

Participatory Learning & Action 4-day Training Workshop (starts Oct 11, Dublin)

"Participatory Learning & Action (PLA) is best described as an adaptive learning and action strategy that enables people to learn, work and act together in a co-operative and democratic manner." (Robert Chambers)

Dublin: **October 11th, 12th, 24th & 25th**

Time: 9.45am - 4.45pm

Venue: **Carmichael Centre**, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7.

www.carmichaelcentre.ie

Trainers: **Mary O'Reilly-de Brún & Tomas de Brún**, Centre for Participatory Strategies.

Language of Instruction: English.

www.activelink.ie

The **Centre for Participatory Strategies** is running a 4-Day intensive training workshop in practical PLA tools and techniques. If you want to learn participatory techniques and methods that enable voices from the community to be included and heard in policy, planning or research, this training workshop could be for you.

No previous research experience or knowledge of PLA is necessary - in fact, we specialise in de-mystifying the processes involved in doing good participatory work. The workshop is practical, people-centred and energetic. Our key aim is to enable participants to become confident in their understanding of participatory approaches and skilled in the use of core PLA techniques and methods. The workshop includes inputs, demonstrations and practice sessions, discussion and fieldwork.

This PLA workshop is ideal for those involved in community development, community consultation, health promotion, work with children and vulnerable groups, service planning & provision, policy-making, academic research, advocacy, capacity & team-building, evaluation, community arts, therapy, social work and work with refugees and asylum-seekers.

This workshop is already partially booked up, and is the final PLA workshop in Dublin for 2007, so if you would like to reserve a place, please contact the **Centre**

for Participatory Strategies

tel 094 - 954 90 01

email: moreillydebrun@eircom.net

For further information about the workshop and booking online, visit our website

www.platraining.com

The Centre for Participatory Strategies was established in 2002 and is located in the West of Ireland. The trainers at CPS are social-cultural anthropologists with twenty years international experience in the development and delivery of innovative training workshops. The Centre provides a range of training, education and support services.

Participatory action research

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Action Research or Participatory action research has emerged in recent years as a significant methodology for intervention, development and change within communities and groups. It is now promoted and implemented by many international development agencies and university programs CCAR, as well as countless local community organizations around the world.

Participatory action research is a recognized form of experimental research that focuses on the effects of the researcher's direct actions of practice within a participatory community with the goal of improving the performance quality of the community or an area of concern (Dick, 2002; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Hult & Lennung, 1980; McNiff, 2002). Action research involves utilizing a systematic cyclical method of planning, taking action, observing, evaluating (including self-evaluation) and critical reflecting prior to planning the next cycle (O'Brien, 2001; McNiff, 2002). The actions have a set goal of addressing an identified problem in the workplace, for example, reducing the illiteracy of students through use of new strategies (Quigley, 2000). It is a collaborative method to test new ideas and implement action for change. It involves direct participation in a dynamic research process, while monitoring and evaluating the effects of the researcher's actions with the aim of improving practice (Dick, 2002; Checkland & Holwell, 1998; Hult & Lennung, 1980). At its core, action research is a way to increase understanding of how change in one's actions or practices can mutually benefit a community of practitioners (McNiff, 2002; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Carr & Kremmis 1986; Masters, 1995).
Understanding action research.

"Essentially Participatory Action Research (PAR) is research which involves all relevant parties in actively examining together current action (which they experience as problematic) in order to change and improve it. They do this by critically reflecting on the historical, political, cultural, economic, geographic and other contexts which make sense of it. ... Participatory action research is not just research which is hoped will be followed by action. It is action which is researched, changed and re-researched, within the research process by participants. Nor is it simply an exotic variant of consultation. Instead, it aims to be active co-research, by and for those to be helped. Nor can it be used by one group of people to get another group of people to do what is thought best for them - whether that is to implement a central policy or an organisational or service change. Instead it tries to be a genuinely

democratic or non-coercive process whereby those to be helped, determine the purposes and outcomes of their own inquiry." - Wadsworth, Y. (1998) What is Participatory Action Research?

<http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/p-ywadsworth98.html>

The "research" aspects of PAR attempt to avoid the traditional "extractive" research carried out by universities and governments where "experts" go to a community, study their subjects, and take away their data to write their papers, reports and theses. Research in PAR is ideally BY the local people and FOR the local people. Research is designed to address specific issues identified by local people, and the results are directly applied to the problems at hand.

PAR proceeds through repeated cycles, in which researchers and the community start with the identification of major issues, concerns and problems, initiate research, originate action, learn about this action and proceed to a new research and action cycle. This process is a continuous one. Participants in Action Research projects continuously reflect on their learning from the actions and proceed to initiate new actions on the spot. Outcomes are very difficult to predict from the outset, challenges are sizeable and achievements depend to a very large extent on researcher's commitment, creativity and imagination.

Examples of action research projects dissertations and masters thesis can be easily found by searching the internet. Some universities host sites where the best example of this form of research in corporate and university organizations, and school communities.

PAR should not be confused with PRA - Participatory rural appraisal. PRA is an assessment technique that could form part of a PAR process, but does not encompass the full action-reflection cycle.

Community-based participatory research

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is research that is conducted as an equal partnership between traditionally trained "experts" and members of a community. In CBPR projects, the community participates fully in all aspects of the research process. CBPR projects start with the community. Community is often self-defined, but general categories of community include geographic community, community of individuals with a common problem or issue, or a community of individuals with a common interest or goal. CBPR encourages collaboration of "formally trained research" partners from any area of expertise, provided that the researcher provide expertise that is seen as useful to the investigation by the community, and be fully committed to a partnership of equals and producing outcomes usable to the community. Equitable partnerships require sharing power, resources, credit, results, and knowledge, as well as, a reciprocal appreciation of each partner's knowledge and skills at each stage of the project, including problem definition/issue selection, research design, conducting research, interpreting the

results, and determining how the results should be used for action. CBPR differs from traditional research in many ways. One of the principal ways in which it is different is that instead of creating knowledge for the advancement of a field or for knowledge's sake, CBPR is an iterative process, incorporating research, reflection, and action in a cyclical process.

Participatory Learning and Action

http://www.iied.org/NR/agbioliv/pla_notes/index.html

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): Analysis of Experience, an article by Robert Chambers, 1994

<http://www.childsurvival.com/connections/Chambers-AnalysisExperience.doc>