B. Akash/Franco/ActionAid

1. Household map

Objectives: To discuss the history of the village; to show how syllables represent real sounds and to make words based on one key word, cagoba (house); to introduce written numbers 1-5.

Preparation: Make sure the mapping ground is free for the participants to use. Prepare ideas for pictures of: river; bridge; house; man; woman; boy; girl; mountains; road. Prepare syllable cards from the word ‘cagoba’.

How to construct the graphic

Ask the learners to sit in a semi-circle and clear an area of ground in the middle. Ask them to construct a map on the ground showing the houses in their village in their relative position in relation to one another. In order to help them structure this, they may start by indicating the main tracks or paths between houses and any major point of reference like a river. Ask them to use whatever materials are locally available like sticks and stones or beans etc. to represent the houses and other major features.

Encourage as many learners to participate in the construction as possible – try to avoid just one or two of them dominating. When the map is complete, ask if all the participants agree that it is accurate. If not ask why, and make any adjustments necessary.

When there is agreement over the map, ask them to indicate the number of women, men, girls and boys in each house. Again use any materials available, such as beans for women, seeds for men – placing the appropriate number of beans, seeds etc, by each house.

When the map is completed with numbers of men, women, girls and boys, ask participants whether they can draw pictures of the different items represented on the map (e.g.: house, woman, man, girl and boy). If participants lack confidence in drawing, draw some items yourself, and ask the participants whether they understand what you have drawn and why. Once participants have produced or agreed on a set of pictures, place each picture on a card next to the stones, beans, leaves etc. which have been used as symbols. This helps ensure that they remember the pictures for what they are intended to be. Add other important features such as mountains, river, roads, bridge etc.

Then explain that you are going to make a copy of the map they have made, on paper. Take a large piece of flipchart or manila paper and copy the paths and the outlines of the houses in pencil. Then draw in some of the

girls, boys, women and men, with a separate outline drawing for each one (these will have to be small and very simple). The participants can then take over, with three or four participants at the same time adding detail and colour to the map, using thick marker pens of different colours. Try to ensure that there is consistency in the pictures. In making the copy, make sure that it is all done from one angle so that you don’t end up with some houses and people upside down!

When the map is complete, ask the participants if this is an accurate copy of what they constructed. If it is not, try to make adjustments. If the final result is messy ask participants whether they would prefer to make a cleaner copy (or offer to make one yourself at a later date).

Ideas for discussion

The ideas below need thinking about beforehand in order to relate them to your own village. The questions are probe questions intended to open up discussion and deepen the level of analysis. There are no right answers! It is not necessary to ask all the probe questions, but see how the discussion flows. The participants may take a completely different line of discussion (such as local planning) and this is fine. You may improvise additional questions in response to the flow of the discussion. It is useful to keep in mind ‘six friends’ in question-asking: “*who, what, why, where, when, how*” ... who can always be joined by a seventh friend, ‘*what else?*’ The following questions may be useful starting points:

- What different kinds of construction are there for houses? Were they different in the past?
- When was the village first settled/established?
- How many generations ago?
- Who by?
- Where did the first people come from? Why?
- Are there any stories from the early days of the village that are still remembered?
- Who are the oldest people in the village who best remember the past?
- What have been the major events in the history of the village?
- Who has been the most famous person from the village? etc.
- What would you like to see in the village in the next few years?

Other points of significance for the participants might arise in the discussion, and it is important to identify these and allow the discussion to range freely. Encourage participants to talk to each other rather than having just a two way discussion between you and the circle!

Ideas for action

The ideas below are suggestions about the type of actions that might emerge but they should not be suggested to the participants. It is up to the participants themselves to decide what to do – if anything.

- If the discussion has focussed on the history of the community then an oral history documentation project may be started.
- If the discussion dwelled on styles of housing, the sharing of construction skills or collective work on a community building may emerge as action points.
- Another possibility is a process of planning with community leaders; two versions of the map could be constructed, one showing the situation now and another showing how it was twenty or thirty years ago – and perhaps even a map of the future showing how it will or could be twenty years from now.

Ideas for reading and writing

First of all ask the participants to copy the household map from the large piece of paper into their exercise books. This will be time consuming as it is the first time, and might need several attempts. Don't worry if they miss some of the detail. Some participants may need help in copying the main lines.

Remind the participants of the discussion involving houses and homes, then draw the symbol for 'cagoba' (house) on the blackboard. Write the word 'cagoba' next to it in large clear lower case letters. Ask people to read it together several times, and then copy it onto the key of the household map.

Now is the time to divide the word 'cagoba' into syllables:

ca – go – ba

Explain that each syllable is made up of two parts: a consonant (hard/block sound) and a vowel (like a bridge). There are five vowels:

a – e – i – o – u

and 21 consonants:

b c d f g h j k l m n p q r s t v w x y z

Do not spend too long on this and do not ask participants to copy these; write them yourself on a large strip of paper to be displayed on the wall. As they are learnt they will be crossed off. Explain that this may seem like a lot of letters –

but this is all the participants need to know in order to read and write. We will learn each of these over the coming weeks in relation to real words (which will help them remember the letters).

Note: It is very important not to spend too much time on the explanation above. The aim is only to give participants a sense of the task that lays ahead not to make them remember or understand any of the letters.

Return to the word 'cagoba'. Explain that each 'bridge' can go with each 'block'. So, from 'cagoba' we can produce:

ca ce ci co cu

ga ge gi go gu

ba be bi bo bu

Let the participants take turns in repeating syllables, reading them across, up and down and at random. Do not spend too long on this (and never use this technique after Unit 3). Now write each syllable on a piece of paper/card and lay them on the ground. Ask participants to come up and try to arrange them to form real words. Once a few people have done this and everyone has copied the words, ask each participant to try to write other words using these same syllables, in their own books. Move around and help them with holding pens and forming letters. Examples of words they could produce are:

boga (alcohol) caga (day) gaba (to work) gicocu (butterfly)

There are many other words beyond these. Don't worry if this activity takes a long time!

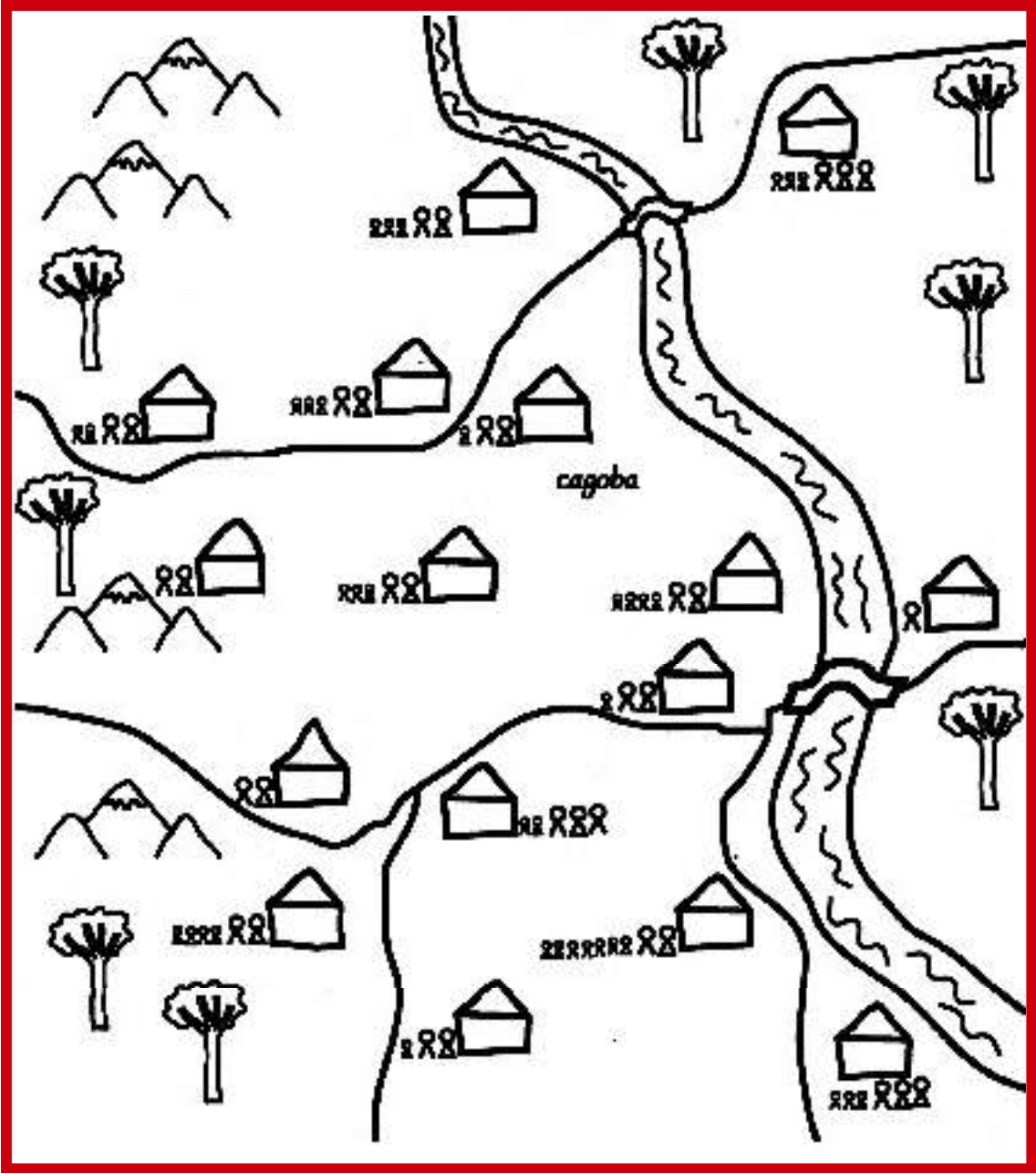
Ideas for numeracy

Look at the different households on the map, and discuss how many women or boys etc. there are. Write numbers 1–5 on the board and let participants copy them into their exercise books. Then practise by asking participants to write down how many women, men, girls, boys there are in the various households – both on the map in their books and on the large graphic on display.

Ideas for supplementary information/materials

- Tape recorder for recording, for example, oral testimonies from older women and men.
- Information on appropriate building technology.

Housing map



Key

	woman		man		girl		boy		house
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2. Natural resources map

Objectives: To discuss changes in the availability and quality of natural resources; to introduce four key words – ‘*tata*’ (tree); ‘*lila*’ (river); ‘*hara*’ (wild birds); ‘*kiji*’ (medicinal herbs) in the context of phrases; to introduce pair work (and the ‘buddy’ system).

Preparations: Consider possible pictures for wild birds, medicinal herbs, rivers, canals, ponds, wells, tubewells, forests etc. Prepare syllable cards from the four key words above. Take blank rough paper for participants to make their own syllable cards.

How to construct a graphic

Start by asking participants how they would define natural resources; for example given by God, not made by people. Explain that today the circle is going to construct a map on the ground, indicating the natural resources in the area, particularly all the sources of water and wood. This might include forests, trees, rivers, canals, ponds, wells, tubewells, etc. Do not include crops (as this is usually better done in a separate unit), and to make it easier start by doing a quick copy of the main features of the household map, so as to locate themselves. The map is likely to cover a large area, to include places to which participants may walk in order to collect water or fuel-wood. The map will be constructed initially using local materials (sticks/stones etc). Then ask participants to try to represent each item on the map in a simple drawing on a small piece of card. These cards are then placed on the map next to the relevant objects.

When all is agreed, make a copy of the map onto a large piece of paper (preferably with the help of the participants). You may want to do a rough copy in pencil first to get the scale right and then ask participants to use marker pens over this. The simple picture cards will help to make this transfer easier.

Ideas for discussion

One of the most effective means of developing a discussion on natural resources in the local area will be to ask participants to reflect on the past and the future. Not all the probe questions below have to be discussed. Try to let the participants take a direction of their choice.

Probe Questions:

- Is there more or less wood now than there used to be?

- Why is it changing?
- Do we have to walk further to collect wood now than before?
- What might the situation be in 10 years from now?
- What can we do to improve the situation?
- Do we have to walk further to collect wood at some times in the year?
- How much time is spent collecting wood (at different times of the year)?
- Who collects wood? Men? Women? Children? Why?

If the circle is interested in discussing trees and their uses the following may be useful questions:

- What different types of trees are there?
- What are the uses of different types of trees (such as fruit, construction, cooking, medicinal uses etc?)
- Which trees are most useful?
- Which trees are planted and which grow naturally?
- Whose responsibility is it to plant trees?
- Do women or men own trees, plant trees, tend trees, collect fruit, process produce from trees?
- Where can you get trees to plant?
- When should trees be planted?

A similar range of questions could be brought up on issues surrounding water for example:

- changes in water availability each year/over recent years (and causes of these changes);
- functions of different water sources (cleaning, washing, drinking, animals etc);
- cleanliness/contamination of different water sources (now and in past?);
- dangers of bad water (associated illnesses)/means of prevention of these;
- gender roles in water collection;
- possible low cost/locally feasible solutions or means to improve the situation.

The precise emphasis you choose to make on one or the other of the above themes will depend on which issues arise spontaneously from the participants in your circle.

Ideas for action

The issues which the participants have been discussing will guide the sort of actions which they decide to take. Again, it is very important that you do not tell the participants what they have to do, and that any decisions come from the circle itself. Examples of actions may include:

- cleaning contaminated water sources;
- changing habits/use of different water sources;

- starting up a tree nursery with local seedlings;
- planting fruit trees;
- contacting department of forestry to introduce new varieties;
- constructing a second natural resource map to show how things were different in the past, and even a third map to show how they may be different in the future.

Ideas for reading and writing

Participants should make a copy of the map in their own books, (perhaps adding their own particular sources of water and fuel). Then referring to the discussion, write labels next to certain items: ‘*tata*’ (tree); ‘*lila*’ (river); ‘*hara*’ (wild birds); ‘*kiji*’ (medicinal herbs) on the large copy. Then write the words on the blackboard and ask participants to repeat syllable by syllable. Tick these letters off the alphabet chart on the wall. Add ‘*house*’ from Unit 1 after first checking if they remember it. Break each word into families of syllables as below, writing them on the board:

ca ce ci co cu

ga ge gi go gu

ba be bi bo bu

ka ke ki ko ku

ja ji je jo ju

ta te ti to tu

la le li lo lu

ha he hi ho hu

ra re ri ro ru

Put 45 syllable cards in the middle of the circle and let participants volunteer in turn to pick out syllables that make a word. See if people can make words with three syllables. Ask participants to try to read the words that each other write.

The facilitator (or preferably a participant!) can write them on the blackboard for everyone to copy into their exercise books. The facilitator should move around the circle helping individuals with holding their pen, getting letters the right way round, clear shapes etc. A lot of encouragement should be given to individuals.

Now explain to the circle that they are going to try working in pairs so that everyone gets a chance to make

new words. Ask them to arrange themselves in pairs – two participants together.

Give out 10–15 pieces of torn up blank papers to each pair, and ask them to copy any of the syllables from the key words onto these papers (just like the syllable cards they have been using as a whole group). This will take some time and the facilitator’s help, but it doesn’t matter that they do not copy all 45 syllables. When they have the cards, ask each pair to make as many words as possible, reading them out loud to each other and copying new ones into their exercise books. The facilitator can move around assisting those that are finding it difficult. If participants are finding it difficult to remember what letters relate to what sounds tell them to refer to the big map where the words appear next to pictures. This should help them to remember.

After most participants have run out of words, come back together as a group. Ask several people around the circle to read aloud what they have written in their exercise books. There will be some repetition of words. You can write on the board the full list of words made up and see if participants can copy them into their books. Collect the syllable cards made by participants for future use. As a task at home, participants can be asked to try to write as many other words as possible using the same syllables.

Then turn back to the natural resources discussion, and ask participants about some of the most important things that were said – perhaps relating to any action points that were decided. The facilitator can prompt, using the notes in her/his book. Pick out two or three phrases that use the key words (or another word that you feel the participants are likely to remember), and write them out clearly on the board.

Ask a volunteer to come up to the board and point out the word s/he knows and read it. Read the whole phrase to the circle and then go through syllable by syllable and ask participants if they can read it – and then if they can read the whole word. Use this as reading practice. There is no need for participants to copy everything into their exercise books at this stage as it might be overwhelming!

Finally, ask the learners for their thoughts on pair work. Introduce the idea that if anyone misses a meeting (or several!), it is a good idea to catch up with the others by asking one participant to explain what the circle has done, and by copying from his/her exercise book. If it is a participant with whom you are used to working as a pair, then this will be easier, and s/he can even show you how to read and write the new words and syllables that have been missed.

Note: Regularly changing pairs could also be considered to help build up a wider support network among participants.

Ideas for numeracy

Revise numbers 1–5 by writing them on the blackboard in a mixed up order, and asking participants to read them. Then write up numbers 6–12, and practise reading them, before everyone copies them into their exercise books.

Looking at the Natural Resource Map, discuss the distances people travel every day to collect either wood or water. Do these distances relate to the action points decided upon? Calculate these distances mentally as a group. Are there different results for different participants? women and men? Discuss how these distances are measured and the relationship between time and distance, and traditional and modern measures (such as kilometres). Decide which method is easier to use. The participants can record the number of hours, miles, kilometres etc. used every day. The facilitator should make notes of this discussion for future written calculation practice.

Ideas for supplementary information/materials

- Posters/pamphlets on water-borne diseases.
- Posters/pamphlets on protecting water sources.
- Posters/pamphlets on how to establish a tree nursery/ how to cultivate and transplant different types of trees successfully.
- Materials on the functions/advantages and disadvantages of different types of tree.

Natural resources map



3. Health calendar

Objectives: To discuss the causes of common illnesses on a seasonal basis; to introduce seven new key words – *zacabi, maraki, lili, jurati, cera, boriha, gaciba*. To practise numbers 1–12 in a calendar form; to introduce group work.

Preparations: Have ideas prepared (or ready-made visual cards) of illnesses, with the name under the picture; and number cards 1–12. Have plenty of blank cards for people to make their own copies of pictures.

How to construct a graphic

Ask the participants what are the most common illnesses in the area – and others which are less common but which do occur. Ask them what are the symptoms of each and how they might be represented in a simple picture. If possible participants should try to draw pictures themselves (each person can try to draw an illness and then they can share these and choose the best picture for each illness). If there are difficulties the facilitator should have ideas for ways to draw them (from the manual or actual visual cards). As each card is produced, the facilitator should write the name of the illness underneath in clear bold letters.

Lay these cards out vertically, in a list on the ground and then, across the top or bottom place the 12 months of the year. Some discussion may be held about why the year is divided into 12 months. Ask the participants which month is considered the start of the year (this can vary: after the first rains, harvest-time, new year celebrations etc) and when everyone is agreed, represent each month with numbers (1-12). Participants may also wish to draw a picture to represent each month, for example showing a fruit or flower which is associated with each month.

Take each identified illness in turn, and ask whether this illness is more common at certain times of the year than others. Identify the months that it is most common and those when it is least common and complete this discussion for all months. The circle must decide on how to show the degree of the illnesses through the year, for example on the basis of 10 – where 10 is extreme intensity and 1 is very little. These can be represented using sticks of different lengths or by placing an agreed number of stones. For some illnesses there may be no change through the year, but for others there may be significant variation.

Complete the calendar for all illnesses that have been

listed. When all agree that it is accurate, ask participants to help copy it onto a large piece of paper – showing them how to indicate the amounts in a bar chart format – but also writing the number (out of ten) in each month for each illness.

Ideas for discussion

- Completing the calendar usually generates considerable discussion. The following probe questions can be used, though many other questions should arise with the flow of the discussion:
- Why are these illnesses common in this village?
 - Do the illnesses that are common change from year to year? Why?
 - Why do some illnesses occur more at different times of the year?
 - What causes of illness are not related to the time of year?
 - What is the cause of each illness and how is it spread?
 - How can each of these illnesses be prevented or how can their incidence be reduced?
 - How can we pay for medicines and funerals throughout the year?

Ideas for reading and writing

Start by revising the words and phrases from the Natural Resources discussion. Choose some very simple key phrases which the participants are likely to be able to write. Read out the phrase (repeating many times and speaking very clearly!), and then prompt by showing how many letters there are in each word with dashes (– – –) or the shapes of the words with sticks of different lengths. Move around the circle helping and encouraging individuals. Encourage participants to work in pairs – copying where necessary. When they have finished, write the phrases clearly on the board, and ask the participants to correct what they had written themselves.

Turning to the Health Calendar on the big piece of paper, ask the learners to copy it into their exercise books. Write the names of the illnesses (and their pictures) in very large writing on the board – to make this copying easier. The words for the following illnesses will probably arise: *zacabi, maraki, lili, jurati, cera, boriha, gaciba*. Probably other illnesses will also be included on the calendar and these should be written down too. Practise reading the new words aloud with the whole circle. Point out the new syllables which will be:

za ze zi zo zu

ma me mi mo mu

Tick these letters on the alphabet chart on the wall. Then ask the participants to divide themselves into groups of five or six. Hand out blank cards to each group for the participants to copy the pictures of the different illnesses and write the names on the back of each card. Ask one of the participants from each sub-group (preferably the quietest) to hold up the words in turn for the rest to try and read; once all participants agree, the picture on the back can be shown to check they are correct. Give a demonstration as facilitator so that everyone understands. Let the cards be passed around the group so that different people get a chance to lead.

Come back together and continue this word recognition by asking the circle for key points from the discussion (causes of illnesses, action points etc.) and writing them on the board; making sure to include several of the new illness words. Ask participants to identify the words that they know on the board (coming up to underline them) and to identify syllables they recognise in other words (underlining these also). Practise group reading of the phrases and let participants call out other phrases (on relevant issues) for you to write up and use as practice.

Ideas for numeracy

Get out the Health Calendar with the bar chart outline, and ask participants in turn to write the exact number decided upon for each illness for each month. This can be done either using the calendar on the ground – or prompted by the facilitator from his/her notes.

To practise reading numbers, ask a participant to point to the numbers on the calendar in a mixed-up order, and ask the circle which month it indicates.

Ask participants to rank order the months [or seasons], using numbers, by the amount of money they spend on medical expenses or funerals in that month. If two months [or seasons] are the same, put them together. Different participants can write up their rank order on the board for discussion.

As a follow-up activity (if participants are interested), contact a local health worker for a session on how to monitor children’s nutrition status: for example:

- for 1-5 year olds, by measuring their mid-upper arm circumference in centimetres (over 13.5cm = healthy; 12.5-13.5cm = borderline; under 12.5cm = at risk). This can lead to parents monitoring their own children, (though care must be taken to find the mid-point between elbow and shoulder, and to avoid pulling the tape too taut) and taking control of this aspect of health;
- by measuring weight against height or age etc.

Do some practice with tape measures, (and scales if these are available anywhere locally) measuring people (and anything else which the participants wish to) and recording the results. If participants have Child ‘*Road to Health*’ Cards ask them to bring them to a meeting, and explain what the graphs mean. Try to read some of the words on the cards but do not at this stage try to read everything on the card. Having a competition in which people estimate heights or weights or distances, before they are measured, can bring an extra dimension to this.

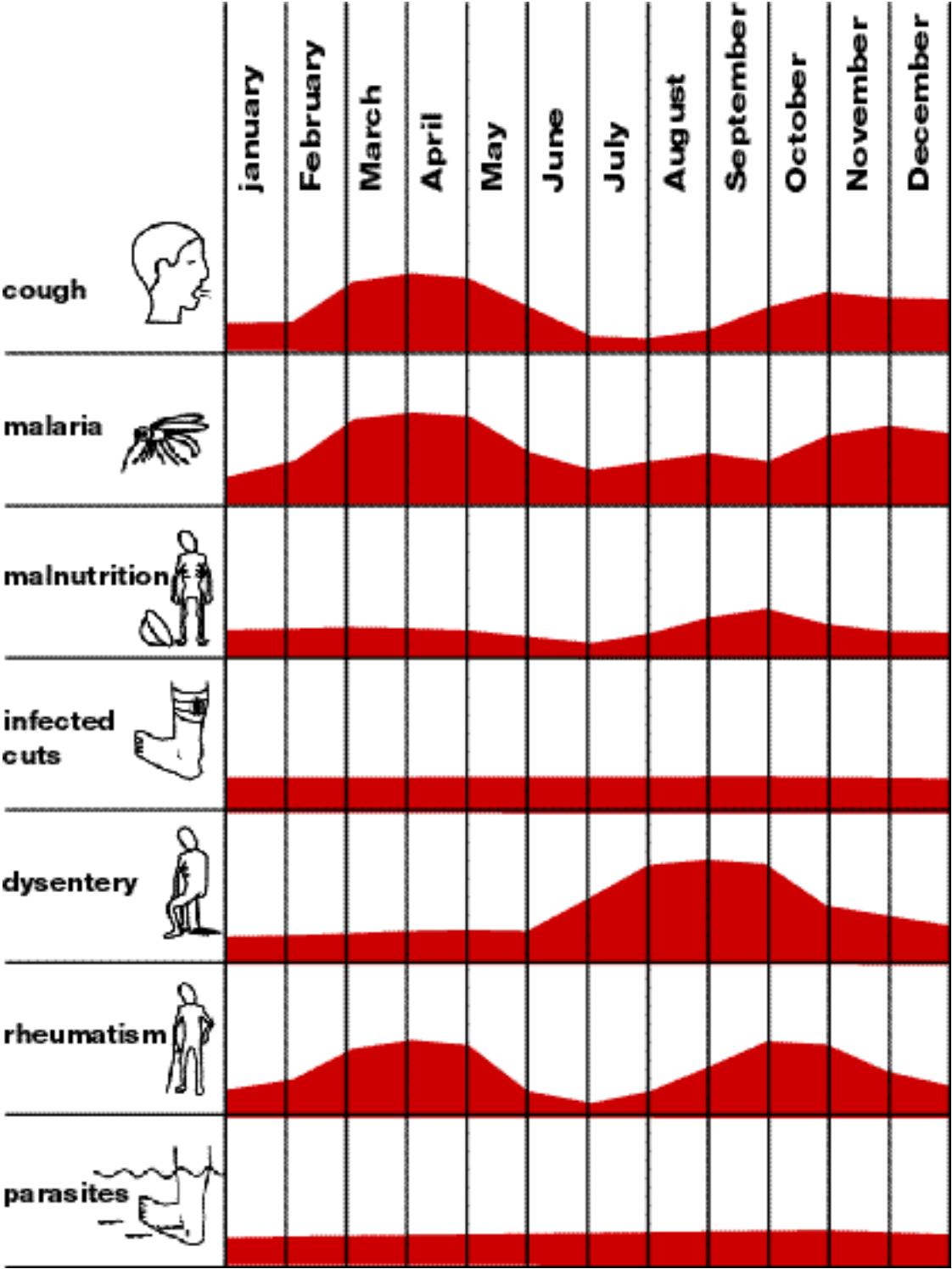
Discuss what traditional systems of measurement exist for height or small distances and the equivalences with the present official system. When did it change and why? What difficulties arose? Practise converting between traditional and official systems.

Ideas for supplementary information/materials

- Health cards/family records.
- Materials from the local health centre/Ministry of Health – particularly on child development.

Note: At the end of the Unit, remind participants about the importance of being able to catch up on missed activities, and in particular ask them to check on anyone they know well who has missed classes.

Health calendar



4. Health curative matrix

Objectives: To discuss different options for curing illnesses using a matrix graphic; to introduce four new key words ‘zalaki’ (hospital); ‘mala’ (chemist); ‘jicora’ (traditional healer); ‘corala’ (prayer). Practise ‘illness’ words, and try independent writing; to read and write numbers 1–50; to write down simple addition and subtraction.

Preparation: Prepare some possible pictures to represent ‘curative’ strategies (or refer to those in the manual). Prepare syllable cards from words in Units 3 and 4. Try and obtain some health materials – especially posters with clear attractive pictures. Take enough torn-up pieces of blank paper for groups to make new sets of syllable cards (about 15 for each sub-group).

How to construct a graphic

Lay out the bare outline of a matrix on the ground, using either stick marks in the soil or bits of string. It should have at least seven or eight (and space for more) boxes down the side, and about the same across the top or bottom. Ask the learners what are the most common illnesses – and others which are less common but which do occur. For most of the illnesses we will already have visual cards from the previous Unit. For other illnesses which are mentioned the participants should try to draw new cards – showing the symptoms if possible. Lay these cards down one side of the matrix.

Ask the learners what they do when they get ill. Do they buy medicine? Take herbs? Go to a traditional healer? Go to a doctor or chemist? Pray? List all the different things they might do to help get better in simple words and ask participants to try to draw simple pictures to go with these. If they have difficulty, refer to the manual or your own sketches of possible pictures. Put the words with the pictures on cards and lay these in a row across the top or bottom.

Now for the first illness ask the participants to think back over the past year or so and remember what they did when they (or anyone in their immediate family) became ill with that illness. Each participant should have a pile of small stones or beans, and put one in the appropriate marked-out box on the matrix to indicate what they did the last time they (or their family member) had the illness. If they did two things (such as take herbs and then medicine) they can put marks in two boxes, but each participant should only think of the last time someone had the illness. If they have never had the

illness, ask them to put a mark in the box for what they would do if they did get it.

Fill in the matrix for all illnesses. When it is complete, ask participants to transfer it to a large sheet of paper, replacing the beans/stones with numbers.

Ideas for discussion

- The range of questions that could be used to develop further discussion include:
- What are the symptoms of the different illnesses?
 - Which illnesses respond best to different forms of treatment?
 - What are the advantages and disadvantages of different cures? (such as medicinal herbs compared to anti-biotics)?
 - Are there any illnesses which you don’t do anything about?
 - Are there times when we can’t afford to do what we think is best to cure illnesses?
 - What are our most urgent problems around illness?
 - Where is the nearest doctor or health centre? How do we get there in an emergency?
 - Do we use different cures for our children /women/men?
 - Are there illnesses or symptoms when it is essential to take a child to a doctor?
 - Are there illnesses that cannot be cured or treated?
 - How does a woman know when she is pregnant? What are the first signs? What are the signs of problems and are there times when it is essential to seek assistance? Who is most able to help?
 - What is ante-natal care? What do they do in a health centre when a woman is pregnant? Who helps us with child birth and what complications can arise?

The facilitator should try to encourage participant-to-participant discussion, rather than having to ask all the questions and having all answers addressed to him/her.

Ideas for reading and writing

First of all, revise any ‘illness’ words which the participants found particularly difficult using the game, ‘Bringing the House Down’ (see Language Games on page 177). This will make those words particularly memorable!

Next, let the participants copy the matrix into their exercise books, taking particular care with the new words for curative actions e.g. ‘zalaki’ (hospital); ‘mala’ (chemist); ‘jicora’ (traditional healer); ‘corala’ (prayer). Write these new words on the board with their pictures, and practise reading them as a whole circle and individually. Rub them out and write them again in a different order and without pictures. Let individuals read them aloud.

On the board, write all the syllables (with their different vowel sounds) covered so far. Give out 20 rough pieces of blank paper to the participants in sub-groups of five or six and ask them to choose and copy one syllable onto each piece of paper. Add any syllable cards the participants made previously and each group should have a large mixed set. Explain that each group should try and make as many words as possible from the syllable cards – which they can lay on the ground in the middle of their small circle. If everyone agrees then the word is written in the participants’ exercise books. Give a demonstration with the whole circle if necessary.

Move around during this activity to give help (but without checking every word made by every group!), especially with writing. Encourage the formation of verbs (action words) and linking words as well as nouns. When the groups have had enough time, ask someone in each group to read out their words and make a shared list on the blackboard. Let the participants repeat these words after you, giving all participants a chance to join in. Ask the participants to correct any mistakes they made as a group, and to copy down any words which are new to them.

Now ask the participants to try to write down any phrases they can put together – preferably related to health. By now participants will probably be at different stages of progress, and it is important to move around and help individuals. Ask pairs of participants to exchange exercise books and see if they can read aloud the phrase written by their partners. If this is successful, encourage further exchange around the circle. Give a lot of encouragement as this may be a rather sensitive activity for the less confident or slower participant. Finally, look at the maps and calendars displayed around the

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

literacy venue, and see if any words can be added to the keys/labels. For example, make sure that the Household Map is labelled with woman/man/girl/boy.

Ideas for numeracy

Write numbers 1–100 on the board in a table (carefully laid out as below), and ask participants to read and then copy them into their exercise books. Discuss the patterns that appear in the table. Ask the participants to test each other, pointing to numbers at random.

Look at the curative matrix and discuss how much each type of cure costs for each illness. Write the costs on the matrix in the appropriate box, and underline it. Ask each learner to calculate mentally how much money his or her family has spent on health care in the last six months, and write the total in their exercise book (or a series of sub totals if the amount is more than 100). Let them read out the different totals, and say which illness or cure has been the heaviest burden, and which has been the lightest.

Now take one example from the participants and ask them to go through the amount they have spent step by step. Write this on the board using addition signs and sub-totals, particularly for each illness or cure. Do another example to reinforce this process; emphasising the advantage of recording your sub totals for greater accuracy. Ask learners to copy one example into their books. The more advanced participants can also write out their mental arithmetic using addition signs and sub-totals.

Note: if your currency involves figures much larger than 100 then this exercise will have to be used later.

Next, ask participants to agree on an amount of money that needs to be available for health care for a family over six months. Write this sum on the board and subtract one of the participants’ actual totals. Ask participants to do this mentally and then do the written calculation on the board.

Remember that this numeracy work may also give rise to discussion about how to cope with the costs of health care and be prepared to give space for that!

Finally, if some real materials are available, such as the instructions from medicine bottles about dosage, pass them around the circle discussing their meaning e.g. 3*2 meaning three tablets, twice a day.

Ideas for supplementary information/materials












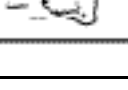
- Health materials – especially on symptoms and treatment (or prevention) of common illnesses. Look for

materials from organisations with health programmes who have produced simple materials in the local language suitable for the newly literate.

- Posters on healthy ante-natal and post-natal practices.
- Simple printing equipment for developing locally based health materials, such as knowledge about medicinal herbs and their properties.
- Labels from medicine bottles to practise reading the correct dosage.

Note: Constructing a matrix of medicinal herbs and plants (see page 125) can be an excellent follow-on to this Unit. In the pilot *Reflect* programmes in El Salvador and Bangladesh the curative matrices tended to show a high dependence on herbs, plants and traditional practices. Addressing these in more detail through a separate matrix proved very popular with participants.

Health curative matrix

		hospital	chemist	medicinal herbs	traditional healer	prayer
						
cough				2	1	15
malaria		5	10		3	5
malnutrition				5		6
infected cuts			7	2		
dysentery		5			8	7
rheumatism				5	2	8
parasites			1		2	7

5. Health and hygiene map

Objectives: To discuss health problems and strengths in the local environment; to generate vocabulary around health and to practise collective writing; to explore large numbers and multiplication; to integrate drama.

Preparation: Visual cards produced by participants so far.

How to construct a graphic

Ask the participants to prepare the ground for the next map by marking on the basic features of the Household, and Natural Resources map. These can be represented by visual cards.

Building on the last two units, ask participants to list what they would consider the causes of good and bad health. Explain that the map is to identify those causes which are part of the environment, starting with the bad things.

Ask the participants what they see as the causes of health problems in the village. To stimulate discussion the facilitator can ask the participants if there are areas in the village where there is a lot of rubbish, and to represent these by simple picture/word cards; areas of water which are stagnant (ask if this is a risk and if so, why – noting down the responses); contaminated water sources or latrines which they think are badly located (for example leading to the spread of infection or to the contamination of water).

Now discuss the location of some positive health and hygiene things such as medicinal herbs and plants, traditional healers or herbalists, the location of people with knowledge of health, traditional birth attendants, clean water sources and latrines which they regard as particularly healthy/hygienic. This may require considerable discussion about what forms of latrine are healthy – and the facilitator should note down what is said.

When it is completed, transfer the map onto a large piece of paper. Make sure that the good and bad things are represented in a different way, such as by a tick and a cross (or whatever symbols the participants suggest). Ask learners to draw any new visual cards that are needed.

Ideas for discussion

The following questions may be relevant starting points.

- In a family who tends to take most responsibility for health and hygiene? Why?

- What is a good latrine and what is a bad latrine? Why?
- Which water sources should we use for which functions? (drinking, cleaning, washing, animals, playing etc)
- Is stagnant water a health risk? If so, why? Should stagnant water be cleared and if so, how?
- How can we work together to improve the hygiene of the village?
- Is the situation getting better or worse? How? Why?

Note: In this Unit it is very important that the facilitator takes notes on the consensus reached by the circle on different questions. These can then be shared in the Facilitator’s On-going Exchange Workshops, where prejudices or mistaken beliefs can be addressed and actions proposed to address them. For example, in some cases malaria may be said to be caused by ‘*bad air*’ after the rain, not by mosquitoes breeding on stagnant water; elsewhere places where flies gather may be regarded as good because they are associated with cattle which are a sign of wealth. The first stage to dealing with such beliefs is to have them clearly documented and in the open. Support from good health education practitioners can then be sought.

Ideas for reading and writing

Revise the most difficult health words so far by writing them on the board in a jumbled form. For instance:

- arcoij → jicora (traditional healer)
- zkilaa → zalaki (hospital)
- aaorlc → corala (prayer)
- ttelii → letiti (dysentery)

(see Language Games, page 177).

Let every participant copy the Health and Hygiene Map into their exercise book, giving extra help with reading and writing of new key words such as ‘*rubbish*’ and ‘*Traditional Birth Attendant*’.

Using brainstorming techniques on the blackboard, generate as many words (especially verbs such as ‘*heal*’, ‘*cure*’, ‘*injure*’ etc.) as possible around the topic of health. Ask participants to volunteer to write them down first, and then ask participants to read them aloud individually and as a whole circle. Finally, copy them down. Very few new syllables should be needed! If new syllables do arise indicate them on the wall chart and spend a few minutes thinking of other words which use the same letter.

In pairs, ask participants to write words from memory. One participant picks a word from their exercise book on the topic of health, and the other tries writing it. Then they

check the word together, before changing round to let the other partner write.

Returning to the map, develop an analysis of the general health environment from the circle. Let volunteers try writing these on the board – either the whole sentence or word by word. The facilitator assists with totally new words. The whole circle participates in checking what is written for accuracy. When these are on the board, agree as a circle which are the most important actually to write on the map. Ask one of the participants to copy them neatly onto the map. If appropriate, these statements can also be written up as an Action Point to keep as a record for the circle or to present to the wider community. Let participants write their own analysis onto their own maps, with more advanced participants assisting slower or irregular participants.

Ideas for numeracy

First of all revise addition and subtraction by letting the participants practice some mechanical calculations based on numbers 1–100. Explain that participants should copy out the whole sum and not just the answer – as this will help with more complex calculations. Let pairs check each other’s answers before writing on the board.

Discuss with participants areas where they need large numbers such as in measuring the depth of a tube well, or dealing with larger amounts of money. Then, using Base 10, show the circle how to build up to 100,000, explaining that the column on the right is always single units, then moving left there are: tens, hundreds, thousands and ten-thousands, etc.

- 0
- 10
- 100
- 1,000
- 10,000
- 100,000

Practise by asking participants to say any three numbers randomly – which another participant writes on the board. Ask participants to try reading these large numbers. Practise an addition with three figure numbers, showing how ones and tens are carried over. This can be demonstrated with piles of stones or beans. Move up to practise with four and five figure numbers.

Finally try a relevant calculation such as the one below:

Calculate the cost of building different types of latrines (prepare costings of the different types of latrine) e.g.

TYPE 1	400 Spangs (four rings/slab)
	180 Spangs (wood for shelter)
	10 Spangs (nails)
	50 Spangs (one day labour)
640 total	

TYPE 2	200 Spangs (earthen rings)
	100 Spangs (bamboo)
	50 Spangs (one day labour)
	350 total

Do calculations based on these. For instance, how much would it cost to replace all bad latrines (adding up all those in the village). This is a good opportunity to introduce how multiplication is written down; for example 640 + 640 + 640 + 640 + 640 + 640 + 640 is the same as 7 x 640. Discuss what words are used locally for the multiplication function and work on a range of examples, asking participants to try to calculate in their heads as much as possible. Ask those participants who are good at this mental arithmetic to explain how they do it. Discuss how you can estimate answers by thinking of 7 x 6 and then thinking of the number of noughts in 7 x 600. Practise a lot of mental arithmetic with different participants posing made-up questions. Encourage people to try to write down sub-totals and answers.

Other numeracy work could be developed around the measurement of distances between latrines and households, latrines and water sources etc.

Supplementary information/materials

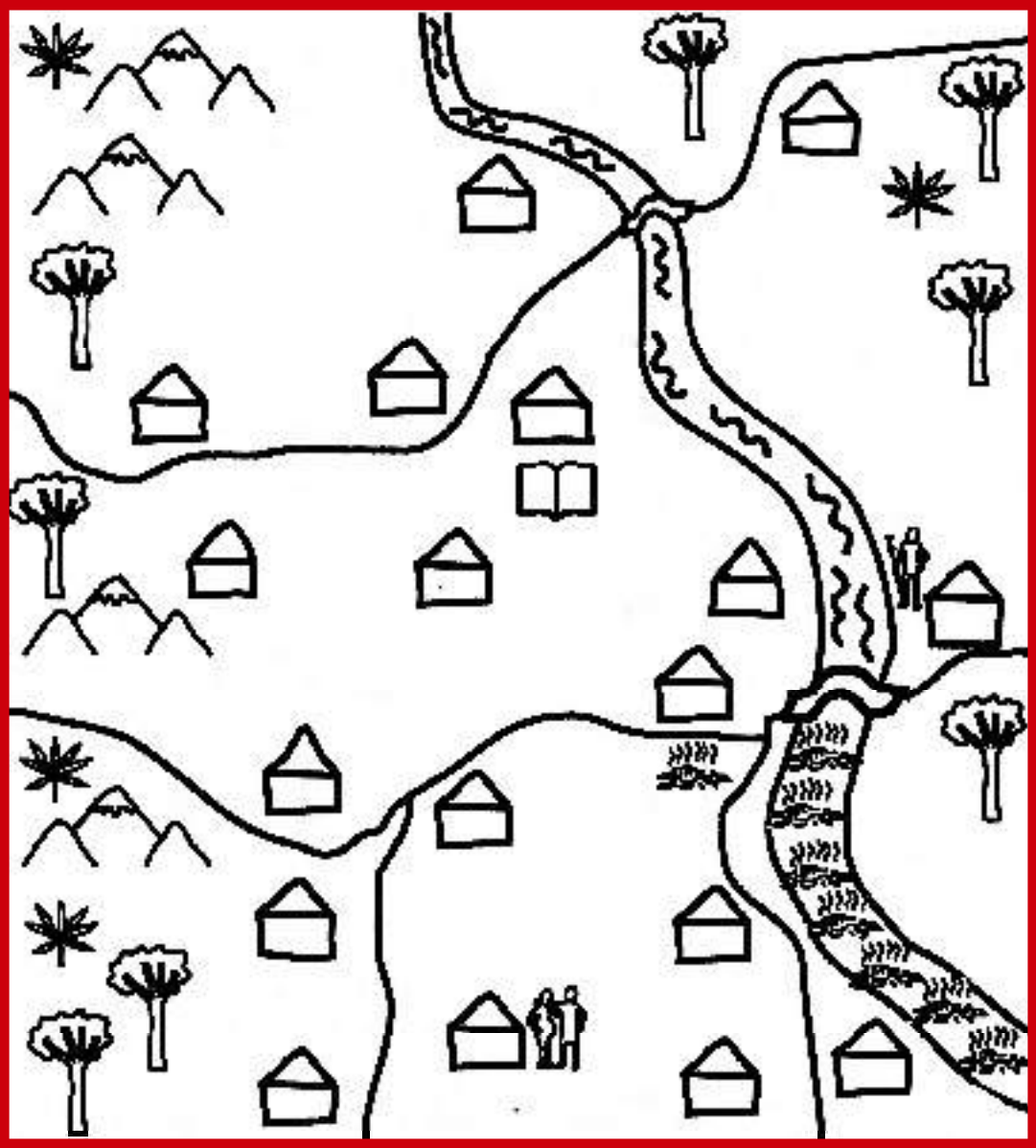
- Costings of construction of latrines/wells.
- Do-it-yourself guides to building latrines etc.
- Instructions on how to clear stagnant water etc.
- Information on the causes of malaria/diarrhoea.

Ideas for actions linked to health units

- Asserting women’s equal right to health care (including ante-natal and post natal care) and recognising women’s key role in health issues which requires them to be involved in decision making.
- Contacting a good, non-judgmental health worker to give advice to the circle on the symptoms of different illnesses, their treatment, and safe, cheaper alternatives.
- Contact a health worker for guidance on monitoring children’s growth.
- Construct food stores to help prevent malnutrition in the Hungry Season.
- Start or strengthen savings groups to pay for medical expenses and funerals at peak times of the year.

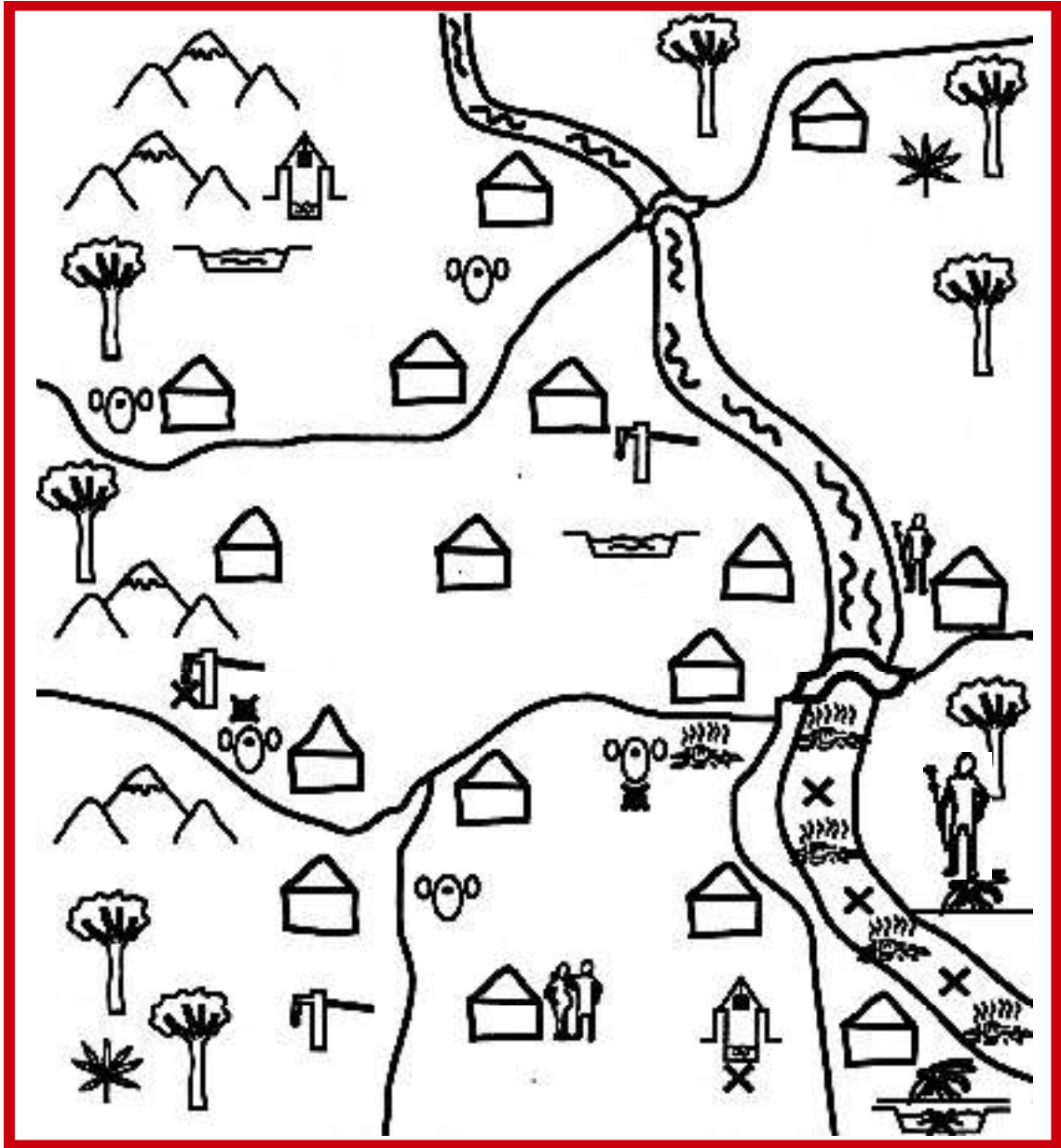
- Collection of information on medicinal plants.
 - Mobilisation to demand better health services.
 - Make arrangements at home for better sanitation. Call a village meeting to organise the disposal of rubbish more effectively, and to discuss sanitation.
 - Visit households who have badly placed latrines, which are contaminating communal water sources and persuade them to re-locate or re-design their latrine.
 - Put up signs in places where dumping rubbish is a health risk, or different uses of water should be made, such as washing clothes and feeding animals.
 - Print signs/posters with simple equipment (e.g. silk screen).
 - Mobilise to clear contaminated or stagnant water; for example by forming a water committee.
 - Construct sealed latrines/contact a local agency to see if suitable low cost designs are available etc.
 - Check that traditional healers are not facing any avoidable problems in their work.
 - Access more training.
 - Practise and perform a health drama showing some of the problems which have been discussed, such as the problems of women in getting treatment. This can be performed in the circle, at a community function or to an external agency.
- Note:** There are two examples of health and hygiene maps showing how different degrees of detail may be included on maps produced by different *Reflect* circles

Health and hygiene map – version 1



- KEY**
- school
 - healer
 - medicinal herbs
 - traditional birth attendant
 - rubbish

Health and hygiene map – version 2



- KEY**
- herbalist
 - well
 - latrine
 - tube well
 - pond
 - contaminated water
 - poorly located latrine
 - traditional birth attendant
 - rubbish
 - medicinal herbs
 - mosquito breeding ground

6. Agricultural calendar

Objectives: To discuss work burdens over the year and how they affect the lives of participants; introduce new words for agricultural work (mainly action words – verbs); to practise silent reading and independent writing of sentences; to practise multiplication

Preparations: Prepare possible pictures for types of agricultural work (and plenty of blank cards); prepare a numeracy problem on a topic arising from the discussion.

How to construct a graphic

Explain that today the circle is going to make another calendar. Look at the Health Calendar on the wall to refresh people’s memories! Ask some of the participants (perhaps the weaker ones) to take the numbers one to 12 on cards and place these on the ground in a row.

Then ask what are the main different types of work we do? Allow the learners to come up with a list. As they come up with each task ask them to draw a symbol for it on a card. Let all the participants try to draw symbols at the same time and then compare them and ask participants to agree which is best so that everyone agrees on the symbols to be used. If no-one can devise a simple picture or symbol, refer to the manual or your own preparation for ideas. The list might include: clearing land, planting, weeding, fertilising, harvesting, storing, selling. Ask them specifically to add certain types of work which they might otherwise overlook, such as within around the household. Write the words under each symbol/picture on the cards produced by the participants.

Ask the participants to place the symbol cards for each type of work in a column down the left side of the 12 months (on the ground). Then ask them, for each type of work, whether there is more of this work in some months than others. If so, ask when there is most and represent this with an appropriate local material (for example sticks of different lengths; numbers of seeds or beans). Then discuss the other months; whether there is more or less of that type of work – until all months are covered. Do the same for each of the different types of work.

When all months have been covered, ask if this is accurate or if they want to make any adjustments to the overall calendar. When all have agreed, ask the participants to transfer the whole calendar onto a large piece of paper. Make sure that weaker or less confident participants also get the chance to draw.

Ideas for discussion

- Are there times when there is too much work?
- What do you do when there is too much work?
- What work is hardest?
- What crops involve most work?
- What happens if you or your husband or children fall sick?
- What kind of things make the agricultural work succeed?
- Which is the best time of year? Why?
- What kind of work or leisure activities happen in the dry season?
- Have any of the above changed over the last 10 or 20 years?
- What is the most stressful time of year?
- What is the happiest time of year?

Ideas for action

- Can certain heavy work be shared/done cooperatively to reduce the burden?
- Can any technology be identified which would reduce certain work – which could be realistically purchased (individually or as a group)?
- Is there any other profitable work which can be done in the dry season?

Ideas for reading and writing

After copying the calendar into their exercise books, the facilitator can give participants the chance to practise the new key words for different kinds of agricultural work, using the visual cards prepared by participants. The facilitator shows the cards around the circle, and the participants try to recognise the words by their shape – but without reading them out loud. This method gives participants at different levels the chance to try on their own, and is an introduction to silent reading for those who have not naturally started to do this. Finally the facilitator turns the cards over so that they can see the picture, or asks one of the participants to identify the word and its symbol on the displayed graphic. If there are certain letters that appear in words which have not yet been covered, do not dwell on them, but draw peoples’ attention to the new letter and point to it in the alphabet on the wall. Most letters will now have been covered and the principle of letters representing sounds will be clear. The focus must now be on practice in a meaningful context.

Return to the ideas for action or conclusions from the discussion, and ask participants to write these down in short phrases or sentences in their own books as best they can. The facilitator should move around the circle helping individuals (both strong and weak). If some participants cannot yet do this, tell them not to worry! Ask any willing

participant to write what they have written on the board and let the circle read it aloud. Emphasise that small spelling mistakes do not matter at this stage. Continue with this exercise, with different participants taking the lead, until all the important conclusions have been covered. Let participants copy all the phrases into their books. Participants could then work in pairs trying to read from their own books to a partner. This will be the first significant circle-generated piece of writing and will be a reason for everyone to congratulate themselves!

Ideas for numeracy

The facilitator can return to the idea of sub-totals introduced in Unit Four, and work out calculations on the board so that the whole circle can follow. Pick a practical topic which has arisen from the discussion, such as:

- time in days between planting and harvesting certain crops;
- spacing between crops when planting (introduce measurements – parallels between ad hoc/traditional and metric systems) – and the impact on the growth of plants;
- number of days in a month/season/year?
- time taken up in certain daily activities, if added up through the year (such as collecting water);
- Amount of time likely to be spent by each individual, if a labour pool were set up (or in existing labour pools).

Then write up a pre-prepared problem to solve (still on a relevant topic). For example: five women are setting up a revolving labour pool for Dry Season tomato-growing. They estimate that each garden will need six mornings’ work in total, and that each garden will produce five kilos of tomatoes for sale. If the price is likely to be 100 Spangs per kilo, how much money will each woman make for her mornings of work? Use multiplication to make these calculations easier.

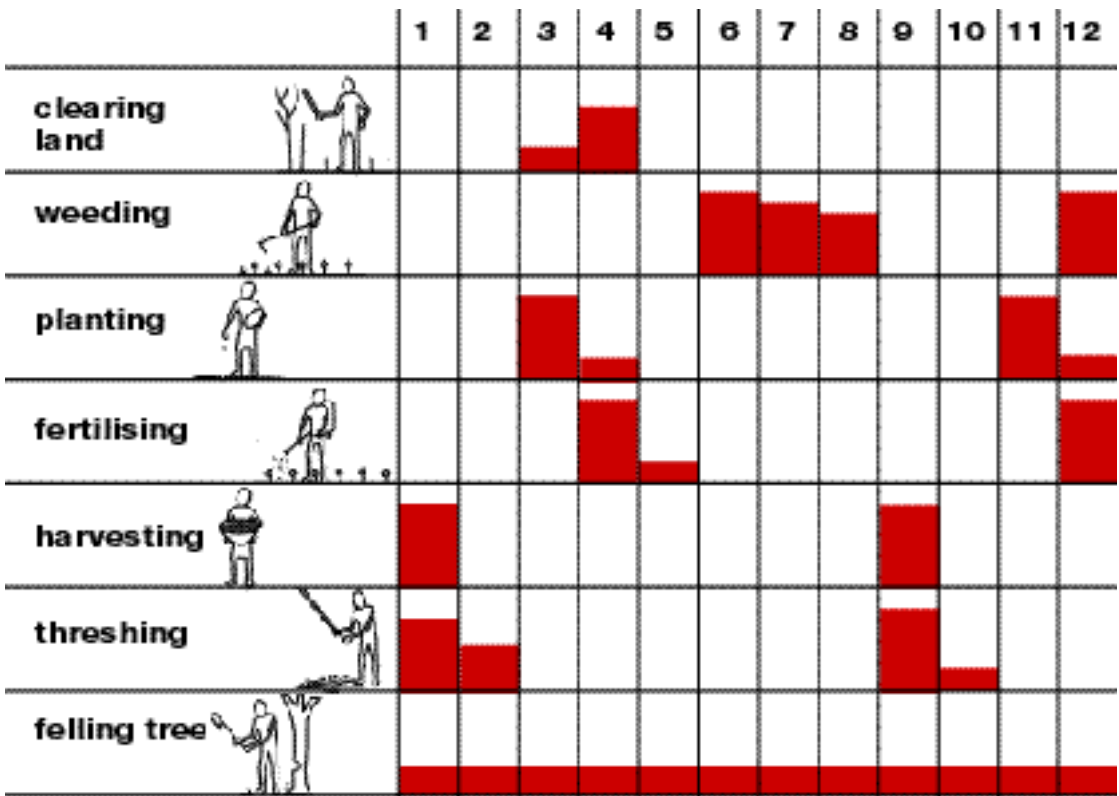
Having done this calculation in pairs in their exercise books, and discussed the answers, participants can discuss what they found hardest about this exercise.

For participants that are enjoying this, ask them to work out if it would be more or less profitable to grow peppers at 150 Spangs per kilo – each garden producing 3 kilos and needing the same amount of work. Develop similar examples.

Ideas for supplementary materials

- Introduce ‘real’ materials like calendars and clocks – practise with these.
- Practise writing dates – including birth dates (if known).

Agricultural calendar



7. Gender workload calendar

Objectives: To analyse work done by men and women, and to consider whether the division of work is fair; to construct a graphic without direct facilitation, and then to carry on this independence by working together in mixed-level groups on different things.

Preparations: Blank cards; syllable cards.

How to construct a graphic

Ask the participants how they would define work (for example as activities which bring food or money, or as anything which requires effort). Then explain that the circle is going to see how men’s work and women’s work changes through the year.

Participants divide themselves into women and men, and each group constructs the framework of two calendars on the ground (in separate places). Ask participants to look again at the agricultural calendar, and the types of work which they mentioned in that. Explain that they are going to list all the different types of work men do, and then that women do. They can use the cards they produced in the previous Unit or draw new cards to represent each type of work (such as planting, child-care). Ask each group to go ahead and construct the two calendars in the same way as they did the agricultural and health calendars, making large copies onto paper.

Come back together as a whole circle and look at each others’ calendars. This could lead to an interesting comparison of perceptions, before constructing joint calendars as a circle (this time with the facilitator). Let the final agreed version be copied onto a large piece of paper by participants who were not too emotionally involved in the debate!

Ideas for discussion

The construction of the calendars will probably have involved a lot of discussion. However, this can be taken further in various ways:

- Are there times when there is too much work?
- What do you do when there is too much work?
- What happens if you or your spouse or children fall sick?
- Do women work harder than men or more than men – or not?

- Is the work that women do recognised as work? Should it be?
- Is collecting fuel-wood work? Is cleaning work? etc
- Why is work divided up as it is between men and women?
- Has it always been like this?
- Has it changed in the last 10 or 20 years? Is there any need to change it now?

Ideas for action

Suggested actions for this Unit might include:-

- A one day swap of work-loads which can be both entertaining and thought provoking.
- More women standing in community elections/women’s quotas for elections (or all women short-lists for certain positions).
- Discussing the gender workload calendar at home with their spouse or parents.
- Men join women’s labour pools – perhaps taking one day for men alone.
- Communal cooking arrangements could be instigated to save women’s time and food resources.
- Women get training in a profitable, non-traditional skill such as furniture making.

Note: In the pilot *Reflect* projects this type of Unit often led to significant changes in attitudes. In Bundibugyo, Uganda for example, men started doing some work previously undertaken by women (such as collecting water and wood), because they acknowledged that in the past women had been expected to do most of the agricultural work and most of the household work. By bringing this injustice into the open in a mixed group, through a structured discussion, change became possible. It is not easy to make this sort of change and a lot depends on the good humour and acceptance of both men and women.

Ideas for reading and writing

Each visual/symbol card should have a word (or even a few words) to describe or name it and these words should be copied onto the final calendars. Everyone should copy the collectively produced calendars into their exercise books – with pictures alongside new words and the words by themselves, where these have been repeated from the last calendar. In addition, the names of the months could be added alongside the numbers 1-12. The new words should be practised with reading/ recognition activities and the construction of phrases using them.

If there is a need for mixed-level activities in the circle,

the following group work can be tried:

- A group of weaker participants can test each other on words from previous units. One can say a word from their exercise book (or the book of a very regular and strong participant) and the others try writing it down – then everyone compares their versions. After this activity, they can spend time copying out the new words from the gender workload calendars and reading them out loud to each other.
- A second group of fairly average participants can try writing the words, phrases and sentences they found particularly significant and conclusive from the discussion on workload. Then they can exchange exercise books for reading and discussion.
- A group of more advanced participants could produce a collective charter for change in workloads (if necessary, drawing on the facilitator to help with certain words) – this will give a useful focus for writing practice.

After these different groups have worked together, they should read aloud what they have written in order to share with the whole circle. This includes weaker participants reading out the new words. The content of the charter should be discussed by the whole group and altered accordingly. The participants, with the help of the facilitator, could copy it out on a large piece of paper for display.

Ideas for numeracy

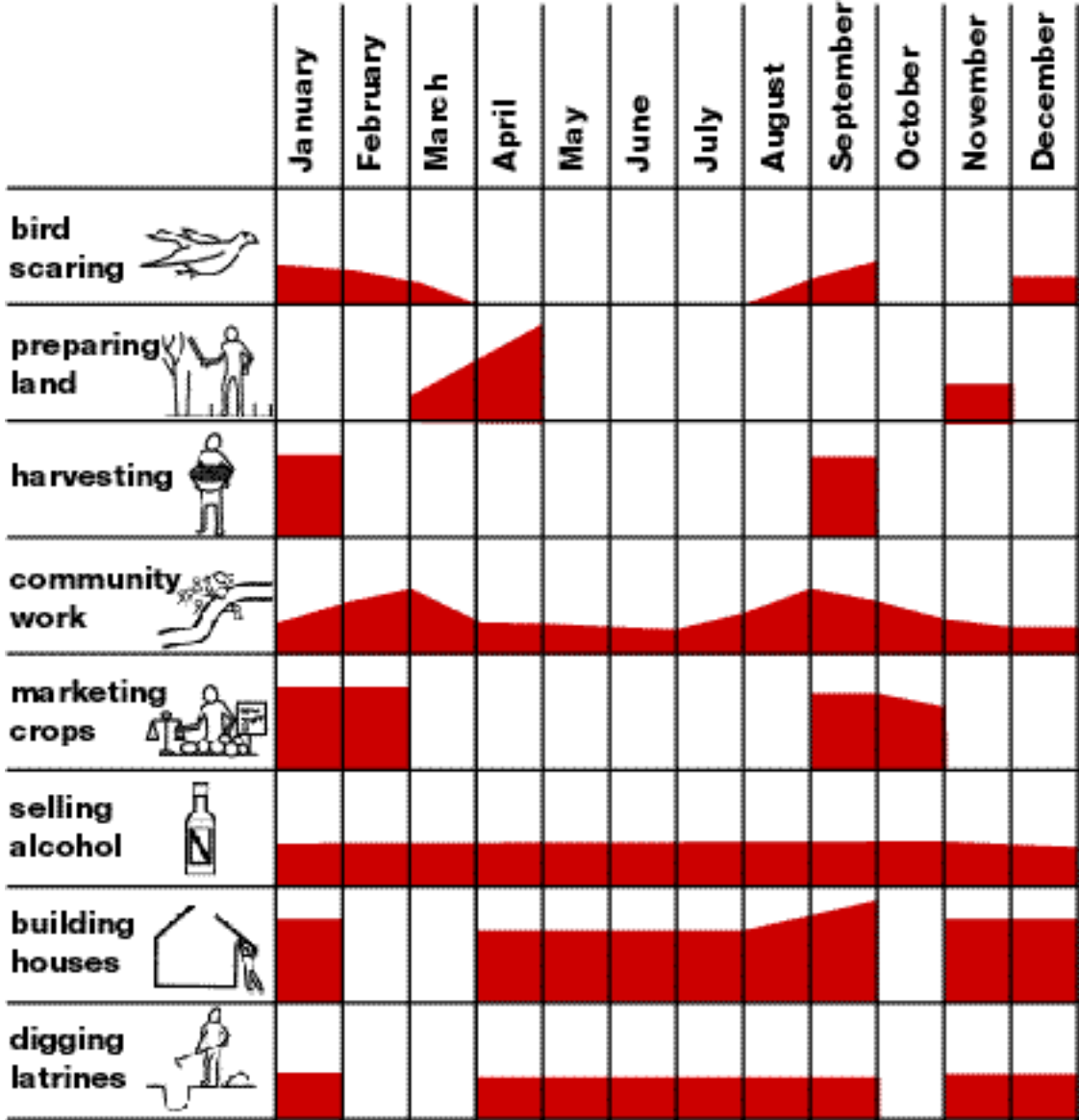
Calculations can be based on hours worked by men and women on a daily basis, and the hours spent in sleep, leisure activities etc.

As relaxation and a change of topic, try playing the game, ‘Bingo’ which practices number recognition, and can be done with large or small numbers (see the Number Games Section, page 180).

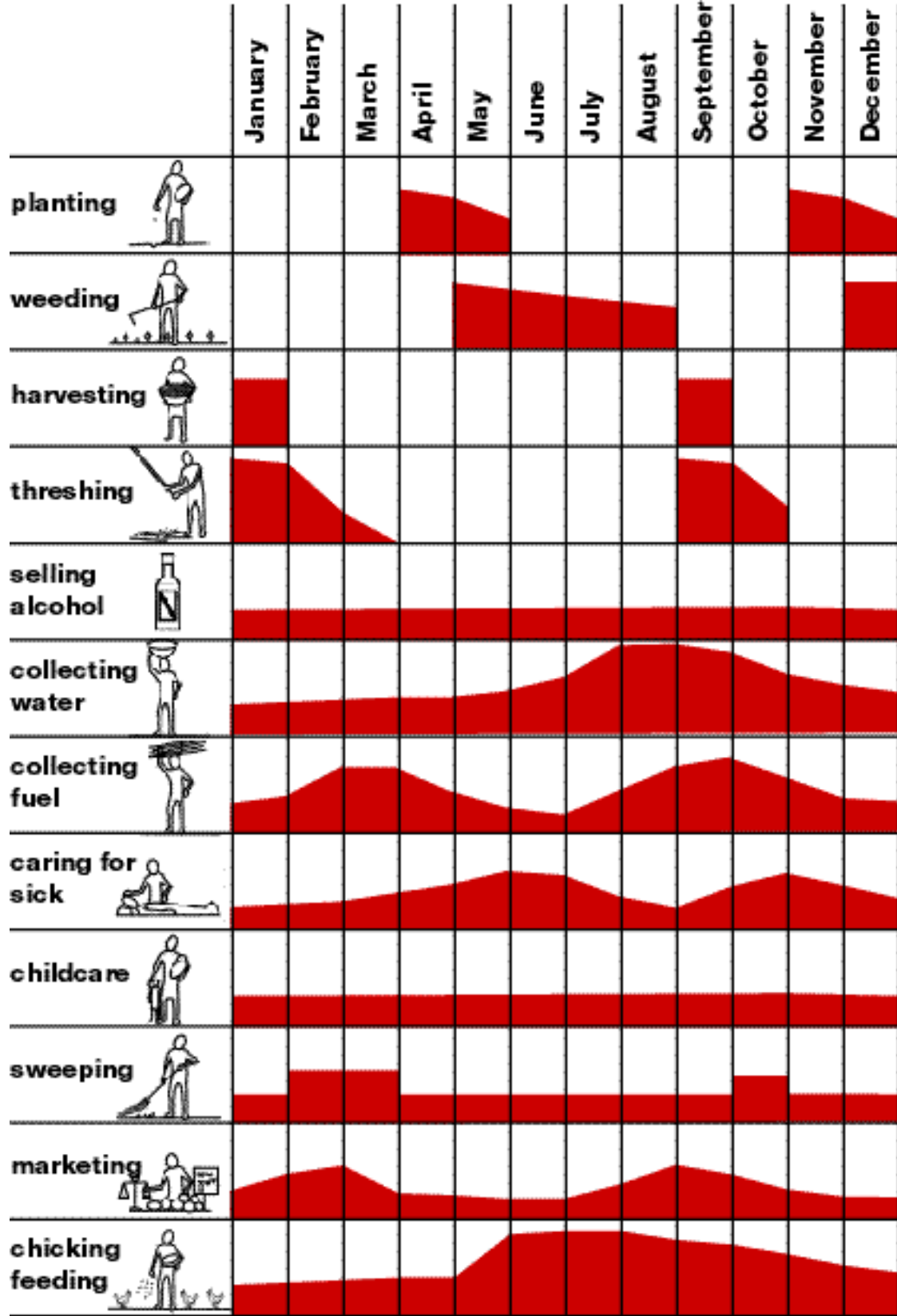
Ideas for supplementary information/materials

- If the debate extends (as it may well do so) into women’s rights, then it is useful to have supplementary materials available on, for example, legal rights of women (and how to access those rights!).
- Materials on powerful women in the history of the country (short, accessible and entertaining stories) can be useful to break stereotyped views – particularly if the women concerned started life in similar circumstances to those of the participants in the circle. Fictional stories following a similar approach can also be useful.

Gender workload calendar – men



Gender workload calendar – women



8. Income/expenditure tree and calendar

Objectives: To analyse income and expenditure of households through the year; to consolidate reading and writing skills; to introduce division; to encourage stronger participants to help weaker ones as part of the circle’s normal practice.

Preparation: Pairs of cards with sentences from previous units; ideas for pictures relating to income and expenditure;

How to construct a graphic

PART ONE: The tree

Explain to the participants that today we are going to start by growing a tree. The roots of the tree are going to be their different sources of income and the branches are going to be the different types of expenditure they have.

On the ground lay out a large stick. This is the trunk of the tree. Place smaller sticks spanning out at the top to represent branches and other sticks spanning out beneath to represent the roots. Then ask what different sources of income they have. Ask for major sources of income, such as cash crops (coffee, rice etc) as well as general categories. For example, if participants mention goats and hens etc, group these as livestock/animals. If they mention making mats and pots etc, group these as ‘home manufacture’. Other categories might include petty-trading, migration (to work elsewhere). Ask participants to draw and agree a simple picture card for each of these categories and place each at the end of a root of the tree.

Then ask for the different types of expenditure they have – again include major items (such as alcohol) and general groups or categories. These could be agricultural inputs; food; fuel; clothes; health; housing; festivals etc. Create simple cards for these and place each one at the end of a different branch.

Then ask: can a tree like this keep standing? Will the weight of all the different expenditures be too much for the roots to bear? Will it fall over?!

Ask participants to make a copy of this tree on a large sheet of paper, putting words alongside each of the pictures used (with your help where necessary).

PART TWO: The calendar

Now place all the picture cards for sources of income in a column, one under the other. Underneath these place the different sources of expenditure. Across the top draw twelve columns (for 12 months) to make a calendar. Ask the participants to think of a typical family in their village. Agree some basic elements of what such a family might be like – the number of children, their ages, whether the children are in school or in a parents’ community school etc.

Then ask the participants, for each of the types of income, what month of the year this typical family will have most of this source of income and when they will have least. Ask them to fill in the response for the whole twelve months, for each source of income. All amounts should be regarded as relative, not as being actual amounts of money (perhaps on a scale of 10, so 10 stones is a lot and one stone is very little). If the discussion gets stuck, then ask the participants to agree additional assumptions about the ‘typical family’ (such as which crops they grow and on how much land). The facilitator should write down all these assumptions.

Ask the same for all the different types of expenditure so that the whole calendar is complete. Transfer this to a large piece of paper.

Ideas for discussion

- How does a family cope with unexpected expenditure or large items?
- How do we save for weddings or funeral costs?
- What happens if a child falls very ill and needs to go to a doctor?
- What happens if the goats die?
- What strategies for increasing income are most feasible for a family like this?

In some cases, it is likely that this type of discussion will lead to an analysis of indebtedness and sources of credit. This can be analysed in more detail with the construction of a credit matrix (see next Unit).

Ideas for action

The discussion might lead to a list of different alternatives for increasing income, and decreasing expenditure. Some may be appropriate for translation into practice by individuals or as a circle. Some may need to be presented to a community meeting for more effective action:

- Less drinking or control of drinking alcohol (such as not during the day).
- Organising transport collectively, in order to take crops

- to a different market with better prices.
- Planting more food crops which will be ready when incomes are low.
- Men spending more money on family projects.
- Challenging local corruption, so that services for the whole community can benefit.
- Tailoring done locally to reduce the price of clothes, especially school uniforms (or abolishing uniforms).

Ideas for reading, writing and numeracy combined

The facilitator can start with a revision session using pairs of sentences from previous units, particularly those which most participants found difficult or missed. See ‘Memory’ in the Games Section (see page 179).

After this light relief, the circle can return to economic issues! Participants copy the tree and calendars into their exercise books, and do some work on recognition of the new words, and any new syllables. Ask participants to divide themselves up into pairs of a regular and an irregular attender. This has to be done very tactfully, and if possible should be based on the existing ‘buddies’ who are used to helping each other out. Try some pair-writing of phrases, sentences or continuous writing (one or two paragraphs) about the tree and the calendars. This can be general conclusions at this stage, and can be shared with the whole group. Important statements can be copied onto a large piece of paper by participants or the facilitator for display.

Looking at the calendar for the ‘typical’ family, participants can calculate the actual income or expenditure for a month in Spangs, and work out the balance. If this proves interesting, they can calculate for every month and the whole year.

Now it is possible to ask the pairs of participants to work together on producing their own individual versions; looking at their own sources of income and types of expenditure. This will involve numeracy work and reading and writing work, as there will be many calculations to be made, and conclusions for their household which can be written down in their exercise books. The stronger partner can help the weaker, but both should produce a tree or calendar. The facilitator should be very active in helping each pair along. As this is a sensitive area, a choice of activities should be given, and participants can work on areas they want to keep secret at home. These calendars can be shared informally by looking at each others’ exercise books as desired.

Other ideas for practical work include:

- Basic income and expenditure tree for their households.
- Food needed for each month in the year, and changing prices.

- Whole household expenditure for each month, and then the year.
- Whole household income for each month and then the year.
- Money needed for education through the year.
- Money spent on alcohol through the year.
- Changes in prices from month to month for things sold, and for things bought.

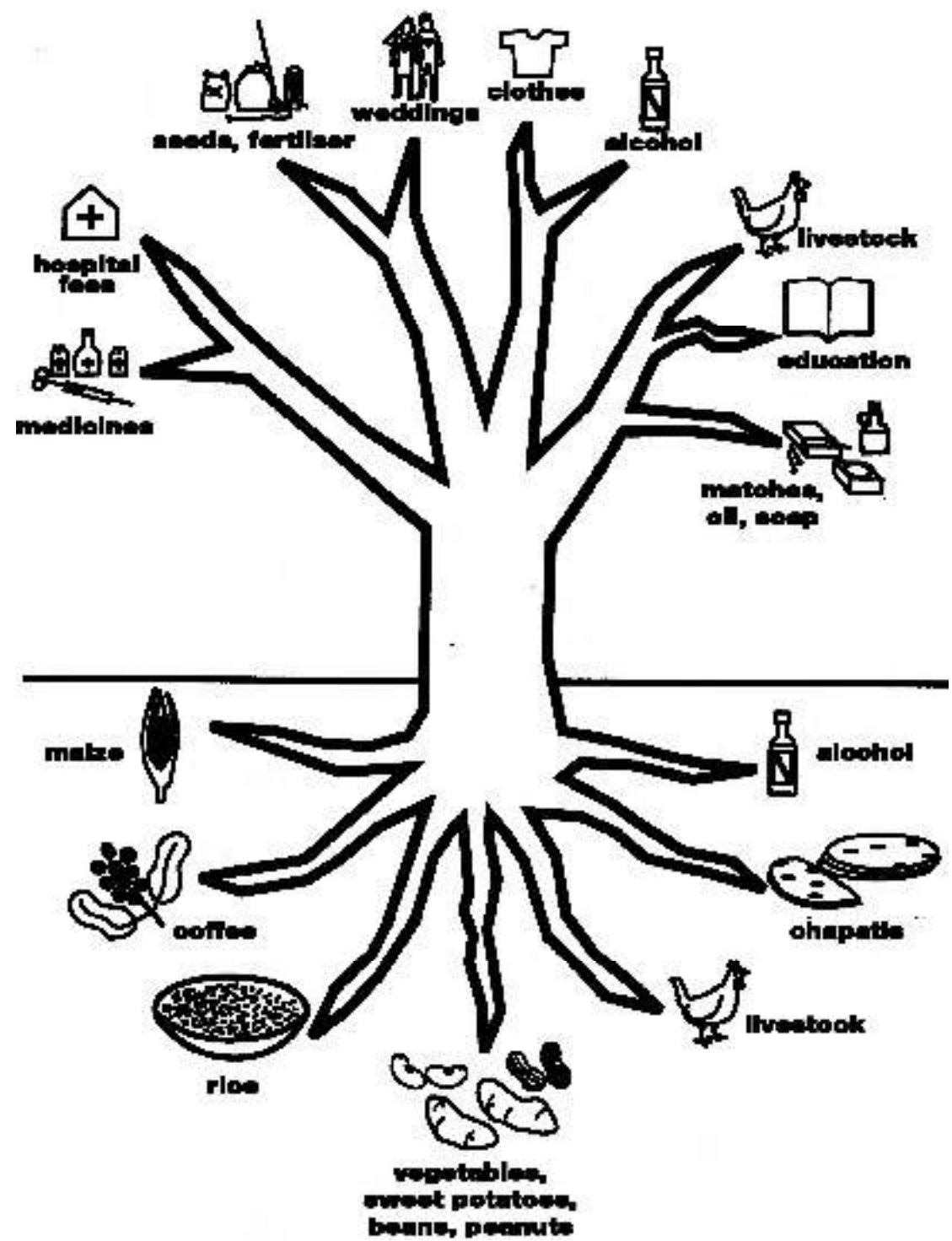
If complete annual calendars are too time-consuming, then concentrate on one month only. Encourage participants to write down all the calculations they make, and the different sub-totals – not just adding them up in their heads!

Some calculations should be designed to introduce division. For example, the participants can be asked what the total income of a family may be when they sell their coffee after harvest. This can then be divided by 12 to give a sense of how much income that could mean on a monthly basis. Introduce the division sign and discuss different words that are used to refer to this function (such as, sharing, fragmenting). Discuss the times in their lives when calculating division may be needed and ask the participants to devise problems/sums for each other, involving division. Allow as much practice as possible in mental arithmetic and ask participants to exchange strategies for doing divisions mentally – particularly for working out approximate answers.

Supplementary information/materials

- Simple pamphlets on keeping household accounts/small business accounts.
- Health materials on the dangers of excessive drinking.
- Agricultural Extension literature on different types of non-traditional crops, and how to grow them.

Income and expenditure tree



Income and expenditure calendar

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
income												
coffee												
rice												
vegetables												
livestock												
selling chapitis												
brewing alcohol												
expenditure												
medicines												
seeds, hoes												
clothes												
weddings												
alcohol												
school fees												

9. Matrix on sources and uses of credit

Objectives: To compare different advantages and disadvantages of sources of credit and to practise division.

Preparation: Blank cards on which to draw and write sources and uses of credit.

How to construct a graphic

Explain to the participants that the focus of today’s session will be credit. In many cases credit will already have arisen as an issue (through previous calendars of income and expenditure). Make sure the circle has a common definition of credit. For instance, are loans in kind included?

First ask, what are the different uses that we have for credit? When do we borrow money and what for? Try to group what they say together in general categories, for example: agricultural inputs, fishing, small-business/petty-trading, food, education, health, festivals (or special occasions like weddings), clothes, paying back other loans, etc. Draw picture cards for each of these (and help to write the words defining them clearly on the back). For some of them, cards will already have been prepared in the previous Unit. Place the cards (with words facing up and pictures unseen) for these categories in a list on the left of a space cleared on the ground. The participants can turn over the cards at any time if they have difficulty reading.

Now ask the participants: What are the different sources of credit we have? When they need to borrow money how do they get it? They may mention, savings and credit groups, moneylenders, families/relatives, banks etc. Prepare cards as above and place them with words face upwards in a row on the ground above the different uses.

Now, for each of the uses for credit, ask the participants, where would they go? Ask them to score each possible source out of 10. For example, if the money lender is the commonest place to get a loan for agricultural inputs, it could score eight; if it is not an easy place to get money for health care, then it could score 0.

Ask a different participant in turn (preferably the weaker or less regular ones, to give confidence) to write the agreed number on a piece of card or paper and place it in the appropriate place.

Ideas for discussion

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of different sources of credit?
- What are the conditions put on loans by different sources?
- Can we get loans from a bank? If not, why not?
- What rates of interest are charged by each source and what are the different ways of calculating interest (by month, by year etc).
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of loans in kind rather than in money form (seeds for instance)?
- How is money paid back to relatives?
- What happens if we get very badly in debt and can’t make repayments (to each different source)?
- How long does it take to get money from each source?
- Do we know people who have suffered very badly from indebtedness? Ask them to share stories, always making it a general rather than a personal discussion, unless a participant volunteers information.

Ideas for action

- Write a letter to make contact with a credit union/local bank.
- Write a letter to a credit union advocating/ recommending changes in their conditions.
- Agreement on changes in conditions in a local credit scheme where participants have an influence.
- Set up local court to adjudicate in cases of unfair credit agreements; dealing justly with borrowers who cannot re-pay etc.
- Establishing a wider ‘voucher’-based skills-exchange scheme as a supplement/alternative to traditional credit (or other mutually supportive savings and credit group).

Ideas for reading and writing

After copying the matrix into their exercise books, the facilitator can ask participants either to practise writing the new words or to write whole sentences from the discussion (doing whichever activity they wish!). The results can be shared with the whole circle, and participants (with help if necessary), can write 10 sentences on the board. Everyone can practice reading them. Then, participants can divide into mixed-level groups for different activities. One group (weaker) can use the board to fill in the gaps in the sentences which the facilitator has made by rubbing out words. The other group can play the game “*Changing Things*”, starting with a sentence which relates to the credit discussion (see Games Section, page 179).

Then move to relevant reading and writing practice, for example filling out application forms for bank accounts or loans; writing a cheque; articles on debt issues for a community newsletter; or letters on issues which have emerged as needs in the ideas for action (see above). Ask participants what they feel it would be most useful to practise. There may be benefit in working in pairs.

Ideas for numeracy

Numeracy work in this Unit should focus on practical calculations, using examples of typical loans and typical repayment periods. This is the perfect time to consolidate participants’ understanding of division, particularly long division, because it will be needed to calculate monthly payments etc. Refer to previous divisions done. Then give some example of mechanical calculations on the board, followed by some ‘problems’ based on credit examples for participants to do individually, such as:

- If I take out 300 Spangs and have 10 months to repay, how much do I repay each month?
- If I take a loan of 800 Spangs, and spend it on seed rice, how much will I have to pay back if interest rate is 15%? How much rice will I have to plant to be able to pay it back?

Ask participants to give real examples from their own situation and practise with these. Keep to round figures such as 10% and 15%, to make calculations easier. Remember that this discussion is likely to lead to a debate on fair interest rates!

Supplementary information/materials

- Bank or credit union forms/leaflets/pamphlets.
- Simple tables for the calculation of interest on round figures.
- Calculators.

Sources and uses of credit

	savings groups	relatives /peers	money lender	bank
health	2	8	0	0
education	8	5	0	0
weddings/ funerals	0	8	8	0
buying livestock	8	0	0	2
agricultural inputs	2	0	8	2

10. Preference ranking of crops

Objectives: To compare the advantages of various crops; to practise independent writing; to practise calculating and estimating volumes.

Preparation: Relevant visual cards produced so far and blank cards for any new words/pictures; True/False cards; reading materials on agriculture.

How to construct a graphic

Ask the participants to list the major crops grown in the village (perhaps referring to the agricultural calendar where a range of crops may have been mentioned). Ask participants (with your help where needed) to prepare word cards for each crop and to lay these down one side of a matrix – and then to lay the visual cards for these crops (as a prompt for those with difficulty recognising the words!) in the same sequence across the top.

Make lines down and across, using whatever materials are available (thread or string), so as to make the matrix clear. Now ask participants to number the different crops across the top from 1-8 (or however many they have) and down the side (from 1-8 etc) – so that the same number relates to the same crop.

Now, starting with the first crop in the first row ask whether they prefer to plant that crop or the crop in the second column. When they have decided, ask them to write the number of the crop they preferred in the appropriate box. Then ask them to explain why they preferred that crop. When they give a reason, try to get them to explain it in simple, general terms which could also relate to other crops. So rather than, for example, “*rice is good food for the family*”, just put “*good food for the family*”. Rather than, “*It is mostly women who grow and sell sweet potatoes, and keep the money from the sale, so this money is spent on children*”, just put “*money from sale goes to women*”.

Ask if anyone can attempt to draw this reason – or at least represent it somehow. Ask a participant to draw a card and then ask another participant (with your help) to write below the picture in simple language, the reason. This will enable different levels of learners to recognise these complex cards.

Now ask the same question for the crop in the first row compared to the crop in the third column. Which is preferred and why? Again ask them to put the number of the preferred crop in the box and then to give a reason, to

generalise the reason, and to try to draw it, following the same method described above.

Continue to compare the first row crop with each of the columns until the whole row is full and you have a set of cards giving reasons. If some of the reasons given are repeated then do not draw another card and simply use the one drawn before.

Now, complete the second row. As you have already compared crop two to crop one leave this blank – and as you can’t compare crop two with itself leave this blank and go straight to crop three. Complete the rest of the row again with reasons and cards (see example).

Then move to row three. The first two columns are not relevant as they have been done and the third cannot be done as it can’t be compared with itself, so go to column four. Continue like this until all the rows are complete (though half of the matrix – everything underneath the diagonal from the top left corner to the bottom right corner – will be blank).

At the end you should have a large collection of positive reasons (or criteria) which helped people make a choice. These could include such things as: easy to cook, doesn’t depend on labour, has various uses, high profit etc. Some will clearly have been difficult to draw and may not be remembered by the picture alone! Looking at these reasons laid down in a long list can lead participants into comparing the importance of these criteria in relation to different crops.

This discussion can be done by making another matrix, scoring each crop for each positive criteria out of a total of 10. Put the crops across the top and all the reasons/criteria of preference down the side. Read the first crop in the first column and ask whether the first criteria of preference is relevant. If not put a 0. If it is, ask whether this crop is very good in relation to this criteria or not. If it is good, ask them to give it a high score – out of 10. If it is poor, give it a low score out of 10. Whatever score the participants decide, ask one of the participants (a weaker one!) to write down the number on a piece of paper, and place it in the box. Then ask about the same crop in relation to the next criteria and give it a score. Continue this for all criteria.

Then move on to the next crop and complete for all criteria. The aim is not to attempt to show an overall score but to show the complexity of all decisions in relation to choosing which crops to plant.

Ideas for discussion

A lot of discussion will have taken place already! However, where there have been particularly animated discussions they could be picked up and explored in more detail.

- If certain traditional crops have been revealed to have

few advantages, then discuss what we can do about this? Repeat for non-traditional crops.

- Is the division into men’s and women’s crops helpful to the family? Is there any situation where women have control of profits from their crops?
- Is there any alternative to planting crops which can be made into alcohol?
- Are there any ways of organising community labour, which will relieve the work burden on otherwise labour-intensive crops? (such as shared bird scaring for rice).

Ideas for action

- Training on crops which have been shown to have considerable advantages, but where lack of knowledge is an obstacle.
- Collective action against certain pests.
- Cooperative planned planting so that different people plant different crops and trade internally (or between villages with *Reflect* circles).
- Write a letter to an Agricultural Extension Worker (copies to their boss!) asking for help with growing something new.
- Ask a richer farmer to experiment with a new crop, so that participants with fewer resources can see how it works.
- Challenge men’s practice of taking all the money from sale of cash crops such as coffee.
- Translate agricultural extension materials into the language used in the circle.

Ideas for reading and writing

This matrix itself can involve a lot of reading and writing. A lot of practice can be developed around the list of criteria that are generated. Mixed-level groups can work on different things.

- Group one can work with the new words and play the game ‘*True or False*’ with one member of the group holding up cards for the others (see Games Section, page 179). The sentences on the cards should include a lot of words and ideas from the crop matrix and the sources of credit matrix. When the participants have finished with the pre-prepared cards they can start to write their own True/False sentences and try them out on the rest of the circle(at top speed!).
- Group two can try writing phrases and short sentences from the discussion in their exercise books and then pass round their books for reading practice.
- Group three can use real reading materials, such as





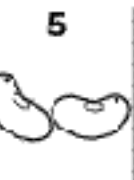

instructions from pesticides or fertilisers or any other agricultural inputs; training leaflets and pamphlets on different crops. These can often be found in abundance in certain places (often filing cabinets or stores of development agencies/government ministries), or could be written by the facilitators in their regular exchange workshops and centrally duplicated in a copying machine.

All groups should give the whole circle a feedback on their work, and everyone can benefit from the extra reading practice. The circle can work together on any real writing that needs to be done to carry out the ideas for action.

Ideas for numeracy

Numeracy activities that can flow from this work include practice with volumes in relation to pesticides or fertilisers (dilution etc) – including practice in estimating the volume of different containers (which could be collected prior to the class). This practice in estimation could be of considerable practical value! In the same light, some calculations of area will be useful (as most pesticides will say that X amount will cover Y square metres). The starting point might again be to ask people to estimate the area of a certain plot of land and then discuss strategies for calculating the area (there may be various ingenious ways people have of doing this and various terms people have for the Units of measurement and area involved). Practice could then be developed on the parallels between the local/traditional measurement systems and the metric system – showing ways of approximating the calculations involved.

Preference ranking of crops (a)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
						
1 maize		1	1	4	5	6
2 coffee			2	2	2	2
3 rice				4	5	6
4 sweet potatoes					4	4
5 beans						6
6 ground-nuts						

coffee is better than maize

groundnuts are better than maze

I prefer groundnuts to beans

rice is good for selling not eating

Preference ranking of crops (b)

space for pictures drawn by participants ▼		Maize	coffee	rice	sweet potatoes	beans	ground- nuts
	good food for family	5	0	0	2	8	8
	short growing season	5	0	0	8	8	8
	good market price	8	8	4	3	3	3
	money from sale goes to women	0	0	0	6	6	6
	resistant to drought	8	7	0	0	0	0
	not much labour needed	5	9	2	5	5	3
	not much money for seed	5	9	2	7	7	8

we are going to ask the agricultural extension worker for advice on growing sweet potatoes

we are going to discuss using less land for rice with our husbands

5.3 Sample Units by theme

These Units are not presented in any sequence. They are clustered by themes simply for ease of reference. Most Units can be used either early or late in a *Reflect* programme (to teach very basic aspects of literacy or more complex reading and writing and numeracy). Once you have decided how to sequence your local manual you can build up the literacy and adjust the level of difficulty of the literacy/numeracy work in each Unit. For example, in the early stages the graphics will tend to be constructed using pictures, with just a couple of words being introduced. In the later stages, the graphic may be covered with words as labels to the pictures or even directly constructed with words. Some Units necessarily involve more reading and writing (e.g. time-lines) and will only be appropriate later in a programme.

Some Units are presented here in detail; others are only in summary form. In all cases some attempt has been made to indicate ideas or possible directions for reading, writing and numeracy work but this is not developed into step-by-step guidelines – as in the Units in 5.2.

5.3.1 Additional units on agricultural/ micro-economic themes

Agricultural map

An Agricultural Map (see page 110) will show all the different crops grown in the village (or on land which people in the village use). On the same map, animals which are reared could also be shown (though they could be kept for another map). The map is likely to involve covering a larger area than the household map but it is important to ensure that major points of reference are established. It can become very complex if every single field is identified. Visual cards for each of the major crops and animals should be relatively easy for participants to prepare.

The discussion of this map may focus on the advantages and disadvantages of different crops/animals and the uses of each. Some reference to historical changes in land use can be productive (what was planted thirty years ago, what is new, what may be planted in the future). Gender workload in relation to each crop might also be a

productive line for discussion. Some classification of crops into cash crops and subsistence crops can be useful. Discussion may extend to cover different soil types in the area and which crops are appropriate to these – or which crops are suitable for growing on slopes or at different altitudes (if relevant).

Reading and writing exercises can involve picking out the names of crops as key words (initially as labels to the map). These can be used for simple phrases or more advanced writing by participants, depending on the point in your course.

Numeracy work, if at the basic level, might focus on the number of fields of different crops and then the total number of fields. Alternatively, at a more advanced level it might lead to discussion of measuring land area and calculations relating to that.

Map of land tenancy

In certain contexts a Land Tenancy Map (see page 111) can be an invaluable starting point for discussion. In others it may be so politically sensitive as to be dangerous. The map involves classifying land into various types, such as small-holding, large plantation, rented land/share cropping, cooperative land, land in dispute, government land etc. Simple symbols/pictures can be developed for each of these and the map can be constructed most easily after an agricultural map has already been completed (indeed it might even be possible to integrate the two).

Discussion is likely to focus on land distribution (and most probably the unfair nature of it). It is interesting to put this in an historical perspective. Who (probably) owned the land 500 years ago (if anyone)? Who owned it 100 years ago, 30 years ago, 10 years ago etc? The time periods you select will depend on the history of your country. It will be important to highlight points of invasion or major land reforms if there have been any. Indeed, it may be easier to refer to historical events or people (or generations, such as ‘our grandparents time’) than to years.

The discussion might then move on to the feasibility of changing land ownership, the causes of land disputes, the legal (and non-legal) means of challenging ownership etc. It will be important to try to ensure that everything is rooted in local history and local examples wherever possible.

Other discussions might focus on the process of land inheritance – on the process of land sizes becoming unsustainable through repeated division on inheritance; on the role of writing a will to ensure a fair inheritance; or on the impact of inheritance laws and traditions on women’s position in society.

Agricultural map



KEY

rice fields

wheat fields

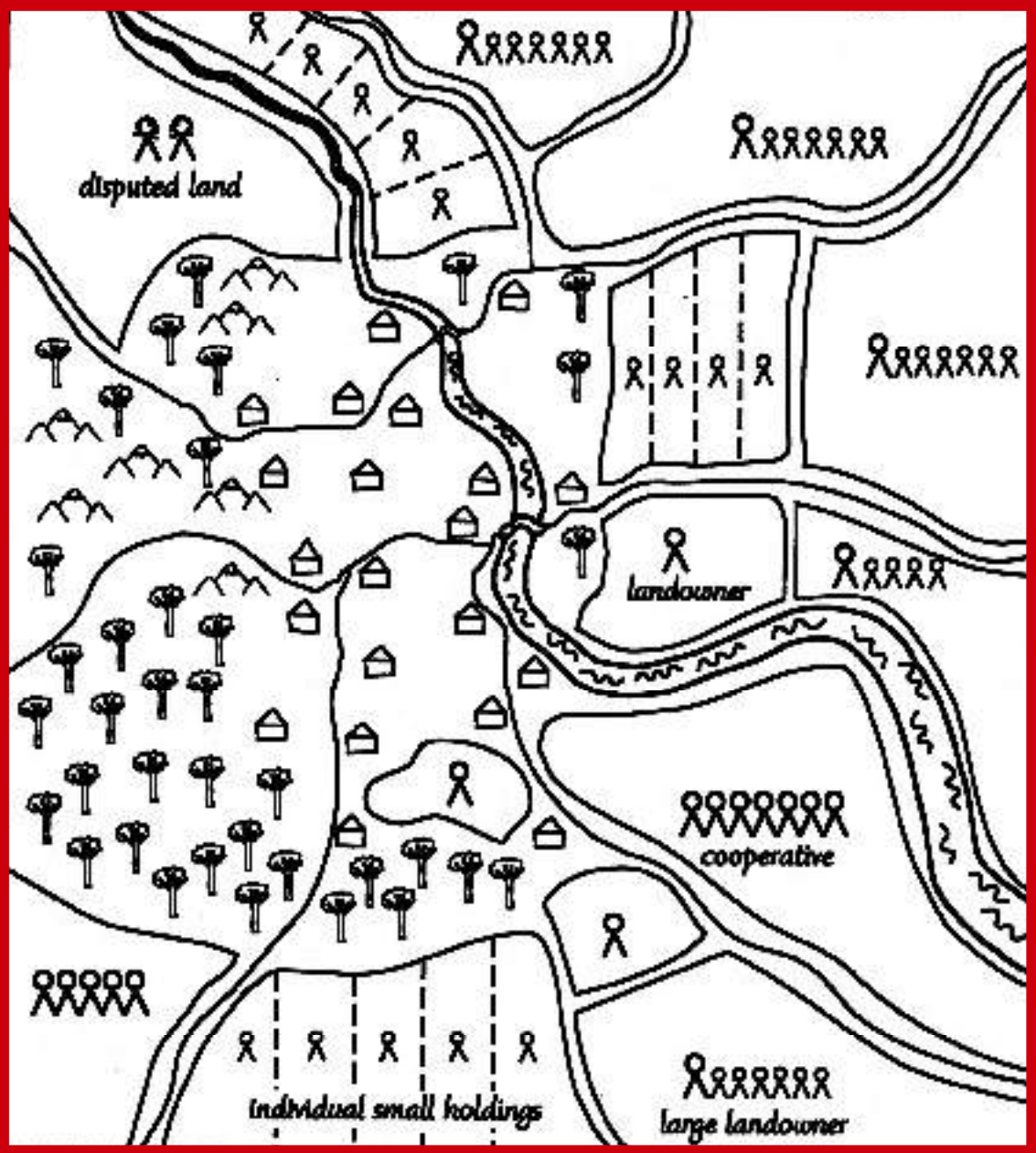
cattle

chilli peppers

goats

chickens

Land tenancy map



If you are still in the early stages of a *Reflect* course, the reading and writing work could draw on key words from the map (cooperative/landowner etc) and constructing phrases from these. At a more advanced level the reading and interpreting of land titles/relevant legal documents could be a practical focus (if participants have them and wish to have help in reading them). Supplementary reading could involve leaflets or pamphlets on land rights, agrarian law etc. Some role plays can be developed where participants simulate examples of people losing their land by putting a thumb

print to something they can't understand. Numeracy work might be based on the size of a cooperative and the land available per person, or on productivity from different fields. It might draw on examples of a share-cropper having to give away half of his/her crop each year. Other possibilities would be examples based on the cost of buying or mortgaging land and repayment periods, especially if people have access to this type of arrangement.

Transect walks

A transect walk involves plotting, on a household map or agricultural map, a path through the community from one end to the other; and then walking the route as a group, noting different characteristics found on the way. These might involve the type of crop, the type of tree or scrub/bush, the type of soil, the gradient of slopes/altitude, the type of animals/livestock, erosion status, human settlement, paths, water sources, pests/predators, common diseases, opportunities for change.

In normal PRA practice this walk would be undertaken by external facilitators with a group of villagers and the facilitators would have a range of expertise to identify certain things (such as soil type) whilst complementing this with local knowledge. In the *Reflect* circle it could be done on a purely local basis or the circle could invite a couple of outside ‘experts’ (or even ‘inside experts’ – people from their own community with specialist knowledge) to walk with them.

Once the data has been collected it is presented in a cross section format (see below). The transect offers another way of seeing the community and can spark off some interesting observations and discussions. Particularly, the scale of the transect (it may cover several kilometres or just a few hundred metres) may offer a different dimension to discussions.

It can be useful to ask how different the transect would have looked historically, as this can be another way of observing change. Issues such as soil erosion can be picked up particularly well in a transect (as tree cover, water sources and land use etc are all represented in relation to gradients/slopes) and actions to reduce soil erosion may emerge from the discussion. Another possible action would be to take soil samples en route and send them for analysis (if this service is available) to determine soil quality (and the most suitable crops/ fertiliser etc).

A transect will normally involve a considerable amount of reading and writing, often generating not just words but short phrases. The participants can be encouraged to try to write directly on the large sheet of paper, with each participant filling a different box.

Further reading and writing work might pick up from the theme of soil quality and focus on practice in understanding descriptions of soil (pH content etc) received from a soil analysis unit (if one is available). Work might also relate to reading instructions on fertilisers (or pesticides). This might also lead into numeracy work. Other numeracy work could relate to measurements of soil erosion (such as examples based on a certain percentage of someone’s land being lost to gullies – what income does this represent if the field yields XX?).

Market prices calendar

A Calendar of Market Prices involves identifying the major things that participants produce and sell – and plotting the changing prices that they can get for those items in the markets at different times of the year. For example, five crops may be identified (e.g.: coffee, sugar, maize, beans and cassava). Participants would be asked to reflect on a typical year – when is the price lowest and when is it highest for each crop etc.

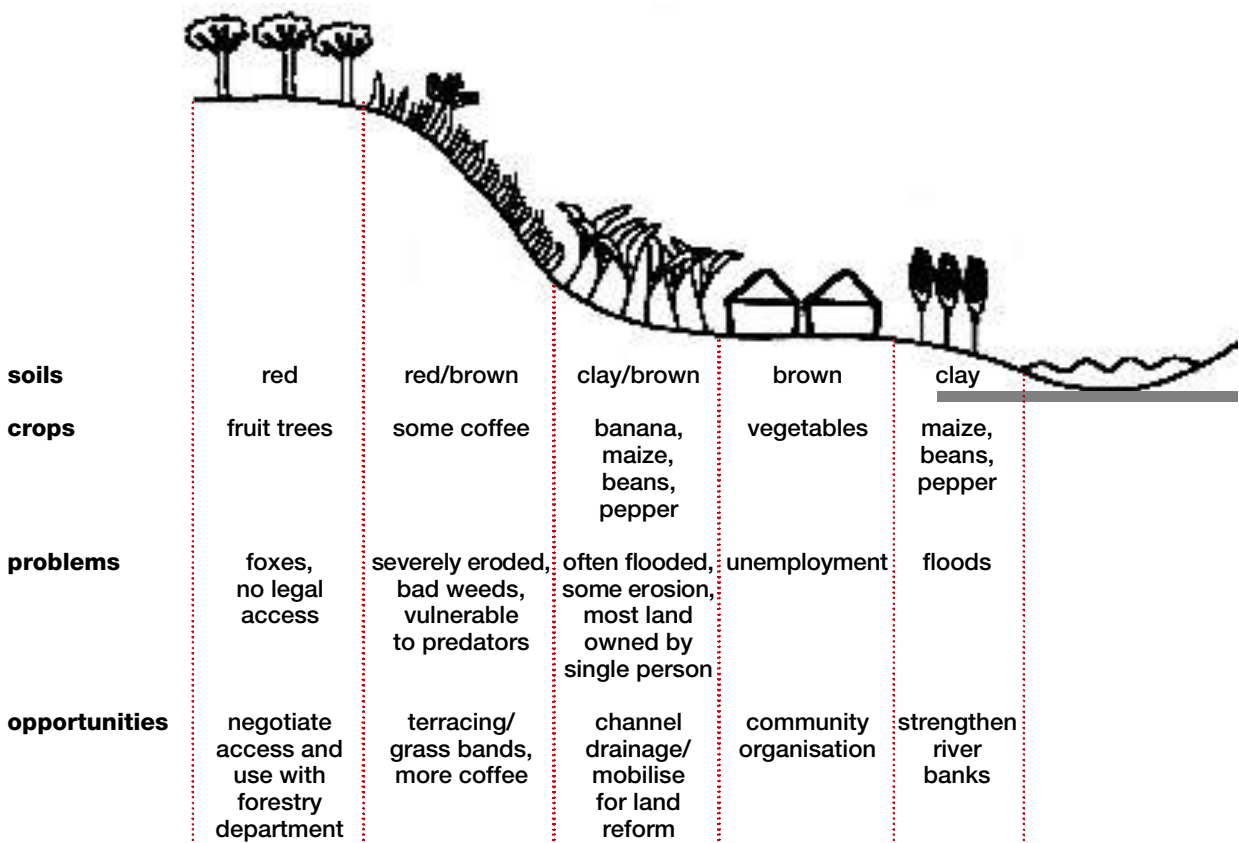
Discussion may focus on how people can avoid having to sell their crop when prices are lowest (immediately after the main harvest), through storing produce or taking credit, working cooperatively or planting at different times etc. It can be particularly revealing to ask them to identify times of the year when they may have to buy the same product (such as maize), which will usually be when it is most expensive. Discussion may focus on why prices change and what factors change the standard annual pattern of prices. Relating price changes to the distance to markets (see mobility map, page 142) can enrich the discussion. In some cases a five or 10 year calendar can also be valuable.

Individuals may want to prepare their own calendar (in their books) about their own specific crops/produce.

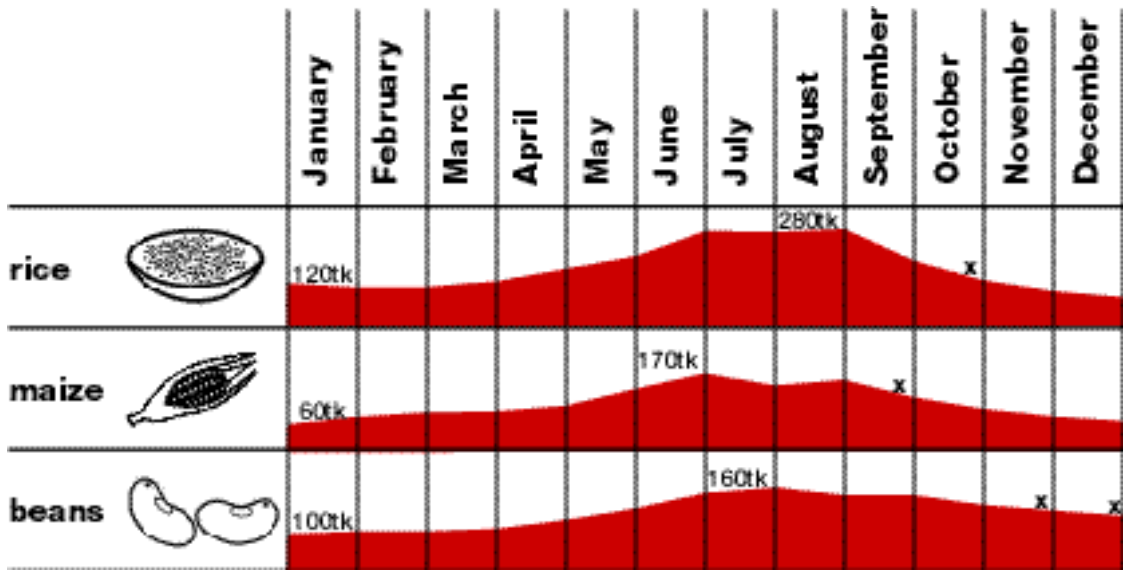
Numeracy work based on this calendar can be very practical. One immediate step is to put actual prices on the calendar (rather than just show relative trends) and then to do calculations on the amount earned by selling the same quantity of a crop at different times of the year. The cost of taking out additional credit or of storing crops can be built into such calculations to make them realistic. Projections for each major crop could be developed, looking at yield/productivity, risks, price stability etc and probable profit levels.

Reading work should start with phrases generated by participants, based on the calendar and subsequent discussion. Additional work could draw on supplementary materials about commodity markets/international trade; or on national newspaper reports on recent developments with major crops etc. Excerpts from these may need to be extracted and written out large on a blackboard to facilitate reading. The facilitators’ on-going exchange workshops/training sessions could be used to receive up-to-date material on these issues. Some simple information material might also be included in the facilitators’ manual.

Transect walks



Calendar of market prices



x = common time to sell

we have to buy food when the prices are high and sell our harvests when prices are low.

Ideas for action

- store crops
- ask for credit
- avoid repaying credit after harvest
- plant new crops – sesame seed, chilli
- group together to take crops to the city market
- avoid selling from the field to intermediaries

Basic purchases calendar

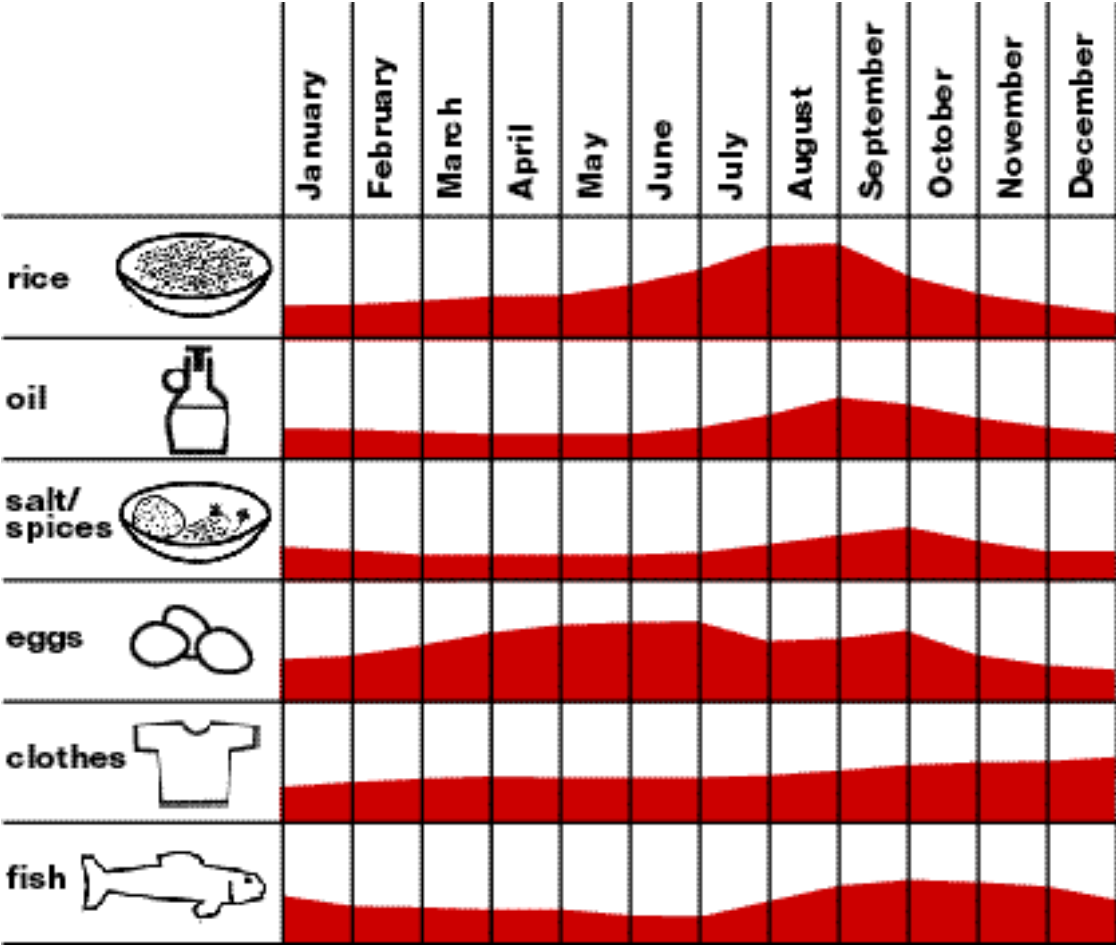
A Basic Purchases Calendar will focus on a selection of items people have to buy and will look at the price trends in those items over a year or, perhaps more effectively, five years. The list of items should be suggested by participants and may include gasoline, soap, cooking oil, clothes, fish, salt, pots and pans etc. The relative changes in prices over a year (or five years) would then be plotted on a calendar.

Discussion might explore the various reasons for price changes; whether income has risen to keep pace with price increases; whether certain items that used to be purchased are no longer purchased; whether any of the items can be produced locally rather than purchased etc. If certain products undergo dramatic price changes within a year, then the feasibility of bulk buying (and storing) when prices are low can be discussed.

Numeracy work could focus on practice in market place situations, based possibly around role plays and the need to do calculations on the spot. It can also be useful to learn how to recognise written prices, to practise currency transactions and weight systems used for different items.

Reading and writing work might focus on writing shopping lists. For instance, participants could write lists for each other and try to read each other’s instructions. The introduction of a basic accounts system for household expenditure could be useful and would integrate numeracy and literacy.

Calendar of basic purchases



Hunger and abundance calendar

A Hunger and Abundance Calendar involves plotting the availability of food and income through the year to determine the times of the year when there are serious shortages and the times of abundance. Cross-referencing with other calendars can be useful to focus discussion. In many cases there will be several months of the year when there are serious shortages. The length of this period may vary from year to year and the reasons for this should be explored.

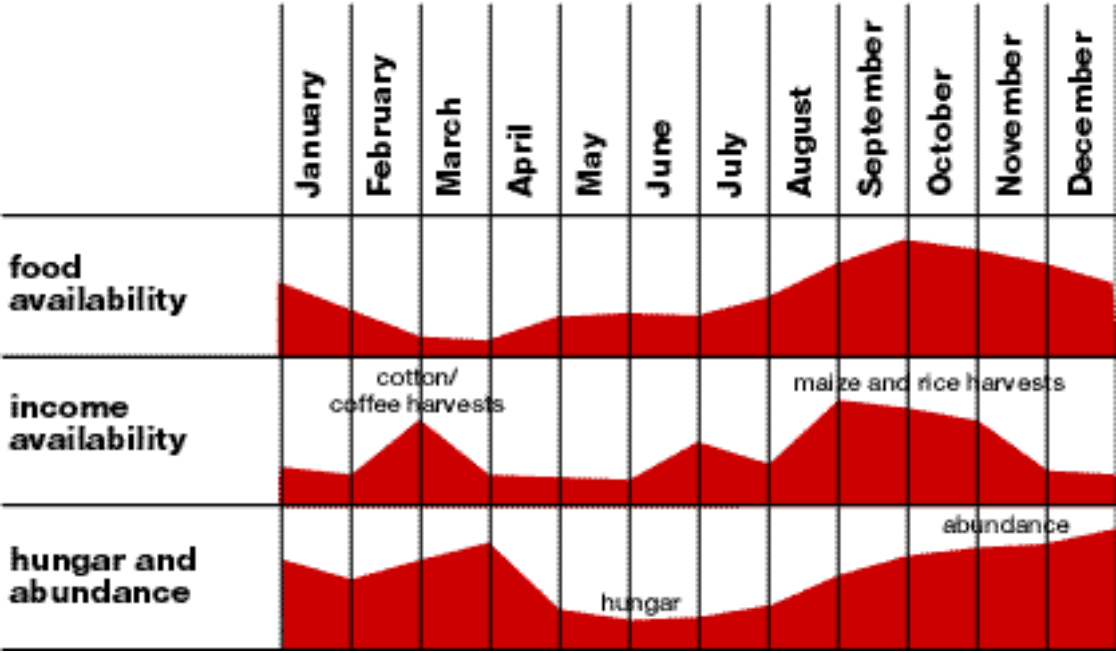
The discussion is likely to focus on survival strategies during the period of shortages – both existing strategies and ideas for improving them. This can often be a very creative discussion with many different ideas being generated which can lead to concrete actions. These may include introducing

low season crops, improving storage, bulk purchasing, cooperative selling, small-scale irrigation, home-based income generating projects and so on.

Writing work might start with each person writing (to the extent they can) a list of ideas for how to reduce the hungry season – and then sharing them with everyone and prioritising. In this way literacy becomes interwoven with the discussion. If the Unit is used early in a course, the facilitator will have to do more of the writing (or give more help to participants to do their own).

Numeracy work might involve calculating the amount of certain crops that it is feasible to store (allowing perhaps for a loss of a certain percentage to pests), from a good harvest. Various calculations could also be introduced which look at how credit can help to fill the hungry season.

Hunger and abundance calendar



Rainfall calendar

A Rainfall Calendar is one of the most basic calendars, which is easy to produce but can be very revealing. Plotting the levels of rainfall month by month in a group, if given thought, will usually yield a very accurate picture. The same calendar can be used for identifying other climatic conditions, such as cyclone/hurricane seasons, hours of sunshine, risk of frost, etc.

The calendar may initially show a typical year, but this can then be used as a starting point for discussing what happens when the pattern is broken – when there are floods or droughts etc. Participants can be asked to exchange their memories of the worst floods or droughts – and how they survived, the impact on crops, livelihoods etc.

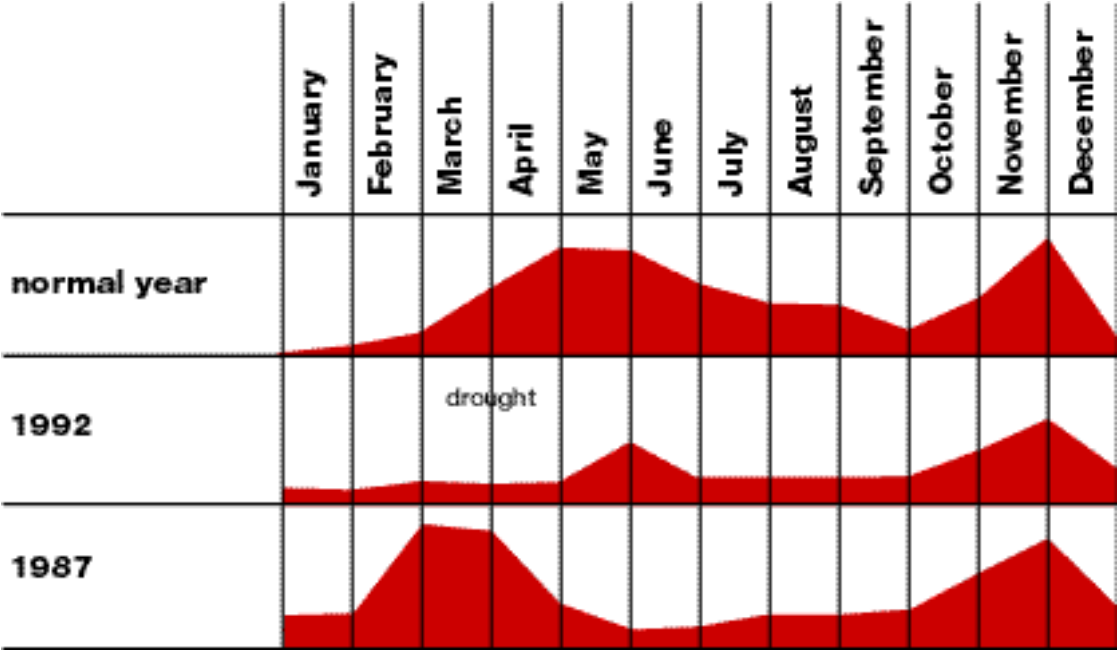
Reading and writing might start with simple accounts written by participants about their memories of past droughts/floods. Depending on the stage in the course, these could be narrated by the participant and written up by the facilitator (for later collective reading) or might involve each participant (or each pair) writing a few phrases. If newspapers are available in the area, then some reading of

weather forecasts could be useful. The reading of other materials such as guidelines for what to do in cyclones (different stages of alert) could also be used. The participants may choose to draw up their own guidelines for survival in different types of crisis.

Numeracy work could involve various things. Measurement of rainfall in millimetres/centimetres offers some scope for practice (the equivalences in local traditional systems). The measurement of temperature by Fahrenheit/centigrade also offers scope for practical work. Another aspect of numeracy that could be introduced would be written dates (1972, 1984 – perhaps looking at conversion between different calendars etc) as the discussion will have involved recording significant past events. This could be extended to abbreviated forms of writing days/months/years (e.g. 5/12/95).

NOTE: The rainfall calendar is useful to introduce at an early stage, particularly in rural areas – as it can be the best way to simply define the shape of the year for any other seasonal calendar.

Rainfall calendar



In 1992 the rains came late and were not enough for the crops. Many people died of hunger. Some moved to the city.

In 1987 the rains came early and were torrential. There were serious floods. Many people in the valley lost their houses. some crops were washed away.

Flow diagram on deforestation

A flow diagram is another technique of PRA which can be applied in many different circumstances to explore the causal relationships between events and their various consequences.

This example of a flow diagram is based on the effects of deforestation, following through the effects on children. Participants are asked to identify immediate effects of deforestation. They may identify soil erosion and extra time for fuel-wood collection. Participants are then asked to follow these through one at a time, to identify possible effects of these changes (such as less livestock kept because less time available) and to look then at the “effects of those effects”. The process can sometimes carry on almost indefinitely. Constructing this on the ground (perhaps with simple written cards) will allow a lot of flexibility and the

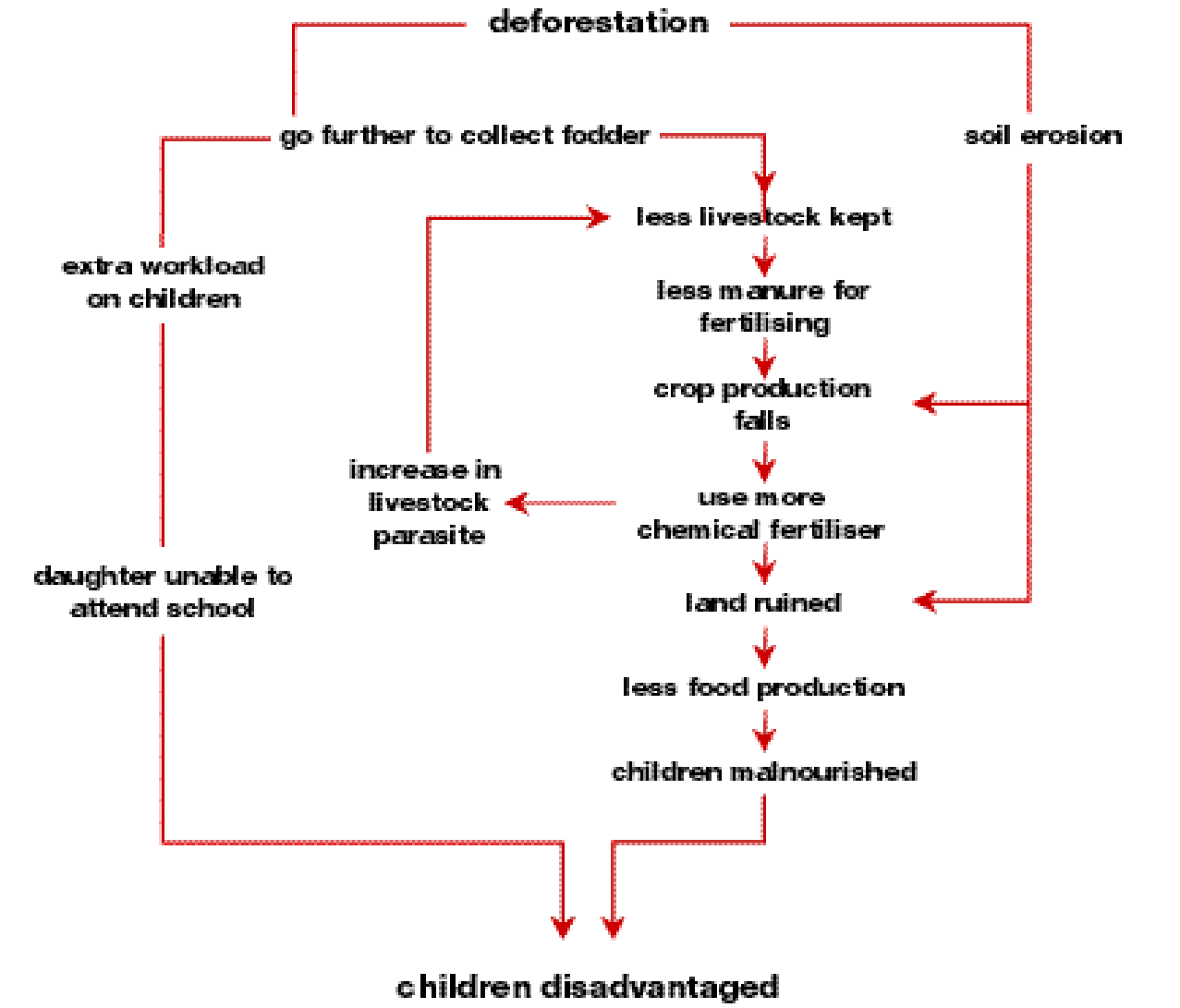
result may well be very complex.

Exploring causal relationships in this way can also help to focus participants on which actions will help to break the cycles of effects at different stages.

Similar flow diagrams can be used in many other settings, for example, for exploring the impact of a flood or a drought, the building of an irrigation canal, the consequences of a dramatic price change, the effects of a plague or a war. They can be used to consider possible future effects of something, as well as the effects of things which have already happened.

Flow diagrams are a good opportunity to practise and use literacy and may therefore be most appropriate for introduction once participants have grasped basic literacy skills. In respect of numeracy, the focus may be placed on the economic costs of different effects – balanced perhaps against the costs of preventive action.

Flow diagram on deforestation



Household economy systems diagram

The aim of a Household Economy Systems Diagram is to show how the different individuals contribute to the survival of a family and the generation of income. Each member of the family is represented by a simple picture; different features of the family's economy (such as crops grown, income sources, other major activities) are then represented around them, with arrows drawn to show who does what in relation to the different features.

This often reveals very clearly the inter-dependence of a family. It can be the basis for discussing relative workloads, changes in workloads, acceptable (and unacceptable) workloads for children of different ages, ways in which systems can be improved etc.

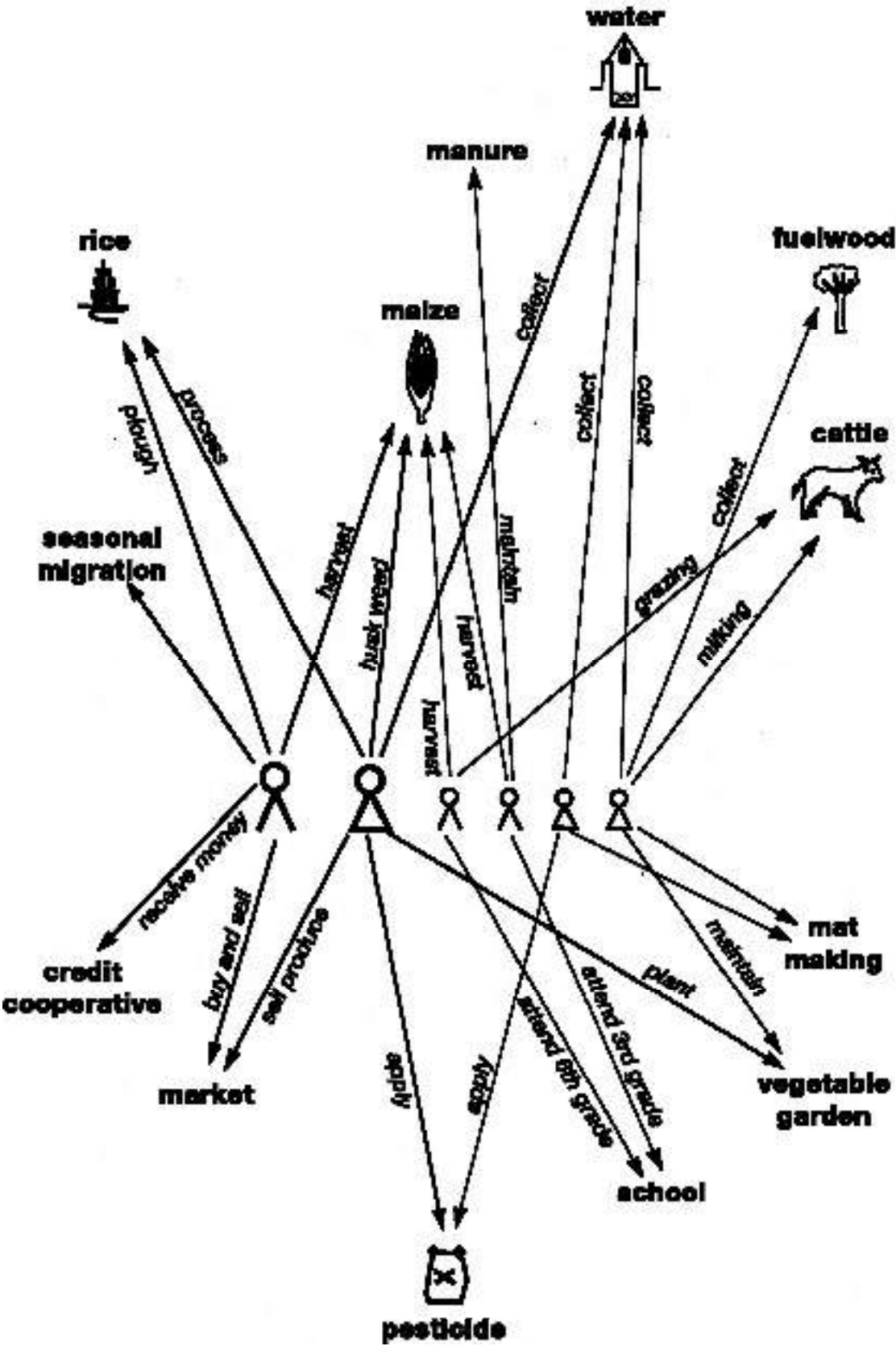
The systems diagram can become very complicated with arrows crossing everywhere. Constructing it on the ground first will therefore help. The *Reflect* circle may begin by constructing a diagram for a typical local family. This would provoke debate over what activities are typically done by different people. Alternatively, a participant may volunteer to have the diagram based on himself or herself. It can then be repeated by each participant (perhaps in pairs) in their own book based on their own household systems. The range of features to be included may be varied. Moreover, as a whole circle, different household systems could be constructed, showing, for example, the economic systems in a female headed household.

The systems diagrams can be constructed mostly in pictures or straight away with words. It can be used to generate a range of vocabulary, particularly including verbs along the arrows. This serves as a strong basis for writing sentences relating to the diagram and particularly sentences which highlight problems or solutions and recommendations.

Other types of systems analysis can also be developed, for example looking at farm systems in a diagram. This might include for example looking at the inter-relationships between animal rearing, crops and households (for instance cattle give milk, meat and income from sale for a household, provide manure for crops and are fed on crop residues; crops are worked on by household and give food and income etc).

Note: Members of a 'household' or 'family' will vary from one culture to another. They may include one man and his children; or several brothers and their dependents; or something else entirely. It is important to have a locally understood term before introducing any exercises regarding the family.

Household economy systems diagram



Process diagram of dairy produce

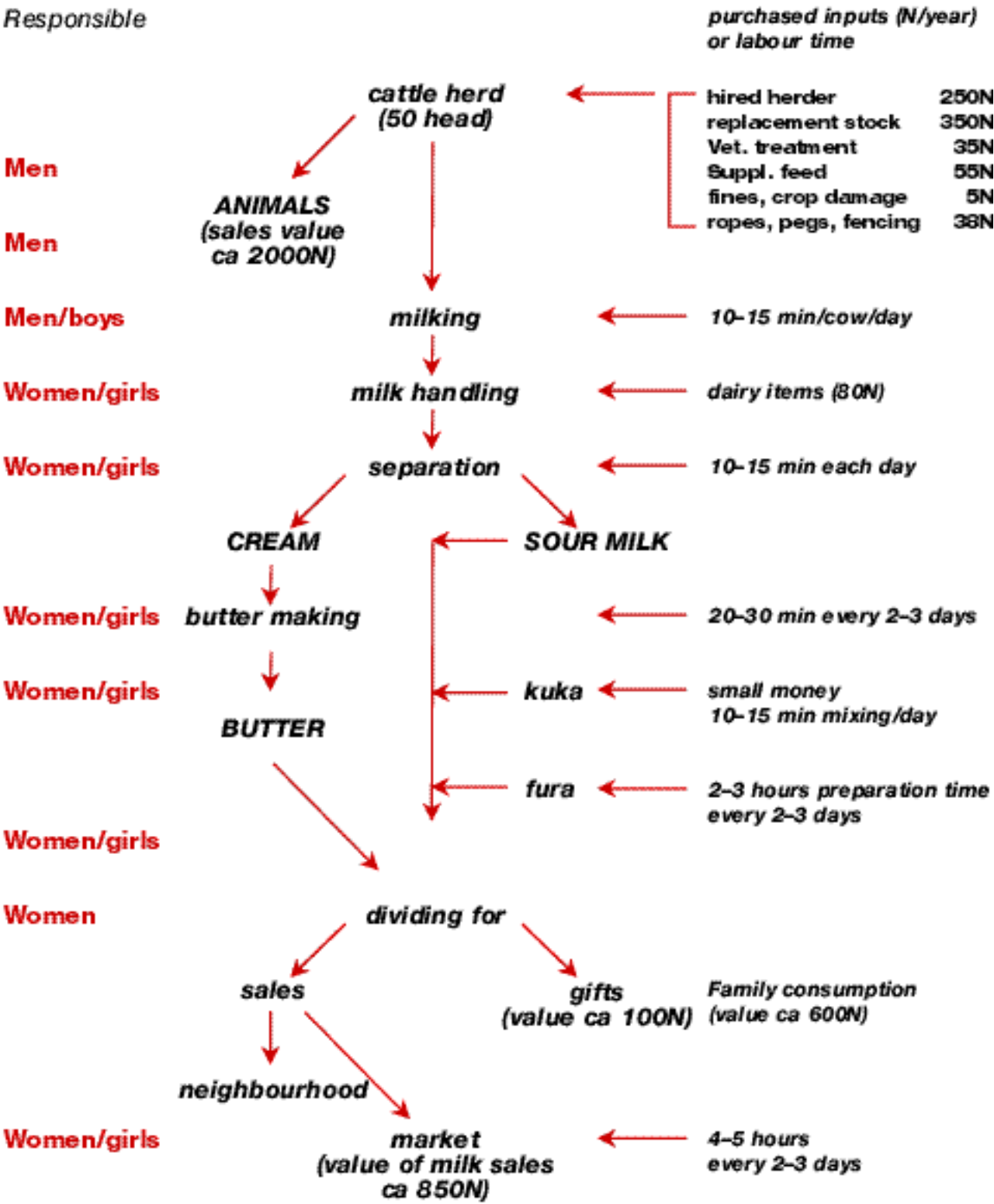
A Process Diagram is one which shows the different stages involved in a process, including details of who does what and the time or cost involved in the different stages.

A Process Diagram of Dairy Production would start by looking at the size of a typical herd of cattle and who is responsible for it, providing some basic details of the cost of herding, replacing stock, veterinary treatment, feeding, fencing etc. It would then look at options for someone with a herd (such as selling heads of cattle/keeping cattle for milking) and add details of who would do these. Milking cattle may then be explored in more detail, looking at various options (selling milk, processing for cream or sour milk etc). Each of these can be followed through to show who would do them and the time or costs involved – and how the product would be marketed.

The model of a process diagram can be used for any type of process, focusing for example on a particular crop and its various uses or exploring the processes involved in making a legal claim etc.

A process diagram will normally only be used late on in a *Reflect* programme, as it can involve a considerable amount of direct writing. This makes it ideal for writing practice but not very suitable for initial teaching of basic principles of writing. Most process diagrams will offer many options for numeracy work, particularly in calculating costs and working out strategies for maximising profit (such as scheduling the process for sale of items at a particular time of year, when the prices are highest).

Process diagram of dairy produce



KEY

Products in CAPITAL LETTERS

N = Naira (local currency) per year

Kula = pith from baobab pods

Fura = millet dumplings

Income and expenditure pie charts

As a supplement or alternative to the Income and Expenditure Calendar (see page 103) the participants can be asked to construct basic pie charts to show the relative allocation of their income on different categories of expenditure (such as food, farm inputs, housing, clothing, health, education, transport, cultural events, credit repayments etc). The ‘pie’ represents the total available and can be introduced as anything which is culturally appropriate (such as a ‘chapati’).

After doing one pie chart as a whole circle, based on a typical family, each participant can be asked to do their own. This is less intimidating than talking about actual expenditure (about which people may feel sensitive) as it only requires a display of relative and approximate expenditure. It can usually be done relatively quickly and this leaves a lot of scope for comparison of the pie charts of different people.

Having introduced the pie chart it can be interesting to use it for different functions, for example, looking at local or national government expenditure and the relative allocations (which can be prepared in advance). Participants can be asked to prepare their own alternative local or national allocations.

Literacy work can be based on the vocabulary in the pie charts and on any related discussions.

Numeracy work arising out of the pie charts can focus very easily on the concept of ‘percentages’, introducing the ‘%’ sign and doing a range of work around the use of percentages. The format also provides scope for exploring ‘sharing’ or ‘division’ (the dividing up of available resources). Putting actual (or approximate) figures in the slices of the pie can open up further numeracy work.

Pie charts of expenditure



Projections of loan use

If the literacy programme is linked in to a credit scheme (either directly through your own organisation, or indirectly, in that participants have access to credit from somewhere else), then some interesting work can be developed around projecting loan use. This will have a strong numeracy focus. The starting point should be a typically-sized loan to which participants can gain access from the loan scheme and an activity which is commonly undertaken with such a loan (such as buying hens or goats, mat-making or some other local craft). Lay out a calendar on the ground, starting from the stage of the year when people would want a loan and continuing for the typical period of repayment of a loan (such as 10 months).

Ask the participants to imagine they are taking a new loan from a date which they agree on – which they have to repay within this period. Then lay out different rows, one set of rows for expenditure (with sub-categories, ‘starting costs’, ‘recurring costs’, ‘occasional costs’, ‘loan repayment’ and ‘total’). Then lay out a second set of rows for ‘income’ (with sub-categories ‘regular income’ ‘occasional income’ and ‘total income’). It might also be useful to have a row which shows the changing prices of the product through the year (to help participants identify the best time to sell). Finally have a row for ‘Balance’.

Ask participants then to complete the calendar, making assumptions on how they use the initial investment and when they buy additional things or sell their produce. Each stage may involve extensive discussion. At the end they should note down any assets that they have at the end of the period.

This can be a highly complex Unit but with some practice it can work well and can lead to a very focussed reflection on the different things to consider in using a loan. The same calendar can be completed for a range of different activities. In the process, there will be a lot of exchange of knowledge and experience between participants. Numeracy work is clearly interwoven in the Unit and writing can also be interwoven if participants are encouraged to note down their assumptions at different stages. If there is a lot of interest in this, then once participants have understood how to do it in a whole group they could work on different projections in sub-groups (or pairs, or as individuals).

Projection of loan use

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
actions	take loan out	build shelter	buy 10 hens	sell eggs	sell eggs	sell eggs	sell 6 hens	sell eggs	sell eggs	buy 6 hens	sell eggs	sell eggs
price of 6 eggs												
price of 1 hen												
expenditure – repayment	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
starting cost		300	400									
recurring cost			20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
occasional cost										200		
expenditure – total	100	400	520	120	120	120	120	120	120	320	20	20
income – regular	0	0	100	100	100	100	150	170	170	170	170	170
income – occasional							200					
income – total	0	0	100	100	100	100	350	170	170	170	170	170
balance	900	500	80	60	40	20	250	80	330	180	330	480

5.3.2 Additional units on health issues

Herbal matrix

How to construct a graphic

As part of a focus on health the construction of a matrix of local medicinal herbs/plants can be fascinating. It fits particularly well after doing a curative matrix (see page 87).

Ask each participant to bring into the circle examples of the medicinal herbs/plants that they use most commonly. Ask each person to bring as many as possible.

In the circle ask the participants to show the herbs one by one and give the names of the herbs they have brought. For each herb ask them to draw a picture of it as clearly as they can on a card – to distinguish one from another. Write the name on the card as well – using whatever colloquial term they have for the herb/plant (the facilitator will need to help write the name if this is early in the course – though participants should be asked to try to write it first).

Only draw each herb once and try to find the differences between them. For some the drawing may be of the leaves, for others the whole plant or the flower – whatever feature is most unusual or typical. When all the herbs have been drawn on cards lay these in a row. Now bring out the picture/word cards for illnesses that are common in the area (which will probably have been used before) and place these in a column. Draw lines in the earth or use string (or chalk) to mark out a matrix.

For each illness ask, is this herb useful for this illness? Give it a score out of 10 (10 for very useful, none for no use) and write the number on a small card in the appropriate ‘box’ on the matrix. Ask everyone to complete a score for each illness and each herb and then ask participants to transfer it onto a large piece of paper.

Ideas for discussion

- What different uses does each plant have? (medicinal, nutritional, symbolic?)
- Is the same herb used in different ways for different illnesses?
- What part of the plant is used?
- How do you prepare each herb for each illness? In what quantities and what doses?
- Do we prepare these herbs ourselves or are there special people with expert knowledge? If so, who? How did they learn?

- Are these herbs growing wild or do we deliberately plant some of them? Which ones?
- Are there some herbs/plants that we sometimes can’t find?
- Are there some herbs we used to use that no longer grow locally?
- What have each of us learnt from this Unit (e.g.. a new use for a common plant)?

Ideas for action

Through the discussion it is possible that the participants will suggest organising themselves to plant medicinal herbs in a particular place, so that they are always available (i.e. developing a nursery of medicinal plants). Other possible actions include:

- preparing a detailed classification of medicinal plants/herbs;
- preparing a recipe book on how to prepare them;
- sending a particularly important/rare plant for scientific tests (this is not easy to arrange and the organisation would have to have specific contacts to make this work);
- consulting an expert on medicinal plants about the uses of certain herbs, if there is a dispute locally;
- reclaiming traditional knowledge by interviewing old people/local healers/experts about their knowledge – and recording this (though this may be sensitive if people’s knowledge is their livelihood).

Ideas for reading and writing

Some of the actions above may be a practical and productive focus for reading and writing work (particularly if facilities for low cost printing are available locally), such as preparing a simple classification/guide or ‘*recipe book*’.

Other activities for reading/writing would include the writing of simple phrases by each participant and reading them out/copying them all down. If the Unit is used early in a course, then one or two of the names of herbs that are most common could be used for syllabic breakdown and the formation of new words. A competition to see who can create the most new words from one set of syllables can keep this type of exercise lively.

Ideas for numeracy

Numeracy work may focus on the quantities of each herb used for preparing a particular cure, the time taken in preparation and the dosages given, etc.

One common herb which we don’t always think of as medicinal but which has important medicinal uses is garlic.

Simple calculations for practice can be developed about garlic (or many other herbs): Imagine we have six garlic with 12 cloves in each. How many cloves are there in total? And if we have eight garlic each with 12 cloves? (and 12 garlic etc)?

The emphasis should be on developing mental arithmetic skills. However, clearly similar examples might be developed to practise mathematical functions (depending on the stage of the course).

Supplementary information/materials

- Pamphlets on natural medicine (for instance from

national NGOs).












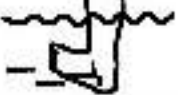
- Recipe books on healthy diets (which use foods that are local).

Ideas for adaptations

A table can be developed showing each herb and various details:

- where it can be found/where it grows well;
- which part of the herb/plant to use for each illness;
- what to mix it with/how to prepare;
- what dosage to give it in (and how often);
- side effects etc.

Herbal medicine matrix

						
	9	3	0	0	5	0
	0	0	8	0	3	0
	0	4	0	4	0	0
	0	5	0	0	0	10
	0	0	0	9	0	0
	0	4	0	0	0	0

Body mapping

This can be a difficult Unit as it can cause embarrassment. However, in certain circumstances it can be very productive. It may help to divide the group into men/women and young/old so that people feel more confident.

How to construct the graphic

Ask one of the participants to volunteer to lie down on the ground and ask another participant to draw around the outline of that person with a stick (or chalk). Ask the participant to stand up again and then ask everyone to look at the outline. Tell them that today we are going to draw a map of what is inside the body.

At first ask them to simply indicate anything that they think is inside, without giving any prompts. Then, if they have not included them, ask them to add the following: brain, heart, lungs, stomach (and perhaps liver, kidneys, intestines) – and to discuss amongst themselves what are the functions of the different organs. They might at this stage write down a few words/phrases on what they consider to be the main functions of each.

When they have completed this, hand out a simple picture illustrating what is really inside the body and ask them to compare it to their own picture.

Ideas for discussion

There is a lot of scope for discussion of the functions of different organs and of the body as a whole. This can be extended to include discussion of, for example, the five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch). It might be useful then to relate these discussions to one of the following wider issues (depending on the group):

- alcohol abuse (What happens when we drink too much alcohol – physical and social impact, short and long term? What constitutes excessive drinking? Why do people drink?);
- drug abuse/smoking (as above);
- pregnancy – what particular care of the body needs to be taken when a woman is pregnant? What should she do (and not do)? What should she eat (and not eat)?
- What conditions have a positive or negative effect on the body (e.g. heat/cold)?
- What foods are particularly good for our health? What is a balanced diet? Can we afford a balanced diet?
- How else can we maintain a healthy body?

To be able to manage such discussions the facilitator will need to have some relevant reading materials available from the exchange workshops. Where a facilitator lacks knowledge, or any immediate source of information, on a topic, s/he should suggest to the participants that they invite someone to the circle who does know and who they can then question in detail. This request can be passed on through the exchange workshops.

Ideas for action

Action points will depend on the focus of discussion. If alcoholism has come under close scrutiny there may be suggestions for reducing alcohol intake (or distribution/sale). Links to the nearest health centre or community mid-wife for ante-natal care might also be promoted.

Ideas for reading and writing

Some reading and writing can be integrated into the activity – with subgroups making notes on their understanding of the functions of different organs. The presentation of factual information from health books/pamphlets might offer some useful reading practice. Sections from certain reference books (like ‘Where There is No Doctor’) could be translated and used. Other materials on subjects that have been the focus of discussion might also be introduced where relevant (such as the effects of too much alcohol).

Ideas for numeracy

There are various ways in which numeracy work could emerge from the body map and subsequent discussion. Examples for practical work could be developed on the calories of different foods (calculating average intake) or on the cost of alcohol, such as:

- A bottle of beer costs 1,500 shillings. If a man drinks three bottles a night for a week (seven days), how much will it cost him?
- If the same man keeps drinking for a month (four weeks), how much will it cost?
- In a whole year (12 months) how much will this man have spent on alcohol? What else could he have done with that amount of money?

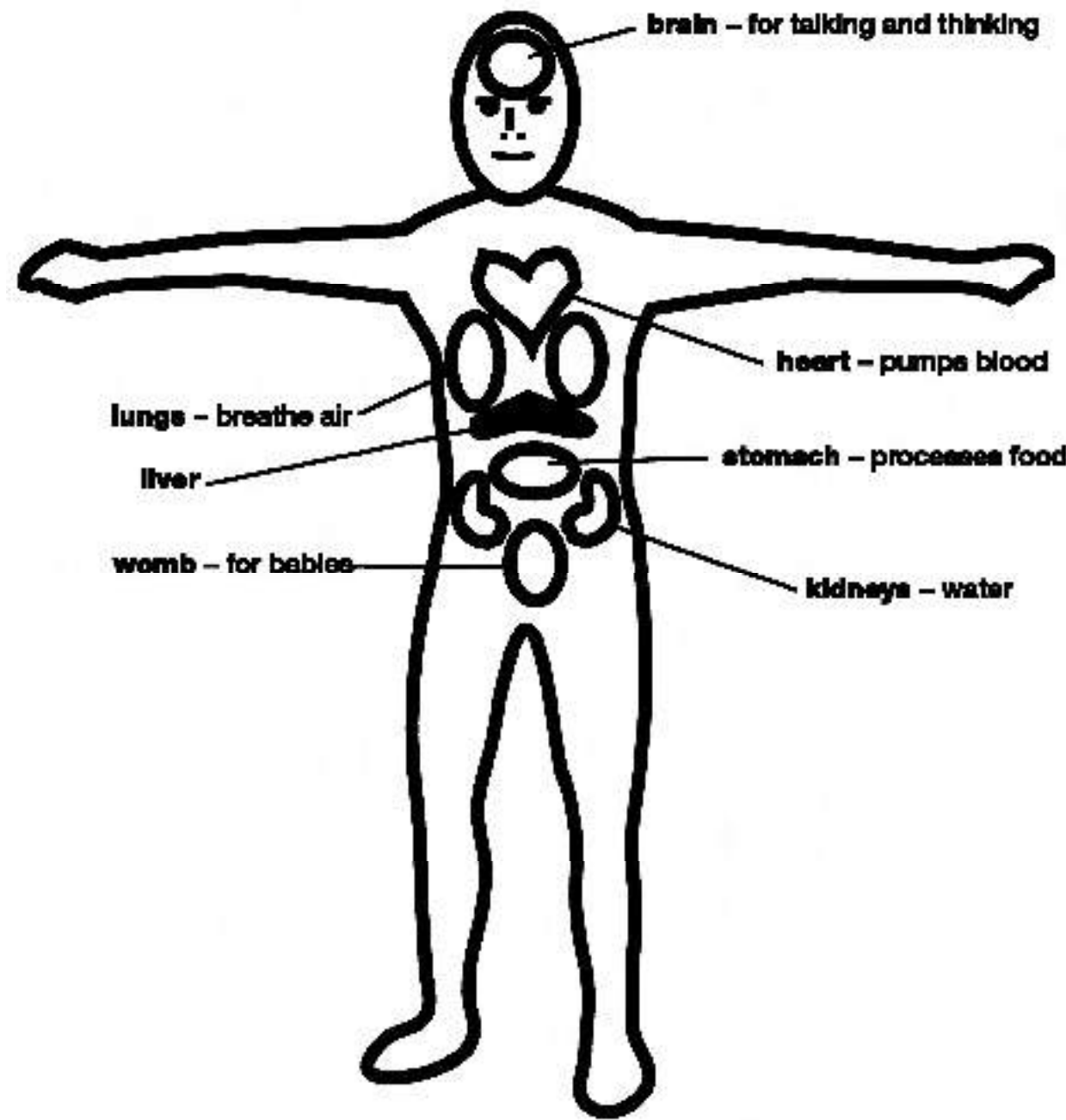
Supplementary materials/information

- Actual body maps – charts showing basic internal organs.
- Brief descriptions of the functions of each organ.
- Pamphlets on the effects of alcohol/smoking/drugs.
- Pamphlets on diet.
- Translations from books like ‘Where There Is No Doctor’.

Ideas for adaptations

This Unit could lead into more detailed work on pregnancy and childbirth (such as bringing in pictures of fetal development), preferably in close liaison with local health promoters/trainers/traditional birth attendants.

Body mapping



Criteria ranking of foods








Ask the participants for a list of the foods that they most commonly eat (such as maize, rice, dal, beans, wheat, fish, eggs etc). Ask them to draw a picture card for each of these (and also write the word with the picture if they know the word). Place these on the ground in a vertical list. Then ask what criteria they might use for deciding on foods that they eat. These might include: it is cheap to buy; we produce it ourselves; it is tasty; it is easy to cook; it uses little fuelwood; it is healthy to eat etc. An attempt could be made to draw pictures to represent each of these criteria (but always use words as well). Lay these criteria cards in a row across the top and now ask the participants to score each food for each criterion with a mark out of an agreed total (out of 10 say, or 20). A different participant should write down the numbers each time.

Discussion might focus on diet: what is a balanced diet?

Why is it important? What foods is it good for a pregnant woman to eat? Why may she have problems in having these foods? Why is it difficult to get nutritional foods all year round? It might extend to include cooking methods/types of stove used/problems finding fuel-wood etc. Ideally there should be some written information available on the nutritional qualities of foods that are available locally. Actions might relate to ensuring access to nutritional foods at certain times of the year, for example, through diversifying crops.

Reading and writing if at the basic stage might involve participants writing down the names of as many different types of food as they can (and then sharing them and producing a group list). This could move on to participants writing down basic recipes. Numeracy could be linked to calculations of calories in different foods. Examples could involve people selecting foods from the market within a fixed budget with the challenge of providing a balanced diet.

Criteria ranking of foods

		cheap	self-produced	easy to cook	uses little fuel	healthy	tasty
rice							
fish							
eggs							
vegetables							
beans							
maize							
fruit							

Health severity ranking

Collect all the picture/word cards of illnesses which the participants may have already drawn (perhaps from the health calendar or matrix) and lay them in a row. Do a copy of all the pictures and lay them in the same order as a list down the side. Number the rows and columns one to 10 (or however many). Now, agree some means of showing an illness when it is relatively mild or when severe. This may be one stone for mild and three for severe (or different lengths of stick etc). Place the appropriate two signs by each illness in the row and by each illness in the columns (so there is a double row for each illness and a double column for each illness).

Starting with the first illness in the row, ask whether a mild version of this is worse or better than a mild case of the second illness in the columns. Place the number for whichever is more severe in the appropriate box. Ask why it is more severe and note down the reasons they give. These notes (or criteria) will be used later and may include comments like “can cause death”, “is costly to cure”, “results in handicap”, “prevents person from working” etc. Now ask about a mild case of the first illness in the row with a severe case of the illness in the columns. Repeat for every case (always placing the number of the more severe illness

in the box). As there is no need to ask the same comparison twice, half the matrix will be empty (everything under the diagonal from top left corner to bottom right corner).









Further discussion should be based on the notes that the facilitator has taken of the reasons given by participants for making each choice (i.e. the criteria). These can also be used for practising reading and for developing further writing.

Numeracy work may be based on the effects of illnesses on people’s income (For instance, imagine your husband is a rickshaw driver who normally makes about 60 taka a day. He falls ill and cannot work so hard for five days so he only makes 15 taka a day. How much money has he lost? – and variations on this). Focus on developing mental arithmetic skills and on making notes of sub-totals if necessary. You could introduce specific approaches to doing multiplication; for example, to calculate 5 x 45, you can do it by splitting the question into:

5 lots of 5 are 25
5 lots of 40 are 200
Total = 225

Note: See page 106 for more details of how to do preference ranking.

Health severity ranking

		1	2	3	4
					
1					
2					
3					
4					

a severe case of malaria is worse than mild diarrhoea –
but a severe case of diarrhoea is just as dangerous as severe malaria

Chapati diagram on childbirth

Clearly this is most relevant to young women, but it may also have a role as a prompt for discussion with a wider community.

The aim of this diagram is to explore sources of knowledge about childbirth and to discuss the merits of these different forms of knowledge. A central circle should be drawn to represent a woman who is pregnant for the first time. The aim is to show all of the influences on her/her sources of knowledge about child-birth- and their relative importance. So for example, the woman may be influenced primarily by her family (or within that by her mother, grandmother, partner, sisters etc) but also by traditional healers, by a traditional birth attendant, by a local health centre or by having been to a training course.

The discussion should focus on the type of learning that the woman will receive from these different sources and their relative importance/value. An effort should be made to elicit particular ‘myths’ or ‘opinions’ which are typical and to discuss these openly. These may include criticisms of ‘modern’ options (like hospitals). Some conclusions may be arrived at in the process.

It is important for the facilitator to write down all the different comments and conclusions, and to share these in a wider forum to verify which of these are well-founded and whether any of them are potentially dangerous or life-threatening. The facilitator cannot be expected to separate out fact from myth on the spot in the circle, but should be able to with the help of good health professionals or trained community mid-wives, at the exchange workshops. The facilitator can return to the circle with concrete information and a targeted training programme or awareness campaign can also be organised. However, these should always respect people’s starting point and not ignore the wealth of local knowledge.

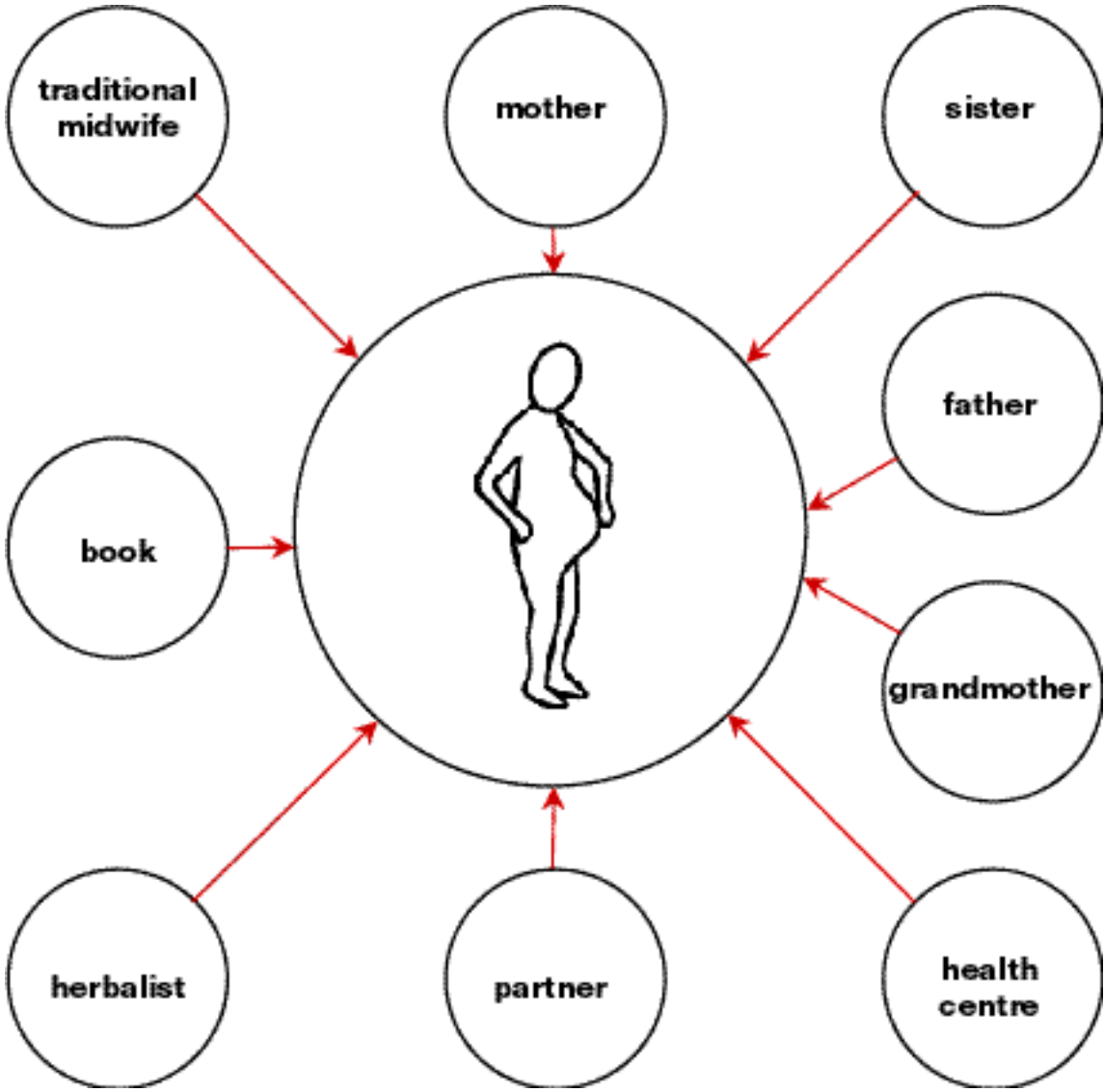
Reading and writing work is involved in the process of constructing this and can be based particularly around myths, proverbs, local sayings, typical comments etc on the subject. These could be put on cards and sorted for their relative value (some may be discarded). They may even be voted on. Supplementary materials on fetal development, pregnancy (particularly signs of problems/complications and what to do) and child-birth would be appropriate to introduce.

As a specific follow up to work on child-birth, the participants could refer back to the household map and identify particular people who have knowledge and may be able to help. The map may extend to a wider area to identify sources of expert advice outside the community, location of centres offering ante-natal and post-natal care etc.

Other related work might involve developing a day by day calendar of women’s activities before and after birth (over different periods from birth) – what they can/should do and what they can’t/shouldn’t do.

This type of approach can also be taken with other types of learning/knowledge. Where do we get our knowledge of agriculture? Which source of knowledge is most valuable etc?

Chapati diagram on childbirth



Health cards/vaccinations

It is a good idea to base some Units entirely around real materials which exist within the communities. For example, many participants may have health cards or vaccination cards for their children. The study of these can lead both to discussion and practical reading work based on key words that come up. The cards will often be very small with small writing (and unfortunately often technical terms/complex forms will be used). It can be useful to make a big copy of key parts of the form onto a flipchart and to use this as the basis for reading.

Discussion is likely to focus on the causes and symptoms of the major illnesses preventable by vaccine (such as tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, Tetanus, polio, measles). A further area to discuss may be whose responsibility it is to run vaccination campaigns. Discussion of myths and fears about vaccines can be important – and reflection on how vaccines work. The facilitator should always receive clear guidelines in training for how to deal with myths if they come up. For instance, s/he could ask the participants to write down what they believe/fear and then put this in a letter to someone who they will trust to give an honest response.

Numeracy work can be linked to understanding dates and dosages of each vaccine. Practice may be related to working out ages of people with different dates of birth. A community survey to determine levels of immunisation could be a suitable follow up activity.

5.3.3 Additional units on socio-political themes/organisation

Schooling of children/ education matrix

How to construct a graphic

This can be constructed in a simple way or in a complex way – though perhaps ideally a simple matrix (restricted to the participants in the circle) would be a prelude to later doing a more detailed matrix (based on a community survey).

Construct a matrix with age groups across the top (e.g. 3-5; 6-10; 11-14; 15-19; 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-100: a more detailed matrix may have year by year columns up to 15 years old). To make this most useful, each age group can be divided between male/female.

Now make a series of cards to place in rows for example:

- X (which will mean that this person has never been to school);
- lower primary;
- upper primary;
- lower secondary;
- upper secondary;
- college;
- university.

Clearly the exact grades you choose will depend on the education system locally. For a more detailed survey you could do it grade by grade. Also, if this is done early in the literacy programme, putting grade numbers instead of words will be easier!

Now ask each participant to consider their own household as you go through the age groups. If they have a boy or girl in that age range, ask them to put a mark in the appropriate place to show the grade of education they are now in (or a mark in a different colour to show the highest grade that child reached before leaving).

A further sub-category may need to be made if there is a formal primary school and a non-formal education centre. This can be accommodated by again asking participants to use a different colour pen to mark the matrix.

Once the matrix is completed, the marks in each box can be added up and numbers can be written down.

Ideas for discussion

- Is education useful or not?
- Why do some children not go to school or drop out of school?
- What is the quality of the local school? If good, why? If not, why not? How could it be improved?
- Do boys go to school for longer (or more regularly) than girls. If so, why? What effects does this have on girls?
- Is there a non-formal education centre in the community? If so,how is it different from a formal school?
- Is there a religious school (such as a Moktab) in the village? How is a Moktab different from a school? What are the advantages and disadvantages of Moktabs and schools?
- What sort of education did we receive as children? How has it changed?
- What sort of education did our grandparents receive? There may have been no formal school system but was there a traditional system for passing on knowledge? Was it different for boys and girls? How?
- Is the education of girls as important as the education of boys? How much education should boys and girls have (to what grade)?
- How can we help our children with their school work? Can we get more involved in the local school?

Ideas for action

- Organising or joining a parent teacher’s association or school management committee or village education committee.
- Setting up a non-formal education centre.
- Launching a campaign to improve school attendance.
- Undertaking a full community literacy survey.

Ideas for reading and writing

The best starting point for reading and writing might be to ask the participants to bring in any of their children’s textbooks or homework from school and to have a discussion about these books – their content and value – and how parents can help their children to learn more effectively. If they now have basic literacy the participants could read excerpts to each other in pairs.

Other reading and writing work might involve writing letters to the local schools, if there are particular concerns/queries, or to the district education office if there are complaints (for instance, if the teacher rarely turns up).

Another interesting activity can be to ask participants to design their own certificates (in a small competition), which they will all obtain at the end of the course. What should the certificates say and how should they look? This can lead to discussion about the value of certificates and the real reasons for learning.

Ideas for numeracy

Some numeracy work can be based on simple practice with written numbers, adding sub-totals and totals from the matrix (columns and rows and grand totals). The totals (for boys/girls) may lead to further discussion. Different participants can add up different parts of the matrix.

Another possible area of numeracy is to consider the costs of sending a boy or girl to school over a year. Ask what different costs might be involved – like books, uniforms/clothes, pens, basic fees, PTA levy etc and draw each of these on a card. Ask how much the costs are in a month (if appropriate) and then a year (so that they have to multiply by 12). Note the amount for the month and for the year. If there are some costs that are only occasional ask what they will be in a year and then ask them to divide by 12 to find out the average cost in a month. Write both down. You might also ask participants to consider indirect costs like the loss of help in the home or in the fields. How much might such a child be able to earn for them in a month? In a year? There will be no precise cost for lost help in the house but ask them to give it a value in some way. Discussing differences between boys and girls might be revealing. Comparing the totals to other costs can also be a thought provoking exercise.

Another area for possible numeracy work is for communities where there is no existing formal school, to determine the feasibility of setting up a non-formal education centre. This would involve calculating the demand (number of children/parents) and the costs involved (paying a teacher, constructing basic shelter, blackboard, books etc).

Supplementary information/materials

The participants could be asked to bring their children’s school textbooks into the circle – to discuss what they think of these and which textbooks they find interesting/useful.

Education matrix

		no education	lower primary grades 1–3	upper primary grades 4–6	lower secondary grades 7–9	upper secondary grades 10–12	college grades 13–14	university grades 15+
3–5	m	.....					
	f	....					
6–10	m	....	....	....	
	f	....	....	.....	
11–14	m	....	...	....	....
	f	....	.....	.....	....
15–18	m	.....	....	..	.....	..	...
	f	....	..	..		.	.
20–29	m	....					
	f	....					
30–39	m	....					
	f	.....					
40–49	m	....					
	f	....					
50–59	m	....					
	f	....					
60–69	m	...						
	f	....					
70+	m	...						
	f	...						

Children’s work unit

How to construct a graphic

Introduce the idea of discussing the work that children (both girls and boys) do on a regular basis. Work can include anything, from child-care, collecting fuel, paid labour on a neighbour’s farm or working away from home. Also ask the circle how they would define a child. Then, construct two calendars with the months (or seasons) across the top – one for girls, and one for boys. Ask participants to place sticks of different lengths to show how much work (overall) is done by girls, and then by boys, in each month (or season).

When this is done brainstorm all the different types of work carried out by children (such as selling food; collecting water; herding), and produce pictures/ symbols for each. Decide as a circle which types of work are most common in which month, and mark them on the calendars underneath each month.

Ideas for discussion

- Which is the busiest period for girls? – and is this the same for adult women?
- Which is the busiest period for boys? – and is this the same for adult men in the family?
- What do girls learn from the work that they do?
- What do boys learn?
- What happens when a mother/father gets sick or moves away from the family?
- Have there been any changes in the work girls/boys do over the last 10–20 years?
- What happens when a father/mother dies?
- What is the effect of working on girls’ education, and boys’ education?
- When do girls/boys get free time? What do they do with this?
- Is there a good balance of work between girls and boys?
- How many children are desirable in a family, and of what age and gender?

Ideas for action

- Organising creche at the local primary school for

- younger siblings of girl pupils.
- Contacting teachers/PTA about more flexibility in school time-table – to suit children’s work.
- Organising training sessions for participants’ children in income-earning skills, in which one or two local people are expert, such as carpentry; chapati-making; weaving.

Ideas for reading and writing

Ask participants what they found most interesting in the discussion, and ask them to write down what they remember. Share these accounts around the circle for reading practice. If possible, ask participants if their own children (even if they are away at secondary school) could write something about their daily routine at a particular time of the year, or what they like or don’t like about different types of work. The facilitator can collect these and use them for reading practice around the circle. An interesting discussion about adult and child perspectives might develop!

Another possibility would be to write down traditional stories where children are involved – particularly moral tales where children’s duties are laid down.

Ideas for numeracy

Numeracy work might be based on the hours girls and boys work in a day – at different times of the year; or the amount of money children contribute to the family income. These calculations could be done for girls and boys of different ages, and for children attending and not attending school.

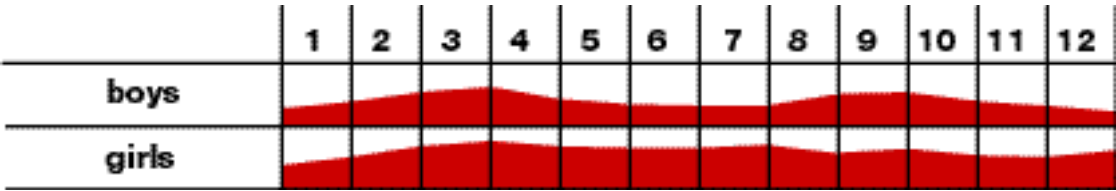
Supplementary materials/information

- Materials from local organisations working on children’s rights or welfare.
- Stories written by children about their lives.
- Traditional stories which involve children.

Ideas for adaptation

If there have been significant changes in the lives of children in the area over the last two generations, it would be interesting to make a time-line noting important events and the resulting changes.

Children’s work unit



Chapati diagram of organisations

How to construct a graphic

Ask participants to draw a medium-sized circle and explain that this represents the village. Ask the participants what organisations there are in the village (such as village council, political groups, parents-teacher association, School Management Committee, churches, women’s group, cooperatives, youth groups etc). Ask the participants to draw each of these as a small circle inside the village circle and label them. If the Unit is introduced early in your course then draw pictures or represent the groups with symbols, if later then use abbreviations, acronyms (such as ‘PTA’) or the full names.

Then ask what organisations/institutions sometimes send people to visit the village (different NGOs, Ministry of Health representatives, tax inspectors, Ministry of Agriculture etc) or have an influence on the village. Ask them to draw these as circles overlapping the village circle (with a big circle/large overlap showing an organisation that comes often and a small circle/small overlap showing an organisation that comes rarely or has a small influence).

Finally ask them if there are any organisations/institutions that community members visit outside the village – and represent these as circles on their own outside the village (large if regularly visited, small if rarely).

Ideas for discussion

- Are the village’s own organisations strong and well organised?
- What can be done to improve village organisations?
- What are the characteristics of a good village organisation?
- Are there any new village organisations that need to be set up?
- If so, how can they be started?
- What organisations from outside the village are most helpful?
- What are the most useful things these organisations do?
- Do we need the support of other organisations from outside the village? If so, what type of organisation and for what?
- Do we know specific organisations that could help? (How might they be persuaded to come?)
- What things do we most need training for?

Ideas for action

- Finding out more about organisations which are little-known.
- Inviting selected organisations to a meeting to discuss their work (and share some of the local analysis from the literacy circle).
- Participating more actively in organisations which are deemed to do positive work (assuming positions of responsibility etc).

Ideas for reading and writing

The names of a number of organisations will have come up and these can be used for practice in writing phrases on how the participants feel about different organisations etc. More formally, this is a good opportunity to introduce capital letters as most organisations would normally be written with capital letters.

Real reading practice may be based on documents from some of the organisations mentioned (you could try to get participants to bring in any documents from any of the organisations they have contact with – even if they can’t read them). These documents may include the constitution, slogans, banners, posters, leaflets, minutes of meetings, plans, technical documents. These should be used for real reading practice. Depending on the level of the circle, sections of the documents could be written up on the board and read collectively (with different participants identifying words/phrases) or they could be read individually (with each participant reading part of something in which they have a particular interest), with support from the facilitator (or from more advanced participants).

Ideas for numeracy

Some numeracy work may arise out of the real materials brought into the circle for literacy – such as basic accounts from some of the village organisations. It would be interesting to invite the treasurer of such organisations (if they are willing) to come in and explain how the accounts are kept, and why they are kept in the way they are – and to set some practice. Some treasurers may not be willing, but the accounts they produce will normally be public.

Chapati diagram of community organisation



Community organisations evaluation matrix

How to construct a graphic

Ask participants to name organisations which exist within the community (internal community organisations) and those external organisations which have an influence on the community. If a chapati diagram of community organisations has been done, this list will already have been generated. Ask participants to write the name of each organisation (with the facilitator’s help if necessary) on a card and place them in a list.

If this type of Unit is introduced early on in the course, you might create a matrix which focuses specifically on levels of participation:

- are we members?
- do we attend meetings?
- do we engage in actions outside meetings?
- are we involved in decision making/management?
- do we have formal positions of responsibility?

This can then be filled in with a yes/no vote of each participant.

If this is used later on, when basic literacy skills have been acquired, ask the participants to generate a list of means by which these organisations can be described or judged, for example:

- sector/s of work/type of work;
- level of democracy/accountability;
- examples of successes;
- examples of failures;
- suggestions on how to improve the organisation.

The matrix would then be completed with short notes for each organisation in relation to each criterion.

Ideas for discussion

- What makes an organisation democratic?

- Which organisations are important but are presently ineffective? What can we do to improve them?
- Are there some problems/issues in the community which are not presently addressed by any organisation. If so which could take a lead? Do we need a new organisation?
- What can we do to improve the work of external organisations?

Ideas for action

- New organisation/mobilisation.

Ideas for reading and writing

The second matrix will often involve a lot of reading and writing in itself. This can be built on by writing letters (as a group, in pairs, or as individuals) to the organisations which are discussed, if there are particular issues to take up.

Reading practice might draw on some minutes from local organisations, and writing might involve practising taking minutes of the key points of a discussion. A simulated meeting could be held and two or three people could take minutes and then read them back to the others – leading to a discussion on which were the most useful minutes.

Ideas for numeracy

It would be useful to borrow some accounts from an internal community organisation and review how they are laid out. Discuss them to ensure that all participants understand what they show. Some simulated work could then be done with examples based on accounts keeping for that (or another) organisation.

Supplementary information/material

Simple guides to account keeping for small community organisations.

Chapati diagram of informal social structures

How to construct a graphic

A chapati (or Venn) diagram, similar to that for organisations, can be developed to explore informal power structures in the village. This can be done by asking the participants, who is the most powerful person in this village? Let them discuss this and when they have agreed, ask someone to try to write the name on the blackboard. When it is correct, ask him/her to copy it on a circular piece of card and place it on the ground. Ask, how powerful is s/he? Now ask if there is anyone else nearly as powerful or as powerful as him/her (and who is not related to and does not work for the first person). If yes then ask participants to put this name separately on a piece of card and to place it separate from the first one. After asking someone to write it on the board, check it and ask participants to copy it down.

Return to the first person mentioned. Ask, does s/he have any advisers, followers close friends or close allies? If so, ask for the person amongst these who is most powerful. Write this name as before but on a smaller piece of card and place it overlapping the first one to show a relationship. Then ask if the adviser/follower has other advisers who help him or her. Continue until all the people who are related to the most powerful person have been mentioned and cards with their names are clustered around him/her (getting smaller for the less powerful ones). Finally ask if there is a ‘*muscle man*’ – someone who does the dirty work or who is violent on the first person’s orders.

Repeat for the second most powerful person and anyone else who has significant power in the village. Then ask if any of the advisers of the first person have any relationships with the advisers of the second person etc.

Now discuss, what other institutions or people influence decisions or help resolve disputes in the village, such as courts, police, local government etc.

When it is complete ask participants to copy this onto a large sheet of paper (leaving space to write numbers by each name), giving different participants practice in writing.

Ideas for discussion

The above diagram will provoke a lot of discussion in itself and it will be very much up to the context whether further exploration of any particular theme is appropriate. Some aspects which could be explored are: how do people become powerful? How do people lose power? Do we want to see a shift of power? How can such a shift be made? etc.

Ideas for action

Organised resistance against unreasonable powerful figures!

Ideas for reading and writing

Ask the participants to copy all the names they have written down into their books as practice. Then ask them to write a few phrases about power in the village. Copy a selection onto the blackboard and practise reading them.

Ideas for numeracy

Ask the participants to refer to the cards from the diagram and to indicate how much land each person owns. Note the answers down on the relevant card, next to each name. Use whatever unit of measurement they use to record these (they may use traditional systems like *kuras*, *bighas*, *kathas* in Bangladesh). Let them discuss in the process how these units of measurement relate to one another. Distinguish measures of areas (like *bighas/curas*) from measures of distance (like nols).

When they have completed this task, ask them if they know how to measure areas using metres (or whatever is the official/recognised system used in the country)? If they ever want to sell or buy land, this is the unit that is now often used, so it is worth learning.

Ask how the area of something is calculated. If it is a square, you measure one side and then the other and then multiply. That is the area. So if a field is 20 metres long and 30 metres wide its area is 600 square metres. That means that there are six hundred little boxes in the area, each one measuring one metre long by one metre wide. Develop examples around this. For instance, what is the area of something 5 metres by 12 metres? What is the area of a field that is 24 metres long and 20 metres wide?

Provide details of the equivalents between square metres and traditional measures and do examples based on these.

Supplementary information/materials

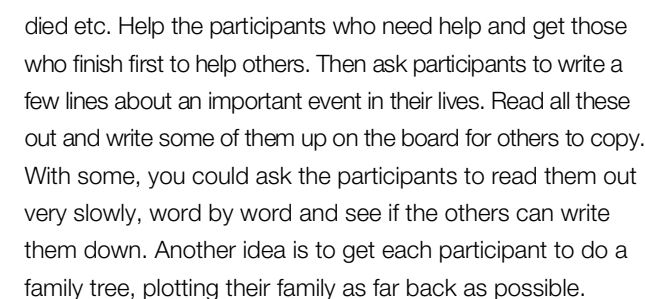
Conversion tables between traditional and official systems of measurement could be introduced.

Stories about powerful individuals who are defeated by their own vanity or by people’s organisation; moral tales about the corrupting effects of power etc.

Community organisations evaluation matrix

	members	active	decision making	position of responsibility
cooperative	7	5	2	2
credit group	9	3	2	1
PTA	2	2	2	1
church	5	3	2	2
health post	1	–	–	–
women's group	4	3	1	1

Time-line of village/ community



Some calculations based on dates can be introduced. Try to develop mental arithmetic skills to begin with by asking participants how many years there are between various events. In some cultures, translation from the local calendar to the international calendar could also be the basis for various calculations.

A similar Unit can be developed for the history of an organisation. If the participants all belong to a single organisation, then the writing of the organisation's history – looking at major events and changes in direction or action can be useful. The time-line in such cases may spread over a shorter period (even months rather than decades) but it can still be very revealing. The discussion may focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation or future directions.

Keep asking for major events from the past and moving gradually towards the present, focussing on what they consider to have been important events. Ask different participants to write each one down on cards with dates and lay them in a sequence from past to present. They may recall more things as they construct the timeline and they can change the order at any time.

- What events/changes have been most significant and why?
- What major events might happen in the next 10 years?
- What major events would you like to happen in the next 10 years?
- To what extent can we plan for change? Which of the events/changes in the timeline were controlled or controllable?

- Interviewing elders in the village and writing oral histories (perhaps borrowing a tape recorder to help).
- Writing oral histories ourselves.
- Planning an annual day to commemorate a major local event (or person) which might otherwise be forgotten.
- Making plaques to mark the places where significant things happened.

Ask the participants to copy the timeline into their books, adding the dates of major events in their own lives – such as when they were born and when they were married, when they gave birth to children or when family members or close friends

- 1900** village settled. Ahmed arrived
- 1905** Shameem built his house
- 1912** fire
- 1925** Hasina and Tulsar built houses, drought
- 1942** cyclone
- 1950** Lipi built house
- 1953** Salima arrived
- 1960** flood – houses destroyed
- 1969** mosque built
- 1972** drought
- 1977** terrible cyclone
- 1982** school built

Mobility map

How to construct the graphic

Ask participants to construct a map showing where people go and for what reasons. Start with an agreed symbol/picture of their community and ask the open questions: What other places do you go to? What other places have you been to? Ask participants to draw different symbols to represent the different towns/locations that are mentioned. This may be best done by asking the participants to identify a distinguishing feature of each place and to draw a simple picture of that on a card to lay out on the ground. You should also ask them to write the place names on the cards (with your help if needed). Once a good range of places have been mentioned and cards are laid out around the central card of the village, ask the participants: For what reason do you go (or have you gone) to each place?

The reasons may vary enormously. They may include market, work, health, education, poaching, visiting relatives. You should ask participants to draw simple picture cards to represent each of these reasons. When all the combinations of places/reasons have been completed, ask each participant at a time to put a stone (or bean etc) next to each symbol, if they have been to that place for that reason. Add these up and place a number by the card.

You might wish to extend the question to include other members of the participants’ immediate family. You might also wish to separate out women and men so as to get a gender breakdown of mobility (which can be very revealing).

Once the map on the ground (largely constructed with cards) is completed, a large copy should be made by participants on paper. This might be made up of pictures and words, or just words (see attached example) depending on the point at which this is done in the course.

Ideas for discussion

- Were people more or less mobile in the past? Why?
- Do we want or need to go further more often? What stops us?
- Is your village isolated? If so, why and what is the impact of this isolation?
- Is there a difference in the mobility of men/women/old/young? If so, why? Can/should this be changed?
- What languages are spoken in different places? Is this an obstacle to us?
- How do we travel to each place?
- What would be the advantages of being able to travel more?
- What would be the disadvantages of being able to travel more?

- What can we do to make ourselves more mobile?

The discussion might focus on one or two specific aspects, for example, trade, education or health. These open up new areas for exploration:

- What are the advantages of taking our produce to a market that is further away? Is it feasible to do so? What are the obstacles?
- What level of education can be achieved locally? How has this changed over the years? Is it possible change further? What are the obstacles facing girls/boys who want to travel to school/college?
- For what type of health problems do we need to travel? Is there any alternative?

Ideas for action

Depending on the focus of discussion a range of possible actions might emerge from this Unit. Perhaps amongst the most likely is some mobilisation around road improvement, particularly for repairing/maintaining access roads to remoter communities (for example, to enable them to extract their produce to market). This can be done at low cost, whereas the improvement of major trunk roads would depend much more on pressurising local government/responsible agencies to fulfil their responsibilities or prioritise the road(s) in question. The discussion may alternatively be focussed on the role of intermediaries and the possibilities of working cooperatively to market crops outside the area (in markets where prices are higher).

If the discussion has focussed on education, then there may be some mobilisation with, for example, the district education office to expand local school provision. This may range from seeking recognition of non-formal education centres/parent’s schools, to extending provision of primary schools to remoter villages where there is demand. It might, on the other hand, focus on adding higher secondary classes to the nearest lower secondary school or on addressing the access of girls to secondary education (for example, through scholarships or hostels).

One action which could be interesting would be to encourage each village to design ‘road signs’ for the various pathways that are commonly taken – with a view to helping orientate people who are less familiar with the community. Arrows on trees for instance, could show the way (and distance) to the village leader’s house, to the health centre, to the school or to neighbouring villages. Reference back to the household map would help identify where such signs could be placed.

Ideas for reading and writing

As always, the reading and writing work will depend on the point in the course in which this Unit comes. If it is early in the course, the focus will be on practising the names of different places which the participants mention on their map (or using the categories of reasons given as key words). If it is a little later, then the participants can be asked to write phrases about where they go and what for. If they are already fairly advanced, the writing might become extended to paragraphs on any one of a range of themes:

- Where they would like to go but have never been.
- Narrated events from memorable visits to distant places.
- Writing letters to responsible departments, making the case for improving road maintenance or upgrading a particular school.

There could be some interesting work drawing on ‘real materials’ associated with this map, even at an early stage in the course. For example, spotting the destinations on buses (or reading the good luck/religious slogans on buses). In a marginal urban area it might even be interesting to visit a bus station for some practical work on this (otherwise pictures of buses could be used – or any suitable equivalent, such as launches/boats in many parts of Bangladesh). There is no substitute for practical experience of reading ‘on location’. Other real materials which might be used are road signs (either directions/distance markers/road symbols).

Ideas for numeracy

There is clearly a lot of scope to do work with measuring distances in this Unit. The distance of each place could be estimated on the map (which will often cause some dispute) – and an attempt could then be made to verify the actual distance afterwards (though this may not be possible!) The equivalences between traditional systems of measurement and modern/official systems might also be relevant. This could also involve work with time – calculating how long it takes to walk, to cycle or to go by bus etc (and the average speed of each).

Other numeracy work might revolve around market prices for the main local produce and how it changes in different markets. For example, if coffee is the main crop and it is purchased from the producer in his/her field, what price is paid, compared to the price in the local market and the price in the district town or the capital. The facilitator may want some basic information prepared on this, so as to have a few calculations ready. Practice in doing calculations often just involves mental arithmetic skills. But the participants will see the value of noting down sub-totals if

they are to work out comparisons. For example, coffee is worth 340 per quintal if sold to an intermediary from the field; it is worth 400 in the local market, 430 in the district town and 500 in the capital. What total income could be gained from 25 quintals in each location?] The focus of practice here is on writing and reading large numbers. More complex calculations would include costs of transport to each market/prices in different seasons of the year (though the seasonal price shifts are best dealt with in a separate Unit involving a calendar). If the theme of education has emerged strongly, then there could be some interesting numeracy work on doing a rough census of the number of school-age children (of different ages) and the projection of how many children will be school-age in five years time. This might be left as a separate (or related) unit – see the Education Matrix. One alternative in urban areas might be to do some work with bus or train timetables – but only if the participants have to deal with these (or would find it of practical value to do so).

Supplementary materials

Various materials might be considered for supplementary reading:

- Pamphlets on low cost local means to repair roads effectively.
- Publications/tables showing prices of common local produce in different markets.
- A detailed map (such as ordnance survey) of the district/region, locating the community. This would be worth analysing in the circle and might lead to much more discussion.
- Traditional stories from some of the different places that are mentioned or (locally famous) stories of imaginary places.

Ideas for adaptations

There are many observations within the above which highlight how this Unit can be used in different ways. One additional point to consider is the potential value of a Unit like this for future evaluation of the impact of the programme. If a copy of this map is retained as a baseline and the map is then re-produced as part of an evaluation process, say three years later, shifts in mobility may be observed. This might be both a tangible and indeed quantifiable indicator of change. However, the changes would have to be discussed with participants to determine the extent to which the literacy programme was a factor in prompting them.

Mobility map



Note: Includes family members of participants.
Picture cards could be drawn for each location/activity.

Well-being ranking

Well-being ranking can be a sensitive process and should not be undertaken if it is likely to cause offence locally. However, it can also be an effective means for people to reflect upon what poverty and powerlessness are, and to explore their causes.

The starting point should be a household map (probably already produced). Give each household a number and ask participants to write these on the back of cards, with the name of the head of the household on the front (ask participants to try to write these cards themselves but help them if necessary). Make about four copies of each card and put them in four piles. Now sub-divide the *Reflect* circle into four and give each group a pile of cards. These should be shuffled. Now ask each to pick out two names and ask them to decide who is ‘better off’ (which may relate to wealth, power, social status etc) and who is ‘worse off’. Then pick out a third card and ask if they are better or worse off than the previous two (or between them). Continue with each new household name, asking if they are better or worse off than each of the previous ones. If they are the same as one previous household place them in the same pile. Continue until all names have been completed and various piles have been made (some groups may make just three piles, others 10 or even more).

Ask the participants to then discuss what it is that made them classify people as ‘better off’ or ‘worse off’? What criteria did they use? What do the households in each pile have in common? Notes should be taken on the reasons given (such as money, large house, amount of land, certain machinery, many children, social status, positions of responsibility locally, wisdom, religious knowledge etc). This can serve as the basis for reading and writing work. Further reading work can be based on asking participants to write their names and addresses (and those of their relatives elsewhere).

Numeracy work can then be developed on the basis of this. One very thorough means of doing statistical analysis would be the following, but simpler forms could be developed. Ask them to number their piles (e.g. one to five, with one as the best-off and five as worst-off). Now for each pile calculate the following:

- Number of all piles divided by the number of this pile, multiplied by 100 e.g. (1 divided by 5 = 0.2 x 100 = 20) or (2 divided by 5 = 0.4 x 100 = 40). Most groups would need help with this (and would probably need a calculator). The next stage is to list all the households and then gather the scores from all four sub-groups to determine an overall score for each household.

A simpler version involves just using the number given to each pile (this is inaccurate if one sub-group has 20 piles and another just 3; but you could standardise and insist for example that all sub-groups produce five piles). Once a total has been produced for each household, the households can be placed in ascending order of well-being.

It is important to explore the definitions of well-being carefully (distinguishing between material wealth, status, spiritual wealth etc). The discussion could also extend to intra-household poverty (is everyone in the rich households rich?). There should also be an attempt to avoid looking at things statically by asking, for example, how the materially rich became rich and the poor poor? or “*Can a poor family become rich? (How)?*” and “*Can a rich family become poor? (How)?*”

Further discussion can relate to the *Reflect* circle itself. Who comes to the circle? Who doesn’t and why? Do they need to come? What can be done to help them come?

[RRA Notes 15, on Wealth Ranking gives further ideas, see page 199].

Well-being ranking

	name of household	group 1	group 2	group 3	group 4	group 5	group 6
1		25	20	13	17	75	14
2		50	60	38	32	180	8
3		75	40	50	50	215	5
4		25	20	13	17	75	14
5		25	20	13	17	75	14
6		25	20	25	17	87	12
7		75	100	88	100	363	1
8		50	40	75	66	231	4
9		50	60	88	83	281	2
10		25	20	25	17	87	12
11		75	40	63	32	210	6
12		50	20	13	17	100	10
13		25	60	38	50	173	9
14		50	40	50	50	190	7
15		100	80	100	83	363	1
16		25	20	13	17	75	14
17		50	40	50	32	180	8
18		50	60	63	66	239	3
19		25	20	38	13	100	10
20		25	20	25	13	83	13
21		25	20	13	13	71	15
22		25	40	13	13	91	11

Daily routine chart

Draw a daily timetable from midnight to midnight (or from 6.00am to 6.00am – or whatever is more appropriate locally) and ask small groups (for instance women, men, young, old) to fill in what they do, using single words/pictures. Ask about an average day this month: when do you sleep, do household work, do farm work (what type), talk, drink, relax, collect water, collect firewood, cook, go to school/literacy class etc. Bring the different daily routines together and compare them. A second chart can be done for a different month of the year. It can also be interesting to ask each sub-group to do a chart for the other sub-groups (i.e. women do one for men as well as for themselves) – so that the group’s self perception can be compared to how others perceive their workload.

The discussion will often flow very freely from the charts and from the comparisons. Some issues that might be particularly picked up are:

- What do you regard as work? (farm-work? child-care? cooking? talking? collecting water? thinking/planning?)
- What work do men do that women don’t do? Why?
- What work do women do that men don’t do? Why?

- Who does most work: men, women, young, old? Why?
- Is there a fair division of labour? If not, why not?
- Is there some work which could be more equally shared?
- Can anyone work harder than they are at the moment?
- What work do children do and what age do they start different types of work?

The scope of this discussion might be similar to that generated by a gender workload calendar – so the two may be best done close together, with questions/issues divided between them.

The names of the different activities might serve as a basis for creating phrases and short paragraphs (depending on the stage in the course) on the work of men or women. The sub-groups might be asked to write a few phrases together about how they perceive each other’s workloads as a starting point for further discussion (or argument!). Numeracy work is likely to be based on examples concerning time spent on different activities. It might also be appropriate to introduce percentages – looking at the percentage of time spent on different activities. A useful transition to this would be to make a pie chart out of the information generated by the chart (see page 122).

Daily routine chart

	midnight	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
woman – June																									
December																									
man – June																									
December																									
girl – June																									
December																									
boy – June																									
December																									

KEY

wake up

drink alcohol

agricultural work

sleep

cook

eat

collect firewood

collect water



Map of human resources

A Human Resource Map can be developed on the basis of the initial household map. The aim of the map is to identify everyone in the community who has a particular skill or expertise. It is a good Unit to introduce early on because it emphasises people’s existing knowledge rather than making ‘literacy’ appear to be the only real knowledge.

The skills and expertise to identify might include everything from being a carpenter to a skilled farmer (perhaps more detailed, separating a skilled potato farmer from a skilled cattle-rearer), from a builder to a bee-keeper, from a traditional healer to a midwife, from a masseur to a musician, from a religious leader to a vet, from a skilled clothes-maker to a teacher, from a mother to a cook, a cleaner to a fuel-wood collector, a community leader to a brewer. As each person is identified, a simple picture (with the word – depending on the stage in the course) should be drawn by participants (with help from facilitator if needed) and placed by each household. It is important to try to include as wide a range of skills as possible.

The discussion should focus on how people developed these skills. How did they acquire their knowledge and how might they hand it on to others? How can people extend their knowledge in each area or share it most usefully with others? What skills could we not do without on a daily basis? In some cases this sort of analysis might lead to a local skills-share system – where people exchange their labour and develop an alternative currency or voucher system, which only has value locally. The key is to work out equivalences, such as making a dress in exchange for X hours of a builder’s time. Numeracy work could be based on trying to work out a set of equivalences, if there is an interest in doing so.

This map will throw up a wide range of local vocabulary which can be used in various ways. If this is in the initial phase of the literacy programme, then it may be a matter of picking out one or two words and focusing on them (breaking into syllables, creating new words, trying to find the syllables in other words on the map etc). Slightly more advanced work could involve trying to write a phrase or two about each (or some) of the skills mentioned. Writing local people’s names can also be useful.

Map of human resources



KEY					
	herbalist		builder		village leader
	bee keeper		school teacher		expert hen rearer
	masseur		tradition birth attendant		expert on coffee
	carpenter		catechist		

Map of services and opportunities

This map will cover a much wider area than the community itself and has similarities to a mobility map (see page 142). Start by asking participants to put something (such as a picture card) on the ground representing the village/neighbourhood. Ask the participants to identify where there are opportunities for work in the area, outside the community – not only for themselves but for their whole family (husbands, wives, children, mothers, fathers etc). This work might include day labouring work in fields, other forms of employment (on building sites, as maid-servants, washing women etc), business, trading etc. Ask participants to locate each of these on the map (perhaps drawing picture cards and placing them on the ground in the appropriate place). It may help to draw on roads and other indications of direction.

Now ask the participants to add to the map any services that they are aware of – whether health services (health centres/hospitals), legal services, social organisations, religious organisations, schools or colleges, government offices, markets, cyclone shelters, non-governmental organisations etc. Include as many details as possible representing them with cards or objects.

When the map is completed, transfer it onto a large sheet of paper.

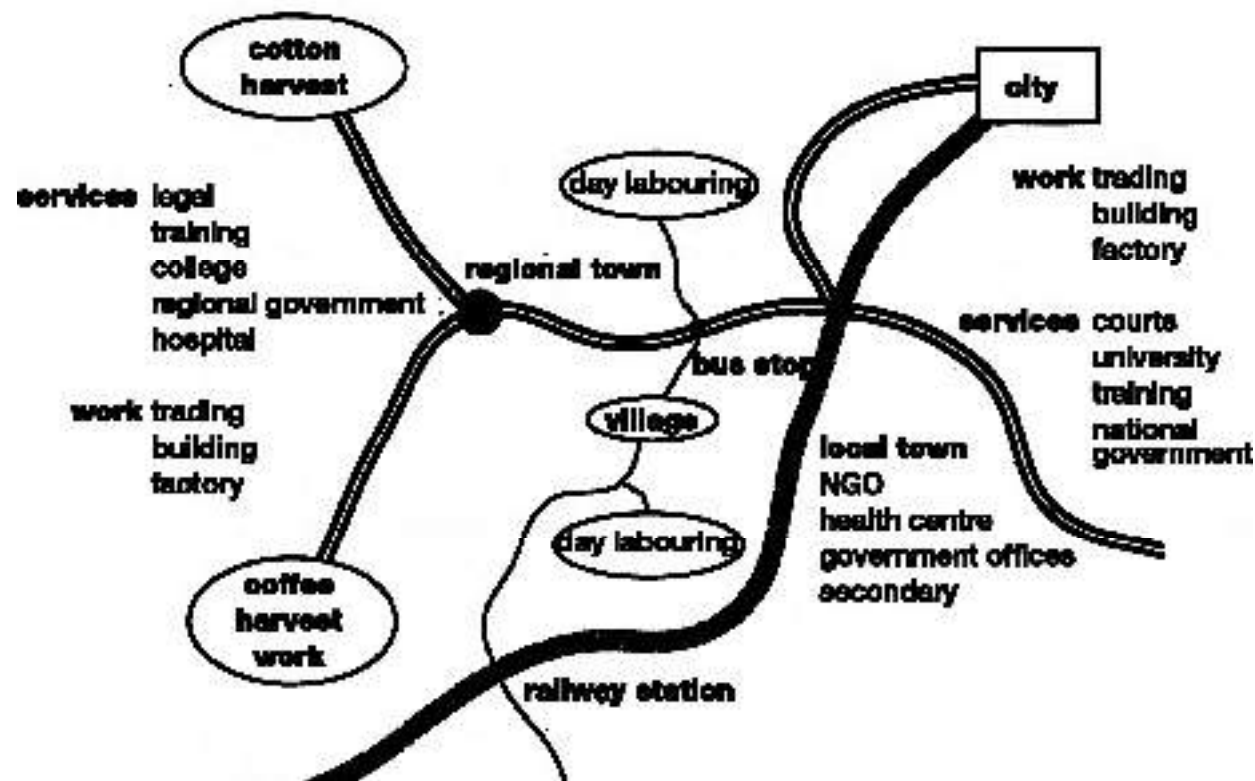
Discussion from this map may explore many different themes. One would be the strengths and weaknesses, advantages and disadvantages of government and non-governmental services. Another would be to explore the quality of legal services (Can you get real justice? How?). The changing patterns in employment (over the past 20/30 years) might be worth exploring.

Discussion could also focus on different types of bribery or corruption in different places.

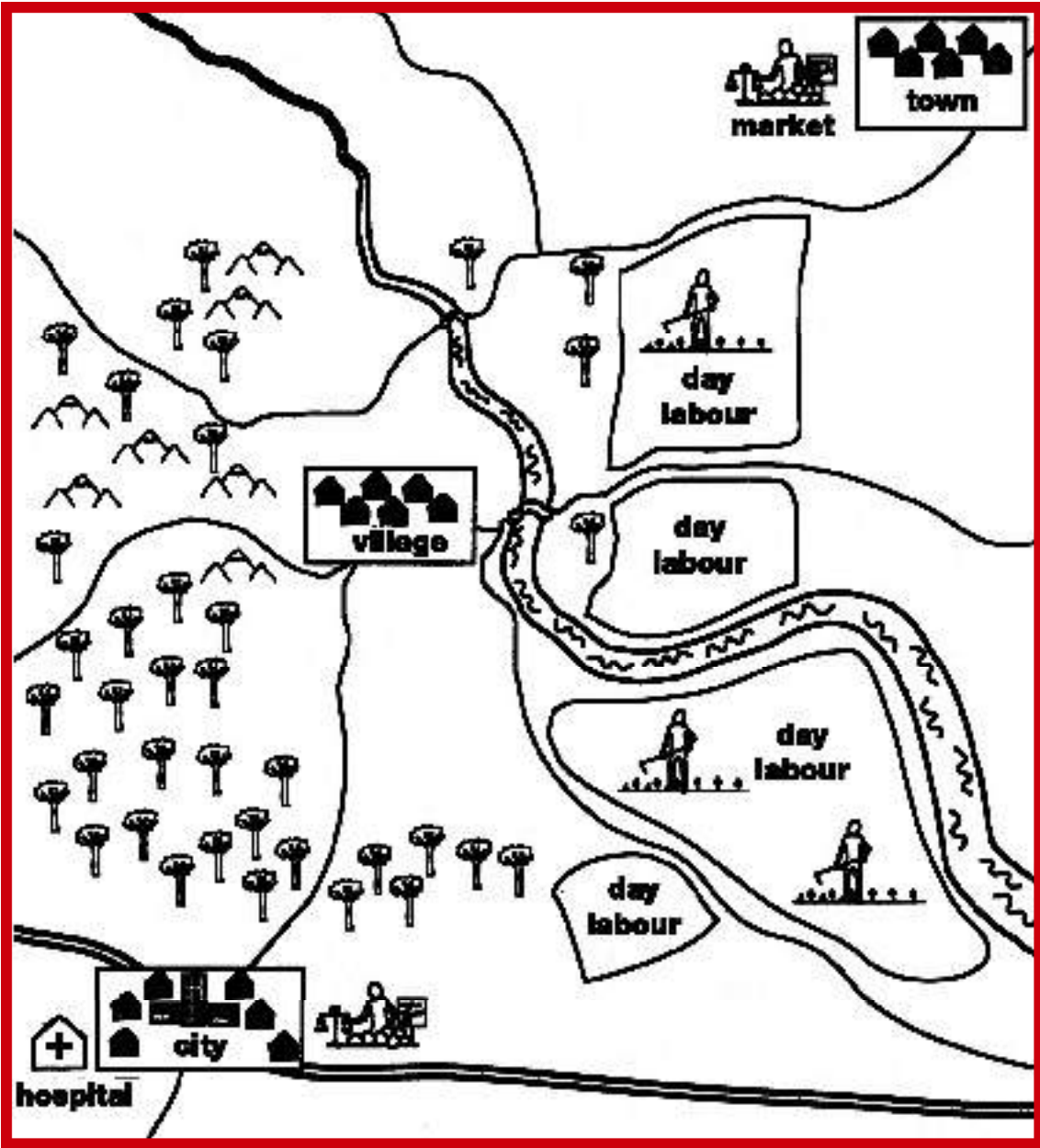
Reading and writing work might range from practice with directions (buses/trains/timetables/road signs etc) to practice with filling in applications for employment (or writing letters/even CVs for potential employers). Specific work on legal forms might be relevant. Information on employment law/labour rights could be useful to introduce. If many participants are interested in a particular form of employment, then practice with literacy relevant to that could be developed.

Numeracy could look at the different income levels from different types of employment (and the relationship, for example, to education level) or at the costs of different types of service (working with real figures relating to legal/health/education services)

Map of services and opportunities (alternative style)



Map of services and opportunities



Social/cultural calendar

A social/cultural calendar involves identifying the major cultural and social events each year. It might work particularly well in an urban area, where there are people from different cultural backgrounds living together. Plotting religious festivals and holidays on a calendar can be the basis for structuring a discussion about different cultures. This may lead in to work on traditional songs or dances from the different cultures represented in the circle. The calendar might include personal events, such as people’s birthdays and special celebrations, commemorations or anniversaries which particular people observe.

The discussion might focus on how different cultures have developed and how they can be retained in future. What initiatives help to strengthen these cultures and what can undermine them? Which people within the community are central to retaining cultural identity? What is the link between culture and language? How did different festivals evolve? What is the meaning of different symbols? etc

If traditional songs or dances are introduced (see page 175) then these can be used as a rich foundation for literacy and numeracy work. Writing down songs can be linked to analysing their content/meaning. Writing down the key stages in different ceremonies can also be useful practice. Reflection on the these issues might lead to plans to re-vitalise some long dis-regarded cultural event/ceremony – which could be publicised and explained through leaflets produced by the group. With songs it can be interesting to introduce the concept of written music – a different form of literacy which some people may wish to pursue.

Numeracy work could be based on anything from dates to dance paces or musical rhythms. It could relate to working out the cost of putting on different cultural events, or could be linked to measurements for costume-making (if this is a big part of certain events and of local interest).

Social/cultural calendar

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
	EID			EID							
new year			easter			harvest festival					24-26 christ-mas
						20 martyrs day		30 indepen-dence day		21 found-ation day	

Ideal future map/development projects matrix

The aim of this Unit is to discuss what the participants would like to see in their village in future and to prioritise amongst these. The starting questions may be: How would you like your village to look in 10 years time? What would there be in the village that there isn’t now? Let the participants come up with ideas. It may include for example a school, health centre, drinking water, electricity, new crops, a better road, a processing plant for a major crop etc. These should be indicated through simple picture/word cards (drawn by participants) placed on a rough household/ village map.

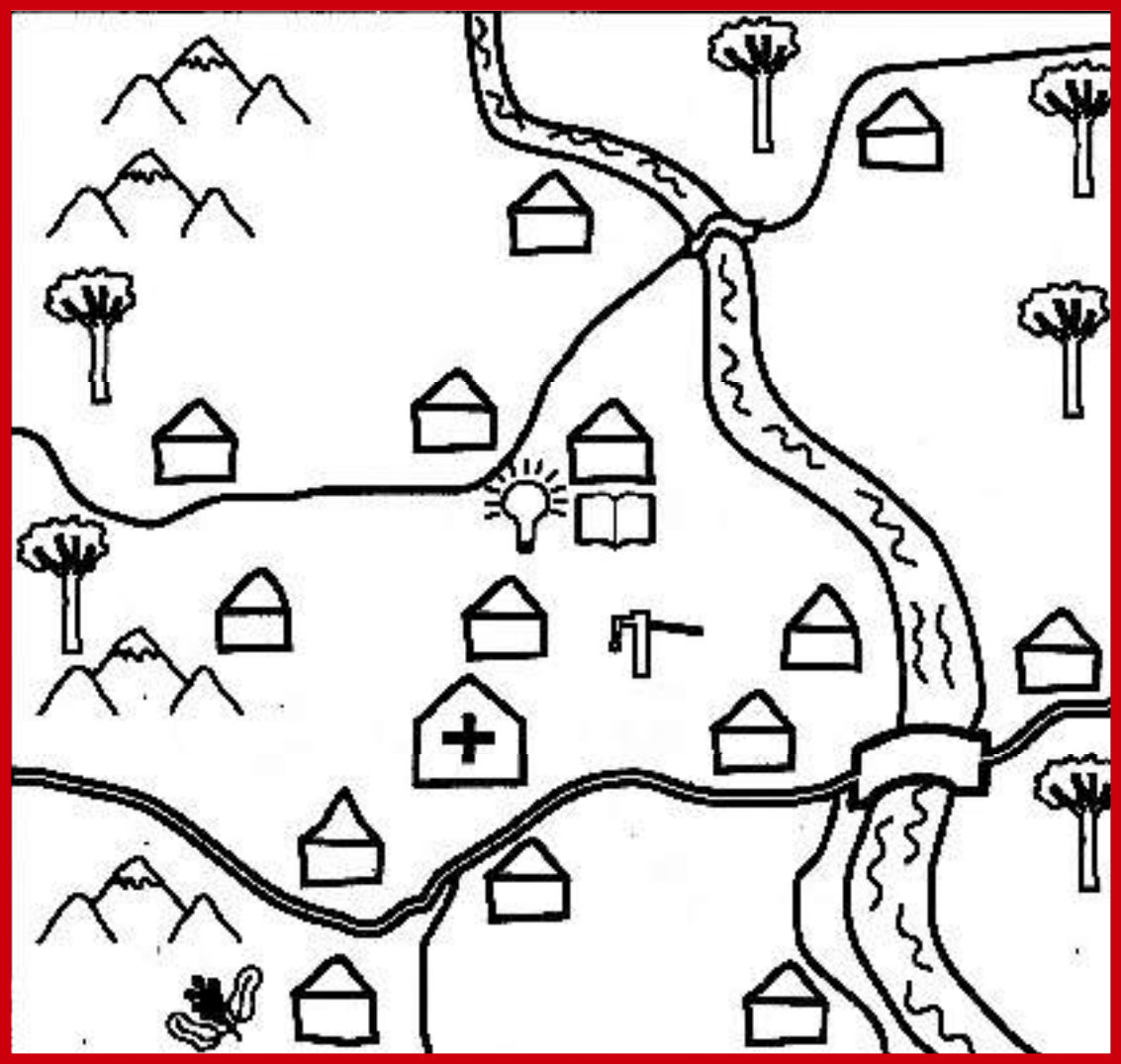
The discussion could explore why people want each of these things, whether it is realistic to have them all, which things are most necessary or realistic, and how each may be achieved? This could lead to the construction of a related matrix.

It is often revealing to ask men, women, old and young to do this exercise separately. Their priorities are often very different.

Literacy work might relate to people writing a few lines arguing the case for their own particular preference – or might involve them writing letters to organisations to work out the feasibility of different projects.

Numeracy work could be based on various ways of voting to prioritise the different items. Depending on the stage in the literacy course, this could be done simply or could be used as a way of exploring the different impact of different ways of voting. For example, people could be asked to name just their preferred one, or they could be asked to select three (or rank their first three preferences). Practice with transferable votes etc could then possibly show the different outcomes of different electoral models. This could then be compared, in further discussion, with the electoral systems used locally and nationally in different spheres of life. Alternatively, numeracy work could relate to the costs of different items selected.

Ideal future map



KEY		most important	most realistic feasible	cheapest	Who can help?
school		2	4	4	Ministry of Education/NGO
health centre		4	6	6	Ministry of Health
drinking water		1	5	3	NGO
improved coffee		5	1	1	Agriculture Dept./NGO
new paved road		3	3	5	Public Works Dept.
good bridge		6	2	2	Public Works Dept./NGO
electricity		7	7	7	?

Table of human rights violations

In certain contexts this type of table can be very important, though it will often be sensitive or controversial. It depends on a high level of trust within the group. The most simple approach is to generate a list of different types of human rights violation with the participants (murder, rape, disappearance, torture, forced conscription, restrictions on mobility, censorship, domestic violence etc). Then the participants can be asked to identify the number of cases of each type of violation that have taken place in the last X years in the local area. Examples of each incident should be discussed, giving plenty of space for people to share their experiences and their suffering.

The discussion is likely to focus mostly on people's actual experiences and may proceed from there to discussing whether things are getting better or worse and

what can be done (particularly about unresolved cases).

Literacy work can involve encouraging people to write down their own testimonies and (where relevant) sending them to a reliable human rights organisation. The documentation of abuses is often inadequate and the more information such organisations receive, the stronger they are able to mobilise forces internally and internationally to improve the situation. However, this type of work should only be undertaken where there is a high level of trust and where each individual is given the right to opt out (or to retain anonymity).

Numeracy work related to this could revolve around national level statistics on human rights abuses and discussions of their accuracy, based on comparison with local level abuses. Work with statistics should always be taken carefully, encouraging participants to take a critical look at the figures rather than accept them automatically as the truth.

Table of human rights violations

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	total
murder	0	2	3	0	1	0	6
disappearance	1	3	1	0	2	1	8
torture	2	3	2	1	1	2	11
forced conscription	5	9	4	2	0	0	20
detention	3	12	15	6	1	2	39

Map of displacement/ migration

In areas of conflict there may have been a lot of people displaced. Even in calm areas, many people will migrate seasonally in search of work. These themes can be addressed through a map similar to the mobility map (see page 142). In a context of conflict, participants can be asked to identify the number of people who have been displaced and where they have been displaced to (and the causes of their displacement). It could also be useful to add the number of people who have arrived in the local area, having been displaced from another part of the country (and the different places from where they have come).

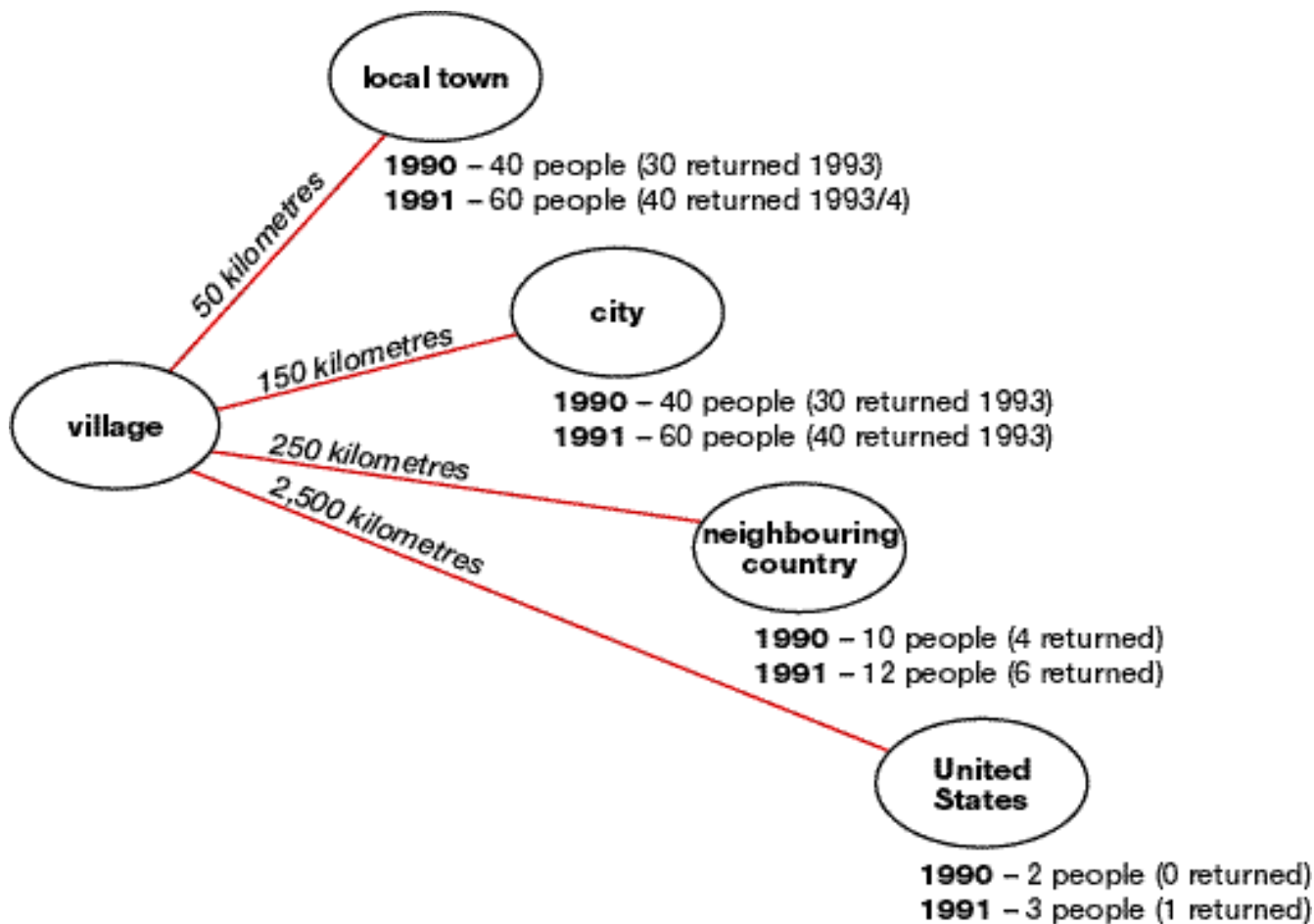
In a migration context, the focus would be on different places that people go in search of seasonal employment – the numbers who go, the duration of their stay and changes/ trends over the past few years. You might also add the number of people who have permanently left the community (and where they have gone).

Discussion would be likely to focus on the causes and effects (psychological, social etc) of displacement/migration, the problems of re-integration etc.

Reading and writing work might focus on letter writing (to keep in contact with people who have moved), particularly on how to address and post a letter.

Numeracy work could be designed around doing a more detailed local census on this subject or on distances involved in migration/displacement.

Map of displacement



Note: the type of detail added to this map is optional. It may include the numbers of people who go; the months they go; the distance; the average income; even the age/sex of people who go.

Education planning – various Units

An Education Matrix has already been outlined in detail (see page 132) but several other Units can be designed to explore education issues.

School mapping can be a useful starting point. This can involve various stages, starting with the identification on a map of existing educational resources/opportunities (primary, secondary, university, technical) – and the number of people who have been to each level/location. The access to each level can be a focus of discussion in itself and can lead to the identification of gaps or needs. If the need for a new school or non-formal education centre is identified, then the location of the new school/centre can be discussed and plotted on the map. If there is a need for a secondary school this may involve liaison with other literacy groups in neighbouring villages to determine an appropriate location, research the level of demand and mobilise to put pressure on the Ministry of Education.

The process of school mapping could be linked to a more detailed analysis, built upon a well-being ranking exercise (see page 145), whereby the education levels of girls and boys in different households (and their attendance at different schools) are analysed in relation to the socio-economic status of the households.

Related work can involve constructing **calendars of children’s workloads** (disaggregated by age-group and sex), to determine the most appropriate calendar of school terms and vacations. **Daily routine charts** (see page 147) can also help to determine the hours of the day when children (of different ages/sex) are most likely to be available (ideally related to the calendar so that changes in daily routines at different times of the year are taken into account). Such exercises are most valuable when discussing the setting up of a non-formal education centre (where parents may have control over the school calendar/timetable). The formal education system may be less flexible, but the data collected on such calendars can be used to influence district education offices (perhaps through local parent teachers’ associations or school management committees).

Other work following the theme of education can include constructing **matrices** to explore the causes of boys’ and girls’ **absence and drop out** from school. This can be done by looking at different time periods (from a short absence of a day, to week-long absences, month-long, three months, year-long or permanent absences). Participants can be asked to consider what are typical causes of absences of these different lengths (for instance, short ones may be caused by illness, medium term ones by seasonal workload,

permanent ones by family poverty etc). The discussion can move on to address which absences can be prevented.

Other possible activities touching on the theme of education can involve building on the **human resource map** (see page 148) to identify all the different local people who could act as a resource for the local school in terms of supplementary teaching, running workshops/practical sessions, or providing material inputs (such as maintenance/ furniture).

The above work can be linked to **curriculum review and planning**. This might start with a discussion of the existing uses of education (What is the point? What value does education have/what role does it play locally?) and then the actual education needs locally (to understand farming for instance, new methods, preventive health etc). The existing curriculum can then be reviewed to identify the gaps which make it fail to fulfil local needs. This might be done in a matrix format and could lead to recommendations by participants on curriculum reform (and even changes in teaching approaches/methods).

To make this an effective discussion, the facilitator would need to provide a summary of the existing school curriculum/activities. Related to this, participants can be asked to review critically their **children’s textbooks** – the relevance of the images and the value of the information contained in them. All recommendations would normally have to be discussed closely with the PTA/SMC. If significant changes are suggested, then the local map of human resources might help in the process of implementing change.

The **mapping of literacy** in the home and community can be a further means to work on educational themes. Such a map might start with a household map of the village and the identification of any places in the community where the written word is seen in public (wall newspapers, posters, notices, signs, inside shops etc). Often participants will ‘not see’ all the written materials that are around them (things which are always present become absent) so it can be useful to walk through the community with the full literacy circle, picking up any written materials on route (or at least noting them down). This is suggested in the initial research stage (page 43) but may be repeated by each literacy circle. Participants can then be asked to do a household survey/map to determine where there are written materials (even non-literate people will often have some materials, such as calendars, packaging, medicines, fertilisers etc).

Once such a survey/map is complete the discussion can focus on the importance of creating a more **literate environment** in order for children (and the adults in the circle) to consolidate what they learn. How can this best be done? Listening to local suggestions can yield innovative

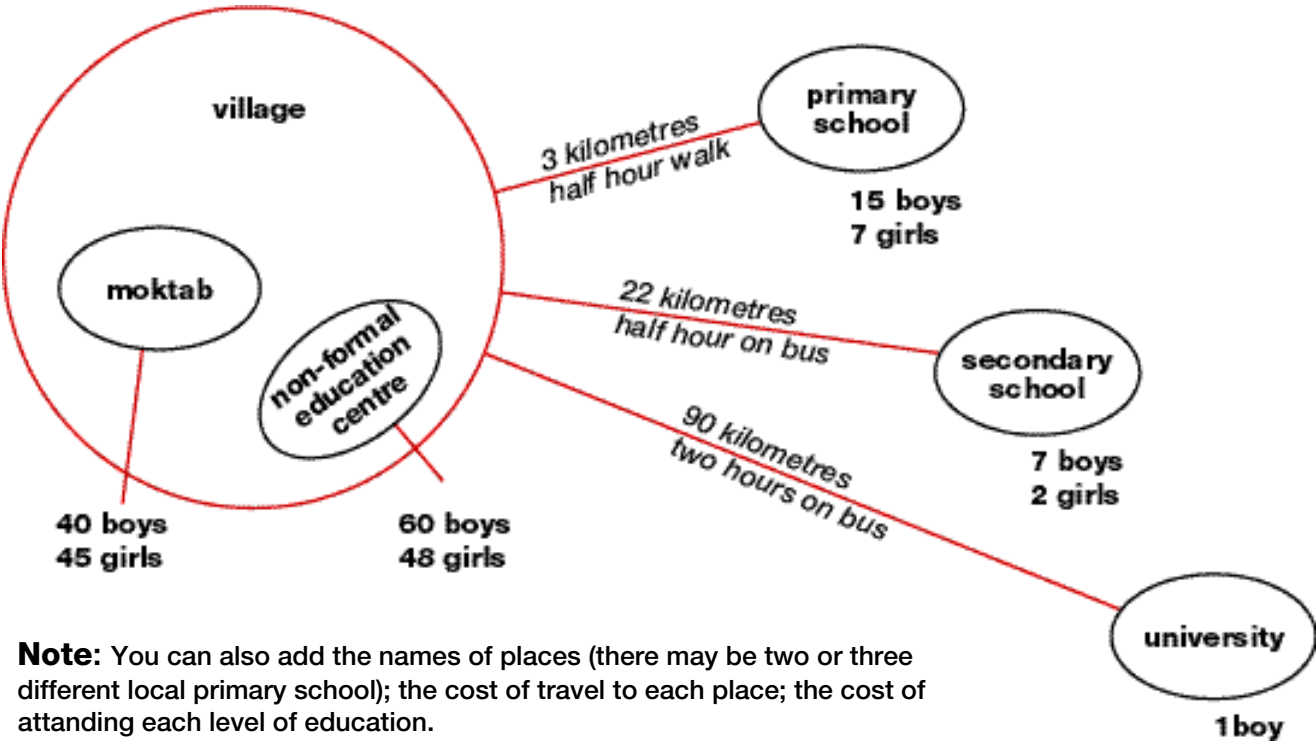
ideas – and can also ensure ‘ownership’ of more common ideas (such as rural libraries, community notice-boards) which all too often fail when the community has not taken the first initiative. The map which has been constructed can be used to identify where such things as notice-boards, signs or libraries should be placed (see the section on ‘*Strengthening the Literate Environment*’, page 70).

Another Unit could be developed in the **preference ranking** format, (see page 106) in which paying for the

education of boys/girls is analysed in relation to other priority expenditures for a family (such as food, housing, seeds, tools, fertiliser, medical attention, wedding etc)

The range of activities/Units outlined above will not be relevant to all communities and it would be undesirable to enter into such a detailed analysis of one issue unless the literacy circle has a very active interest. Reading and writing work can emerge from any of the above, as can numeracy work (linked to data analysis etc).

Education planning



Note: You can also add the names of places (there may be two or three different local primary school); the cost of travel to each place; the cost of attending each level of education.

Writing your own Units

The range of Units presented here is only a sample of what you might be able to do.

Be creative!

Discussion of almost any issue can be structured through the construction of a map, calendar matrix or diagram. Moreover, there are many other types of graphic which you could invent. Practitioners of PRA are constantly innovating with new tools or new uses for old techniques. Subscribing to PLA Notes (see Appendix 3) is a good means to keep up to date with developments.

However, a systematic analysis of your own unique environment will be the richest source of creativity – and will ensure that what you create is relevant to local needs.

Any form of locally produced graphic will offer potential opportunities for introducing literacy and numeracy work in a meaningful context.

If you wish to see examples of the local facilitators’ manuals used in the pilot projects in Uganda, Bangladesh or El Salvador, please contact ActionAid UK. We would also like to receive a copy of any manual that you produce so that we can learn from you and share your experiences with other literacy programmes internationally.

Section 6

Adapting Reflect

6.1 Adapting Reflect for work with different communities

6.1.1 Urban areas

Defining ‘urban’ is not as straightforward as it might seem as there will always be grey areas. For example, a rural market town whilst urban in some respects has an economy which is rurally based. Perhaps a truly urban area is one which has its own self-generated employment and marginal areas which depend for survival on an informal economy. There is, however, no need for an absolute definition here. It will be for you to judge whether the Units and approaches outlined below are relevant for the type of area in which you are working.

Developing Units for urban areas is not easy as the three original *Reflect* pilots were in rural areas and the origin of many of the techniques is in Participatory Rural Appraisal. The lack of clearly defined ‘communities’ in urban areas also presents a particular challenge.

One of two basic strategies might be followed in organising a *Reflect* programme in urban areas:

- working in a neighbourhood-based urban programme;
- working in an employment-based or sectoral-based programme (e.g. with sex-workers/street traders etc).

Ideas for possible Units are outlined below in these two categories. However, first there are a few general observations which need to be made:

- People in an urban neighbourhood may have different mother tongue languages but it is very likely that they will wish to learn the language of power/dominant language. If their present oral abilities are poor then it is important to consider separating out (though perhaps still inter-relating at points) the language teaching element.
- People may be much less knowledgeable about their area (particularly if they are newly arrived) so the level of detail on mapping may be much less. Constructing maps may however be of much practical use.
- People may be more reluctant to map on the ground, so

it may be more advisable (though more restricting) to do mapping on a large table with movable objects.

- Participants may have less commitment to their neighbourhood than rural people – and so they may be reluctant to invest time in community actions (though it is hard to generalise and there is much evidence that at the right moment people are willing). Research before starting any programme – to determine the level of stability of the population – would be vital. It should be noted, that the *Reflect* process may well make a significant contribution to creating a strong sense of commitment to the neighbourhood (i.e. turning a limitation around and making it a strength).
- Timing meetings may be hard, as daily routines are sometimes less regular and people in the informal economy particularly work long hours.
- One strategy to give more stability to the group would be to link to pre-existing groups – for example the parents of children in one particular school, or savings and credit groups, or urban dwellers’ associations (in Ethiopia), burial groups, cultural groups, or existing ‘popular movements’. Starting with issue-based movements/campaigns may be a good idea.
- There is much talk about a more individualist mentality in urban areas. This is difficult to pin down but it may well be the case that people’s lives are very different and that, as a result, some of the maps and matrices will not be able to be done collectively. In this case, once the basic concept has been discussed, people might develop a personal map or matrix and then use this as the basis for discussing with others.
- It will be hard in an urban area to expect the literacy circle to be the basis for generating community actions, to benefit the wider community (given the density of population). A link into any existing community organisation would thus be highly desirable. An alternative is also to think of a series of literacy circles in a small area (perhaps at different times of the day to suit different groups of people), which can then come together at certain moments and build up a wider momentum.
- There will be less difficulty in creating a literate environment to sustain literacy skills in an urban area (though some work may still be needed in this area), but it is also likely that the level of literacy skills which

participants will need in their daily lives will be higher than in rural areas. The use of a lot of real materials from the environment (especially those brought in by participants) is likely to be important. This would include some very practical items like application forms etc.



A meeting in Nepal

Neighbourhood based urban programmes

Although marginal urban areas have much less sense of community than villages in rural areas, it will be possible in many cases to develop a neighbourhood-based programme. Units that could be developed include:

Neighbourhood maps

A Neighbourhood Map could be done on a household by household basis (see page 77), though in many cases people will not know their neighbours as intimately as they would in a village, so there will be more gaps. The starting point would be to identify key features, (streets/alleyways/ significant locations/shops or stalls etc), particularly those which act as a locally recognised boundary to their neighbourhood. The participants can then plot their own households and those of friends, leaders, public figures, etc.

The discussion might focus on the origins/history of the neighbourhood, on what a ‘neighbourhood’ means to them or on contrasting urban ‘communities’ with rural communities.

Literacy work would probably evolve in much the same way as with any household map. As this will often be an early Unit in a course, picking out one or two key words might be sufficient, for example the word for ‘neighbourhood’ or ‘slum’ or the name of the particular area etc.

Numeracy work at a very basic level might depend on starting with counting the number of people in houses (at

least those which are known – though with two or three storey buildings it can get complicated). These figures could be used to work out the probable average population of each household/street and eventually of the neighbourhood as a whole. Looking at how this has changed over recent years and how it might increase in the future could be linked to further discussion.

Human resource maps

Human Resource Maps would normally build on the above neighbourhood maps, to identify the different skills/trades of different people in the neighbourhood (see page 148 for ideas on the range of skills to consider). These can be represented by simple pictures or words.

Discussion may focus on how people acquired their skills and how they may pass them on to others; the role of qualifications and certificates, and the value of skills for employment (or self-employment) may be interesting areas of debate. The number of people who have skills which they do not (or cannot) use in the urban environment could be discussed, as could the level of access to skills training. A discussion of what constitutes unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled labour can be revealing – especially exploring how these categories might relate to economic rewards and job security.

This could be an interesting foundation for generating actions such as establishing small-scale skills exchange schemes, where people develop an alternative voucher-based currency to exchange their skills/labour (I do child-

care for you for instance, and so earn X vouchers that I can use to ‘pay’ someone else to do my plumbing for which s/he earns X vouchers which can be used for getting some clothes made etc). The development of such alternative economies has thrived in many places (see, for example, the New Economics Foundation, UK).

Literacy work could relate to key words from popular skills (and vocabulary surrounding those areas) or at a more advanced stage could, where relevant, involve preparing CVs or job applications.

Mobility maps of the city

An urban mobility map may be a mixture between the mobility map (page 142) and the opportunities and services map (page 150). To start with, identify the location of the neighbourhood in relation to principal routes to other parts of the city or other towns. These may be plotted roughly based on bus routes, train lines or major roads/features. Then identify the location of sources of employment (of various types) and the location of services (health, education, legal, training).

This can lead to considerable discussion on, for example, the transport provision to the marginal neighbourhood (one marginal area of Mexico City developed a strong neighbourhood organisation after first mobilising in demonstrations to the municipal bus company, to demand that they improve services to the area).

Seasonal migration maps

Many marginal urban areas have mushroomed over the past twenty or thirty years, with most people living in them having come from rural areas. Many of these people retain strong links with the rural areas where they came from and it can be interesting to plot these links. For example, people may return there for times of peak labour (such as harvests) or for annual festivals (as well as for occasional events such as weddings or funerals).

In some neighbourhoods, people will have mostly come from the same part of the countryside and so the focus of the map may be on how often they return and for what. Other neighbourhoods contain people from many different parts of the country and so the geographic dispersion will become another layer to the map and may involve constructing a rough map of the whole country (and even neighbouring countries).

There may also be seasonal migration in the other direction – with people predominantly based in the rural areas, who come to stay with relatives or friends in the urban areas at times of severe shortage and hunger in the

villages. This phenomenon can also be identified on this map.

A parallel calendar might be developed alongside this map, to show the times of inward and outward seasonal migration. Amongst other things, this can be very helpful for planning the calendar for the literacy circle (if this has not already been done).

Reading and writing may relate to place names, to the reasons for migration or to writing to relatives back in the villages. Numeracy work may relate to work with distances, with time, with dates or with the cost of travelling backwards and forwards.

Historical maps

Related to the above, an historical map would indicate (possibly on a map of the country) where different people came from and when – plotting each participant’s individual route into the city (which may often be marked by different stages, moving from village to market town to regional town to capital – and even within the capital). The dates of each move and the main causes of each move should be annotated.

This might start as a simple map for the whole group, and then each individual can plot the details of their own moves on their own map, providing practice in reading and writing as well as numeracy (with dates and perhaps also estimated distances). More and more detail can be added, such as the means of transport used for each move, the length of time each took and the costs involved. Each participant may wish to do a family map, which identifies where each member of their family has moved and ended up.

As a group, this could generate interesting reading and writing work, with participants recording lists of push and pull factors which influenced them at each stage.

Health and hygiene maps

Health and hygiene maps can follow much the same format as with the rural areas, (see page 90) identifying health hazards in the neighbourhood such as open drains/poor sanitation/accumulated rubbish. An analysis of water sources might be particularly appropriate. Both positive and negative features can be identified and a group map at first could then lead to work on individual household maps.

Such maps could be the basis for coordinating actions on solving such problems in conjunction with others in the neighbourhood (such as digging ditches for drainage and covering them). These maps might also identify such things as open spaces/playing fields (and focus people’s minds on the need to organise to prevent further development of the ‘green’ or unbuilt areas).

Literacy work might involve preparing relevant signs (to prevent dumping for instance, or to direct people on where to dispose of litter) or on writing letters to relevant government departments. Numeracy work could involve costing certain actions to improve conditions.

Land-ownership and tenancy maps

Land-ownership and Tenancy maps could be very interesting and complex in urban areas, where free holders and even original leaseholders may well no longer live in the area. People may have sub-contracts of sub-contracts etc and very little legal security as tenants.

Discussing the issues of ownership and plotting them locally can be very revealing, can lead to collective action (where individuals are helpless) and could be a good foundation for introducing some legal rights work on tenancy law and eviction.

The starting point could be the household/ neighbourhood map, with participants identifying the different layers of ownership in properties they know (or live in). This would involve writing names by each property involved. The numeracy work could look at the levels of mortgage/rent paid by each person in a chain of ownership (where such a chain exists). There may be some fear of transparency in this; confidentiality should be respected where desired.

Income and Expenditure Trees/Calendars

This would work much like an income and expenditure tree in rural areas (see page 102). However, in an urban area, participants may have very different sources of income and this may make it difficult to identify a ‘typical’ person. Some attempt should be made to do so – making assumptions about the household size and sources of income. However, much more interest may be shown in doing individual trees and calendars – so the purpose of one constructed by the group might be as an illustration, to show participants how to do their own versions.

Sources and uses of credit matrix.

The Credit Matrix in an urban area might be very similar in format to one in rural areas (see page 104). It may however be more complex with a wide range of credit sources (from banks to loan sharks) and a different range of issues to address (such as the violence of loan sharks who ‘buy’ debts and then use strong arm tactics to reclaim them). The buying and re-selling of produce in the informal economy might be considered to fall within a broad system of credit.

Preference ranking of home-based income generation

Following a preference ranking format (see page 106), this would look at the different strategies of all family members for gaining extra income from home-based activities, in order to see which ones are most effective. If the activities of men and women (or old/young etc) are very different, then a separate table could be completed for/by each group. The ranking process involves asking participants to identify a range of criteria upon which preferences are chosen. This will generate material for reading and writing practice. Numeracy work might relate to calculating average hourly income from each type of activity.

Preference ranking on employment

Following the same format as the Unit above, this would look at employment outside the household. This will probably generate a wide range of criteria surrounding income levels, job security/stability (or lack of it), health and safety, travel time, seasonality, skills required etc. Again, separate matrices could be done by (or for) men, women, young and old.

Calendar of work availability

The aim of this calendar will be to identify seasonal shifts in employment in different sectors. The participants may choose to focus on five (or more) different types of employment and will identify any significant seasonal shifts in the availability of work in those sources of employment. In some cases, a five or 10 year period might be used to indicate wider trends in sources of employment, related to structural shifts in the economy.

Calendars of price changes

People living in urban areas are more vulnerable to price changes in products that they consume – as they are less likely to producing anything themselves for their own consumption. Constructing an annual calendar to look at seasonal price changes in basic commodities can be of interest. However, longer term price changes (of say five years or longer) might be even more revealing and can lead to a discussion of inflation etc.

Timeline of the neighbourhood

This is constructed in the same way as a timeline of the village (see page 141), but is more likely to be over a shorter time period (though there will be exceptions to this). The starting point is to identify when the area was first settled

and then to reflect upon major events in the development of the area. This can be done simply, just using key words like ‘first-settlement’, ‘fire’, ‘school’, ‘eviction’ etc. alongside dates – or could go into much more detail and be the basis for collecting and documenting local history.

Health Units

Many of the Units on health used in rural areas will also be relevant for urban areas. The Health Calendar, for example, will still be revealing as there are clear patterns to certain illnesses (such as malaria) relating to the time of year/climate etc. Matrices on the Causes or Cures of Illnesses, or even on Medicinal Herbs and Plants (see page 124), are also pertinent in most urban areas.

Gender workloads: calendars and daily Routines

Units addressing gender relations and roles are as relevant for urban areas as rural areas. The daily routine chart (see page 147) and the gender workload calendar (see page 96) can easily be adapted.

Neighbourhood models

One of the problems with mapping in urban areas is that houses are often built on two, three or more storeys and each storey can have a different function (such as ground-floor shop, basement workshop, first floor family quarters, second floor rented out). If local people wish to engage seriously in planning their neighbourhood then there needs to be a means to represent this.

One answer is to construct three-dimensional cardboard models of the neighbourhood. In some places such models have proved very effective in focusing local people’s attention on the implications of proposed changes (such as construction of a new road, or of a major new building which is in the planning stage). Being able to visualise undesirable (or desirable) changes in 3D cardboard can enrich reflection and lead to local actions. [See the work of Tony Gibson, the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation].

Literacy work can relate to the planning applications, involving a letter-writing campaign, a local petition or the preparation of leaflets and posters, to raise other people’s awareness of proposed changes. Numeracy work might relate to measuring areas, heights, distances etc.

Chapati Diagrams of Organizations/Power Relations

This will be developed much like the chapati diagram for rural areas (see 195), though the range of organisations

within and outside the community may be much more diverse (including governmental and non-governmental agencies). This can be followed up by work with organograms to explore the roles and relationships of different organisations in more detail. Knowing who to contact in relation to a particular problem is often more important in large urban bureaucracies than it might be in rural areas, where there are often fewer agencies involved.

The Chapati Diagram of informal power structures (outlined for rural areas on page 139) in the neighbourhood might be very provocative (and even dangerous) in an urban area as it might, in some cases, involve exploring a criminal underworld or mafia operations. As such, it would have to be handled with great caution but in certain contexts it would also be of fundamental importance.

Matrices of crime/vices

A matrix which might be useful in some urban areas would be one analysing different types of crime (burglary, vandalism, violence etc) and the causes of that crime (poverty, frustration, alcohol etc). The discussion might include categorising people who tend to be involved in each crime (young, old, men, women etc), though there would be a danger of stereotypes emerging if this was not facilitated carefully. The discussion might best focus on how best to prevent or reduce the incidence of each type of crime. For instance, if young men were trained so that they had better employment opportunities, or were involved in an income generating project, they may have less tendency to be involved in crime.

A matrix which looks at different types of vice or addiction would also be likely to be relevant in urban areas where alcoholism, gambling and sex work, etc may be more common.

Ranking of the causes of poverty

This matrix would involve asking people to identify typical characteristics of poor families and the causes of poverty. Although well-being ranking might work in some cases as a foundation for this, in many urban areas it will be unrealistic as people’s socio-economic status is not viewed in such obvious ways as in rural areas (land ownership, cows etc) and people may be more secretive about their financial situation.

It may therefore be more realistic to develop a list of characteristics and then of the causes of poverty in a more general way, through brainstorming. For example, you may ask, “*can anyone think of ways in which you can tell if someone is better-off or worse-off?*” In a brainstorm,

everyone should be listened to and their suggestions noted down.

The focus of discussion might then be on prioritising the causes that have been suggested. This can be done in various ways. It might involve a simple vote. However, before a vote it might be good to cluster the different causes into general sub-categories. This can be done using VIPP techniques (see page 182) with participants writing each cause (very simply and boldly!) on a card, and each card then placed next to any other card which represents a similar idea.

Matrix of campaigning techniques

For literacy groups which are strongly committed to direct action to improve their living conditions, a matrix exploring the effectiveness of different campaigning strategies for different purposes can be useful. The starting point would be to generate a list of different campaigning strategies (such as demonstration, press denouncement, letters, marches, discrete lobbying or meetings). Then the suitability of each of these approaches could be judged in relation either to the different people/ organisations that need to be influenced (local/ national government, private companies, own community etc), or in relation to specific problems that the community addresses. The options for collaboration or networking might also be explored in each case.

Literacy work might involve preparing actual campaign plans or materials for a particular campaign. Numeracy work might be relevant for preparing statistics for those materials or for costing of an overall campaign.

Calendar of cultural celebrations

Many marginal neighbourhoods include people from different parts of the country with different cultural traditions (and even religions). The type of calendar outlined on page 152 is thus particularly relevant for such areas.

Television and video

In most urban areas, even very marginal and poor areas, television is firmly established. People have televisions even if they lack drinking water. Television is a one-off investment, (often low cost if second hand) and can be run on power from illegal connections to overhead lines. Water provision is usually much more costly. In areas of low literacy (even in fact in areas of high literacy!), television is now a more powerful medium of communication and is a significant part of people's daily experience. It is thus important to consider television within a literacy programme, particularly in urban

areas. This is not to say that television should be the medium for teaching (it has not usually proved very good for that), but that it should be the object of study and analysis.

There are some exciting experiences involving the analysis of popular television programmes such as soap operas (telenovelas) and of news coverage, for example in Chile (see Archer and Costello 1990). The aim of the analysis of these programmes is to promote 'active reading' of television by viewers (rather than passive acceptance of everything they watch). Linked to this sort of work, some groups have promoted the 'active writing' of television, by making video cameras available to groups to record their own programmes. This latter process can be costly, but if video equipment is purchased by an organisation and rotated around literacy circles in an area, then the costs can be reduced.

To date we are not aware of any programmes which have explicitly sought to link this 'active reading and writing' of television to a literacy programme which focuses primarily on pen and paper as a medium. This is unfortunate, as the growth of audio-visual communication (television/video/radio) has not reduced the power of conventional literacy. In many respects, these 'literacies' are inter-twined and should be addressed together.

The concept of 'actively reading' television could lead to some interesting work. Participants could construct matrices analysing and categorising different types of television programme (or different television channels). One could even do a preference ranking of soap operas (or telenovelas), to identify why participants prefer one over the other – helping to structure a discussion which can get surprisingly passionate. In more detail, participants might look for qualities of soap opera heroes and heroines whom they like/dislike, identify with or don't etc. Though this may sound bland, it can lead to some very revealing discussions.

Some of the particular techniques used in Chile have included stripping to basics the plot and characters of telenovelas, so as to find the points of empathy and the points of contradiction. For example, heroines may be from broken families (something perhaps shared by some participants in a literacy group) but they are often absurdly rich. It is the combination of realism and fantasy which can make such programmes so popular.

Notes on employment/ sectoral based urban work

Bringing people together into a literacy group if they already have a shared interest or are physically in the same location for work, may sometimes be more easy than neighbourhood-based work. In such a case, the sort of actions which are likely to arise are much more likely to relate to workers' rights and unionisation. This is, needless to say, often politically sensitive.

Nevertheless, the work that such groups do in a literacy circle does not have to be restricted to themes relating to the work domain. Though some Units would be developed specifically to address work, others would broaden out to their wider lives. Clearly it is impossible to generalise, because the specific needs of different groups would be very different. Sex workers, car washers, stone crushers, potters, metal workers, street children, assembly-line workers, all have different needs. However the sorts of Units that could be developed and adapted could include:

- Matrices to analyse categories of employer within the sector (or preference ranking).
- Matrices to analyse types of client/customer (criteria of good/bad ones).
- Health and safety matrices to look at risks associated with different activities involved in the work.
- Matrices on supplementary income sources.
- Maps of where they all come from to get to work (and where they all originated from before coming to the city).
- Individual timelines and histories (including a consolidated chart to show people's crossing paths).
- Personal skills and employment mapping.
- Hypothetical future calendars/flow diagrams of alternatives.
- Mapping of work location, especially where it is shifting (such as street traders/kids washing cars etc.), to identify good places at different times of the day/week/year.
- Calendar of income over the year.
- Advantages and risks of a work-based organisation.



A meeting in India

Sikant Khar/ActionAid

6.1.2 Adapting *Reflect* for fishing communities

Many of the same approaches and techniques as those outlined in the above sections would be relevant for work with fishing communities. However, in order to show the adaptability of the methodology it is worth outlining briefly some of the approaches that may be suitable for specifically addressing themes relevant to such communities:

- **Calendar of Catches:** a variation of the agricultural calendar, looking at different types of fish and the level of catches at different times of the year (including, for example, times of the year when certain fishing is either illegal or unsustainable).
- **Mapping of the Sea:** this would be a map which would make little sense to anyone else! It would show the different fishing waters and might include, as well as species of fish in each area, indications of depth, levels of danger, characteristic signs etc. It may be necessary/interesting to do maps for different seasons to show how the fishing waters change.
- **Preference Ranking of Fish:** the comparison, one by one, of each type of fish with each other type will generate an interesting array of criteria (such as ease of catch, ease of handling, ease of storage, high sale price, good taste etc). Remember that here, as in all preference rankings, high scores should always be good from the viewpoint of the participants – to avoid confusion.
- **Matrices of Technologies:** the value of different types of technology for fishing might be compared

- systematically through a matrix, which analyses them against criteria chosen by the participants.
- **Fishing Timeline:** the aim of this would be to identify the major changes over the years in relation to the size of catches of different fish, the area fished and the use of different technologies etc. Major events in the fishing communities, including tragedies, could be included.
 - **Out-of-Season Work Calendars:** which would explore additional sources of income in off-peak times and the seasonal workload of men/women.
 - **Capital Investment Matrix:** which could look at major purchases such as boats (of different types) and how financing of these can be secured – and how it can be re-paid etc.
 - **Accident/Risks Analysis:** addressing the range of accidents which fisher-people face, the likelihood of their occurrence, the possibility of their prevention etc.
 - **Analysis of Winds/Weather:** different aspects of the weather could be subjected to detailed analysis and classification, drawing on local proverbs to stimulate and enrich discussions.

A wide range of other Units relating to health and socio-political issues would also be relevant.

Numeracy work in fishing communities might be closely related to navigation, buying of items like nets, baskets and sails and selling fish.

6.1.3 Adapting *Reflect* for nomadic pastoralists

Nomadic pastoralist communities present particular challenges for the organisation of a literacy programme. If facilitators are from within the community (as is always recommended) and can travel with them, then it becomes more logistically feasible. However, with no single base to their community some of the mapping approaches need to be adapted. Below are a few ideas to start people off on thinking about adapting *Reflect* to work with nomadic pastoralists:

- **Annual Mobility Maps:** these maps would mark the full extent of the community's travels, perhaps marked with traditional measures of distance (and time taken), seasons passed in each place and major features en route (such as mountains, oases etc.) indicated. If older generations recall different routes, these could be indicated on the same or a separate map.
- **Emergency Maps:** building on the above maps, emergency maps would represent what happens when typical seasonal patterns are broken – linking this disruption to its causes (such as climate, conflict) and the dates.
- **Local maps:** these would represent the details of each of the core locations where the community spends a significant part of it's time each year, indicating for example, sources of fuel and wood, grazing lands, water (and changes in these over the years).
- **Ranking of Camels:** only of course relevant where camels are used as the main transport, this would simply involve asking the participants to identify major

- types of camels and a range of criteria by which they would judge them (such as hardy, reliable, temperamental, violent, good load-bearers, stamina etc).
- **Matrix of Animals:** looking at the main animals (cows, camels, goats etc.) that people use and what their different uses are (for dung/milk/meat/skin/calves/sale etc).
 - **Grazing Types and Availability:** this could be done by both calendar and map (perhaps the two inter-related) to identify and classify the quality of grasses, bushes and trees and their uses.
 - **Daily Routines:** in the pastoralist context, the daily routine may change significantly and this may need to be done for boys, girls, men, women, old and young, for three or four different times of the year.
 - **Land Access Problems:** A map can be developed to identify areas of land which previously people had access to (or grazing or water rights) from which they have now been excluded. Classifying the different causes of this exclusion, and the strategies for addressing them, can be undertaken on another matrix.

6.1.4 Adapting *Reflect* for refugees

Working in a refugee camp with the *Reflect* methodology presents particular challenges. The context can often be highly politicised and there may be a danger of any education process for adults being co-opted by certain political forces. However, as an open-ended methodology there is potential to overcome such pressures. The lack of need for a primer/textbook makes *Reflect* a very low-cost approach which can start up very quickly. The one thing most refugees have is time and this would mean changing the training model so that facilitators might receive daily training sessions every morning before going to their circles in the afternoons. This can allow facilitators an active input into the development of *Reflect* Units. In such an intensive process, progress can be made very quickly. This is necessary as many camps may be unstable, with people (including participants and facilitators) constantly coming and going.

The lack of ‘community’ in a refugee camp (particularly in a new camp) may present certain challenges – though often people collect within camps into language groups, or into geographical areas of origin and often camps end up with people from the same village living in the same area. The role of the *Reflect* process in such a context may therefore be to contribute to building (or re-building) a sense of community, offering people a chance to reflect clearly upon their experience and analyse future options.

In many cases the camp will include people in various states of trauma and distress (and it is often possible to talk of collective trauma). The *Reflect* process might be seen as a form of self-therapy to help individuals and groups face what has happened and build for the future. Very little effective work has been done on addressing the trauma experienced by refugees. Given that individual counselling or therapy is both logistically unrealistic (given the numbers involved) and perhaps culturally inappropriate (liable to bring in western baggage), a self-managed approach may be the most effective. This requires a structured environment in which people can reflect and openly discuss sensitive issues. *Reflect* circles might offer a good structure for such a process, with Units specifically adapted to help people face the past and address the future.

To reduce the danger of a *Reflect* circle becoming a place of open argument and conflict (where wounds are opened rather than healed), and to avoid the risk of the circles being taken over by political forces within the camps,

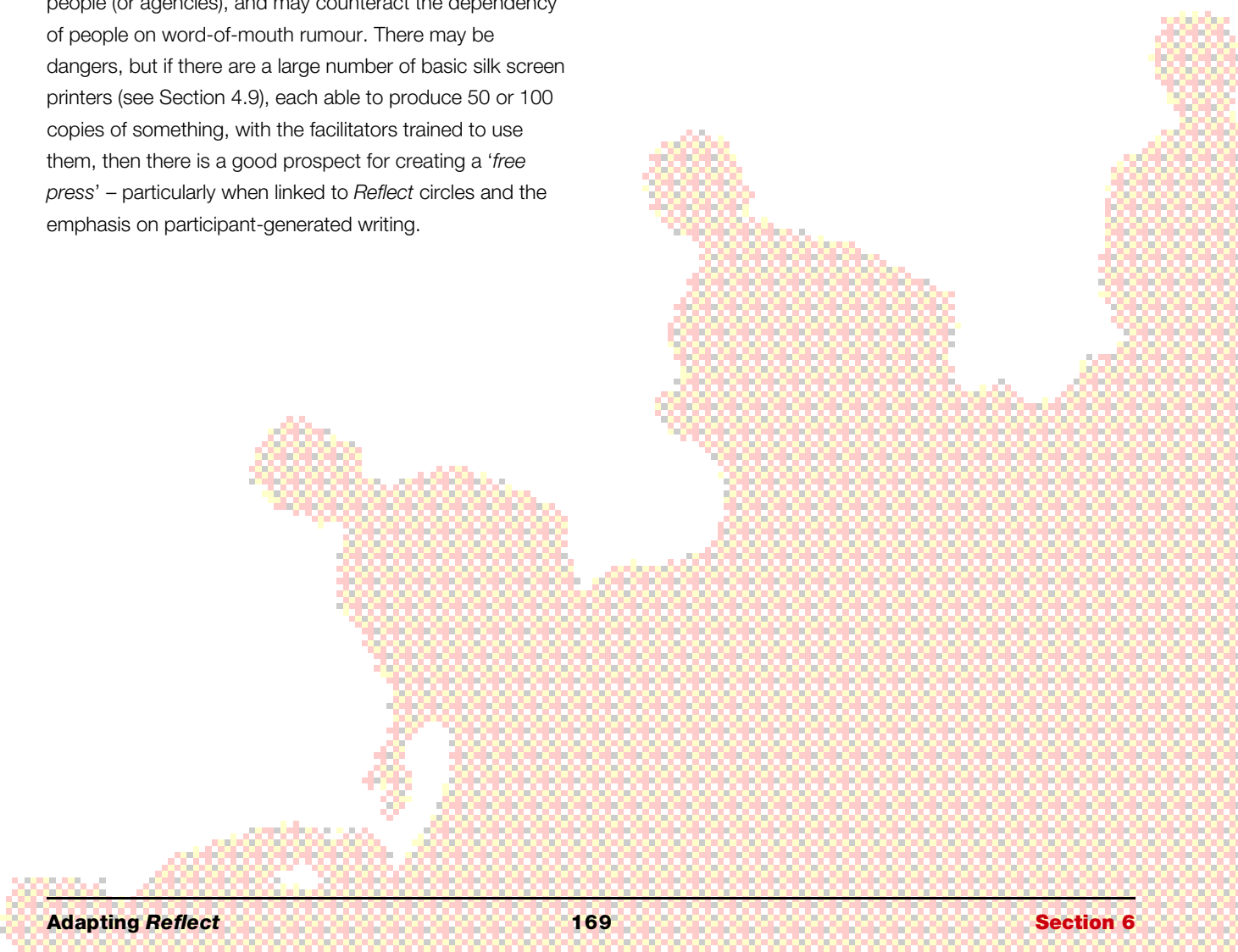
- it may be advisable to avoid the headline-sensitive issues at first – until a good level of mutual trust has been built up.
- Many of the Units from previous sections may be relevant to refugees, or easy to adapt, though there are particular Units which it may be worth highlighting:
- **Displacement Maps** (see page 156): following both participants and other members of their families (done in a mobility map format).
 - **Maps of present location:** orientating people and highlighting important locations.
 - **Maps of past locations:** either as a dispersed map (showing the different parts of the country refugees have come from) or as a district/village map (if all the people in the circle come from the same area).
 - **Self-Sufficiency Matrix:** looking at all the things consumed in the camp (food, clothes, shoes, utensils etc) and the feasibility of producing them within the camp – what skills/training/materials would be needed.
 - **Matrix or flow diagram on burial ceremonies:** exploring the different elements and stages involved in traditional ceremonies and discussing the difficulties people have encountered in fulfilling their duties with relatives recently lost. This could be extremely emotional, but also productive if some agreements can be reached on how to adapt traditional ceremonies to present conditions.
 - **Tables/Matrices of Disability.**
 - **Maps of mobility:** services and employment available from the refugee camp.
 - **Maps of safety/danger for women and girls:** especially around the camp (as this can be a big problem).
 - **Calendar of events:** leading up to seeking refugee status etc.
 - **Calendar of projected futures:** looking at different possible sequences of events and desired/undesired/likely/unlikely future scenarios.
 - **Daily routines:** looking at existing daily use of time in the camp and then how they could use that time, say in education, training etc.
 - **Matrix of Organisations:** camp life can be characterised by a great variety of different aid agencies (sometimes treading on each others’ toes). An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each from the refugees themselves could be revealing.

If a *Reflect* programme is established in a refugee camp then, over time, the circles could provide important opportunities to discuss sensitive issues and for planning

the future. The facilitators might play a key communication role between agencies and the other refugees, and it might be advisable for a regular meeting to be held between the facilitators and the main agencies – which would be of value to both (facilitators could use the meetings to channel requests, demands, views, problems etc, and the agencies could use them to consult, learn and channel information back and forth).

In some circumstances it might be worth making a particular effort to recruit youths as facilitators – as the youth population of camps can be the first to become disaffected/frustrated: giving them a positive role will be a way of building hope and skills for the future. Of course, often young men are absent from camps, hiding in the bush or fighting back home.

In the context of a refugee camp, the creation of a literate environment may be particularly useful. Low-cost printing facilities for each literacy circle (such as silk screen) would enable a literate environment to be created from ‘below’. This may be a means to prevent the domination of the media of communications by a handful of powerful people (or agencies), and may counteract the dependency of people on word-of-mouth rumour. There may be dangers, but if there are a large number of basic silk screen printers (see Section 4.9), each able to produce 50 or 100 copies of something, with the facilitators trained to use them, then there is a good prospect for creating a ‘free press’ – particularly when linked to *Reflect* circles and the emphasis on participant-generated writing.



6.2 Adapting *Reflect* for work with children

“Children are a unique reminder of the past, and signals of the future. In all societies, children represent the possibility of recognising all that is best and achieving all that is yearned for... However all too often children are treated as human beings on probation. Innovative participation on their part is discouraged in favour of socialisation into facsimiles of the adults around them.” (Judith Ennew, University of London, quoted in ‘Listening to Smaller Voices’, ActionAid, 1995)

It is this ‘*innovative participation*’ which the *Reflect* approach, if adapted to children, could help to nurture. It can provide a practical strategy for making the 1990s buzz word, ‘*children’s participation*’, into a reality, by recognising (and involving!) children as active participants in development. The self- confidence gained through this process can equip children for their future; whether it is self-employment, entry to formal education, or democratic participation in society at large.

Reflect may be most likely to be used in Non-Formal Education Centres (usually those run by NGOs) where flexibility and participation are not compromised by an over-loaded syllabus. However, in addition it could be used in formal primary schools, with the aim of making them more child-centred and relevant to the life of the community. In more and more countries, governments are recognising the limits of the traditional formal system; the lack of practical relevance of the inherited western curriculum; the ineffectiveness of rote teaching methods; and the gulf that exists between schools and the communities that they should serve. Several countries are now experimenting with the ‘*non-formalisation*’ of the formal system (often with the support of agencies like UNICEF). This is a huge challenge and *Reflect* may offer a sufficiently structured approach to enable this to be done on a large scale.

The main objective in using *Reflect* in children’s education is to provide a tool for children to share their knowledge, systematise it, and use it to analyse their environment. It is an approach which specifically recognises children as making an economic contribution to their family and community through domestic and productive work, and having useful skills and knowledge based on this experience.

This would, with children, have to be balanced with information and ideas from the teacher to enable the children to develop in key areas (acquiring a wider view of the world as well as new skills), and to empower themselves both individually and as part of the community. The role of

the teacher is therefore different from the role of a facilitator of adults, but authoritarian aspects must be minimised for the *Reflect* approach to be practised effectively.

Skills Development/‘Competencies’

The use of *Reflect* in children’s education is an opportunity to practise child-centred learning in disadvantaged rural environments. The emphasis is very much more on skills development rather than information transfer. This implies that testing by the teacher is less important than children’s awareness of their own progress. The following skills can be drawn out of a *Reflect* process with children (though the precise details will depend on the Units used and might need to be adapted to the national primary curriculum in the country concerned):

- **Drawing skills:** such as producing visual representations of problems and situations, and being able to interpret them for somebody else.
- **Oral skills:** such as the ability to debate and express ideas clearly, the confidence to challenge others (especially across power groups such as age, gender etc) and the ability to present information clearly to a group or to another pupil.
- **Aural skills:** such as the ability to listen and absorb information and ideas, and to understand their meaning.
- **Writing skills:** such as independent writing for: description; communicating information; instructions; expressing ideas and opinions; narrative; creative fiction/poetry; summarising information; awareness of different styles for different readers.
- **Reading Skills:** such as reading signs, labels, names; reading longer passages for key information; reading longer passages intensively – for narrative, religious purpose etc; reading passages on unfamiliar topics and guessing meanings; reading instructions.
- **Mathematical skills:** such as mental arithmetic skills; writing numbers; number awareness (including familiarity with large numbers); ability to use tally systems common in the community, ability to read graphs (line, pie, bar etc.) and matrices; ability to produce graphs and matrices; ability to use the four calculations with large numbers, and write down mid-way results; working out fractions and percentages; ability to decide which calculations to make in order to solve practical problems; understand and use basic geometry skills – drawing shapes and recognising angles; ability to use standard weights and distance measurement; personal accounting (with clear records); writing project proposals; writing simple budgets; extracting numerical information from a longer written passage.

- **Entrepreneurial skills:** such as problem solving; identifying outlets; adapting innovative technologies (IT); travelling (customs posts, finding safe accommodation etc); costing and budgeting; decision-making.
- **Agricultural skills:** such as market research, analysis of weather patterns, land rights, crop diversification, reading fertiliser instructions, etc.
- **History skills:** such as placing local events in national and international context; interviewing older inhabitants and writing oral history; interviewing grandparents and parents about changes in the roles/work of women and men in their lifetimes; and making a written record (comparing past and present).
- **Geography skills:** such as map reading and making; sense of national and international geography; finding information about history of natural resource use in the area, and recording it in written form (and comparing it to the present); recording information about the weather (rain gauges etc) to help with agricultural decision-making; collecting existing local ways of making climatic predictions; finding information about history of land tenure and use and making a written record; looking at patterns of migration locally and nationally and discussing reasons.
- **Science Skills:** such as analysis of natural environment (food-chains, classification of vertebrates and invertebrates); acid/alkali identification; problem-solving on basic principles of telephone, TV, car (where appropriate) etc; problem-solving on numerous aspects of human biology including bacteria, infections, reproductive systems; observation skills; recording skills.

Starting up with Children

If you are interested in using *Reflect* with children, some of the preparatory steps will need to be different than they would be with adults:

- Socio-economic research would need to focus on talking to children without adults around (but with their knowledge), accompanying children as they do their work, and community consultations on the local concept of childhood, the purpose of education etc.
- Analysis of the national primary curriculum would be necessary, supplemented with participant observation in local classrooms.
- A socio-mathematical survey would need to focus on the skills that children/youth need and their existing mental arithmetic skills.
- Selection of facilitators should be undertaken with some consultation with children and their training would have to emphasise respect for children, understanding of their

workload and roles, and how to communicate well with them.

- The calendar and timing of clases would have to account for children’s work patterns (particularly the different work of boys and girls).

Possible Units

Many of the Units which are used with adults and which are included in this manual can easily be adapted for work with children. The following are just a selection of Units which could be used:

- Flow diagram of impact of major events on children’s lives.
- Chapati diagram of power relations within the family.
- Map of Animal Husbandry (where children herd).
- Crop Matrices.
- Seasonal Work Calendars (general and girls/boys).
- Daily routines of girls and boys.
- Preference Ranking of Tasks of girls/boys (likes/dislikes).
- Informal sector work – ranking of sources of profit for different members of the family; matrix on different types of work, such as petty trading, marketing.
- Future dreams and aspirations.
- Matrix of different uses of trees and plants.
- Well-being ranking.
- Natural Resources Map (food chain; changes in use over generations).
- Personal mobility maps.
- Timelines of family, community and national history (perhaps integrating local and national events).
- Household by household map.
- Calendar of Games (played by whom, when, where?).
- Education Mapping (primary and secondary mapping including different types of schools – parents’/ government; who goes; reasons for attending; causes of drop out and of irregular attendance; purpose of education etc.
- Self-evaluation of education progress.
- Curative Health Matrix/Hygiene and Health Maps.

The use of these different techniques would ideally be linked in to project or topic-based work on the different themes. So, a map and a matrix on health issues would form the backbone of a wider range of work on health issues for a week or two.

Teaching Strategies and the Wider Environment

To create the right environment for *Reflect* to work with children, will involve the extensive use of participatory

- approaches in the classroom, reflected by a change in the wider school environment.
- Group Work (dividing tasks on a project, making use of children with different abilities and experience, teaching co-operation, giving girls their own space/giving girls experience of working with boys in a controlled environment where they are not dominated).
 - Pair Work (for sharing ideas, marking one another's work).
 - Stronger pupil working with weaker pupil ('buddy' system).
 - Use pupil/child generated materials for reading practice, problem solving etc. Encourage sharing of children's notebooks around the classroom, and displays of good work on notice board.
 - Literate environment – notice-board for messages, letters, announcements etc. in classroom; class or school twinning for comparison of PRA materials produced, pen-pals etc.
 - Positive encouragement for good work or behaviour (instead of only bad behaviour getting attention – in the form of punishment!).
 - No unrealistic homework tasks – in the context of children's work commitments. Concentrate on preparation for the following Unit, which will involve talking to different members of their family (and people of different ages). Encourage children to show their notebooks to their family.
 - Diary writing.
 - Study Record – of class discussions, project work etc.
 - Teacher to speak to the class no more than 40% of the total time. Emphasise development of children's ability to talk.
 - Teacher to self-monitor (and to arrange for observations) on gender awareness such as: How much time do girls speak to the whole group compared to boys? How much help does the teacher give to girls compared to boys? Are the same goals expected of both girls and boys (or less for girls)? Does the teacher value the interests and experience of girls as much as of boys? How does the teacher organise the class so that girls are free from sexual harassment (such as separate toilet location, not kept late so that the walk home is dangerous).

- In order to create a stimulating and creative environment in which children feel able to communicate, a wider range of techniques should also be used including:
 - drama;
 - role play;
 - musical improvisation;
 - singing,;
 - poetry;
 - story-telling (by the children);
 - games.

See Section 6.3 for ideas on how these other participatory approaches may be used.

- *Reflect* with children will also be strengthened if there is a form of democratic opening within the school for children's participation. This may involve weekly discussions about the organisation of school life, where children can raise anything from problems with attendance, punishments, teachers' or children's behaviour, suggestions for change, evaluation of recent activities (and how to record them) etc.
- Any work on other subject areas should also be conducted in a way consistent with the *Reflect* approach. This would mean focusing on discussion, pair work for marking and sharing ideas, small group work, child-led research/enquiry, problem-solving and positive reinforcement of achievements (rather than failures) etc – whether the subject is mathematics, science or language.

The teacher should be encouraged to produce supplementary materials adapted to the local environment and should try to draw on parents and other people from the community to act as an additional resource.

6.3 Integrating other participatory approaches

Reflect is not the only participatory approach to adult literacy! There are other highly innovative approaches which have been used, for example, drawing on traditional songs or story-telling as the basis for introducing adult literacy based on people's experiences and interests. These excellent approaches often depend on highly skilled facilitators who can creatively adapt to the demands of their class, produce materials for themselves and draw on the 'language experience' of the participants. In many respects, such approaches depend upon being unstructured – and this has prevented them from being replicated on a larger scale.

Reflect is, in many respects, a highly structured participatory approach. This means it can work on a larger scale without requiring facilitators who have post-graduate degrees or inherent leadership qualities. Similarly, a *Reflect* process can offer a structure within which many of these other participatory approaches can fit. It is not therefore a matter of either/or, as there is much compatibility between *Reflect* and other innovations. Once a participatory process has been established within a literacy circle, using some of the graphics, other approaches (which can be difficult to initiate otherwise) can be introduced quite easily.

This section aims to introduce (in very outline form) some of these other participatory approaches and illustrates how they can be interwoven with *Reflect*. Most organisations interested in *Reflect* will have had some experiences with such methods and we urge you to retain those which have really worked and build them into a *Reflect* curriculum.

Sometimes these other approaches can be made into separate *Reflect* Units (by themselves) and at other times they will be linked thematically to an existing Unit to reinforce a discussion, introduce a new perspective, bring analysis to a different level or simply to bring some more fun into the circle. The more diversity there is the better. Diversity is strength. A nightmare with *Reflect* would come if literacy circles started saying "*Oh no, not another map*". They have not to date, but we must always ensure that we avoid drudgery, repetition or predictability – which will reduce motivation, and in the longer run, undermine the whole process.

Using real materials

Ask participants in the *Reflect* circles to bring in written materials, which they find in their household or community, and which they are interested in reading. This can yield some interesting and exciting results.

The types of materials that are brought in might range from vaccination cards to cinema posters, from shop signs to timetables, from land titles to job adverts, from bank forms to fertiliser instructions, from children's school-books to old family manuscripts, from food wrappings to election leaflets.

Participants might be asked to bring in such materials (of their choice) on a regular basis, perhaps one day each fortnight or each month. Each participant can be asked to introduce what they have brought in and what they think it might say. Each item might be the subject of a brief discussion, for example addressing: Where was it found? What is its function? What language is it in? Who might have written it? Who might have printed it, where and when? The discussion might then extend to wider issues relating to the document in question (such as the type of film shown at the cinema, who attends, etc. or the level of access to credit).

The literacy circle may decide to do some work as a group on one of the items brought in. The facilitator can then write up, on the blackboard in large letters, a key section from the document. This can be used for individual and group reading. At a more advanced stage, participants might be asked to read the documents directly. Writing work might be elaborated on the same material – asking participants to try to write something in the same style/of the same genre/serving the same function.

The other materials brought in could be read by the individuals who brought them, with the facilitator rotating to help people with difficulty, or pairing strong readers together with people who are struggling, so that they can work together.

In some cases it may not be possible to bring materials into the circle (if they are on fixed signs/ notices etc.), in which case either the circle can go to see the materials in their 'natural location' or the interested participant can try to make a copy of the material and bring it into the circle. A walk about around the community to identify places where the written word is used can help to focus the attention of participants on the diversity of uses of literacy, and can help to develop group dynamics and the profile of the literacy circle in the wider community (though this must be done with caution, respecting the fact that, in the early stages, people may feel nervous at being publicly identified as part of the circle).

Real materials can be used as outlined above in special

sessions of the literacy circle, but also as supplementary to the Units covered. For example, if addressing health issues (with the help of a health calendar, matrix etc) then participants can be asked to bring in real materials relating to the theme of health (vaccination cards, health cards, medicines, posters, leaflets etc). This has been suggested in some of the sample Units

Drama/role-play/story-telling/ proverbs

There are many different ways in which drama and role play can be used within the literacy process or as a supplement to it. The use of role play, building up (where desired) to socio-dramas, can add a new dimension to the literacy circle, helping participants to focus on issues from a new perspective and to develop new skills.

In some cases there may be participants in the circle who already have experience of performance or being involved in dramatic functions of one kind or another. In other cases there may be no experience (other than perhaps of being in an audience).

It may take time for participants to build up their confidence in dramatising themes or events. It is probably best to start by asking a few of the more confident participants to do short re-enactments of particular incidents, or role plays illustrating some issues that have come up within their discussions. For example, if the Unit being addressed deals with agriculture, the participants might be asked to enact the moment of someone selling their crop to an intermediary. Two or three simple characters might be developed and then the participants would act out their interpretation, largely using spontaneous or made-up dialogue, to illustrate what typically happens. They might then be asked to do a similar role play which shows what happens if the producers start working together and sell collectively (or whatever other scenario they develop).

Small role plays can gradually evolve into longer dramas – particularly if, in different Units, the same ‘characters’ invented by the participants, re-appear. More and more participants can be involved as the role plays become more complex. Once the ice has been broken, most people will be willing to join in. If a literacy circle does take to this enthusiastically, then the facilitator can help them write down a basic plot, with key events sequenced. This could be done by the whole group as a type of time-line. Prompt cards can then be produced for the main actors in the drama – not giving them lines but reminding them of key phrases or things to do.

Many circles will not wish to reach the stage of

performing to other people, but some may wish to do so. If so, then the first audience may be another literacy circle (where they may feel less nervous), before they perform to their own community. The performance may be used as a means to motivate other people to join literacy circles. If a performance is really successful then there may be a desire to go ‘on tour’ (to other circles) or to write out a script for the drama in full and to share this with other literacy circles or anyone who is interested. Performances should always be linked to discussions of the issues raised.

A drama that evolves out of role play, such as the one above, is quite different from other types of drama. Work can be based on dramatising a traditional story or a concrete historical event. This may be drawn from local oral history and story-telling, and be a means of exploring the morals and messages of such stories in more depth, perhaps trying to bring them up to date by setting the traditional stories in a modern setting. This work can be linked to writing down oral histories for the first time.

In working with oral histories it is important to discuss not just the content of the stories but also the functions that they play in local life. Prior to dramatising the stories, they may simply be narrated (ideally by a traditional story-teller) and the narration can be used as the basis for an extensive discussion, for example covering: How are such stories handed down? When are they told? Who are the story-tellers? What are the origins of the story? Is it fact or fiction? What different versions of the story exist? More generally, are different types of story told by different people?

In most traditional stories there will be morals or learning points which can be analysed in some depth, with people being asked to equate the traditional story with recent events or those happening here and now in their community.

The use of stories, oral history, drama and role play can be filtered throughout the *Reflect* process. The facilitator can constantly ask for examples of stories to illustrate the themes which are being discussed – drawing on traditional stories or recent events which can be used for role plays. The narration of events that have occurred to the participants themselves is a particularly rich source of material. It is possible in most communities to identify such stories which relate to a huge range of themes, whether touching on indebtedness/credit; human relations with nature/the environment; the introduction of new ideas/ technologies/ crops; organisation/the importance of unity; sickness and death etc.

Introducing short role plays and mini-dramas (which can build and follow on from each other), can help to keep the dynamic of the group shifting. It can, of course, go too far and lead to frustration of some participants if a few

participants take too long on such work or dominate it completely. Longer dramas may become a project in themselves, separate from the normal functioning of the literacy circle. However, links should still be retained as, in most cases, such work will lend itself to the introduction of some reading and writing work – whether collectively ‘writing’ short stories or dramas, jointly plotting, writing character profiles or having simple prompt cards to help actors remember where they are. For dramas, the group may wish to plot out the positions of actors on the ‘stage’ by drawing illustrations of key moments, together with key lines.

In mentioning the possible use of all the above we should not forget ‘*proverbs*’ or local sayings. They can be ideal materials for work in a literacy circle. Participants can be asked to think of sayings/proverbs which illustrate any of the issues raised and these proverbs can then be written up (used for reading/writing practice) and analysed for their origin and meanings. In some cases it will be possible to dramatise a proverb (even perhaps asking participants in small groups to dramatise different versions). Small groups could also be asked to dramatise different proverbs, with other participants having to guess which proverb is being represented.

Dance, song and poetry

Dance and song are, in many respects, simply different means of telling a story or dramatising an event, so much of what has been said about the use of drama is relevant to work with songs and dance.

It can be very powerful to explore the origins, the means of handing-down, the contents and morals of traditional dances and songs. Songs have the particular advantage of usually having fixed words – and this means that they can be written out within the literacy circle, and key lines or phrases can be used for closer study. Poetry can be used in a similar way.

The range of types of song is often considerable. There may be a wide range of different genres represented in a single community, from religious to traditional, from folk songs to new popular songs, from bawdy bar songs to nursery songs, from political songs to ceremonial songs. The type of songs used in a literacy circle will clearly depend primarily on the make up of the participants – their own preferences and interests.

Certain questions for discussion may be relevant to any song – Who developed or wrote it? How was it passed on? What instruments are used for the song and who makes them? When are the songs sang, by whom and to whom? This can lead to an analysis of the cultural forms, which may



Women’s group and members of *Reflect* circle in Liberia

be of great interest to some groups. A matrix could be constructed to consolidate this information (or to structure the discussion).

One of the other interesting areas that song brings up is written music. Some participants will already be aware of the different ‘script’ or ‘notation’ used for writing music – and some people may even be able to read music but not words (though this is rare). Outlining the basic principles of written music to a group, where there is a lot of interest in songs, may be a good means of keeping up people’s motivation and involvement.

The writing, by participants, of songs and poetry can be particularly appropriate in *Reflect* circles, which place a central focus on such creativity. The nature of rhyme and rhythm can also be useful things to introduce, enabling participants to pick up on (and remember) the patterns and shapes of written language. ‘Playing’ with language through poetry and song can also be immensely enjoyable.

Working with dance introduces other possible areas of work. In dances with a complex choreography, the steps, directions and pace of movements may be suitable material for some numeracy work.

The ideal is always (as with stories and dramas) to relate the introduction of a song or dance to the theme which is being touched upon at the time in the wider literacy programme.

Using posters/’codifications’

Whilst the use of ‘codifications’ (see page 9) in literacy primers has not usually been a successful means of generating discussion in literacy circles, the occasional use of such an approach may be a useful supplement to *Reflect*. The group dynamics developed within the literacy circle by using other participatory approaches (constructing maps, matrices, calendars etc) might make participants more likely to engage in a dialogue based on a codification.

Codifications are pictures or photographs which capture the essential problems or contradictions in the lives of the participants. They may be single pictures (or photographs) or a series of pictures depicting a simple story/incident. The participants are asked to identify both what they immediately see in the picture and to reflect upon what lies behind or beneath the picture, analysing and interpreting it in considerable detail. This is the process called “*decodification*” by Freire.

The codification aims to enable people to see their reality more clearly by taking one step away from lived reality and looking at an image of it. In the process of decodification, the participants should be able to identify themselves or their lives in relation to the picture.

The choice of images for a codification is of fundamental importance. They should be produced following research of the local area (which in a *Reflect* programme will already have been done). Once fundamental problems or contradictions have been identified, these problems are ‘encoded’ in photographs or pictures. The facilitator should be given a list of questions as a guideline to enable her/him to dig beneath the surface and push the discussion deeper.

In many cases, literacy programmes have produced large posters of codifications – so that everyone can see the image clearly at the same time and it can be the focus of collective attention.

The type of image used could be very varied – from straight photograph to line drawing or comic strip. Observations from the field of visual literacy emphasise that pictures are more easily understood if the main objects stand out clearly from any unnecessarily cluttered background – and if there is strong shading rather than simple line drawings. However, in a *Reflect* programme, which aims to strengthen visual literacy skills alongside alphabetic and other skills, this is not so much a limitation.

The occasional use of codifications as the starting point for discussion in a *Reflect* circle can help to ensure a stimulating variety of approaches. Clearly, the codifications chosen should be consistent with the theme of the Units being covered at any one time. Sometimes the posters may be specially produced codifications. At other times it may be

possible to draw on posters already produced by other agencies, which have stimulating images.

Another factor to consider in respect of posters is that in *Reflect* circles, participants develop their own drawing skills and will be able to produce their own posters or codifications. This can be a stimulating process itself and the posters produced can be shared with other people in the community, used in practical contexts, or shared for discussion with other *Reflect* circles.

The use of radio, television and video

In communities where there are not many written materials, other media of communications may play an important role and can be regarded as an alternative form of literacy.

It has already been noted (see page 164) that in urban areas, television can play this role. The challenge is to make people ‘active readers’ of television or ‘writers’ through the production of videos.

In rural areas (as well as urban), radio can play a similar role. Although batteries may be costly, radio is often the most widely used medium of communication. The challenge is to make it more than a one-way form of communication. Imagine if we only taught people to read things and never taught them to write for themselves. Although they might be able to develop skills to read selectively, even analytically, there would always be some respect in which they were passive – unable to produce things for themselves. In the context of radio the solution clearly lies in open access local community radio (or, in some contexts, clandestine, ‘pirate radio’) where people have a real say in what programmes are made and can directly contribute to productions. In remote areas this can include employing mobile reporters with tape-recorders, making programmes on fixed days in different villages.

In most cases no single media will completely dominate. Even if radio or TV have a powerful presence and there are few printed materials in evidence, it is likely that people’s encounters with printed materials will be at important moments which may affect their life or livelihoods (such as when dealing with government bureaucracy/outside agencies/any large scale sale of produce). The rise of other media should not therefore be used as an excuse for ignoring literacy in the printed word. Rather, it should be used as an argument for incorporating other literacies around a core ‘*alphabetic*’ literacy programme.

This can be done in many ways, with the links being made:

- between reading texts, listening to radio and watching television;

- between writing texts, producing radio programmes and making videos (ideally for broadcast).

The parallels drawn here can be useful in enabling people to understand the importance of ‘critical’ or ‘analytical’ reading of all media. Many people traditionally attribute ‘authority’ to something in print and this is often carried over to something on radio or television. Challenging this automatic authority, by demystifying the process of production, is important. If people produce something themselves in each medium they are likely to be able to see (or understand) how, for example, editing can completely change meanings. The focus can then be on who controls the means of production of different ‘texts’ (written or audio-visual) – and the implications of this for what is produced. This can lead on to exploring ways of challenging monopolies, creating alternatives and taking control of the local media.

Language games

Games can be seen as a break from ‘work’ and as relaxation, but can also be a very good way of reinforcing technical literacy skills. The aim is to make participants feel comfortable with manipulating written language. They should be done at times when participants have been doing the same activity for a long time, or have been working in pairs or groups and would appreciate working as a complete circle. A fast pace is recommended – both for fun, and to help participants increase their speed.

It is up to the facilitator to introduce the activities in an informal way that does not remind the adult participants of primary school! Competition is one of the enjoyable aspects of playing games, but the facilitator must judge if participants wish to reveal their scores or just know them for their own satisfaction. It is also up to the facilitator to ask the participants which game they want to play (when they have been exposed to a selection!), and how often to repeat the same thing.

Materials: The facilitator will need to make a variety of cards (or pieces of paper) with letters, syllables, pictures etc. and should be very careful to keep these safely so that they can be used again. Facilitators can design games and make materials together at regular training/exchange workshops. It might be easier to ask one of the participants to take care of materials for games. The participants can do any necessary writing for games in the back of their exercise books – so that they can write quickly, but not make the rest of their book untidy!

Every language has its own favourites, but the following

are some ideas for games with languages that use a Roman script (such as Swahili, French). They could be adapted for languages with other scripts, such as Arabic or many Asian languages. Only games which are appropriate for the socio-economic and linguistic context of the circle should be used.

1. The mother word

Suitable for: *all stages of the Reflect course*
Skill: *writing*

Pick a long word which is largely made up of syllables already covered, and write it on the blackboard. Give the participants a time limit of 5–10 minutes, and ask them to write down as many words as possible, using the letters of the mother word. At the end of the time period, participants can read out the words they have, or swap exercise books to get more ideas for words. Learners can either state the total number of words they wrote to the whole circle or write the total in their exercise book.

2. Syllable soup

Suitable for: *Early Stages only*
Skill: *reading*

Divide the circle into two teams, and lay the syllable cards covered so far in the course (for instance from the key words on the graphics) on the ground. Make two or three cards for common syllables. The two teams can take it in turns to make words; one person making a word and the rest of the team helping. After holding up the cards, they are returned to the soup. Each card used correctly to make up a word earns two points (so that long words get more points), and an incorrect card loses two points. One participant from each team keeps the score on the blackboard. The game ends when participants cannot make any more words.

3. Sentence soup

Suitable for: *participants after the first two or three months of the course*
Skills: *reading, writing, addition*

This is played in the same way as Syllable Soup, except that whole words, drawn from units covered, are written on the cards (including small linking words), and whole sentences are made by each team. Each word earns 10 points, and incorrect or incomplete sentences lose fifty points.

4. Bringing the house down
(also known as Hangman!)

Suitable for: *all stages*
Skills: *writing*

The first time the game is played, the facilitator starts by choosing a word the participants have learned and discussed recently, and writing the appropriate number of _ _ _ _ _ on the blackboard. S/he also draws a simple house (using about eight lines) next to the spaces for letters of the word. The participants call out letters in turn. If they are in the word, they are written on the correct space, such as: _ _ a _ _ _ and if not, then the letter is written on the blackboard and one line of the house is rubbed off. This continues until the word is written completely or the house is completely rubbed out! The circle is allowed only three guesses at the word itself, and a fourth incorrect guess means that the whole house is rubbed out immediately.

The participant who chooses the last correct letter or guesses the word, takes over the role of the facilitator. S/he may need to check the next word chosen, with the facilitator (for relevance to participants, spelling etc.), before writing it on the board. If the house is brought down, the participant has another turn. There is no fixed end to this game.

d	o	c	t	o	r	c	p
a	g	r	q	b	o	p	a
y	s	o	w	n	o	e	y
t	l	h	w	x	m	k	d
t	h	e	a	t	r	e	e
z	d	i	r	f	a	m	s
u	g	v	d	r	u	g	k
n	o	r	t	a	m	j	l

5. Word Search

Suitable for: *later stages*
Skill: *reading*

Draw a big square and divide it into little squares e.g. 8 x 8. Write words which the participants can read into the square; trying where possible to choose words from one category, such as names of crops (after doing a Crop Matrix); common illnesses; place names from local sign posts. Fill in all the remaining blank squares with random letters. This must be prepared beforehand and written on the blackboard very clearly. See example below.

Ask the participants to look at the letter square on the blackboard and search for words. Tell them which category they are from. They can write these words in the back of their exercise books. Weaker participants (or those with bad sight) can work in pairs, but to copy the square into their exercise books is time-consuming and dull. When most participants have found the words, ask them to read out a list – which the facilitator (or a participant) writes on the blackboard for everyone to read.

6. Memory (also known as pairs)

Suitable for: *all stages of the course*
Skill: *quicker reading*

For this game you need to make a set of cards in pairs with words, phrases or sentences that the participants have already covered. Lay the cards face downwards in the centre of the circle. Ask participants in turn to pick up two cards and show them to the whole circle, before replacing them. The aim is to remember the position of different cards and to pick up a matching pair. The participant who picks up a pair keeps it by her/his side and the winner is the participant with the most pairs at the end of the activity.

Variations can be made according to the needs of the participants in recognising word shapes, matching picture card and word, speed reading of two halves of a sentence or phrase and so on.

7. Anagrams

Suitable for: *all stages*
Skill: *writing*

Choose a new word that has been covered in discussion, written on the graphic etc. and is a word the participants might use. Mix up the letters (making another word if possible!) and write it on the blackboard. For example, the following are all types of food or drink: osetmoat; noison; gabbeacas; ereb.

Ask the participants to write the word correctly in their books. Give a time limit, and make sure one of the participants writes the correct word on the board.

(Answers: tomatoes; onions; cabbages; beer)

8. True or False

Suitable: *after two or three months*
Skill: *reading*

Write several statements on large pieces of paper; making them either true or false. For instance: snakes eat mice... goats have five legs... water is dry... children like playing.

Show them to the whole circle very quickly, necessitating speedy reading. Ask the participants to decide if the sentence they have just read is true or false.

9. Communication circles

Suitable: *later stages*
Skill: *writing*

Ask all the participants to write their name on a small piece of paper. Put all the names together and ask participants to pick out the name of one of their fellow participants at random. If they pick out their own name they have to swap their paper with someone else's.

Every participant writes short letters or messages to the participant whose name they picked out, for two or three weeks. The facilitator acts as a message-bearer, distributing this secret mail amongst the circle. No-one should know who is writing to them.

At the end of the period, the participants say whom they have been writing to, and compare letters!

10. Changing things

Suitable: *after first month*
Skill: *writing*

Write a simple sentence on the blackboard that the participants are able to read. Rub out one or two words and replace them with another word. The aim is to keep a complete sentence on the blackboard, although the meaning can be changed. Learners come up to the blackboard in turns and make the changes. This could also be done in teams, with the last team to make a meaningful change being the winners. For example:

The pen was cheap...

The pen was black...

The cat was black...

The cat is black...

The earth is black...

The earth is fertile.

Number games

1. Bingo

based on an old English gambling game!
Suitable for: participants who can write numbers up to 30 and above
Skill: fast number recognition

Ask each participant to draw a rectangle on a piece of paper and divide it into nine boxes. Then, they should write in nine numbers between 1–30) or 1–50, 1–100 as appropriate) at random. See box below.

1	100	59
3	81	23
15	75	96

Read out numbers at random (repeating if necessary) and tick them off on a piece of paper in your hand. The participants tick them off in their own boxes. The first participant to tick off all nine numbers is the winner.

2. Memory for Numbers

Suitable for: all stages

This game is played in the same way as memory for language. The pairs of cards can be: written numbers 1 – 1,000,000; number and locally used equivalent (such as tally mark); simple sum and the answer (such as ‘9 – 3 =’ and ‘6’).

3. Sequencing

Suitable for: all stages

Divide the circle into two teams. Give a card to each participant with a number (45), time (9.30pm), date (5/11/94), month (January), year (1961) etc. written on it. Each team has to put its members in order as quickly as possible. The winner is the first team in correct order. This is a quick game, suitable for a warm up! As participants progress in numeracy, they can start by writing their own cards and then mixing them up. Similar games can involve giving participants single numbers and asking them to form themselves into a particular date (perhaps, of a famous event) as quickly as possible.

Other participatory training materials

There are many excellent training packages on particular topics which would be appropriate for a *Reflect* circle to incorporate, and do literacy and numeracy work around. For example, *Stepping Stones* (see bibliography) is a training manual on HIV/AIDS, communication and relationship skills. Parts of this could be used directly in the *Reflect* circle, and later the circle may wish to work through the whole of *Stepping Stones*. An example is given below. It is extracted

from the session on ‘*Our Prejudices*’, and the aim is to help participants to experience, in some way, the misery people with HIV feel when faced with the prejudice of others.

“Who’s Labelling Whom?”

Preparations:

One card for each participant; sticky tape; 4–6 large pieces of paper; 4–6 marker pens.

Activity:

1. Ask half the circle to draw a face of someone with a good quality on their card. You could give suggestions such as a generous person, someone who is kind and caring, someone who is a good listener, someone who is always kind and cheerful and so on. Ask the other half of the circle to draw the face of someone with a bad quality (for instance, the face of a liar, a thief, a selfish person, a murderer, an adulterer, a wife beater etc).
2. When everyone has drawn their card, ask each person to hold up their card in turn and show it to the rest of the group, explaining the quality of the face they have drawn. (you may also write a key word on each card)
3. Then ask everyone to pass their cards to you, and shuffle them so that they are all mixed up. Leave them in a pile, face down.
4. Ask everyone to stand up and move around the circle, warmly greeting 10 or so other people as they normally would.
5. Then ask each participant to come to you in turn. Take a card from the pile and use the sticky tape to stick it to their back – without letting them see what it is. Tell everyone not to tell one another what the picture on their back shows.

Continue to stick cards on the backs of all participants, and on your own.

6. When everyone has a card attached to their back, ask them to move around again greeting each other. This time, however, the style of their greeting should depend on the kind of label they see on the back of the participant they are greeting. So, if they are greeting someone with a ‘*liar*’ label, they should show their dislike of liars in their face and movements as they greet. If they greet people they would like to make friends with, they can stay closer to them. If they can’t remember what the label means, they should treat that person with caution.
7. Ask everyone to sit down again – leaving their labels on! Ask the group, the following questions:
 - How did you feel during the first round of greetings?
 - How did you feel during the second round?
 - Did others treat you differently? How?
 - How did that make you feel?
8. Ask everyone to take their labels off, and look at them.
9. Then ask:
 - What have we learnt from this exercise?
 - How can we relate this exercise to AIDS in our community?
 - Why is this exercise relevant to prevention of AIDS and care for people with AIDS?

Following this activity, work could develop along similar lines as any *Reflect* Unit based on a graphic:

Ideas for reading and writing

The discussion generated through this activity (particularly from questions in point 7 and 9) should produce language that can be used for literacy and numeracy work.

If this activity was done at an early stage of the course, the facilitator could ask the circle for key words or important statements from the discussion following any of the questions above, and write them on the board. For example, all answers given to the first question could be recalled and written up as a list. Participants could try writing what they feel is most important personally in their own book, and then participants could swap books to read and compare.

At a more advanced stage, all participants could select the most important points from the discussion, and try writing them in their exercise books. In groups of four or five people, they could read each others’ and then jointly write their views. These can be written up on a large piece of paper and each group can share their priorities with the whole circle. These statements can be displayed alongside graphics from previous Units. The circle may decide to write a joint statement for display, and/or presentation to the community.

Ideas for action

- Sharing conclusions about kinder and fairer treatment of people with AIDS, with family, community, other circles etc.
- Looking at ways of helping people in the community with AIDS, such as, circle contributes labour to their household on a revolving basis.

Ideas for supplementary reading materials

- Personal testimonies of people with HIV/AIDS.
- Health materials on AIDS.
- Materials on caring for people with AIDS.

VIPP: Visualisation in Participatory Planning

VIPP is an approach to participatory planning developed by UNICEF in Bangladesh. It has been used by many development agencies, for example as a means to ensure that there is extensive consultation over strategic decisions. VIPP allows everyone’s experiences to be respected and pooled together (clustered) so that points of agreement or consensus can be found, without losing the rich diversity of individual expression.

VIPP starts with a question, for example what are the causes of poverty (or what are the strengths and weaknesses of X organisation)? Everyone is asked to write down on separate pieces of card five (or three or six etc) causes (with no more than 10 words on each card – and preferably less than five words). If the question is about strengths and weaknesses then people may be asked to write three strengths (on one colour card) and three weaknesses (on another colour). No names are put on the cards.

When everyone has finished writing, the cards are collected and shuffled. They are then held up one by one for people to see and are pinned up on a board, with ideas that are similar to one another being put close to each other and different ideas being spread out. The facilitator asks the participants where to put the cards. At the end a lot of clusters of ideas should emerge, which can then be given titles/headings.

VIPP practitioners in Bangladesh are able to draw on an entire range of specially produced cards of different colours and shapes and sizes, as well as VIPP Boards on which to pin them. Whilst this gives the process a certain buzz there

is no doubt that the same approach could be done at very low cost with simple pieces of card (or even paper) cut from manila boards. Thick pens are required so that people can read what others have written. In a *Reflect* circle, such materials are already available (as they will be needed to produce the graphics). Boards are not necessary. The floor can be used if everyone is standing and willing to move around (to which *Reflect* circles should be accustomed). To give participants more ownership of the process, they themselves can put the cards close to each other or further apart.

VIPP then seems very compatible with *Reflect* and it would be interesting to introduce some VIPP exercises late on in a *Reflect* course or in a post-literacy phase. Clearly basic reading and writing skills are required to do this well. However, highly advanced skills should not be needed; the process can be very simple (with many cards having just one or two words on) and can definitely help to provide practice in reading and writing.

VIPP has not tended to be used at the community level with newly literate people and has never, as far as we know, been used within a literacy programme. Clearly a lot will depend on the questions posed. Some interesting questions may be:

- what topics do you want to cover in the next stage of the course? (ie use VIPP for curriculum planning);
- what are the main problems for agriculture locally?
- what are the most urgent priorities in the village?
- what are the main causes of ill health locally?

A similar approach in a shortened form can be used to generate the lists, for example of local crops or illnesses, which are required for different matrices or calendars.



Section 7

End note

We hope that you have found this *Mother Manual* on *Reflect* of practical use in developing your literacy programme. This is the first edition of the Manual. We intend to prepare future editions which will improve the manual, making it easier to use and addressing different aspects of *Reflect* in more detail.

We would welcome your comments and suggestions on how the manual can be improved in the future. Particularly we would like to hear how you have used the manual and what innovations and adaptations you have made to the approach. Moreover, if there are aspects of the approach that you have found difficult, problematic or unclear please let us know and we will try to address your concerns in the next edition. You can also write to us at any time with your queries and we will offer what help we can at a distance.

Although at times this Manual may appear to be prescriptive we fully recognise that the *Reflect* approach is still in its infancy. It should not be

regarded as a package that you can take off a shelf and apply. It is still evolving. If you use the approach you will be part of that evolution. It is not a question of adopting the approach but rather one of adapting it. *Reflect* requires your creative input to make it work in your environment – to make it appropriate to the conditions in which you are working. It requires your knowledge of local communities and your experience of resolving problems and overcoming obstacles that are encountered locally. It requires your ability to manage a complex process, to coordinate and to motivate. We hope that you can fuse *Reflect* with any other positive experiences you have of participatory approaches – to create new variations and concoctions.

We urge you, above all, to be creative and to take risks. Without risk-taking there will be no change – and it is time for some change. We need to break the mould, to look for new solutions, as past literacy programmes have not lived up to expectations. Good luck.



Appendix 1

The story of the three *Reflect* projects

1. Uganda

In Africa the pilot *Reflect* programme was in Bundibugyo, an area which has been isolated historically from the rest of Uganda by the Rwenzori mountains.

Until recently the steep road winding down to Bundibugyo Town was almost impassable. Due to this inaccessibility, Bundibugyo did not suffer as much as the rest of Uganda in the past two decades of conflict. The Bwamba and Bakonjo peoples have strong links with their relatives in neighbouring Zaire; an area equally cut off from the central administration. The main cash crop is coffee but profitable trading is very difficult. Much of the area is a forest reserve, reducing the land available for planting; with a high population density this has caused an increasingly serious land shortage.

There are very few schools, clinics or any other services in Bundibugyo. Salaried jobs have usually been held by Rutoro speakers (the language of the neighbouring, and historically dominant, people – the Batoro). The indigenous languages are Lubwisi and Lukonjo. As these have never been used for official purposes, they were never previously written. Indeed they were transcribed for the first time by local people for the *Reflect* literacy programme (using a phonetic approach and drawing on written conventions from other local languages).

The percentage of non-literate people in Bundibugyo is particularly high because schools have been run in Rutoro and all written materials are in that language. Rejection of Rutoro by local people contributed to their reluctance to send their children to the few schools that were available.

ActionAid started work in Bundibugyo, in 1992, with a long period of participatory research. This identified a lack of capacity for community planning and action (for example, there were few village groups), and low literacy rates, particularly amongst women (about 14%) – which was an indicator of women's low status. From this research the importance of adult literacy (particularly for women) became clear, and an interactive, participatory literacy programme was proposed, as an entry-strategy for a 10 year development programme. The aim was to use literacy as a catalyst for local development.

Having received a concept paper on how PRA might be used in adult literacy, ActionAid Uganda invited David Archer

in August 1993. Over a four week period, with a team of eight local people, the first *Reflect* facilitators' manual was produced – using the results of the initial research. Key themes were agriculture, health, use of natural resources, gender roles, and isolation.

In the pre-literacy campaign, women were both self-selecting and actively encouraged to enrol. The result was 65 circles in four parishes, with 85% of participants being women. Initially each circle had about 30 people with an age range between 18 and 80 years. Another ActionAid literacy programme in another part of Uganda (Mityana) was used as a control group, to help determine the effectiveness of the approach.

Elected women leaders (called Parish Councillors) selected *Reflect* facilitators on the grounds of 'academic merit and commendable behaviour in public'. There were 59 men and four women, and their level of education varied from seven to eleven years of formal schooling. They were paid the equivalent of \$20 per month, and received their money from the supervising Parish Councillors – who reduced the stipend if they missed a session. Thus the facilitators were (and felt themselves to be) employed by community representatives rather than by ActionAid. Circles were occasionally visited by ActionAid staff, but the main contact was at the fortnightly exchange workshops. Very few facilitators left (perhaps partly because Bundibugyo offers few opportunities to earn cash) and the programme benefited from this stability.



Leya, a member the adult literacy *Reflect* programme in Uganda

James Akena/ActionAid

The circles were started in the most economically disadvantaged parishes, and the main obstacle to the programme was the irregular attendance of participants. They had chosen to have afternoon meetings for two hours, twice a week – after field work and before cooking the evening meal. Difficulties in attending included the need to find food in a prolonged Hungry Season; an influx of relatives from Zaire due to conflict; outbreaks of cholera and killer dysentery – as well as the normal work burden of low-income women farmers. In addition, some of the initial participants turned out to be refugees from Zaire who were resettled in camps only two months after starting *Reflect* circles.

The changing pattern of attendance combined with the participants' wish to discuss each Unit at great length (often involving other villagers), to produce a slower rate of progress though the course than in other pilots. The evaluation after one year found that most circles had completed 10 or 11 units. This was seen as a good thing because discussion had been extensive and most Units had led to positive actions which had been agreed upon by the circle. New facilitators were warned against pushing participants through the units at an artificial pace!

The evaluation results in literacy and numeracy showed that almost all those who had remained after initial drop out, had become basically literate and numerate – by conventional testing, examination of their exercise books, and by self evaluation. 69% of those who had enrolled had graduated. In the test, *Reflect* participants scored an average of 55% compared to 36% in the control groups.

The success of *Reflect* as a catalyst for development was felt significant in the following areas:

Self realisation: particularly the sense of being more in control. As one participant said: “*Literacy has taught us to know our problems ... and that we can solve some of them*”.

Capacity to take collective action: examples included agricultural and animal husbandry projects, building schools and roads, and challenging traditions such as that of distributing 100% of a good harvest – leaving nothing for storage.

Attitudes to children’s education: on their own initiative, one third of *Reflect* circles set up non-formal education centres for their children (with local parents paying a facilitator); moreover, *Reflect*-fed government primary schools experienced a 22% rise in enrolment compared to 4% in schools where parents were not *Reflect* participants.

Quality of Community Participation: different stake

holders reported higher and more vocal attendance at village meetings. However, at the time of the evaluation, it was the facilitators who were taking up positions of responsibility rather than participants. Women’s new-found confidence to speak out was particularly noted – as prevailing cultural norms forbade women to speak in front of men.

Awareness of gender inequity amongst women and men: the majority of participants reported that, after discussion of the gender workload calendar, men had started to collect water and fuel in order to give women more time for farm-work. A smaller number reported that, as women, they had been taking part in family decision-making – previously held in a male-only compound.

Agriculture: changes included measures to stop soil erosion (tree planting and grass band terracing); crop diversification, and building food stores.

Health: improvements had focussed on the building of latrines and improved household hygiene (for example, building separate kitchens).

Creation of a literate environment: over half the participants had written a personal letter since they started the course; it was becoming common to send bereavement letters, put up notices about meetings etc. This process has been reinforced by ActionAid’s efforts to translate some information into Lubwisi and Lukonjo; and the publishing of a newsletter written by participants. The excitement of developing their previously under-privileged language had greatly motivated communities.

At the time of writing, there have been graduation ceremonies for the first participants, and another 65 circles have started – with considerable competition for places. The original participants are continuing to meet in their circles, particularly to address income-generation. The best facilitators have taken a big part in training the new round of facilitators – and will continue to take an active part in the *Reflect* training carried out for other organisations in Uganda interested in using the approach. A *Reflect* Training Centre is being established in Mubende to provide support for government and NGO literacy programmes in East Africa, many of whom have already shown enthusiasm to learn from the Bundibugyo experience.

In August 1995 an International *Reflect* workshop in Uganda attracted 130 participants from 19 countries, many of whom visited Bundibugyo to observe *Reflect* in practice.

2. Bangladesh

In Asia the pilot area for *Reflect* was Bhola Island in the southern-most part of Bangladesh, reached by an overnight boat journey from the capital city of Dhaka.

Bhola is vulnerable to cyclones from the Bay of Bengal; in 1971 a terrible cyclone killed hundreds of thousands of islanders. The people are farmers, though with inequitable land distribution there is a growing problems of landlessness. Islam is strictly observed. Women live in the private sphere, staying in the home compound of their father or husband as soon as they reach adulthood. Very few have a chance to go to school so very few are literate. The local (and national) language is Bengali; a phonetic language with 120 different sounds and a highly complex alphabet. Although there is strong literate environment in Bangladeshi cities (there are more literate Bangladeshis in Bangladesh than English people in England), there are few reading materials available in Bhola,

ActionAid started a long term development programme on Bhola in 1983, and from the beginning tried hard to find a way to include women community members as well as men. All-women ‘*shomitis*’ (savings and credit groups) were started with about 15 members in each group. Women came very cautiously at first, but gradually the shomitis gained the acceptance of the community, becoming focal points for women to discuss health issues and receive training. Many shomitis started non-formal education centres for their children and some started adult literacy classes.

In 1994 ActionAid decided it was time to phase out of the area and to hand over the management of the shomitis (by now 24,000 women) to the members. There were, however, two major problems. Firstly, the women did not have the literacy (and written numeracy) skills necessary to manage their own programme. Secondly, it had become apparent that most women were handing over their shomiti loans to their husbands, without having any say in how the money was spent. Men allowed ‘their’ women to attend because the shomiti was a source of cheap loans. Many loans were not used productively by men and although the women were largely powerless in deciding how to use them, they alone were responsible for making the repayments.

A programme was therefore needed which would help women in the practical management of their shomiti records and accounts, but which would also increase their ability to organise, to analyse income-generating opportunities and to have the confidence to assert their rights in decision-making. The *Reflect* methodology appeared to be appropriate for this task and so a local facilitator’s manual was produced in March 1994 by a team of eight people over three weeks.

In early July 1994, 10 shomitis started meeting as *Reflect* circles (two Hindu, and the rest Muslim), and 10 literacy classes were identified as ‘control groups’ for comparison (using the excellent, but more traditional, materials produced by Friends in Village Development). They decided to meet for two hours on the six working days of the week (morning or afternoon depending on the season), and kept up this frequency.

The facilitators were young women (three of whom were



Members of the *Reflect* group called ‘*Nari Akota*’ which means ‘Women united’ in Bangladesh

G.M.B. Akash/Panos/ActionAid

married), chosen by the communities. Due to the lack of jobs for educated women, they were mainly secondary school graduates. They received 10 days initial training, and then met fortnightly for exchange workshops. Their equipment was the local manual, blackboard and chalk, and large pieces of paper with marker pens for drawing. They were paid by ActionAid at the standard rate used locally for such work (600 taka a month). The participants provided their own exercise books and pencils.

The *Reflect* circles met in the open air, sitting on rush mats in the compound of one of the members. Often the women were surrounded by curious children (and, at the beginning, suspicious men!). Seeing the women with pens was remarkable enough, but watching them construct elaborate maps and matrices, made them the centre of attention. The facilitators took to their role quickly. Often, when outsiders visited a circle in action, all the participants were so vocal that the facilitator could be identified only by looking for the quietest member of the group!

The local manual addressed a wide range of issues including agriculture; health; savings and credit; intra-household decision-making; gender workload, and analysis of village social structures. Progress through the units was faster than in the other pilots, due to the almost daily meetings. After four months, most circles had covered 10 Units, and after seven months most circles had reached Unit 14. After 10 months, 78% were still attending regularly and of those who dropped out, the main reason was male opposition. This kind of opposition was summed up by one participants who commented: “*The men treat us badly if we are ignorant and they treat us worse if we try to learn*”.

There were two evaluations of *Reflect* in Bangladesh; one was an external evaluation, funded by the ODA, focusing on literacy and numeracy; the other was largely internal and focussed on the wider impact on the empowerment of women. The results of both were very encouraging.

Reflect was more successful in teaching literacy and numeracy than the Control Groups. *Reflect* circles scored 43% better in reading, 79% better in writing, and 64% better in numeracy. The most popular reading materials were school texts and health materials. Women were beginning to use their numeracy to manage their own pass books – an important objective for the shomititis. In general, the 15–19 age group did much better than their elders in the circle.

The wider impact of the circles was felt particularly in:-

Self esteem: leading to improved communication with their husbands.

Analytical skills: enabling women to plan new coping strategies (bulk buying, storing, diversifying etc).

Productivity: with women having more control over loan use and investing loans more effectively.

Gender relations: with increasing involvement of women in household decision making; enhanced social status and greater mobility outside the compound.

Health awareness: with women clearing rubbish and productively pooling knowledge on traditional medicine.

Positive attitudes to children’s education: with children attending school more regularly and being given more support at home.

Reflect is expanding in Bhola Island, and the original circles are still functioning well at the time of this manual’s publication. ActionAid is still planning to phase out in the Year 2000, having handed over to people’s organisations in Bhola. A *Reflect* Training Centre is being established on the island to train literacy coordinators from other NGOs and from the government’s non-formal education programme. A *Reflect* Coordination Unit in Dhaka is offering further support to organisations interested in taking up *Reflect*.

2. El Salvador

The pilot programme in Latin America was conducted in the rural Department of Usulután, in the Central American country of El Salvador.

The extreme inequality in the distribution of wealth and land throughout El Salvador, and the civil war of the 1980s, were felt particularly intensely in remote Usulután. It was one of the areas of greatest conflict, with control shifting between the army and the FMLN guerrillas. Many local people were recruited by the guerrillas and most others were sympathetic to the guerrilla cause, in the face of gross violations of human rights committed by the army. The large coffee plantations which dominated the local economy were abandoned during much of the civil war.

In the late eighties, the communities in central Usulután, decided to organise themselves as civilians to improve conditions. Initially clandestine, to avoid army repression, they formed a grass-roots development organisation called ‘*United Communities of Usulután*’ (COMUS). After the Peace Accords in 1992, COMUS was able to come into the open and membership swelled with ex-guerrillas. COMUS initially received support from the Catholic Church and later received more external funding, particularly from Ayuda en Accion. COMUS’s work focuses on a credit programme for farmers, primary health care, literacy and support for the land reform process – giving advice on legal rights and helping people to negotiate with government for land titles.

By the end of the 1980s, less than one-third of school-aged children were covered by state primary provision in the whole country. In Usulután, the resulting lack of literacy amongst adults was seen as a real problem, and COMUS started literacy work with the technical support of the leading educational NGO in El Salvador, the ‘*Inter-Agency Committee for Literacy*’ (CIAZO). CIAZO supported more than 30 different grassroots organisations and had a large primer-based programme called ‘*Literacy for Peace*’. When COMUS expressed interest in experimenting with the *Reflect* approach, CIAZO’s Director, Nicola Foroni commented, “*We are always interested in trying something new*”. However, there was no particular vested interest for CIAZO, who decided to evaluate the small *Reflect* pilot against their wider national programme.

In November 1993, a team of four people spent four weeks writing a local facilitators’ manual – with priority issues arising from the work of COMUS in community participation and local action. Units also addressed land tenancy, agriculture, displacement and human rights.

The COMUS literacy co-ordinator organised the selection of facilitators, their initial training, and the start-up

of 17 circles. Although he had no experience of adult literacy programming, he was a strong community leader, and had himself become literate aged twenty three.

The facilitators were mainly men; volunteers working for the community. They received only small items such as caps and backpacks for their work. Most had around six years of education themselves, and wanted to share it with others. Through the on-going workshops they developed a strong sense of working as a team.

The participants were 68% men, and were either small-holders or landless farm labourers. One of the biggest obstacles to joining was the mockery of others. They met twice a week for two hours in the afternoons or evenings. The circles were held in the mother tongue of Spanish.

There were many problems faced by facilitators and participants in the *Reflect* process. Many of these came from the wider political context. Land reform was delayed, and the participants therefore did not have the land titles which would have enabled them to implement some of the ideas emerging from their discussions of agricultural issues in the early units (terracing, planting new crops etc.). A related credit programme promised by COMUS failed to deliver any loans for six months, and this led to a lot of disillusionment within circles.

At the beginning of the pilot, the background for ‘participation’ and problem-solving discussions was very unfavourable. One month after circles started (March 1994), elections took place and the right wing ARENA were the victors. Morale at community level was low, and at the same time aid donors were coming into the area with big service delivery projects which reinforced the traditional passive role of campesinos (peasant farmers). In addition, the circles had no political authority to act but were dependent on their ideas being taken up by community leaders (who were also demoralised).

The facilitators, themselves, shared all the above difficulties, and found it difficult to continue as volunteers, with no more personal resources than the participants. This nearly reached a crisis point when USAID began to pay village health promoters a stipend. The mixed levels and commitment of facilitators led to different take-up of the *Reflect* method. A few failed to attend on-going training workshops and gradually reverted to conventional teaching methods.

In view of the problems outlined above, the results of the evaluation (led by CIAZO) were very good. In the majority of circles, 75% of those enrolled in the circles were still attending after one year, and 86% of them passed a standard literacy and numeracy test. This is an overall achievement rate of 65% compared to 43% in CIAZO’s control groups (and the World Bank estimate of 25%).

Reflect participants compared particularly well with control groups in terms of independent writing. Numeracy was the weakest area.

In terms of the wider impact, the *Reflect* circles gathered their own momentum, and certain obstacles such as the lack of land title and credit were sorted out. *Reflect* participants thus reported gains in:

- self confidence (100% compared to 42% in control groups);
 - problem solving skills (87% compared to 14%);
 - acquiring new knowledge in agriculture, health and natural resource issues (100% compared to 52%);
 - improving human relations (87% compared to 52%).
- There was no perceivable impact on gender relations, although at least the male bias of the programme had not affected the literacy success of women participants. They had achieved equally.

Perhaps the most exciting result was in the field of community participation. Despite all the problems, over 77% of participants said that they were now actively involved in decision making in community organisations for the first time; and 61% had acquired (for the first time) formal positions of responsibility (as Chair, Treasurer, Secretary etc.) in these organisations (such as the Community Councils, Cooperatives, PTAs, Health Committees, Women’s groups, Credit Committees and Church groups). Each new position of responsibility required participants to use (and thus reinforce) their newly acquired literacy and numeracy skills.

A wide range of local actions were identified as having arisen directly from the construction of different graphics within the literacy circles. These actions included: repairing local roads, constructing grain stores, establishing tree and medicinal plant nurseries, developing organic fertilisers, taking soil conservation measures, and accessing training from outside sources.

The conclusion of *Reflect* participants was that *Reflect* was pleasurable, and 90% wanted to continue learning. The conclusion of CIAZO has been that *Reflect* is a more effective methodology than their previous primer-based approach, particularly in respect of linking literacy to a process of positive change. CIAZO is now planning to integrate the *Reflect* methodology into its programme at a national level.

Appendix 2

Contacts and materials for other training

Participatory rural appraisal/ Participatory learning and action

The International Institute of Environment and Development produce a regular publication based on reports of practical experiences with PRA/PLA. This used to be called ‘*RRA Notes*’ and has now been re-named ‘*PLA Notes*’. RRA Notes 13 is a particularly good introduction to PRA.

A publication (1995) which is particularly recommended is; ‘*A Trainers Guide for Participatory Learning and Action*’ by Jules Pretty, Irene Gujit, John Thompson and Ian Scoones in the Participatory Methodology Series of the Sustainable Agriculture Programme in IIED.

The Institute of Development Studies in Sussex is also an excellent resource on PRA, publishing a guide to sources and contacts, with abstracts available on different topics (available in printed form, on disk or on the internet).

Contact:
Institute of Development Studies,
Library Road, Brighton BN1 9RE
E-mail: ids@ids.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1273 606261
Fax: +44 (0)1273 621202

Gender training and analysis

Publications that are particularly recommended are:

Irene Gujit ‘*Questions of Difference: PRA Gender and Environment*’ (A manual and four videos), available from IIED (see above)

Suzanne Williams with Janet Seed, Adelina Mwau ‘*The OXFAM Gender Training Manual*’ (OXFAM 1994), available from OXFAM, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 7DZ

Mia Hyun, ‘*Gender Training of Trainers, Participants Handbook*’, (ActionAid, May 1995), available from ActionAid (see Appendix 2)

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Further Information

For more information on *Reflect* visit the website:
www.reflect-action.org

You can also find us on Facebook:
www.facebook.org/ReflectAction

Or join the *Reflect* Basecamp practitioner networking and filesharing site (invitation only, follow the link at www.reflect-action.org/basecamp)

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