

ditable. Further, the long-term potential of these relationships is enhanced. Thus, we all have a stake in ethical practice. It is important that each applied anthropologist share in the responsibility.

#### FURTHER READING

LeCompte, Margaret D., Jean J. Schensul, Margaret R. Weeks, and Merrill Singer. *Researcher Roles & Research Partnerships*. Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 1999. This volume, part of a larger series on research methods, includes an introduction to research ethics including institutional review boards.

## *Part II*

# **Approaches to Development in Anthropology**

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## *Chapter 4*

# **Anthropology in Development**

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Participatory development is a process in which the individuals and groups of a community work together on problems that they see as important in order to benefit their lives in some way. The process may both help a group achieve its goals and increase its capacity to achieve goals in the future. Although this process is a typical aspect of the life of healthy communities, there is potential that the process can be made more effective with the assistance of a trained practitioner of participatory development practice. The presence of a trained practitioner may be useful for increasing the rate of development activity, reducing internal conflict, and expanding the resource base. Participatory development practitioners can contribute to effectiveness by providing community facilitation skills, special knowledge of particular areas of technology such as education, public health and agriculture appraisal techniques, and linkages to the resources outside of the community.

Part II of the book includes chapters on various participatory methods. These include action research and participatory action research, cultural action, participatory rural appraisal, and collaborative anthropology. There are other methods which could be included. Cultural brokerage and social marketing are not usually thought of as participatory methods, but in fact they have a strong commitment to the same values.

The methods used are consistent with an anthropological perspective on the development process. This consistency includes concern for the meaning of the development process to the persons most affected, the members of

the communities undergoing development. As authors we place a value on "bottom up" processes that facilitate people to action that produces sustainable improvements in conditions of life in communities. The foundation of the process is respect for local knowledge.

There was a significant increase in the amount of anthropological involvement in the development process starting in the aftermath of World War II. At that point onward anthropologists were involved in a number of ways. These include serving as researchers in the development project planning and evaluation process, the developing of models for development action, and actual implementation of development. The first of these is the most frequent.

Before we begin these chapters that describe different approaches to development, we wanted to discuss concepts that we see as underlying contemporary development anthropology. In addition, we wanted to review the critique directed at contemporary development because this impinges on anthropologists involved.

#### ADDRESSING THE DEVELOPMENT CRITIQUE

The process of development entails societal change and the intentional activities necessary to bring such change about (Gardner and Lewis 1996). A suitable general definition states that development is "conscious pursuit of certain objectives with a view to increasing welfare" (Sandford 1983:4). This process may occur in any aspect of community life including economy, education, public health, nutrition, and so forth. While development implies something desirable, the process often has a negative aspect. Often large-scale economic development can increase social inequality that supports the interests of those who own property. Negative ecological consequences can also occur making environmental sustainability an important issue in development. There are also unintended consequences. A minimal cost of development is the opportunity cost. Doing two things at once is difficult.

The idea of development is closely tied to the nature of twentieth-century history. The ascent of technology and science in Europe inaugurated a new age of rationality, enlightenment, and the expansion of capitalism. One of the mechanisms of this process was imperial expansion and colonialism. The natives, or the colonized, were referred to as backward and irrational while, on the other hand, the colonizers were "rational agents of progress and development." This line of thinking led to the emergence of modernization theory, which emphasized the modernization of the natives out of their "traditional" ways. Industrialization and urbanization were the key processes in modernization. The antithesis of modernization theory was dependency theory, which was more concerned with the nature and causes of the "underdevelopment" of poor nations. Dependency theory emerged

with a discussion of unequal exchange, inequitable distribution of resources across nations, and the ways in which such inequitable relations foster the dependency of poor nations on wealthier ones.

Modernization scholars of the 1960s saw development in evolutionary terms. They felt that countries had to "progress" through certain stages before they could be considered "developed" (Rostow 1960). Among other things, Rostow explored the factors that lead to developed or underdeveloped conditions. According to his analysis, development was equated with economic growth. A country that successfully goes through the various stages described by Rostow can be categorized as developed whereas those who are in the process can be described as developing.

Others argue that development of some wealthy countries produces underdevelopment. According to Escobar (1995), development is a process that has been produced historically. He argues that the period immediately after World War II saw an emergence of the concept of underdevelopment that was associated with the countries of the South (formerly referred to as underdeveloped), especially those in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Underdevelopment was associated with poverty and backwardness, and this view, Escobar argues, emerged from the United States and Western Europe who regarded underdevelopment as a problem inherent in the countries of the South and therefore deserved immediate and concerted action to deal with it. New strategies were developed to cope with the problem of underdevelopment.

Gardner and Lewis (1996) point out that global problems of poverty and inequality cannot be explained by either modernization or dependency theories. Despite the tremendous contribution of these approaches to our comprehension of development, the South is still lingering in the seas of poverty, high rates of illiteracy, malnutrition, and political instability.

Furthermore, economic growth is often implicated in the development process, a point that is upheld by many development agencies including the World Bank (Gardner and Lewis 1996). Measurement of development is based on indices such as the Gross National Product (GNP) and per capita income. The argument in this case is that as the economy grows, there will be a corresponding growth in other sectors, such as education and health, thus positively affecting social indices such as infant mortality rates, literacy, and malnutrition (Gardner and Lewis 1996). This school of thought posits that as the economy grows, there will be a benefit to all citizens in the form of better education, better housing, and better health. This is the so-called "trickle-down effect." The shortcoming of this assumption is that the trickle-down process is slow and not pervasive. Unequal benefits of development are widely recognized. Therefore, the goals of development practitioners are often geared toward increasing equity in the distribution of benefits.

For example, in the development literature throughout the 1970s,

was a focus on basic human needs with emphasis on poverty alleviation. This orientation in development program design involved what is commonly called "targeting." This view emphasizes societal welfare as compared to industrialization and modernization. The targeted beneficiaries were the masses of people living in countries of the South who were living without basic human needs. The target group was the vulnerable in the society such as small farmers and women-headed households (Gardner and Lewis 1996). The focus in this period was therefore to provide people with necessary help so that their standards of living could be improved. It is important to note that in this process, the attention was not on empowering or enabling the beneficiaries to provide for themselves, nor was the focus geared toward involving the local people in identifying and solving the constraints they faced in their efforts to secure livelihood.

Due to inherent drawbacks in development approaches of the past decades, there was an emerging consensus in the late 1980s and 1990s that saw development as a process that needed full participation from the local people. This approach held that local people should be the driving force behind any development initiative in their areas. The guiding premise was that "They know better than anyone else what is good for them and what their urgent needs are." Subsequently, they should have the opportunity to express their needs, desires, and solutions. Participatory approaches in development have indeed influenced many individuals and groups to rethink their roles regarding the whole process of development. Advocates of the participatory view emphasize the crucial need for involvement of the local people in the development process. Not only should local people be involved, they should be involved as problem identifiers and as main actors and decision makers. The foundation of this thought is the fact that the local people know the complexity, diversity, and dynamism of their environments better than the "outsiders" (Chambers 1997). Drawing from this theoretical premise, participation becomes a viable and promising way of development in rural as well as urban areas throughout the world in both the wealthy and poor countries. According to Chambers, there is a growing consensus on the goals of well-being for all: secure livelihood, enhancing the capabilities of the people, equity for all (especially the poor, weak, vulnerable, and exploited), and sustainable changes in the economic, social, institutional, and environmental domains of everyday life (Chambers 1997).

## THE FOUNDATION IN IDEAS

Use of these ideas occurs in many disciplines. Anthropology has contributed to the development of these ideas and continues to make use of them. These include local knowledge, participation, empowerment, conscientiza-

## Local Knowledge

This idea is now widely used in development circles and refers to knowledge and practices emmeshed in a local community. It is used in contrast with "expert knowledge" which is the technical information brought to the situation by trained outsiders such as agronomists, sanitarians, physicians, or foresters. It is sometimes referred to as indigenous knowledge (IK) or indigenous technical knowledge (ITK) although this label is thought of as somewhat confining to the extent that indigenous implies being limited to knowledge that is locally generated. It can also be referred to as "traditional knowledge" although this label suggests that the knowledge is unchanging. Local knowledge is dynamic and is continually tested and adapted to local needs.

Discussions of local knowledge often emphasize the role of systematic observation and experimental practices that are found in every community. Within development practice there has been a shifting of perspective away from the privileging of the knowledge of technically trained persons from outside the community to the valuing of the knowledge of the community itself. For example, in agricultural development, "instead of starting with the knowledge, problems, analysis and priorities of scientists, it starts with the knowledge, problems, analysis and priorities of farmers and farm families" (Chambers et al. 1989:xix).

While anthropologists have always been concerned with "local knowledge," explicit concern for this emerged little more than two decades ago in the development arena. This involved a reconceptualization of local knowledge. This went against the widely held view that "local knowledge" was uniform, static, and invalid, and that "expert knowledge" could provide an adequate foundation for development. More and more researchers realized that local knowledge systems were very much like the expert systems. They were dynamic, experimentally based, and were valuable for understanding how things worked. Increasingly, local knowledge came to have a role to play in the development process. Increasingly, researchers emphasize the fundamental similarities between the sciences of all the people of the world.

Success in development programs often requires paying attention to local knowledge. Local knowledge-based developments were often more sustainable. There are a number of reasons for this. Basing a project on local knowledge often means use of locally available, lower-cost resources rather than more costly materials brought into the community from outside. Local knowledge-based projects are usually better understood by the community and therefore more easily managed by them. Local knowledge-based projects can be more easily adapted to local circumstances. Emphasizing local knowledge in project planning can increase the likelihood that the project addresses local needs and circumstances. There may also be a decreased

potential to create dependency on the part of the community. The use of a local knowledge-based approach is necessary to achieve participatory development.

As the development community has become more sensitive to the importance of local knowledge, there has also been increased economic exploitation of the producers of local knowledge. Critics of pharmaceutical companies that do "bioprospecting" in places like Amazonia say that the producers of "local drug knowledge" do not get adequate compensation. There has been more and more concern about protecting local knowledge as intellectual property (Greaves 1994).

### Participation

What is participation? It can be represented by many words: involvement, representation, cooperation, and so on. But what is the true meaning of participation. Is it involvement? Is it representation? Is it cooperation? After all, the powerful can force the powerless to be involved in certain activities. Anyone can claim that she or he represents a certain group of people. Through various strategies, those in positions of power can often coerce others to cooperate. Again, is that participation?

Understanding the values or characteristics attached to participatory activities can help us understand its meaning. Self-determination is an important component. A participatory viewpoint requires one to understand the situation within which one operates and the role one plays in it. Participation derives from one's own consciousness and determination and awareness of the system.

Development anthropologists can strive toward a more democratic process, but must recognize at the start that no relationship is completely neutral. In order to strive toward a mutually beneficial and equitable relationship during the development process, practitioners can act ethically and responsibly to reduce risks and negative unintentional outcomes. Anthropologists do not deny as anthropologists the personal benefits of our own participation in such projects (financial, professional, political, and so forth). Instead, they start from the premise that participatory research is truly collaborative and as such, all collaborating parties ideally receive some benefit, whether material or nonmaterial.

Participation of the intended beneficiaries of development projects in the development process is widely advocated by most national and international development agencies. Because of this the word participation often appears in the literature on development agencies. Indeed some widely used techniques include "participation" in their names (see for example "participatory action research," "participatory rural appraisal," "participatory technology development," "participatory learning and action," "partic-

ipatory impact monitoring," and "participatory monitoring and evaluation").

There is considerable difference between agency rhetoric and the extent to which development is participatory at the level of the local community. The extent to which a development effort is participatory can vary considerably. Participation ranges in a continuum that includes information sharing, consultation, collaboration, and finally, empowerment. Organizations that are committed to participation in their development programs may vary substantially. There will be a difference between the participation programming of a non-governmental organization like Oxfam and that of a large, quasi-governmental bureaucracy like the World Bank. Some have spoken about "pseudoparticipation," as occurs when community members are asked to ratify decisions made by the program managers rather than actually designing the projects (Uphoff 1991:478).

Participation is sometimes thought of as a new way of doing development, even trendy. Concern about participation of local people in the development process has existed for a very long time. There are clear antecedents in the mass education movement in the late 1940s. Rhetorically, participatory approaches are contrasted with approaches in which planning and implementation decisions are made by persons outside the community, usually by professional technicians or governmental bureaucracies. Because of this, people speak pejoratively about "technocratic" or "top down" development. A technocratic approach places little value on local knowledge and the capacity and potential of local organizations. This means that a participatory approach will tend to place a high value on local knowledge and organizations.

Participation almost has to involve local community organizations, either those which are established or newly constituted. There has been research done on the characteristics of community organizations that are more effective in participation (Uphoff 1991:496). Informally operated organizations seemed to work better than more formal ones. Organizations that work to share decision making through horizontal linkages seemed to work better. Size was a significant factor. Organizations that had linkages to governmental organizations did not tend to have better results. Organizations that were established by local leaders seemed to work better than those established by outsiders. In this regard often what is authentic participation in decision making by established traditional groups like a community council can be not very democratic. Sometimes women and poor people are not really part of the process.

Participation can occur at various stages of the project cycle and all sectors of a project. Participation can occur during research done in anticipation of project design, in project implementation, in benefits of the project, and in project monitoring and evaluation. One should look for the

extent to which beneficiaries actually allocate resources to get a feeling for how participatory a project is.

There are a number of ways of ensuring participation of beneficiaries in project design and implementation:

1. *Have Explicit Goals and Designs.* The extent of participation must be made clear from the very beginning of the project. This should be done in such a way that it is acceptable to all persons involved.
2. *Have Realistic Expectations.* The goals of participation should be realistic. It is important to be sensitive to the time requirements of different segments of the project cycle. A fixed deadline can often be very disruptive to effective participation.
3. *Have an Organizational Framework.* Participation occurs in an organizational framework. This framework may be provided by existing local organizations. If these groups are inadequate or insufficient, culturally appropriate organizations need to be designed and supported. Development efforts may, if properly designed, result in strengthened organizations.
4. *Have an Adequate Resource Base.* There should be adequate financial investment to support participation.
5. *Be Concerned about the Whole Project Cycle.* Participation needs to occur during the entire project cycle from design to evaluation. (Cerna 1991a:465-466)

An important possible outcome of the participation process is empowerment.

### Empowerment

Empowerment is a process whereby individuals or collectives of individuals move from a state of being simply acted upon to one in which they are initiating and directing control over their lives. Stated more succinctly, empowerment, as defined by Rappaport (1984:3) is, "the mechanism by which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their lives." An elusive concept, having developed out of the "social action" ideology of the 1960s and the "self-help" movements of the 1970s, empowerment is often best understood by what it is not—powerlessness, helplessness, hopelessness, and disenfranchisement, or those conditions in which an opinion is held that one's behavior cannot determine or control the outcomes that one seeks. Empowerment is the antithesis of these powerless states of being.

Empowerment, as a process of becoming, involves the cognitive and behavioral development of individuals or groups over a period of time. More specifically, empowerment entails the systematic and progressive cultivation of participatory skills and political understandings of those formerly with-

erment develops within individuals and groups an awareness of the manifestations of powerlessness in their lives. The process of empowerment often results in people increasing their understanding of how such social and political inequities are institutionalized and impact them. This is the process of conscientization. Once awareness and understanding of the sources and forms of powerlessness are acquired, the next step in the process of empowerment is providing the individual or group with the tools necessary to address their own powerlessness.

### Conscientization

Conscientization means the development of critical awareness of the structures that cause one's current circumstances. Brazilian educator Paulo Freire developed his method of conscientization, or the development of critical consciousness, as part of an effort to help Brazilian farming families learn to read and write (Freire 1997:17). More specifically, it is "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire 1997:17). Freire's program became popular in Brazil because people were learning to read and write in six weeks, while also learning their capabilities to change oppressive structures which kept them poor. Freire's main contribution to the literacy training was not speed, but helping poor Brazilian villagers overcome the feeling that they were too ignorant to learn (Werner and Bower 1982). In this work he discovered what he describes as the "culture of silence" of the dispossessed and poor who are too ignorant and tired to change the hegemonic forces which keep them poor. It became clear to him that the whole educational system was one of the major instruments for the maintenance of this culture. He believed people had the power as individuals to attain a critical consciousness of their own being in the world, to recognize and understand historic forces influencing their place in the world, and develop the ability to change that world. His pedagogical method consisted of naming the problem, reflecting on the problem, and then acting on the problem.

### Sustainable Development

Decreasing poverty was an important goal of many development programs funded by organizations such as the World Bank and bilateral agencies like the U.S. Agency for International Development. With the advent of the environmental movement came an increased governmental concern about environmental impacts. This in turn influenced development programming. In response to this, the idea of sustainable development emerged. This complex idea was given more concrete focus through the World Commission on Environment and Development (also called the

Brundtland Commission), which was established by the United Nations in 1983. The commission defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland Report 1987:43).

The issue of sustainability has come to be expressed in a wide range of themes in addition to economic development. These include biodiversity, climate change, soil and water conservation, efficient and renewable energy use, air quality, solid waste, population planning, forestation, and alternative agriculture. Increasing discussions about sustainability have come to recognize the environmental problem in terms of a complex web that includes the environment, economic equity, and social integrity. The concern for equity and poverty reduction addresses the concern about political sustainability as well as more narrowly conceived environmental concerns. Equity issues are especially important, given their tendency to associate environmental concerns with elite interests.

Increasingly the organizations that fund development projects structure their programs and policies to address the long-term environmental impact of their projects. As a result, there is more concern about sustainability issues in project planning.

## SUMMARY

The development anthropologists of today make use of a complex array of ideas that were nascent when anthropologists were first involved in development activities directly in the 1950s and 1960s. They function as part of a complex of practices and ideas that have emerged starting in the 1970s and include the ideas that are the core of this chapter. These are local knowledge, participation, empowerment, conscientization, and sustainable development. Previously anthropologists made use of approaches to development that were from within the discipline. These included research and development anthropology and action anthropology. Though not widely used, these approaches represented effective means of achieving goals of development within the context of the anthropological worldview. These approaches were major departures from the traditional role of the anthropological researcher that most anthropologists still think of as a core of the experience of being an anthropologist. What has emerged over the last two decades is a complex of ideas and practices that are not part of a particular discipline. These ideas develop and change in response to the challenges faced by practitioners. Contemporary development practices, like contemporary research practices, are influenced by many and owned by none. Because they are good ideas, they are widely used. Much of the current tradition of practice has been very heavily influenced by anthropology. It is the knowledge of this that anthropologists are comfortable with the ideas

and practices. The following chapters of Part II present various approaches used by anthropologists working in development.

## FURTHER READING

Chambers, Robert. *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the First Last*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications, 1997. The works of Robert Chambers are foundation texts for a person committed to participatory development.

Brundtland Report. World Commission on Environment and Development. *Our Common Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. This document is frequently cited in discussions of sustainability.

## *Chapter 5*

# Action Research and Participatory Action Research

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Action research (AR) and participatory action research (PAR) are methods of research and social action that occur when individuals of a community join together with a professional researcher to study and transform their community in ways that they mutually value. The idea of cogeneration of understanding is often part of AR and PAR discussions. The “community” for an action project can be a neighborhood, village, school, organization, or any social group in which members want to enact some change. This broad definition of community gives AR and PAR potential to deal with many different kinds of problems in many different settings. For example, PAR has been used to develop nonviolent alternatives to tribal infighting among the Enga of Papua New Guinea (Young 1997), to provide HIV prevention education to women in San Francisco (Stevens and Hall 1998), to examine a worker cooperative complex in a small Basque city in Spain (Greenwood et al. 1992; Whyte and Whyte 1988), and to support business development in Norway (Greenwood and Levin 1998).

In discussing AR and PAR it is important to note that some writers make a clear distinction between AR and PAR while others treat the two terms as more or less synonymous. It is useful to sort through the issues. The term action research was used first. Participatory action research is historically derived from action research. Early action research literature continues to be useful to participatory action research practitioners. The idea of PAR emerged to stress the participatory and non-dominating orientation of practitioners and to separate the practice from examples of co-optation of the approach by the business community. Greenwood and Levin draw

a good example of this from industrial management. They say "One way of achieving the currently fashionable goal of total quality management is by involving the work force more fully in the life of the business. This is often framed as increasing participation, and recently, some conventional organizational development consultants have begun calling their work PAK" (Greenwood and Levin 1998:180). Greenwood and Levin talk about both under the rubric of AR (Greenwood and Levin 1998). While we maintain the terminological distinction, our view is essentially identical to Greenwood and Levin.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE APPROACH

Kurt Lewin coined the term *action research* (Greenwood and Levin 1998: 17). He was a social psychologist whose interest was focused on social change. Greenwood and Levin see "Lewin's work is a fundamental building block of what today is called AR" (Greenwood and Levin 1998:19). His ideas emerged in a series of applied research projects done in the 1940s.

AR has very early linkages to anthropology. During his service at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, John Collier called for anthropologists to support action research (see, for example, the work of Laura Thompson 1950). In addition to Collier's work, Lewin himself worked in association with Margaret Mead in the American Food Habits Project. As applied anthropology gained more formal recognition in the discipline, AR was promoted as a way to work against the "professional expert model." In other words, applied participatory research worked to minimize the authoritative power of the researcher and grant legitimacy to the local knowledge of community members. While early "participatory research" was not always linked to action objectives, it did make an attempt to include community members in the research process—from data collection through analysis and some times in publication.

Action research, according to Lewin, "consisted in analysis, fact-finding, conceptualization, planning, execution, more fact-finding or evaluation, and then a repetition of this whole circle of activities; indeed a spiral of such circles" (Lewin quoted in Kemmis 1980:3). Lewin also put forth the idea that research should be evoked by the needs of people for a particular action, and that the research techniques should be integrative of a wide variety of tools able to accomplish that action. The core idea of AR is that research will be more valid and there is a greater likelihood of it being used by a community when the community has meaningful participation in the research process (Argyris and Schon 1991:86).

## KEY CONCEPTS

### Research

One of AR's strengths as an approach is its process leads to the generation of new and powerful knowledge. The knowledge constructed during the inquiry process leads to social action, and the reflections on actions also lead to the construction of new knowledge. Parallel with Lewin's criteria on judging a good theory, AR uses "workability" (defined as an ability to support practical problem solving in real-life situations) to judge the credibility/validity of good knowledge.

### Participation

Participation has a strong value in AR. Participatory process is understood to create a strong commitment to the knowledge generation process and enable participants to take some responsibilities in increasing their control over their own lives.

### Action

AR is a research with a social agenda. It aims to alter the initial situations in the direction of a more self-managing, liberated state. The action grows out of the research experience. In contrast with most applied research, the users of the research are the same as the researchers. This makes knowledge use much more likely.

## THE PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

The PAR process begins when members of a community recognize some problem they want to change. Once the problem is presented to a professional researcher either by community members, an extension agent, another researcher, or an agency, she or he begins communication with community members. At this preliminary stage, the professional researcher should work to gain thorough knowledge of the community in question by doing a complete literature review and answering a few basic questions: What is the context of the community? What is the political organization? If the community is governed by particular individuals, will those individuals grant access to their community for a PAR project? Have other development projects been attempted in this community before? How might the successes or failures of those projects impact the potential for success for another development project? In what venues might the researcher introduce herself/himself to the community? Questions such as these represent a general reconnaissance on the area of general interest. Anthropological

research methods such as ethnography, participant observation, interviews, field notes, archival analysis, and case studies often form the basis of this initial exploration.

Both AR and PAR place a high value on local knowledge. According to Greenwood and Levin, "AR is based on the affirmation that all human beings have detailed, complex, and valuable knowledge about their lives, environments, and goals" (1998:109). This contrasts with scholarly knowledge of academic experts in that it is part of people's actual lives. The action researcher serves to bridge everyday knowledge and the knowledge of the "expert" by engaging them in a cogeneration process. Greenwood and Levin call this "cogenerative learning" (1998:110). This has two potential positive outcomes. The local community can be enhanced, and the goals of the researchers can also be served.

Typically, the PAR process includes problem identification, information gathering, mobilization of community members who are affected, collaborative analysis and critical reflection, collaborative planning, action, and new reflection. Despite the linear representation, these stages do not occur in a neat and orderly progression, but often occur simultaneously. In fact, many PAR practitioners envision the PAR process as an ongoing spiral of action and reflection. Furthermore, participation occurs at every level of the PAR process. Thus, the stage referred to as "mobilization of participation" simply refers to the continuous efforts of current participants to gain and sustain representative participation and interest.

### Identify Problems and Constraints

If a community has not already identified a problem for a PAR project, members working with a professional researcher can utilize several strategies to generate themes for evaluation. Of course, the decision about which strategies to apply should be made by the community. One strategy members might apply is an exploratory questionnaire. In this questionnaire, the researcher working with key informants constructs basic questions about community needs, usually regarding a variety of domains, such as health, agriculture, environment, economy, education, and so forth. The questionnaire can be mailed, hand delivered, or simply asked informally and noted as members talk to other members of the community.

Once a problem has been identified, the researcher along with community members can begin to discuss how they want to acquire more information. For example, members of a community may decide to conduct more formal, in-depth interviews with other community members, attempting to gain a representative sample of the community if it is large, or a complete sample if it is small. Informal interviewing and participant observation often yield important information for professional and community researchers to share with other participants. Focus groups can also

help to gauge the level of interest, resources, and constraints for various problems.

If more than one problem is identified for action, the facilitator may implement several techniques to help members prioritize their action objectives, such as pair-wise ranking. The goal of this phase is to work with community members to define a PAR project.

### Participation

Once a problem has been identified and targeted for PAR, community members along with the professional researcher continue to seek out additional support and resources from members. At this stage, a community may also seek out the advice of technical experts from outside the community. Here, it is important to remember that participation can take many forms: individual communications with the professional researcher or other community members, group discussions or focus groups, joint committees, and/or task forces. The form, frequency, and duration of participation will depend on the context of the PAR project. After all, the "degree of participation achieved in any particular project is the joint result of the character of the problem and environmental conditions under study, the aims and capacities of the research team, and the skills of the professional researcher" (Greenwood et al. 1992:175). No matter what form of participation is utilized, it is necessary for the researcher to clearly define what she or he means by *participation*. As Whyte, Greenwood, and Lazes suggest, "[s]ome aspects of those descriptions can be buttressed by measurement: how many people were involved in the participation process, how often and over what period of time they participated in it, how many proposals for change were initiated by [subjects themselves] . . . how many proposals were actually implemented" and so on (Whyte et al. 1991:52).

### Collect Data

Data collection actually begins with the very first conversation about the PAR project. During data collection, participants become researchers themselves as they continue to dialogue with other community members and begin to gain a deeper awareness of the problem. Data might include interview transcripts, fieldnotes, literature reviews, seminars, focus group results, archival research, and so on. Some participants might also utilize reflective personal journals as important sources of data. Also during data collection, participants may seek out the advice of other professionals (economists, bank officials, extension agents, public health officials, and so forth) to gain specific or technical information.

### Critical Reflection

As research participants begin to dialogue about their situation, they enter into the process of critical reflection. Throughout this process, members examine and construct general themes then evaluate and reconstruct those themes from a more critical perspective. This phase is difficult to define, as it tends to be a more abstract psychological process of individual and community awareness.

### Planning

Planning emerges from the solutions proposed by participants. Plans for action also include discussions of how much participation is needed, how to obtain necessary resources, and plans for continuous evaluation.

### Action

Action occurs when local participants and other collaborators begin to put the plan into action such that the improved social situation occurs.

### Evaluation—New Reflection

Participants observe the action and continue to dialogue about the positive/negative outcomes. Participants may even become critical of their original plan and reconstruct a new plan. The cycle of social change continues with simultaneous action/reflection. The cycle continues until the group is satisfied with the outcomes. Usually a PAR project will go through two or more "PAR cycles." However, it is not unrealistic for a project to continue indefinitely in this fashion.

## THE MONDRAGON INDUSTRIAL COOPERATIVE AR PROJECT IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY: A CASE STUDY

The Mondragon Cooperatives, located in the highly-populated and industrialized Basque region of Spain, are well-known examples of industrial democracy and worker ownership and participation. Because of their size and success as labor-managed organizational alternatives to advanced capitalism, Mondragon is the subject of substantial writing and analysis by social scientists (Greenwood et al. 1992; Whyte and Whyte 1988).

The financial structure of the cooperative and its membership is an important part of the Mondragon story. Each worker-member pays a fee equivalent to a year's wages; this funds the worker-owner's "capital account" and defines the person's economic stake in the cooperative. The participants receive pay and increments to their capital account. These dis-

tributions are based on economic performance of the cooperative and capital needs of the organization. Pay distribution is based on a job classification. The ratio of top-paying jobs to low-paying jobs is low by American standards at 6:1. As part of this, the "managers" are paid less than they would be under typical capitalist organization. The managers are elected by the workers to four-year terms and are subject to recall (Greenwood and Levin 1998:43).

The cooperatives were founded in the 1950s with five leaders and thirteen coworkers. Currently there are nearly 200 cooperatives with over 30,000 worker-owners involved in the production of industrial robots, machine tools, semiconductors, computer circuit boards, household appliances such as refrigerators, electrical and plumbing supplies, and foods. They also offer various services including cooking and janitorial services. The AR project took place within the Fagor Group the largest of the many cooperative groups.

A team, including anthropologist Davydd Greenwood, was involved in a four-year AR project which was focused on solving some of the cooperative's problems. The project started with a consultation between the Fagor director of personnel and William Foote Whyte, and later Greenwood. This resulted in the development of some proposals to do research on the cooperative. In a general sense the project was to increase the social research capacity of the cooperative. The cooperative already had economic research capability that was well developed.

AR started with mutual visits. Greenwood taught a summer course in AR. The AR team consisted of second generation cooperative members. The underlying question had to do with the problems of integrating new members into the ideology of the organization and the adaptability of the coop. Much of the early work of the team focused on reading the relevant literature on the cooperative. Greenwood describes aspects of this part of the process: "We explored the constant use of dichotomies to stereotype desired and disapproved behavior in the cooperatives and to contrast the cooperatives with ordinary businesses" (Greenwood and Levin 1998:144). The team developed approaches that helped them better understand the cooperative through research practices that were consistent with cooperative principles. The research was "self-managed, open-ended and practically useful" (Greenwood and Levin 1998).

The process by which this emerged was difficult. There were misunderstandings about roles. Initially, at least, the Fagor members of the team expected that Greenwood would be more directive and that he would express an expert's role. Instead, "His goal was to develop a research mindset through which members could learn new things about themselves, find counterintuitive information, and develop action plans that linked these findings to appropriate actions" rather than to simply come in and do the research (Greenwood and Levin 1998:45). In this way Greenwood worked

to overcome the rest of the team's traditional conception of social research. The path out of this situation involved reading and reflecting on the existing literature on Mondragon. The AR team disliked this literature, feeling that it was a misrepresentation. Greenwood advocated that they needed to take charge of the depiction of themselves. This is where the project actually started.

This said, it is important to note that the team learned many social research techniques as well as produced a reinterpretation of itself. "In particular, the team came to believe that organizational culture in Fagor set the terms of conflict and contradiction in the group, and that the strength of the system was not found in absence of conflict but in commitment to broad goals and a set of rules of debate" (Greenwood and Levin 1998:45-46).

The process is research based. Much of the research consisted of focus groups and long series of interviews with the most alienated. Selection of the persons to be interviewed was an important part of the process. The data collection concluded with "a series of focus groups in which the team members subjected their most important values about cooperative life to open questioning: participation, solidarity, and the freedom of information" (Greenwood and Levin 1998:46). The research actively sought conflicts and contradictions in Fagor and found them. They concluded that the concern that experienced members had with new members was misdirected and even self-serving. They discovered that many of the problems grew out of the practices of the personnel department rather than a failure of new members to get it right. Many of the practices of the administration were inconsistent with the cooperative principles of the organization.

#### PAR FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE DEVELOPMENT IN A PHILIPPINE COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY

Since the World Health Organization's Alma Ata Declaration in 1978, primary health care (PHC) has been the governing agenda behind global health development programs. Particular PHC programs took various shapes depending on the agency or sponsor. The PHC strategy meant a de-emphasis on urban-based, high-technology, and curative medical care. Instead, attention was redirected toward community-based preventive health programs that would rely on low-cost, appropriate technologies to meet the basic health needs as defined by local people through participatory processes (Coreil and Mall 1990:xiii). This subtle departure from top-down policies demonstrated the incorporation of social science research that had long affirmed the importance of community involvement to the long-term success of PHC projects.

Since PAR includes community participation throughout the development process, and since participation and motivation among community members often increases sustainability, PAR may provide successful strat-

egies for implementing sustainable PHC in various communities. Today, many PHC planners are gearing their projects toward high community participation and "bottom-up" development.

Funded by Canadian sources, the De La Salle University Research Center in the Philippines conducted a PAR project among a forest-dwelling people inhabiting the rugged interior of the island Mindoro province in the Philippines. The nearly 6,000 Hanunoo live in the grassy woodlands of the southeastern part of the island. Settlements tend to be relatively small, usually with five or six one-family dwellings each. The Hanunoo have been characterized as a monogamous, bilaterally structured society with both men and women participating in locally important economic activities, and mainly shifting agriculture (Conklin 1975). While both women and men are regarded as complements of each other, particularly in terms of subsistence and general economic production, the gendered division of labor among the Hanunoo has a significant influence on the local health care system.

In terms of subsistence activities, Hanunoo women do much of the farming: weeding, planting, and burning (although decisions about the location of the plot are to be made by the husband). In terms of community decision making, women tend to have less power than men. However, since women are the primary caretakers of the household and of the children, the domain of health care has been constructed primarily as a woman's area of authority.

Health planners observing these local structures of authority, and taking into account the recent movement in PHC development toward the empowerment of women in local communities, decided to approach the Hanunoo women for training as health care workers. Researchers thought that women would be empowered by their new roles as local health care workers, particularly since they would be in charge of planning, managing, controlling, and assessing the collective actions of community members.

Among the Hanunoo, the biggest health concerns were poor nutrition, sanitation problems, and a lack of basic health care. The overall quantity of food consumed is low and strongly influenced by the seasons. During the months of June through September, families may eat very little or go without food. Sickness itself is attributed to two general domains of causation: the evil spirits that inhabit the landscape around them, or natural explanations such as injury from an accident, insect bites, or burns. Local healers usually prescribe herbal remedies for "natural" ailments, but rely on good spirits to help them cure someone who has become the victim of an evil spirit.

The PAR project was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of establishing a community-based health care system through training of local members, the use of indigenous knowledge and resources, and active participation from the community in planning the new health care system. The reason that the development researchers applied PAR is because they

wanted the program to be culturally appropriate and to take into consideration the local social, political, and economic dynamics of the community to maximize sustainability and capacity building. Researchers hypothesized that if they worked within local structures and coordinated the participatory action research with local members, that a decentralized system of health care could encourage cooperation among the members and provide the best chance of fully realizing better health in the community.

Two villages that had not been visited by other health personnel during the previous year were selected to participate in the study. The project was conducted through three general phases. The first phase consisted of gathering information within the community to gain general knowledge of the local health conditions and get members' input in priority health concerns. This phase also helped the "outsiders" to understand local constructions of sickness and healing, or what medical anthropologists call "ethnomedicine." The second phase of research centered around the actual formulation and implementation of the PAR project. The third phase began after 15 months and focused on an overall evaluation and assessment of the project and its strengths and weaknesses. In order to evaluate the success of the new health care delivery system, researchers utilized household surveys and an assessment of local health workers who had been trained during the project. As a result of this last phase, researchers hoped to learn valuable lessons and to then be in a better position to make recommendations to other PHC planners about the sustainability and replicability of PAR projects for PHC development.

During the initial phase of research, four local healers were identified who became part of the research team. These healers discussed local perceptions of nutritional status, sanitation, and local desires for basic health services. Meanwhile, clinicians were invited to participate in the study to examine household members in the village to gain a general sense of the variety of health problems within the community. Among the problems were high infant mortality, upper respiratory infections, skin diseases, parasitism, malaria, and nutritional anemia. Sanitation was extremely poor in the villages, with most of the household members using the bush for defecation and open springs and streams for their water supply. Waste was disposed of mainly by open dumping of garbage.

Once researchers had gained information working with local community members, they decided that a community-based health program would have the best chance for success. Since researchers were working from a PHC perspective, they contacted the Ministry of Health. A committee made up of a ministry representative, the medical consultant, a public health consultant, and a project nurse was formed to create a manual. The manual targeted key information about basic health care and consisted of sketches of daily life. After the manual was reviewed and approved by the committee, the project nurse and the local midwife were trained to become trainers

in their communities. At this time, community assemblies were held to find out what the community at large regarded as its primary health concerns and what they also considered as possible solutions. During the assemblies, the communities selected 30 women to become *Doktor sa Barangay* (DSB) on the basis of their interests and perceived abilities.

The DSBs were then trained by the nurse and the midwife through lectures, hands-on instruction, and practicum. The DSBs were then assigned to particular areas of the region as field workers, while the nurse maintained the central health facility for consultation with the DSBs as well as her own clinical duties.

As more women became interested in the role of the DSB, the number grew to 37 women only four months into the project. At the end of the 15 months of project implementation, researchers conducted an assessment of the PAR project through local interviews with health workers, household surveys, survey of the village health committee members, and a skills assessment of the DSBs. The results revealed a slight improvement in sanitation facilities, a slight reduction in childhood mortality, and an increase in basic awareness of disease etiologies. Researchers also noted a reduction in the prevalence of upper respiratory infections, skin diseases, anemia, malaria, and pulmonary tuberculosis.

Since the project required the participation of the Ministry of Health, the project was constrained from the start. However, as Osteria and Ramos-Jimenez point out, PHC is based on three general components: community participation, voluntary village health work, and appropriate technology. "Part of the failure in getting the community to participate arises from trying to impose an alien bureaucratic notion of participation rather than seeking to achieve it through the traditional structure of the village" (Osteria and Ramos-Jimenez 1988:227). Of course, community participation does not automatically ensure that all local needs will be met. After all, the services are usually geared toward basic needs and may not immediately enhance the preventive measures needed to maximize community health in future generations.

From the overall project assessment, the researchers realized several key areas of concern: the selection of voluntary health workers, community participation, training, incentives and rewards, supervision, and support. Since women were already in charge of household health care, the use of volunteer women from the village—as well as community participation at large—was considered central to the overall implementation of the PHC project. Since the project was collaborative throughout all phases of the action research, researchers hoped that the "resulting increase in cooperative interaction would lead to a more united community and act as a catalytic force for further development efforts as it creates a sense of responsibility to act on the unresolved needs. For . . ."

edge" (Osteria and Ramos-Jimenez 1988:229). Researchers also realized some of the unintended consequences of the PHC project.

Since the households were set far apart (due to the use of shifting cultivation), women had little motivation to visit the households. Furthermore, since women are the primary caregivers in the household, women had very little time to devote to an outside job before the job became burdensome. The instructions for local health workers assume that a few local members will be able to manage a wide range of functions—home visits, environmental sanitation, providing a safe water supply, first aid for injuries, treatment of simple and common ailments, health education, nutrition, maternal and child health, family planning, and record keeping. Certainly it is absurd to think that these women could take on such tasks and still take care of their households, their children, their husbands, and their farms.

Women's morale was also affected by the lack of confidence that some local households had in their abilities as DSBs. Furthermore, training the women was difficult due to language barriers and low literacy level. And finally, the village health committees made up of local members were harder to establish than initially thought because local members were not as interested in sustained activities.

Clearly, the project among the Hanunoo has its problems. However, as a result of the project, Osteria and Ramos-Jimenez argue that perhaps PHC planners will realize that the "disparity between the magnitude of the results expected and the meager resources and efforts expended is considerable: too much is expected from too little input." This advice basically means that PHC planners need to take seriously the problems surrounding community motivation, resources, incentives, and rewards. In this case, women were probably the best candidates for DSBs due to the pre-existing role of women as managers of family health. However, since women are already heavily burdened with work, taking on the role of DSB on a voluntary basis necessarily means that the DSBs can only work part-time. "The best solution to encourage sustained activity seems to be the incentive scheme for the voluntary worker—that is, the provision of nominal payment or payment in kind" (Osteria and Ramos-Jimenez 1988:231).

Furthermore, health workers need to be supported by an entire network of community members, including technical, supervisory, referral, and logistic support. An important ethical consideration here lies in the fact that community members—particularly the very poor members—come to expect the provision of basic services. When those expectations are not met, the community begins to lose faith in the abilities of the health system and it eventually fails. If PHC is to be successful, it needs to take the PAR approach seriously and work to gain full participation. Furthermore, the process needs to be much more collaborative and cogenerative as opposed to some model of the "health care system" being imposed from the top-

## SUMMARY

Action research and participatory action research represent a useful array of practices that address local needs in a constructive, capacity-building way. The AR and PAR literature is rich and consistent with the community orientation of anthropologists. Anthropologists have contributed to the development of these approaches since they were originally developed. The process will tend to incorporate local knowledge and address local needs by its cogenerative nature. The action research traditions inevitably link research and action. There is a substantial use of these approaches in many different settings.

## FURTHER READING

Greenwood, Davydd J. and Morren Levin. *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1998. This is an invaluable contemporary statement on action research and participatory action research. The stance is both intellectually reflective and practical.

## WEB SITE

<http://www.parnet.org/>

## Chapter 6

# Cultural Action

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Cultural action is a process directed at changing the relationships between poor people and power elite. People are poor because of the political economic structures that exist in the world. It takes an essentially cultural approach to deal with the factors which cause poverty and powerlessness. The word "cultural" refers to the fact that the process deals directly with the community's knowledge and understanding about their situation. The essence of cultural action is the process by which a community, through reflection and study, can better understand those factors which cause their predicament and through this understanding achieve a release from these circumstances or their own liberation. It is highly participatory and focused on increasing self-determination in the context of cultural dominance and oppression. This approach is sometimes called radical or liberation pedagogy.

Some of the ideas that constitute cultural action are widely used in contemporary education in America. Direct use by anthropologists is far more common in Latin America than in the United States. Nevertheless Freirean thought is part of community development discourse in the United States. What is rooted in Brazilian radical thought is in part now mainstream innovative educational practice on most American college campuses. It can be seen in the emphasis on critical thinking, and active and participatory learning.

Portions of this chapter were published in *Cultural Action: Theory, Process and Practices, High Plains Applied Anthropologist* 16(1):9-18, 1996. The authors are Barbara A. Cellarius, Deborah Crooks, Patricia Kannapel, Juliana McDonald, Cynthia Reeves, and John van Wiligen.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE APPROACH

The *cultural action* approach was developed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1921–1997) as a means for liberating illiterate Brazilian peasants from oppression by the elite. He came to the approach through his own life experiences. The approach is also called Freirean method.

Freire was born in Recife, Brazil, to a middle-class family. Though middle-class, he did experience poverty as a young person during the Great Depression of the 1930s. His father died while he was young which made it necessary for him to be a family bread winner. This experience was formative in his development. He was trained in law but choose a career in education. Elza Maria Costa de Oliveira, to whom he was married, was an important influence on his life. She was a teacher. Through her commitment to assisting the poor through education, his own consciousness was raised. He came to learn about *Catholic action* and *basic church communities*, ideas associated with liberation theology (Taylor 1993:22).

Freire expressed the idea that domination, aggression, and violence are intrinsic parts of social life. This is often expressed in terms of race, class, and gender but can also be based on religious beliefs, political affiliation, national origin, age, and physical or mental disabilities. His ideas were first put into practice among the very poor people of the impoverished northeast of Brazil. He was successful in bringing literacy to hundreds of poor farm families. He soon became the director of Brazil's national literacy program which became very successful. He was attacked by the right-wing, land-owning elite. Freire was forced into exile following a military coup in 1964. He developed his mode of practice further while working with poor farmers in Chile (1964–1969). His ideas are described in his classic statement on radical education, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and many other volumes. He established the Institute of Cultural Action in conjunction with the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland. His return to Brazil was in 1990 under a general amnesty declared by the government. Paulo Freire died in 1997. His work continues to influence educators, anthropologists, and other social scientists.

The reason his approach came to be widely used is that Freire and his associates did not just teach literacy in a decontextualised way but emphasized the relationship between literacy and participation in the political process. This helped the poor see their own potential and capacity. Literacy, instead of being unobtainable, is something that everyone can aspire to.

## KEY CONCEPTS

Cultural action incorporates a large number of special terms that reflect a specific view of the world and understandings about how the structures of the world can be changed. Many of the terms are derived from Marxist

thought and resonate with critical social theory. While this terminology is useful, the meanings are often obscured by convoluted prose that seems to be intent on creating jargon meaningful to a specific intellectual community.

The Freirean view sees the world as consisting of dominating power elites and the people they oppress. Oppression is associated with poverty and distorts the knowledge and understanding poor people have about the world and the reason for their place in it. This is the process of alienation. As the elites control wealth they also control the understandings the poor have of their situation. Another way of saying this is that the elites control the content of the culture of the poor. Under these circumstances the culture of the poor becomes inauthentic because it is basically structured by the power elites. This line of thinking illustrates Freire's use of the basic ideas of cultural anthropology. For example, Freire uses the idea of culture in way that is consistent with the way that it has been used in anthropology. Culture consists of what humans have constructed both material and immaterial—buildings and artifacts on the one hand, and ideology and symbols on the other. The key task of cultural action is to make it possible for oppressed people to take control of how they are depicted.

The concepts of humanization and authenticity are central to Freire's thinking and to the method of cultural action. Humanization is a process in which one becomes truly free and authentically human. Authentic humans control their own culture. Freire believes that this should be the ultimate human occupation. To be human is to be neither oppressed nor oppressor. Although elites in a society may see themselves as more "human" than others, Freire argues that their humanness lacks authenticity. By virtue of the fact that they oppress others, the elites cannot be truly free nor can those who are oppressed be free as they are complicit in their own oppression. According to Freire, authentic humanness and authentic freedom cannot be achieved by simply attaining a higher status in a corrupt system; they can only be obtained by throwing off that system so that both freedom from oppression and freedom of oppressing can be obtained.

Freire gives this example: a peasant moves through the system to become a landowner. The peasant has internalized the oppressive aspects of the system by taking on the landowner's attitudes and behaviors. Although the peasant has achieved a measure of freedom in that he or she is no longer a possession or object in the inventory of the landowner, authentic liberation has still not been achieved. The individual who now possesses material, whether in the form of people or material items, is still denied freedom. Conditions of humanity are not achieved.

Freire's philosophy has straightforward implications for education. Educating others to take part in a dehumanizing system accomplishes little more than the maintenance of the status quo. Freire calls for a humanizing pedagogy that is constructed through a *dialogue* between individuals and

teacher(s) that is based on relevant topics. The topics are not imposed by others, but are generated by the students themselves. This allows the students to move beyond the dehumanizing system in which knowledge is defined and controlled by the elite to the creation of a system in which knowledge is defined by all and controlled by none.

Under these terms, the process of humanization is freely negotiated among all parties, by coequals, enabling all to achieve their own authentic humanity. According to Freire, this process should be the same whether applied to education, research, or revolution. Truly liberating education, applied to education, research, or revolution. Truly liberating education, research, or revolution requires that all are active and equal participants in the process, not simply objects of the process. When this occurs, authenticity and humanness are achieved.

Freire's ideas about education reflect his thoughts about humanization. He conceptualizes two approaches to education: the banking approach and the problem-posing approach. The banking approach, traditionally used in schools and academic settings, is an act of depositing knowledge, with the teacher as depositor and the student as depository. The teacher is viewed as the holder of knowledge while the student is viewed as an empty receptacle. The role of the teacher is to fill the student with knowledge by narrating content to them. The role of the student is to listen and memorize the content presented. Freire sees an underlying motive in the use of the banking approach: the dominant class indoctrinates the subordinate class with its view of reality and stifles any creative powers within the subordinate class that might lead it to recognize true reality and rise up against the elites. Banking education is an important mechanism for the production of alienation.

The problem-posing approach, in contrast, is characterized by a student-teacher partnership in which the two engage in dialogue and reflection, each learning from the other, each teaching the other. Problems of human beings and their relations to the world are presented for reflection by both teacher and student. Students discuss, or dialogue in Freire's terms, these problems with the teacher, engage in critical thinking in order to arrive at an understanding of the problems, develop solutions to those problems with that understanding, and then implement a plan of action using those solutions.

In Freire's view, the problem-posing approach is revolutionary in that it does not accept a static view of the past and present, nor a predetermined view of the future. It also does not assume superior knowledge on the part of the teacher. This approach assists teachers and students in recognizing that their situation is not a matter of unalterable fate but is instead a problem that can be understood and solved.

This first goal of radical pedagogy shows the relationship between thinking and acting that should exist for change to occur. Conscientization is

tions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire 1970:19). It is the process of developing consciousness that has the power to transform reality. Conscientization can be thought of as a method of liberating education that humanizes its participants. It is an intentional process of critical awareness of the world, and those who become conscientized "are able to discover the reason why things are the way they are" (Gadotti 1994:166). Poverty, illness, and other problems have structural causes. A conscientized person understands the structures that cause poverty and illness to be.

Conscientization is different from "consciousness raising" which means the promotion of preselected information about a specific topic consistent with the interests of the people doing the speaking. The idea of consciousness raising implies a kind of cultural superiority (Berger 1974).

Conscientization involves the process by which people discover the experiences that have structured their world. In the terminology of Freirian analysis these are represented as generative themes. Generative themes are codifications of aspects of the reality that people face every day of their lives. These generative themes are a large class of knowledge about the particular situation that the people find themselves in, and may be found in words, phrases, expressions, characteristic ways of speaking, of composing verses, and of talking about the world (Gadotti 1994:19). Generative themes emerge through a dialectical process which takes place between the facilitator and the people from the community. These themes are ideas, concepts, expressions that are known to the people. They are selected for investigation because of their relevance to their lives and their capacity to generate the ability of the people to confront the social, cultural, and political reality in which they live. The themes must suggest and mean something important to the people of the community. Through the study of these generative themes, two goals of radical pedagogy may be attained: conscientization and praxis.

Praxis is thinking about and acting upon the world around us. It is the process by which the cultural world is created and the physical world is transformed. The world exists because humans are conscious of it and this consciousness of self and of the world is what makes humans unique and different from all other species. In order to exist, to be in the world, humans must act upon and transform the world. The purpose of humans in this existence is to act in ways that will create a full and rich life for both individuals and for the collective group. Humans are capable of thought and action, which are both at the heart of the meaning of praxis.

Through action and thought, humans can solve the problems of their immediate existence. By solving problems, history is made, and humans are aware of the history which they have created. Humans recognize their part in this history, are aware that they are creating history and have the ability

to create the history of future generations. This framework of the realization of past, present, and future is part of the definition of human existence.

Praxis consists of both thought and action. It is not enough to mouth the words of propaganda, to mimic the words of teachers or revolutionary leaders. Thought must create a real change in the consciousness of the individual and of the collective group. Freire makes the point that thought and action are concurrent and should not be thought of as a step-by-step process. This is a qualitative change, an awareness of the world, and a conscious effort to change, to transform the conditions of life.

### PROCESS OF CULTURAL ACTION

Cultural action involves people defining problems based upon their view of the world and their situation. The process involves a team composed of a facilitator, who acts only to guide the activities, a number of investigators or educated experts who are typically from social sciences such as anthropology or sociology, and the local people who act as co-investigators at all stages of the process. The groups formed in this way have been called "culture circles" or "reflection groups."

The people discuss their problems in the culture circles. This involves the conscientization or "awareness raising" discussed earlier (Werner and Bower 1982). This is an open-ended group dialogue process. While this is formed by those that share a problem and a facilitator. While this is an educative process, it doesn't involve the flow of information from the teacher as expert to the class. It is not based on the "banking" approach. The questions raised in the dialogue do not have predetermined answers. The group works to better understand the problems they are facing. Each group member's perspective is given equal value. It is best when everybody takes part in the process.

Werner and Bower offer the following advice on leading a discussion group (1982:16). They suggest:

- 1) encourage all persons to take an active part; 2) assure them that they are among friends and are free to speak their own thoughts; 3) advise them to listen carefully, and avoid interrupting each other; and 4) warn them not to simply accept what another person says, but to think about it carefully, or analyze it. (1982:16)

It's not a matter of just saying all of this. The leader has to genuinely believe that each person in the group possesses relevant and valid knowledge. The questions that are used to stimulate discussion need to be truly open-ended. Discussion is often stimulated by facilitators by using words, pictures or objects. These stimuli need to be familiar and understandable to the people. The jargon of technical fields or leftist politics should be avoided. Facilitators should be careful that to "accept a sincere attack

on your own ideas" should be taken "as a sign of successful leadership" (Werner and Bower 1982:34).

This is the basis for everybody learning from each other. The distinction between expert and novice is erased. The questions should foster the view that through the discussion group they can act and exert control on the world around them. Part of this is to increase the feelings of self-worth and feelings of strength within the group. This is difficult to do. The life experiences of oppressed people make it difficult to change their consciousness. "This is especially true with persons who have learned to silently endure their misfortune and who accept society's view of themselves as powerless, ignorant and hopeless" (Werner and Bower 1982:26).

Freire found it useful to focus on specific words, things, and situations. In the course of the discussion some words and phrases are repeated. This repetition suggests that the ideas behind the words are important parts of the consciousness of the group. For example poor people may continually refer to the idea of "slum" where they live. This may be done uncritically, indicating an acceptance of the conditions of life there. This can be discussed with the circle facilitator focusing on the meaning of the slum, how slums come to be slums, and the reasons members of the circle experience poverty. In this way they develop a critical consciousness about their lives. Slum becomes a generative theme, an idea that can be used to produce critical understanding of a situation.

This process is much more workable if it is done in the context of learning of practical skills. Freire's original work did involve awareness raising to be sure, but it was done in the context of poor people learning to read and write. Consciousness without context is difficult. Werner and Bower say, "to be most effective, educational methods that increase self-confidence and social awareness should be built into all aspects of training programs and community activities" (1982:18). There is sometimes the temptation to do the conscientization in the Freirian mode but to revert to a top-down, expertise-driven mode when presenting technical information. As they work on generative themes, this deep level of involvement of the community allows those involved to be better able to act on the themes to cause change.

The process involves three areas of investigation which compose a concurrent, iterative process, and not a linear, step-by-step process (Taylor 1993:73).

#### Naming

The first part of the process is to identify or "name" the problem on which work will be done. The initial phase involves informal meetings between the cultural action facilitator and members of the community. The facilitator will live with the community in order to develop an understanding of their culture. What is the question under discussion? The problem

is defined by community members, reflecting their perceptions of the world in which they exist. The facilitator must enter into a dialogue with the people in order to know their objective situation and their perceptions of the situation. The meetings between the members of the community and the cultural action worker are informal. From this dialogue, the generative themes are identified.

### Reflection

The generative themes are reflected upon. Reflection involves thinking about the situation and trying to explain it. The situation of the people is seen as a living code which has been developed through the generative themes and is to be decoded or deciphered. Instructional materials in the form of photographs, posters, reading texts, and so on are produced which are based on generative themes. Through the use of such materials the investigator represents the themes to the people in a systematized and amplified form. The images of "codifications" depict the generative themes in an attempt to stimulate thinking about the situation. These materials are used as the basis of reflection and should be organized so as to offer various possibilities of analysis. In this way, links can be made between the various themes, and the people are able to examine the historical-cultural context of the themes. This process of decoding develops a critical consciousness of the situation that may then lead to the development of strategies of action meant to transform the situation.

### Action

The process becomes concrete. The group identifies possible routes of action to change the situation. What options are there becomes important. Action involves cooperation, unity, and organization. Facilitators and the people of the community together must create the guidelines for action.

## CASE: CULTURAL ACTION EMPLOYED IN EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Anthropologist Sebastiao Rocha and a group of teachers frustrated with the low-quality school system of their region founded the Centro Popular de Cultura e Desenvolvimento (CPCD) in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil. A not-for-profit, non-governmental organization, the center promotes popular education and community development through educational programs for poor people. The starting point of the process is the culture of the communities with which they work. The culture of the participants

ment and use of innovative methodology, training of educators, and encouragement of community participation. Their program reflects the pedagogical ideas of Paulo Freire. Participation is important. Participants include "children, adolescents, adult men and women, not as mere beneficiaries or objects of our interest, but citizens and partners of all the processes and stages of the projects" (<http://www.cpcd.org>).

Minas Gerais is a state in the impoverished southeast of Brazil. There the current economy reflects the historic dependence on gold mining and the collapse of this industry. The people of the region have high unemployment and long-term dependence on employment in mining. Because of the history of labor practices in the highly capitalized and economically volatile extraction industries, there is less tendency for these people to participate in the political process.

CPCD has created and manages a large number of different projects located in various cities of the region. In Curvelo the community of learning project focuses on training people of the local community to train others. This project was to result in the training of 250 community agents of education. The Bernal de Jogo project focuses on education through play. The project results in the fabrication of large numbers of games and toys that relate to motor development, reasoning, reading/writing, and mathematics.

One of their projects *Ser Crianca* ("To Be a Child?") won first place in a UNICEF program for recognizing achievement in education and participation. This program provided an innovative education program for children and adolescents 7 to 14. There are over 500 participants at three locations in the region.

Brazilian public schools only provide half-days of classes. *Ser Crianca* supplemented this with a daily program during the students' after school hours. Perhaps more important than these activities is that *Ser Crianca* provides a place for children "to speak and be heard" (Walbran 1999). This idea is at the core of Freirian methods. In the project, Freirian methods are most clearly expressed in the methodology of the circle (or wheel). The circle is an alternative to the traditional hierarchical pattern found in schools. Children form a circle at the start of each session during which various things are done. They plan the day's work, share news from home, discuss goals. Circles are also used for conflict resolution and to establish goals. More generally, the circles build a sense of community. A child can call for a circle to discuss a wide range of issues. These may include sexuality, family violence, and the challenges of living in a small town in the interior of a developing country (Walbran 1999). The circle removes the pedestal which protects the teacher and forces them to examine their own values. The approach facilitates critical thinking, including thinking about the political implications of the education process. CPCD teachers are given special training to deal with their role in the circles. The approach is the

antithesis to "banking education" in which the authoritative teacher makes deposits of information in passive students.

Teacher training is an important part of the mission of the center. The methods of *Ser Crianca* are taught to groups of teachers from outside the program. The strategies of the program are applied to teacher training itself. Teachers are engaged in play activities and share in the production of toys and other aids to learning. Teachers are encouraged to develop professional solidarity.

In the program, participants plant and care for the school's organic garden and prepare foods from the garden for the school's lunch. This involves reading and writing about recipes from the kitchen. They have a small factory for toys where they make toys out of recycled materials. Participants have made large numbers of educational games. They also have gardens and produce jams and jellies using fruit they raise without harmful chemicals.

CPCD has disseminated projects to other regions of Minas Gerais, other Brazilian states, and two other countries namely Mozambique and Guinea Bissau.

#### SUMMARY

Cultural action is an approach that is widely used to achieve educational goals in many different settings. While it was developed in the context of very poor communities, the ideas have been applied in a wider array of settings. The core of the process is a dialogue of community members done with the help of a facilitator. The goal of the dialogue is that participants better understand the factors that put them in their current situation. The approach results in the people of the community having an enhanced sense of what they can do to improve their situation. They are liberated from the negative images that the wealthy have placed upon them. Although often couched in a political rhetoric that appears to create distance with many readers, elements of the approach are now very widely used on college campuses.

#### FURTHER READING

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum, 1970. Freire was a prolific author. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is a classic in the radical education literature. It is a logical place to start reading.

### Chapter 7

## Collaborative Research

Collaborative research anthropology is a process in which researchers, program developers, and community members are networked to do research for "joint problem solving and positive social change" (J. Schensul and S. Schensul 1992:162). Although collaborative anthropology is primarily a research activity, the anthropologist is also involved in change-producing action. The anthropologist serves not as a direct change agent but as an auxiliary to community leaders. It is important to the success of the process that the relationship between the community and the collaborating anthropologist be direct. Because of this, little collaborative research is done through intervening agencies.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

Collaborative research anthropology was developed by Stephen Schensul and Jean Schensul within the context of community programs in Chicago, Illinois and Hartford, Connecticut (J. Schensul and S. Schensul 1992). The initial project was done by Stephen Schensul in the Mexican-American community of Chicago (Bell, Schensul, and Just 1974; S. Schensul 1973, 1974, 1978; S. Schensul and M. Bymel 1975; S. Schensul and J. Schensul 1978). This program was originally focused on community mental health but grew to include many aspects of community welfare. These programs were diverse and included "bilingual education, maternal and child health, mental health, community-based mental health training, substance abuse, child abuse, sports and recreation, and gang-prevention work" (J. Schensul and S. Schensul 1992:167). Through encouragement and modeling provided by the Chicago program, a number of other providers were initiated