

what kinds of action African countries can themselves take to respond to climate change, regardless of what the global community decides to do.

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Participatory Research in Conservation and Livelihoods: Doing Science Together. Edited by Louise Fortmann. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell (2008), pp. 284, £29.99. ISBN 978-1-4051-7679-8

Among the growing number of books on participatory research, this one stands out. Its originality lies in its presentation of participants' voices and experience, which are all too often missing in accounts of participatory research. Here they are central to the argument that it is how relationships are established and managed and how participants views are heard that are important in inclusive knowledge production.

The 15 chapters are based on the personal narratives of research scientists and their lay partners on how they have engaged in participatory research, drawing on a number of case studies in agriculture, natural resource development and conservation. The case studies are presented in 'paired' chapters; the first in each pair containing researchers' perspectives and the second, those of participants. This allows for revealing and sometimes critical comparisons between the two.

The accounts do justice to the complexity of the relationships, processes and methods in participatory research, including establishing partnerships and building trust, the role of local knowledge, ensuring credibility of results and managing tensions between research for knowledge production versus action to transform livelihoods. They discuss the challenge of engaging in participatory research in contexts of unequal power relations – between researchers and local people, between the resource poor and local elites and between women and men.

This book will be of great interest to those involved in agricultural and natural resources research, development and teaching, as well as providing an important example of how accounts of participatory research processes can themselves be made more participatory.

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Plant Breeding and Farmer Participation. Edited by S. Ceccarelli, E. P. Guimaraes and E. Weltzien. Rome: FAO (2009), pp. 688, US\$160.00. ISBN 978-92-5-106382-8.

Industries usually take account of the needs of end-users of product supply chains, but government-funded institutions tend to decide on crop genetic improvements in isolation, sometimes producing apparently good cultivars that fail between release and uptake by consumers. In recognition of this problem, since the 1980s the opinions of farmers in developing countries – and their expertise and experience – have been integrated into Participatory Plant Breeding (PPB) and related programmes, supervised largely by international institutes funded by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

This FAO book aims to strengthen the concept of PPB by stressing its reliance on 'conventional' plant breeding practices, and by describing its management. The 25 chapters have authors drawn mainly from international and national research institutions and universities, with emphasis on staple cereals and pulses. The broad range of plant breeding activities is covered, from mass to marker assisted selection, and through domestication via quantitative genetics to hybrid breeding and Breeders' Rights. Some chapters make only token reference to PPB, but most focus on its theory and practice.

Together with the successes of PPB, the book reveals ongoing problems: several authors criticize administrative and legislative impediments; there is little commentary by non-scientist beneficiaries of PPB; and there is no synthesis with the concepts and practices of commercial breeding. Nevertheless, plant breeders – actual and aspiring, and particularly policy-makers – should be stimulated by the book's emphasis on the need for, and efficiency of, low-cost, science-based breeding aimed at local and niche outlets.

Peter Crisp