

Research in Developing Countries

CTOL September 18 2006

Martine Poolman

What is the difference between the two pictures of zebra's?







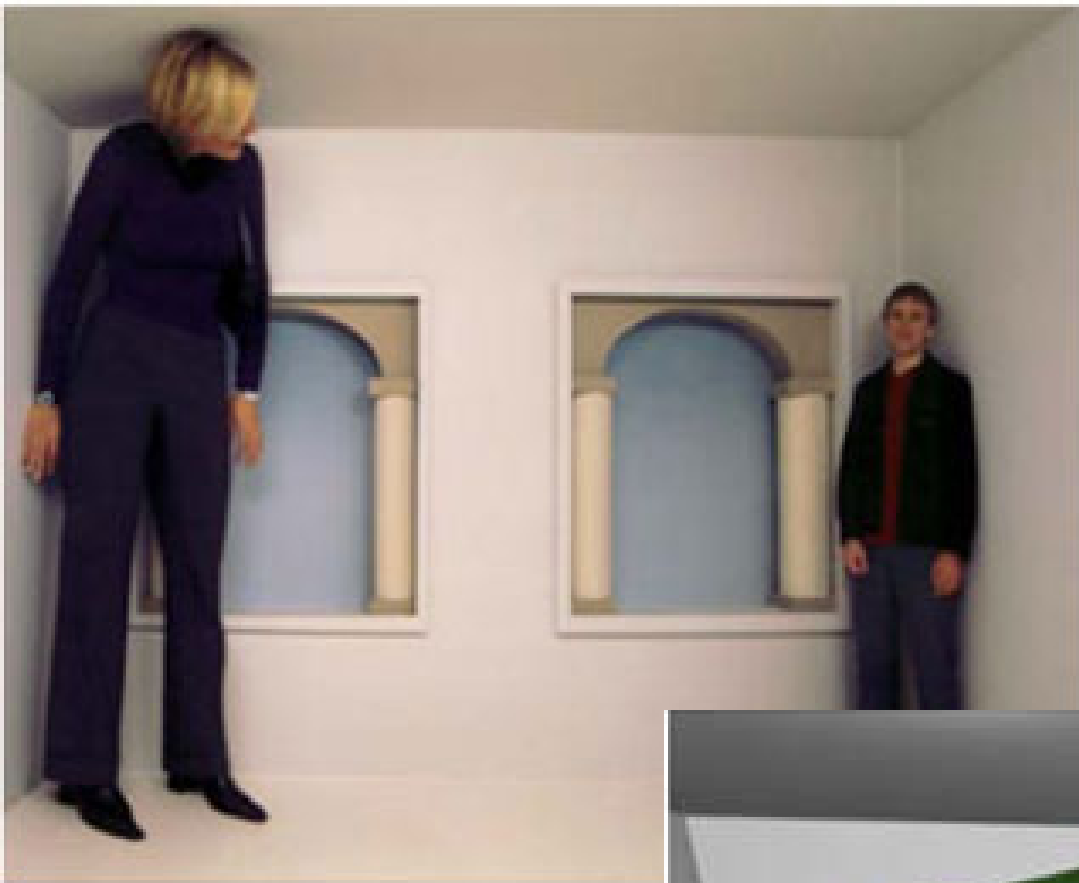


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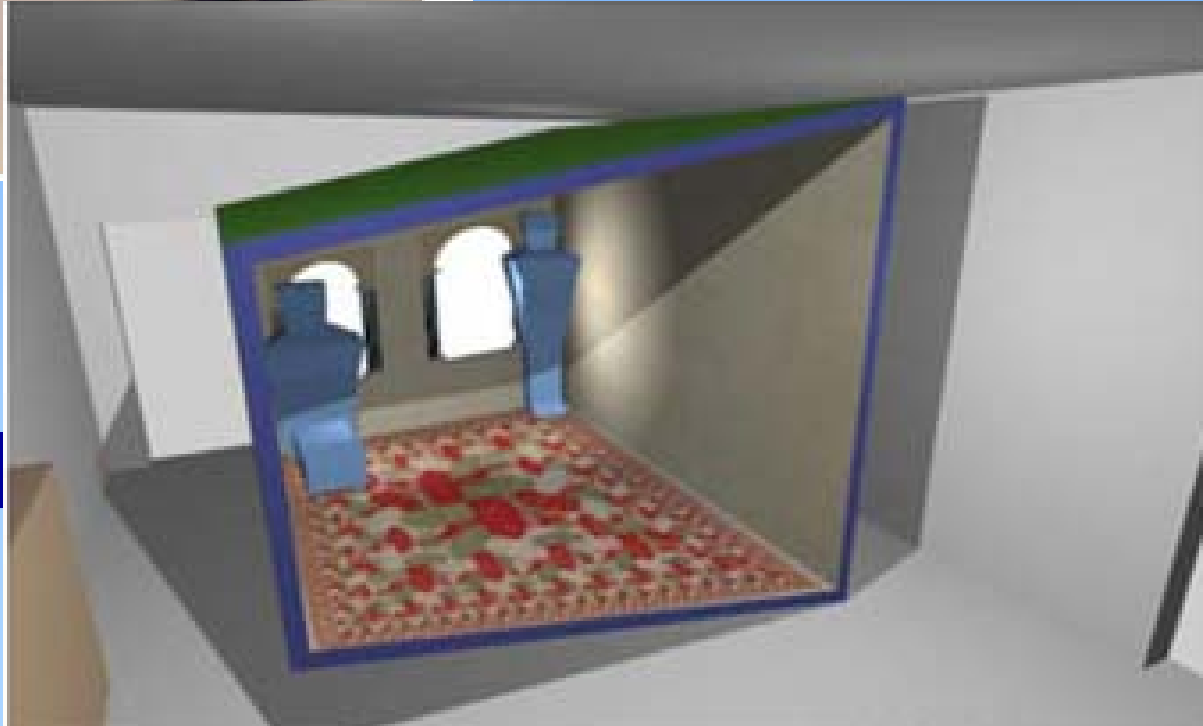
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Research

- Not always as it appears!
- How you see it depends on:
 - Background you get, you have
 - Presentation
 - Perception
 - Experience



Type of research and researcher



by M. Lumor

Type of research

- Engineering
- Anthropological
- Political Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Natural Sciences
- Health

Who you are doing research for

- Yourself (BSc., MSc., PhD, publications, etc)
- Local people (because they asked for assistance)
- NGO (foreign or local) (Red Cross, Oxfam)
- World Bank, FAO, UNDP, etc.
- Governments (local or foreign)
- Disaster relief (UNHCR, MSF)
- Business

Who you are working with

- Other universities/ institutes (local or foreign)
- Students (local or foreign)
- Local decision-makers (political, traditional, influential)
- Local people (farmers, fishers, constructors, workers, etc.)
- Local interpreters, chauffeurs etc.
- Other foreigners working in the field
 - Volunteers
 - Peace corps, SNV, etc.
 - NGOs

Example

- Internship to Ghana
- In the Upper East Region
 - Rural (mainly farming)
 - Dry and rainy season
- Development of small water reservoirs
 - For irrigation, livestock watering, fishing, etc.
 - To provide water during dry season
 - Reservoir water is not used efficiently

Example (cont.)

Small Reservoirs Project

Objective: To improve planning, operation and maintenance of small reservoir systems.



In order to assist stakeholders, planners and smallholders.

Short thinking assignment

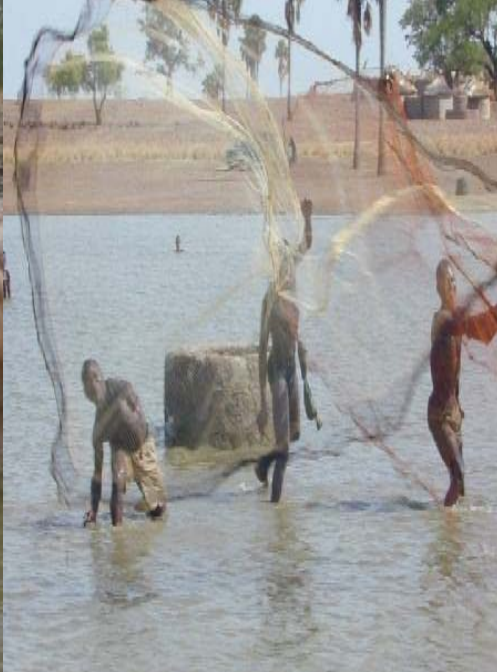
- With your neighbour(s)
 - write down min. 3 questions you would ask based on this short information
 - write down what you would be interested in doing if given the internship possibility
 - Type of research
 - Concerning which aspects?
- (Based on own experience, interest, study)

Have we examined the following?

- What are reservoirs?
- What is development?
- What is the problem?
- What does efficiency mean?
- As perceived by whom?

Have we examined the following?

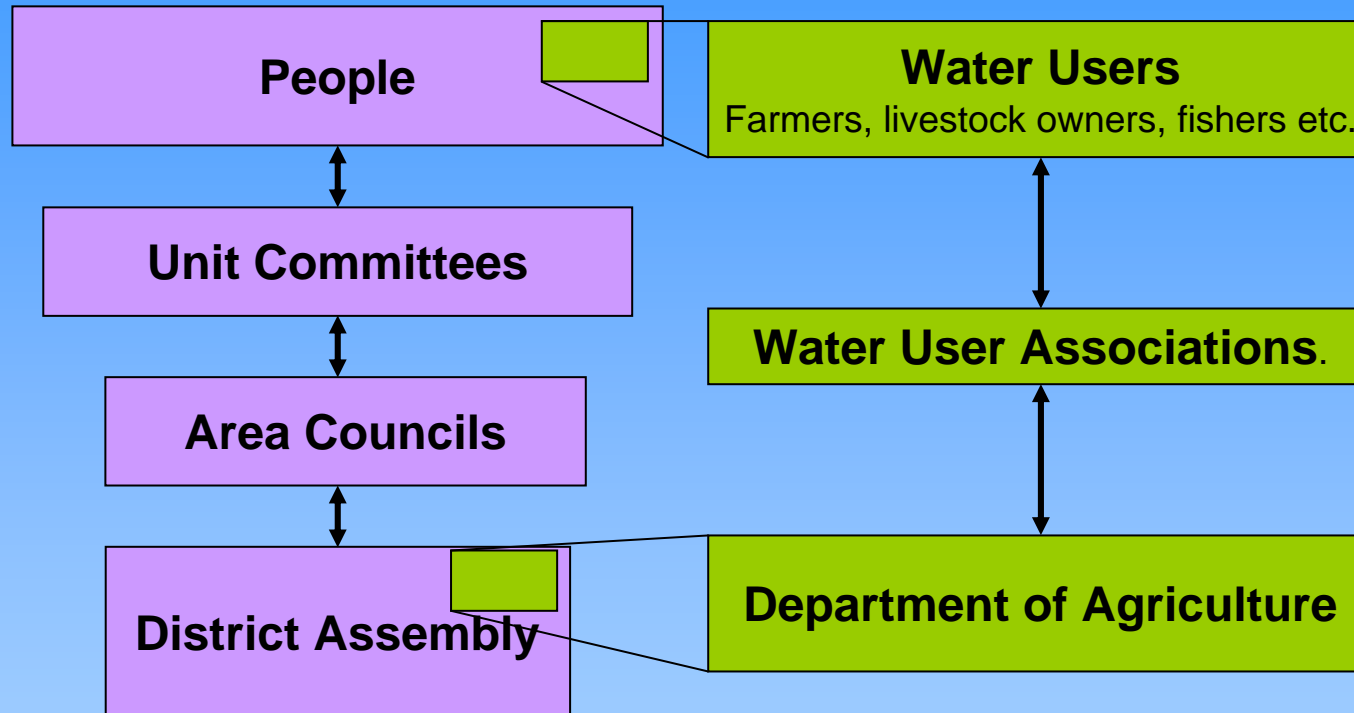
- Who use the reservoirs?
- Uses of reservoir?
- Who “own” the reservoirs (or make decisions about them)?
- Whom to involve to solve problem?
- Languages? Customs? Traditions?
- When to start research? (timing)



- Volume of reservoirs
- Productivity
- Social Capital
- Maintenance/ development of infrastructure
- Participatory Approaches
- Fisheries



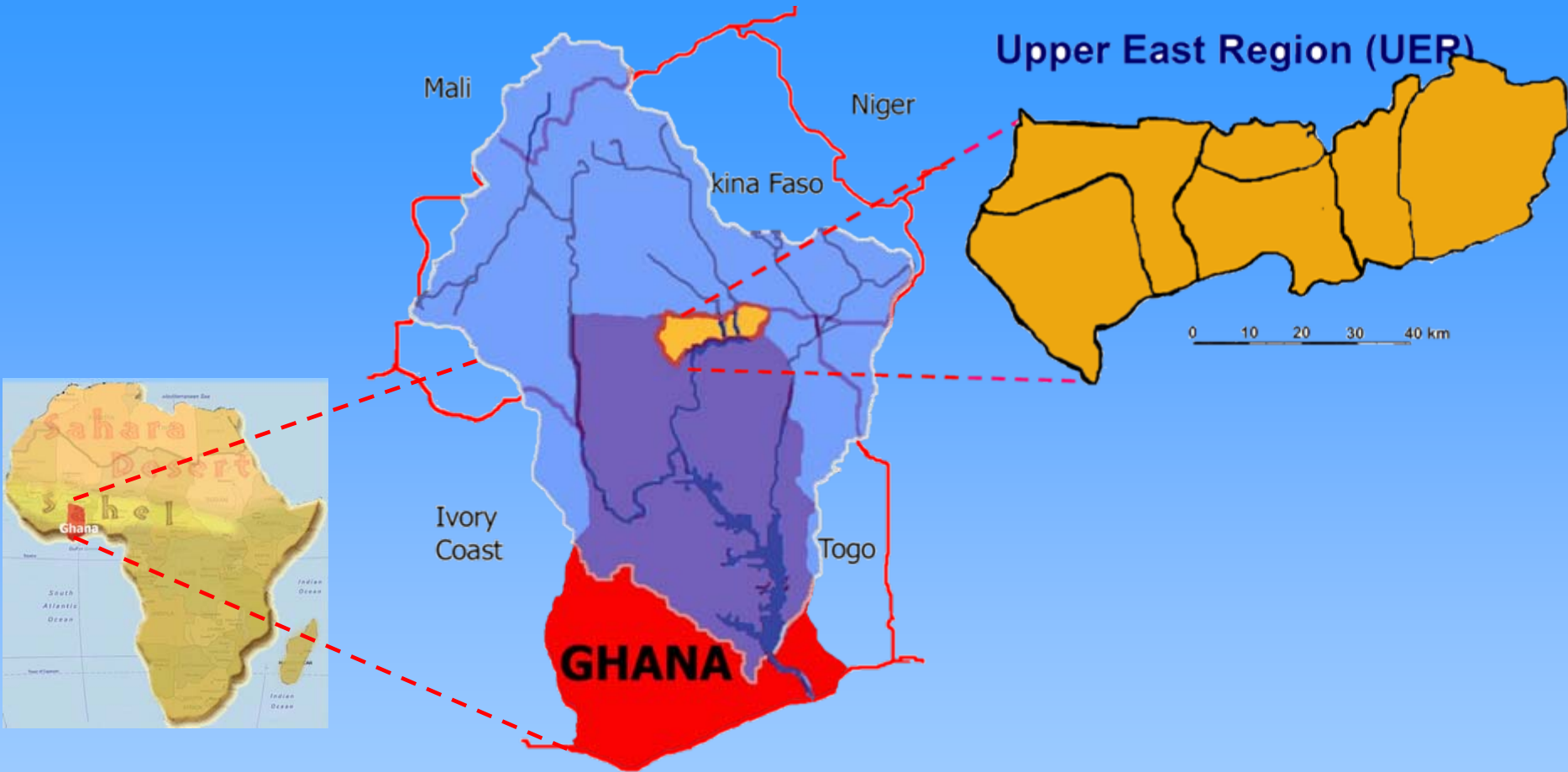
Institutions at Local level



Knowledge Sharing

Pilot Project





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Types of information

- **Data:**

quantifiable and qualitative facts about characteristics of water resources

- **Information:** interpreted data

- **Knowledge:** information held in the mind

- **Wisdom:**

agreement and commonly accepted methods of using water resources to ensure sustainability.

~According to Global Water Partnership 2003



USES



INFRASTRUCTURE



Knowledge holders

- Water Users

Farmers, Fishers, Women, Livestock owners

(men and women of the community, also including some chiefs and assembly men)

- Ag. Extension Agents

- Researchers (IWMI, SRP, GLOWA, IFPRI, etc.)

- District Directors MoFA (ministry of food and agric)

- Regional MoFA

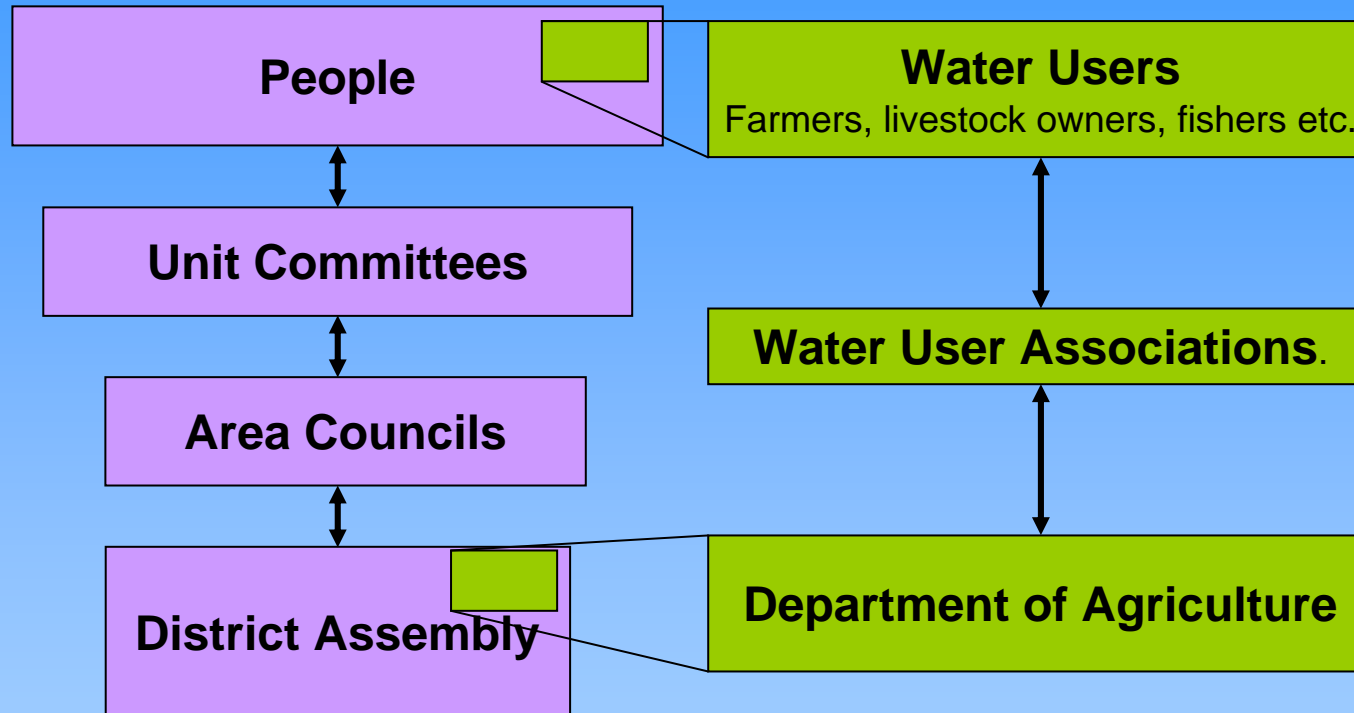
Data

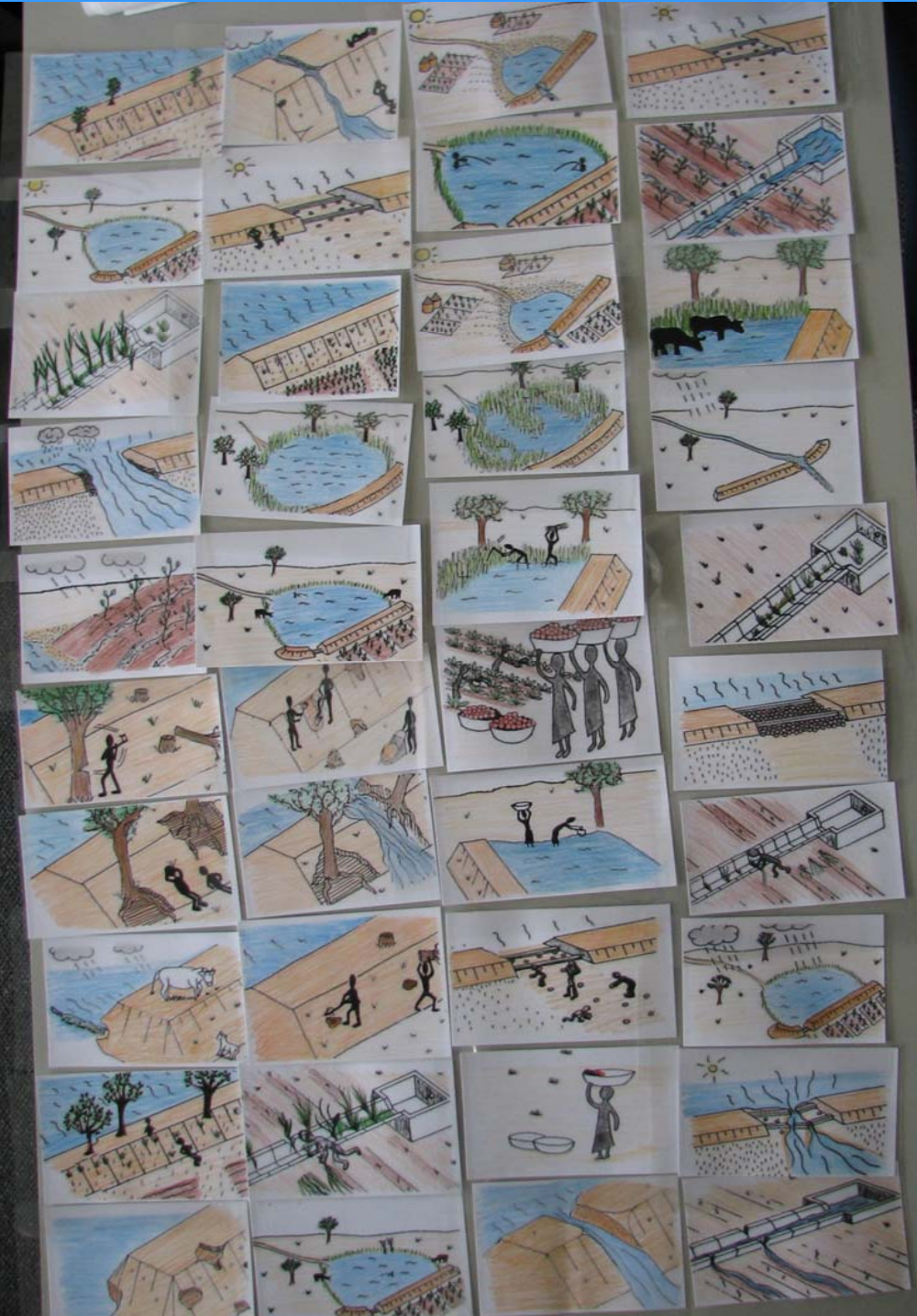
Information

Knowledge

Wisdom

Institutions at Local level





Realized during field study

- At the moment Rainy Season
 - subsistence farming season
 - difficult to gather farmers
- Farmers have never drawn
- Wind and rain =
 - game blown away
 - markers didn't work ideally

So with 8 days left,

What would you have done ?

What I did

- Visit became preliminary research
- Introduce myself to other stakeholders
- Talk with various stakeholders about issues
- Discuss possibilities for collective action
- Draw up a plan for next visit

Visit 11 reservoir sites

Took pictures and spoke with the farmers that were to be found

- Different manners of irrigation
 - Dug wells, Canals, Free flow
- Different ages of reservoirs
 - Oldest = before 1950, Newest = still to be completed
 - Some have been rehabilitated (w and w/o success)
- Different problems and solutions possible
- Better time for interaction possibilities

Spoke with

- the District Directors of MoFA
- the Regional Director MoFA
- University of Development Studies, Navrongo
Faculty of Endogenous knowledge
- White Volta Basin Officer
- IFPRI researcher involved in Basin board

Issues that were discussed

1. Interaction between researcher and DDs
2. Interaction between foreign and local researchers
3. Interpretations of each other
4. Usage of research methods

1. Interaction researchers and DDs

- DDs say that researchers leave little information
- Researchers do not always have info they feel they can share yet
- Researchers not well aware of other research done already in region
- DDs not aware of info that may be available to them

2. Foreign and local researchers

- Learn about their teaching/learning system
- The manners in which they respond
 - » Do they tell you what they think you want them to tell you?
 - » What does “I understand” really mean?
- Make them part of the learning and understanding process
 - Helps them understand what you think
 - You learn a lot about what may be possible

3. Interpretations

- What foreigners may think
 - People are very unfortunate (need help)
 - People are lazy
 - People are not well educated (so not knowledgeable)
- What the local people may think of you
 - Helper
 - Money bringer
 - Intruder
 - Not understanding

4. Be careful with methods!

- i.e. Questionnaires
 - How counterparts go about having them filled in
 - How random is random sampling really?
 - Statistics can be interpreted as you would like
- i.e. Interviews
 - Do people tell you what they think you want?
 - How does the interpreter translate?
 - How does gender and religion affect interview?



- Gender issues
- Age issues
- Landowners
- Water User Association affiliation
- Link with traditional leader (chief and/or tindana)



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Pitfalls to research in DCs

- Development over research projects
- Guidelines (such as MDGs)
- Difference in perceptions
- Difference in manners of working

Final advice from other researchers

- Let relevant regional ministries or decision-makers know what you think you will do. Can be just a brief explanation.
- Afterwards even if only a brief explanation of what you think you may have achieved through the research.

“A gift given promptly is given twice”

Final advice from other researchers

- Don't burn your bridges, people who have been in the country for a while may turn out to be very useful afterwards.
- Inform people of what you do and don't plan to do
- Realize that many more people may count on you arrival than you realize (courtesy calls are very common)

Final advice from other researchers

- Don't be too discouraged
- Enjoy what you do
- Talk with various researchers about your experiences
- HAVE FUN!

Interested?

- Economic value of leaving land fallow
 - » Different uses, trade-offs, tradition, beliefs

- Different uses of sediment
 - » Uses of “mud”, labour intensity, tradition (who can do what?), farming cycles (who can do what when?)

