

EVENT REPORT







Training on Participatory Research Methodologies

Yangon, Myanmar

September 18-22, 2017

PRIA facilitated a week-long training program on 'Participatory Research Methodologies' for civil society practitioners in Myanmar, from September 18-22, 2017. The training program was organized by the East India Institute (EAI), based in Seoul, South Korea and was held for practitioners who belonged to various civil society organizations such as NDI, YSPS, OMI, Sandhi Governance Institute etc. On behalf of PRIA, the facilitators of the training included Dr. Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay, Director; Mr. Sukrit Nagpal and Ms. Wafa Singh, Senior Program Officers. From EAI, Mr. Young-Hwan Shin, Senior Research Fellow/Director, Research Planning Department and Ms. Natalie Grant, Research Associate/Program Officer, Research planning Department, attended. The training program built on the social research training which the trainees received a couple of months ago. PRIA's training aimed to build their capacities in participatory research methodologies in particular, and therefore, had two major objectives:

- Enhancing understanding and skills in social and participatory research methods
- Planning for applying social and participatory research skills in rural and urban settings of Myanmar

The first day of the training was organized around introduction of concepts and building of a common understanding on participatory research. The first half of the day was dedicated towards introduction and understanding the trainees needs and aspirations of the training program. This included a briefing by Dr. Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay, where he introduced the training program design, and set the stage for the training sessions, which were to follow. This was followed by a session by Mr. Shin and Ms. Grant from EAI, where they engaged in discussions with the trainees, around the capacity development program in Myanmar; lessons arising out of the Seoul Democracy Forum and development of their research proposals in line with the expectations from EAI. This involved conversations, which gave clarity to the participants on expectations from them and ways forward.

The second half of the first day introduced the concept 'Participatory Research' to the participants; its origins, implications and applications. This session was facilitated by Dr. Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay, where he explained the concept of research, social research, and finally participatory research and its principles, which differentiated it from other forms of research such as traditional social science research and policy (commissioned research).





This was followed by a session on 'steps to participatory research', which was facilitated by Ms. Wafa Singh and Mr. Sukrit Nagpal. This session helped develop an understanding on the steps to be followed in a participatory research process, starting from a request from actors in a problem situation to joint data analysis, and sharing of the findings. This was illustrated through a case study analysis, which helped the participants identify the steps in a practical real life situation. This was done through a group activity,

where the trainees were split into groups for analysis, followed by a group presentation. After presentations were made, the facilitators built on what the participants had identified and tried to see it in light of the ideal steps in a participatory research process. This sequence of having the group activity first and the presentation later helped the participants identify the steps that they missed. At the end of the session, the facilitators collected feedback from the participants on their expectations from the training program, and what they expected to learn from the sessions in the following days. To end with, the day's learning was consolidated by the PRIA team, who also introduced the sessions for the following day.





The second day of training program focused on building skill sets and capacities of the trainees in application of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools in the first half of the day and developing an understanding of Community Score Card (CSC) in practical, real life settings. The day began with a recap of the previous day, where a group of four volunteers collated and shared the key learnings from the previous day. Following this was a session on PRA, which introduced the concept, including its origins, evolution and related aspects, and was facilitated by Ms. Wafa Singh and Mr. Sukrit Nagpal. This session reflected on PRA principles and how it differed from the concept of development tourism, which introduced earlier, and which led to the emphasis on participatory appraisal techniques.





From a practical viewpoint, this session also introduced the various tools and methods under PRA, which could be applied in rural settings, and helped develop a common understanding on how this can lead to identification of problems, and potential solutions in a participatory manner. Tools such as social mapping, resource mapping, timeline, transect walk, trend analysis, Venn diagrams and ranking methods were introduced. In order to develop a better understanding of the various tools, the trainees were divided into groups, where they practiced tools such as social and resource mapping of a common, identified location. In this activity, and within the group, participants enacted the role of villagers and researchers, and practiced inter-personal communication skills, along with mapping. The maps were then shared with the larger group, and a debriefing was done by the PRIA facilitators, where they gave

feedback and points for improvement to the respective groups. Along with PRA, the participants were also familiarized with a similar approach used in urban settings, known as Participatory Urban Appraisal (PUA). The concept, as applied under a project being implemented by PRIA in India, was explained to the participants, and used to illustrated how tools of transect walk and mapping were used to understand urban realities and how it paved the way for developing joint solutions for addressing urban challenges.

The second half of the second day was dedicated towards introduction of the concept of Community Score Card (CSC). Dr. Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay shared the important elements of this participatory tool, and illustrated the format in which this scorecard was used and practiced in real life. He explained how this tool was used by communities in a locality to rank the performance and service-delivery of public facilities accessed by the people. While the first step involved assigning of scores by communities and service providers exclusively; the second involved the collation of the two. This led to identification of gaps that emerged, brainstorming and putting together an action plan for addressing the gaps and the challenges that marked the service delivery of the particular public facility.





This session also involved splitting the participants into groups, where they practiced the CSC as applied in practical situations. This helped them gain a better understanding of the application of this participatory tool in participatory research studies. At the end of the day, the facilitators also took feedback from the participants, on what they felt about the sessions, and one major point that emerged was that they learnt better through activities. This was duly taken into account for the sessions to follow, which were thoughtfully built around more practice-based activities.

The third day began with a recap done by a group of four volunteers from the learnings acquired from the previous day. This was followed a session on 'research design', which was facilitated by Dr. Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay. This session in particular laid the foundation of development of a research plan, and helped the participants understand how important planning a research process is, before embarking on doing the research itself.





Through references to practical examples, concepts like deductive/inductive research; dependent and independent variables, cause-effect relationships were explained. Other aspects like identifying a specific research question from a broader research topic, developing a research hypothesis, and planning for data collection and analysis were introduced. This session set the stage for the upcoming exclusive sessions on collection, organizing and analysis of data.

The second half of the third day focused exclusively on data collection methods, tools and techniques. This session, facilitated by Ms. Wafa Singh and Mr. Sukrit Nagpal, helped develop an understanding on the importance of data collection, various tools, and approaches for the same and important elements in developing a data collection plan. This session introduced qualitative and quantitative data collection approaches separately, and the most common tools and techniques used under both approaches. This session helped develop an understanding on In-Depth Interviews (IDI), Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), questionnaires and case studies under qualitative approaches; while the techniques of interview, observation, questionnaire and enumeration were illustrated under quantitative approaches.

To help participants understand how to apply these tools, a common research question was chosen. The question was: 'what is considered as violence, by the young people in Myanmar'. Participants were again split into groups, and each group was asked to develop a qualitative questionnaire, in order to seek data for the given research question. Among the four groups, two were asked to design a questionnaire for an in-depth interview, while the other two were designed questions for an FGD. The groups then presented their work, and were given feedback by the facilitators. The same activity was repeated for developing an understanding on quantitative approaches, where they were asked to design questions from a quantitative perspective. This was also followed by sharing, and feedback. In this session, the concept of mixed method approaches to data collection was also introduced. As a practical illustration, the tool of enumeration was also explained to the participants, with details on how the tool was used in practical settings in Ajmer in India.





The fourth day of the training program was dedicated towards developing an understanding on three important aspects in a research process: sampling; data analysis and writing a research proposal. The first half of the day focused on an exclusive session on sampling approaches. Facilitated by Mr. Sukrit Nagpal, this session aimed at developing clarity on key concepts like population, sampling, sampling frame etc. This session also introduced various sampling approaches as applied under quantitative and qualitative methods separately. While random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, etc. were introduced under quantitative approaches, a brief illustration was made of convenience sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling and snowballing approaches as used under qualitative methods. All the approaches were explained through practical examples, followed by an exercise on sampling of wards in a

locality in Yangon city in Myanmar. This helped the participants understand the concept of sampling in practice, and the important considerations to keep in mind while doing sampling under a research project.





The second half of the fourth day detailed out the process of data analysis, both through qualitative and quantitative approaches. Facilitated by Mr Sukrit Nagpal, the session began with outlining the importance of thinking of data analysis, right from the beginning of the research process, when the researcher designs the questions for data collection. The session also threw light on organizing the data, data entry process and the process of crunching the data for facilitating the process of emerging of trends, which would in turn help in data analysis. Qualitative data analysis process was explained by Dr. Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay, through an illustration of a project in India on 'Capacity Building needs of Indian CSOs in the state of Jharkhand'. Through this case study, Dr. Bandyopadhyay explained how the data that emerged was grouped into exclusive categories of organizational management, human resources, communication etc., and the trends analyzed.

Finally, the last session of the day, aimed at developing an understanding on 'how to write a research proposal'. Facilitated by Ms. Wafa Singh, this session primarily aimed at three things: understanding the participant's perspectives on what a research proposal is, illustrating the elements of an ideal research proposal, and finally identifying the commonalties with the research proposal format prescribed by EAI. In order to do this, the participants were again engaged in a group activity where they put together the structure of a research proposal. The groups then discussed their thoughts with everyone, and the facilitators gave their feedback.





This was used as a base to consolidate the learnings from the group work and introduce the elements of an ideal research proposal, which included putting together the title, abstract, table of contents, introduction, literature review, methodology, ethical considerations, timeline, references, personnel information and budget. Following this, commonalties were identified between the latter and the format prescribed by EAI, so that the participants are able to reflect on what is ideally desired and what they need to produce in order to conform to EAI standards. The last few minutes of the day was used to collecting feedback from the participants on what they wanted to learn more, during the final day of the training. All the viewpoints were duly noted and the most common topic that emerged from the feedback, PRA and sampling was chosen for further deliberation on the following day.

The first half of the fifth and the final day of the training program aimed at consolidation of learning's acquired during the four days and practicing some key concepts studied, to have a clearer understanding on the application of theoretical tools and techniques, in practice. Following the recap of the previous day, and the feedback received on further practice of PRA tools, the session reflected on the PRA tools discussed earlier this week, and recapitulation of the important points and elements. After a brief orientation by the session facilitators (Mr. Sukrit Nagpal and Ms. Wafa Singh), the participants were again divided into groups, and detailed instructions on the activity was given. Firstly, the groups practiced the tools of social and resource mapping and Venn diagrams under PRA techniques, and identified a list of issues that emerged. A sharing was done after the exercise, accompanied by feedback from the facilitators. Similarly, after this exercise, the groups were asked to reflect on their maps, and depending on what they saw and understood, and the issues/problems, which emerged; they were told to sample for their study, and identify the stakeholders with whom they would engage with, in order to collect data for addressing the challenges that emerged from the PRA exercise. This entire activity helped the participants develop an understanding on how to use PRA techniques in a participatory research exercise, and how the latter helps in problem identification, formation of stakeholder groups, joint data collection and analysis. This also helped them reflect on the participatory research process as a whole, which they were studying session-wise in the last four days, and appreciate the logic, flow and coherence that marks an ideal research process.









The training session closed through a reflection made by Dr. Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay who revisited the training objectives and the training design and tried to collate the learnings acquired around the two. He reflected on how the process began with an introduction to the concept of research, followed by social research, coming down to participatory research; use and application of tools in a participatory research process (PRA, PUA and CSC), developing a research design, collecting data, performing sampling, data analysis, and finally on the important considerations to be mindful of, while writing a research proposal. He gauged the sessions in light of the training objectives set at the beginning of the training and the expectations and aspirations of the participants, as shared during the first day of the training. He shared how both of them were touched upon and an attempt was made to fulfill all expectations and training objectives through the training sessions during the last four days.

Evaluation

Finally, as a closing step to the training program, the participants were asked to fill an evaluation questionnaire, which helped the facilitators view their performance from the participants perspective, and which also gave crucial learning's and feedback for the conduction of similar training programs in the future. The feedback would help fill the gaps in the program, along with building on the strengths and working on the weaknesses so that a more effective, relevant and useful training could be designed and facilitated for building capacities of civil society practitioners in Myanmar. The section below details these findings.

A total of 18 participants were administered a questionnaire to assess and evaluate their learnings from the Training on Participatory Research Methodology, organised by East Asia Institute, and facilitated by PRIA International.

Quantitative evaluation

For the quantitative evaluation, a four-point scale was used: choices included a) very little, b) some extent, c) large extent, d) fully. In the tables below, options which were not selected by participants have been left out.

Q1. To what extent has your knowledge and skill on social and participatory research methods been enhanced?	
Some extent	11%
Large extent	89%

Q.2 To what extent are you confident that you wi utilize the knowledge and skills on social and part research methods in your future research work?	
Some extent	29%
Large extent	71%

Q.3 To what extent has your knowledge and skills on the	
following sessions been enhanced? (a) CSO capacity building	
programme in Myanmar-2017	
Very little	6%
Some extent	50%
Large extent	44%

Q.3 (b) Introduction to Participatory Research	
Large extent	78%
Fully	22%

Q.3(c) Steps in Participatory Research Process	
Some extent	39%
Large extent	44%
Fully	17%

Q.3 (d) Using Participatory Appraisal methods and tools in Participatory Research	
Some extent	28%
Large extent	67%
Fully	6%

Q.3 (e) Application of Community Score Card (CSC) tool in Participatory Research	
Some extent	39%
Large extent	50%
Fully	11%

Q.3 (F) Designing your research	
Some extent	22%
Large extent	61%
Fully	17%

Q.3 (g) Collecting data-methods, tools and techniques	
Some extent	33%
Large extent	39%
Fully	28%

Q.3 (h) Selecting a sample	
Some extent	28%
Large extent	44%
Fully	28%

Q.3 (i) Processing and analysing data	
Some extent	67%
Large extent	33%

Q.3 (j) Writing a research proposal	
Very little	6%
Some extent	44%
Large extent	17%
Fully	33%

Q.4 To what extent were the learning materials helpful?		
Some extent 33%		
Large extent 5		
Fully	17%	

Q.5 To what extent were the learning methods (group exercise, case study analysis, participatory lectures) helpful?			
Some extent 17%			
Large extent 44%			
Fully	39%		

Q.6 To what extent were logistical arrangements helpful to learning?			
Very little 6%			
Some extent 39%			
Large extent 39%			
Fully 17%			

Qualitative evaluation

Participants were also provided space to give feedback to trainers and facilitators (Q.7), as well **as** suggest future workshops and trainings to the organisers (Q.8).

For question 7, 17 participants provided 22 responses¹. These were analysed largely into three categories.

- A. Effective and useful training, which details the aspect of the training participants found enriching. (13 responses)
- B. Desire for more experiential learning using exercises, practical examples and case studies. (2 responses)
- C. Desire for longer / extended training so that participants can get more time with facilitators as well as grasp concepts better. (6 responses)
- D. A fourth category of responses have been clubbed under 'Others'. The response here suggests that facilitators may have a bias towards participatory research, when compared to traditional forms. (1 response)

 $^{^{1}}$ For the purpose of analysis, each response was classified into multiple categories where applicable. This is why there are more responses than respondents.

For question 8, 13 participants provided 16 responses. Here too, three categories of responses emerged.

- A. Location specific comments, which include participants finding the location inconvenient due to distance, as well as those that disliked it because they found seating arrangements and food to not be to their liking. One response however indicates that the place was comfortable and convenient. (4 responses)
- B. Desire to learn more about participatory research, especially data analysis, usage of research tools, capacity building trainings, as well as opportunities to practice and engage with local communities. (4 responses)
- C. Requirement for translator, which participants felt the need for since they found certain words difficult to comprehend and accents, which were difficult to understand. (2 responses)
- D. A fourth category of responses emerged that have been clubbed under 'Others'. These do not fall under 'suggestions' and have thus been segregated. These include feedback to trainers, which has been highlighted earlier, and demands for PowerPoint presentations. (6 responses)

Concluding reflections

Our first impression after concluding the training program was that it was an excellent opportunity to interact with the civil society practitioners in Myanmar, and exchange meaningful learning experiences. Given their interest to learn and know more about participatory research methodologies, the workshop gave us an opportunity to not only share our learning's and experiences on participatory research but also know more about their research experiences as well. Some more of the crisp reflections and learnings that emerged from the program (taking in from our own perceptions and the feedback given by the participants) are:

- The participants were oriented to concepts of research/social research but very few of them were comfortable and well versed in applying those concepts in practice.
- There seemed to be a lot of interest in participatory research methodologies. Gauging from the energy they presented during the group activities; it emerged that these can be taken up when pursuing research and that this approach can deliver quality results.
- A major point that was reiterated throughout the training and even before, was the participants' interest in practicing the research tools, rather than only studying about the concepts through a PowerPoint presentation. Although we took notice of this fact, and built our sessions around more practice of research tools, we felt that the time was a limited for having a real practice session, by going out in the locality and studying real life settings.
- We also felt that crunching sessions into fitting the limited time, gave us less time to expand and
 go into details of a topic. For instance, if a specific and detailed question on a particular topic was
 raised, which was beyond what was planned for a session, we found it difficult to address it,
 considering the other things that needed to be covered in the limited timeframe.
- Language emerged as a barrier for some of the participants. Although a large number of the
 participants seemed to be comfortable with English, there was a small section which seemed to
 have difficulty with English language.
- The participants had different levels of knowledge regarding research process. While some were aware of the process, others were new to it. It was because of this reason that bringing all the participants on the same platform and ensuring that of them had a common learning by the end of session appeared as a challenge.
- The civil society space in Myanmar seems to be flourishing at the moment. Therefore, apart from
 research methodologies, if attention was also paid to building capacity deficits for CSOs as a
 whole (in interpersonal skills, communication strategies, etc.), it would be highly beneficial for
 the sector as a whole.
- Further, the impression we got from the evaluation forms were that the participants seemed interested into applying participatory research methodologies in practice, and therefore, wanted more training sessions, which could help build their practical skill sets.

ANNEXURE -I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

S. No.	Name	Organization	Email ID
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ANNEXURE-II

PROGRAM DESIGN

Training on Participatory Research Methodologies

Time	Session	Learning objectives and content	Methodology	Responsibility
DAY 1: 18 Sep	tember, Monday			
09:30-09:45	Registration of participants		MaterialsBlank attendance list	EAI
09:45-10:45	Welcome and introduction Tea/Coffee	 Session objectives Making participants comfortable and to know each other Setting learning objectives of the training Developing common understanding on the content and design of the training Content Welcome and introduction to the training Getting to know each other Setting the expectations and objectives Introducing the training design Agreeing on ground rules 	Methods Participatory lecture Participatory activity Materials List of participants Programme design	PRIA and EAI
11.00-12.30	break Session1:	Session objective	Method	EAI
	Introduction to CSO capacity building programme in Myanmar – 2017	 Developing a clear understanding on the CSO capacity building programme in Myanmar for the year 2017 Content Capacity building programme outline Key lessons learned from Seoul Democracy Forum on Knowledge to Policy Sharing of preliminary ideas about 	 Participatory lecture Interactive session 	
12.30-01.30	Lunch	future research programme and topics		

Time	Session	Learning objectives and content	Methodology	Responsibility
01.30-03.00	Session 2: Introduction to Participatory Research	Understanding the concept of participatory research Content Origin of participatory research Meaning, framework and perspectives on participatory research	 Method Participatory lecture Interactive session Buzz group Materials Handout on introduction to participatory research 	Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay
03.00-03.15	Tea/Coffee break			
03.15-04.45	Session 3: Steps in Participatory Research process	 Session objective Understanding various steps in participatory research process Content Selecting the research problem Selecting appropriate methods Using the findings 	 Method Participatory lecture Case study analysis in small groups 	Wafa Singh and Sukrit Nagpal
04.45-05.00	Summary of the		 Case study on participatory research steps Handout on steps in participatory research 	
DAV 2: 10 Sep	day tember, Tuesday			
09.30-10.00	Recapitulation			
10.00-12.30 (including tea/coffee break – 11.00- 11.15)	Session 4: Using Participatory Appraisal methods and tools in Participatory	Understanding various participatory appraisal methods and tools used in participatory research	 Methods Participatory lecture Interactive session Group work 	Wafa Singh and Sukrit Nagpal

Time	Session	Learning objectives and content	Methodology	Responsibility
12.30-01.30	Research	 Content Introduction to Participatory Rural Appraisal Acquaintance with tools like, Social mapping Resource mapping Transect walk Time line analysis Trend analysis Venn diagram 	and presentation Materials Handout on Participatory Rural Appraisal	
01.30-04.45	Session 5: Application of Community Score Card (CSC) tool as Participatory Research	 Session objective Learning the purpose and methods of Community Score Card (CSC) as an example of participatory research Content An overview of CSC Steps involved in CSC (how to facilitate CSC) Advantages and limitations of CSC Sharing CSC results with service providers Measuring service providers response 	 Methods Participatory lecture Interactive session Simulation Group work and presentation Materials Handout on Community Score Card Case study on public health services Note on simulation 	Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay, Sukrit Nagpal and Wafa Singh
04.45-05.00	Summary of the day		Silituation	
_	tember, Wednesda	ıy		
09.30-10.00	Recapitulation			
10.00-11.15	Session 6: Designing your research	 Session objective Enhancing knowledge and skills for developing a research design Content What is a research design? Why do we need it? 	 Method Participatory lecture Interactive session Group work and presentation 	Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay and Sukrit Nagpal

Time	Session	Learning objectives and content	Methodology	Responsibility
		Research topic, research question and research methods: Understanding the sequencing	Materials Handout on understanding research design	
11.15-11.30	Tea/Coffee break			
11.30-12.30	Session 7: Collecting data -methods, tools and techniques	 Session objective Enhancing skills for choosing research methods, developing tools, and their application in quantitative and qualitative research Content An overview of research methods used in quantitative and qualitative research Developing instruments/tools for collecting quantitative and qualitative data Application of various methods and tools 	 Methods Participatory lecture Interactive session Role play Group work and presentation Materials Handout on introduction to data collection in quantitative and qualitative research 	Wafa Singh and Sukrit Nagpal
12.30-01.30	Lunch			
01.30-03.00	Session 7 continues			
03.00-03.15	Tea/Coffee break			
03.15-04.45	Session 7: Selecting a sample	 Session objective Enhancing practical application of various types of sampling methods in qualitative and quantitative research methods Content Concept of sampling Sampling terminologies Principles of sampling Types of sampling 	 Method Participatory lecture Interactive session Group work and presentation Materials Exercise on sampling Handout on Selecting a 	Sukrit Nagpal and Wafa Singh

Time	Session	Learning objectives and content	Methodology	Responsibility
			sample	
04.45-05.00	Summary of the day			
OAY 4: 21 Ser	otember, Thursday			
09.30-10.00	Recapitulation			
10.00-11.00	Session 8 continues			
11.00-11.15	Tea/Coffee break			
11.15-12.30	Session 9: Processing and analysing data	 Session objective Enhancing skills for organising, processing and analysing quantitative and qualitative data Content Developing an analytical framework Organising, processing and analysing quantitative and qualitative data 	 Methods Participatory lecture Interactive session Group work and presentation Materials Handout on data applyeis 	Wafa Singh and Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay
12.30-01.30	Lunch		data analysis	
01.30-03.15	Session 9 continues			
03.15-03.30	Tea/Coffee break			
03.30-04.45	Session 10: Writing a research proposal	Developing skills on how to write a good research proposal Content	Methods • Participatory lecture • Interactive session	Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay and Sukrit Nagpal
		 Content of a research proposal Things to keep in mind when writing a research proposal Application of lessons for future research proposals developed by partners 	Materials Handout on research proposal	
04.45-05.00	Summary of the day			

Time	Session	Learning objectives and content	Methodology	Responsibility
09.30-10.00	Recapitulation			
10.00-12.00 (including tea/coffee break – 11.00-11.15)	Session 10 continues	The primary purpose of this part of the session is to share, discuss, and refine research proposals by the partners	 Methods Presentation of research proposal Discussion and feedback 	
12.00-01.00	Evaluation and closure	Assessing the extent to which the training programme effectively developed knowledge and skills related to social and participatory research methodology Content Assessment of Training objectives Training sessions Facilitators Logistics	 Method Administering questionnaire Materials Evaluation questionnaire 	Sukrit Nagpal and Wafa Singh
01.00-02.00	Lunch			
02.00-04.00	One on one meeting between EAI and the partners			