Orality Journal
The Word Became Fresh

Participatory Learning and Networks Revisited

Keller • Azomo • Lim • Wise • Varghese • Handley
Chaudhary • Lhomi • Desemone • Wills

The Seven Disciplines of Orality

Courtesy of Dr. Chuck Madinger who leads Global Impact Mission and serves on the International Orality Network's Leadership Team facilitating the Research Task Force.

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Cover Photo
Participatory Learning in a rodeo! The rider and the horse learns about each other, and the audience (the networks) while entertained is also learning and passing on the learning.

Your statutes have been my songs
in the house of my sojourning.

Psalm 119:54 ESV

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom
that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God
acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,
for our God is a consuming fire.

Hebrews 12:28—29 ESV

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Orality Journal is the journal of the International Orality Network. It is published online semi-annually and aims to provide a platform for scholarly discourse on the issues of orality, discoveries of innovations in orality, and praxis of effectiveness across multiple domains in society. This online journal is international and interdisciplinary, serving the interests of the orality movement through research articles, documentation, book reviews, and academic news. Occasionally, print editions will be provisioned. Submission of items that could contribute to the furtherance of the orality movement is welcomed.

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CONTENTS

Editor's Note
Samuel E. Chiang

Participatory Learning and Networks

Less than two decades ago in small shops in large coastal cities of China, there were banks of computers set up for people to experience the arrival of computing power. By day it looked business-like; by night it was the domain of youths playing video games. I vividly recall how they would shout out across to each other upon the discovery of new strategies to advance to the next level, all with a focus of how to take down a foreign government or power.

Even today in MMOG (Massively Multiplayer Online Game) the players are tethered to a device connected to a gaming platform, which is, enabled by a network (internet), and together the players interact meaningfully with people across the world. They actually learn from each other, and in turn achieve an individual best, and more often a common agenda, collaboratively. At times one is the master, at other times one is the apprentice, all the while the learning is crafted into the individual through ultra high-definition images presented in a coherent imaginary storyline.

All this sounds very intuitive. It is oral, visual, collaborative, and purposeful. Embedded are assumptions and theories which drive the process, including but not limited to: 1. Adults learn better when knowledge is constructed through participation; 2. Adults are able to pass on "sticky" knowledge through their vast networks; 3. Knowledge gets passed on through personal relationships (networks) when it retains its "stickiness" in the form of how people normally receive, process, remember, and pass on information.

The practitioners who contributed articles to this volume are all experts in their own domain. They have gone through both the school of hard-knocks and the school of discoveries. While the case studies speak of how "orality—learning—participation" works in the field, the theories along with the nomenclature are both grounded and well established.

In assembling this volume, William Coppedge and myself encountered several sensitivities concerning case studies, field of service, and names.

Thus, where necessary we have used pseudonyms, or left out names entirely. The cases are all true. In this volume, we also attempted something new: we have endeavored to capture several threaded discussions from within a forum context. Theory and praxis often intersect in a community of practice supported through a public forum, and so we worked with one of the writers to distill material contributed within one of those forum contexts and craft it into an article. In this sense, we have tried to capture what was timely and casted it as what can become timeless.

Finally, in this issue there was so much good information—along with detailed discussions and concrete examples—that the submissions were much longer than the allotted space. Thus, while editing has been necessary, we have tried to ensure as smooth a reading as possible.

We continue in the exploration of how orality works within communities, both in the oral and digitoral generations. We desire to discover how vital information permeates networks as well as how participatory learning enables the delivery of that information and makes "it stick" in the individual and the community. We are certain you will find this issue interesting, and we invite your feedback.

On the journey together,

Samuel E. Chiang
From Knoxville, Tennessee, USA

From the Field 1: Discussions with Community Stakeholders in Nepal about Language Development

Prithvi Chaudhary and Shangbu Lhomi

Prithvi Chaudhary serves with Transformation Nepal. He is the Field Supervisor of the Rana Tharu Adult Transitional Literacy project, working among Rana Tharu communities of Nepal.

Shangbu Lhomi is the Project Leader of the Himalayan Indigenous Society, an organization in Nepal which focuses on Tibetan ethnic groups to create an equitable and peaceful society among the ethnic Tibetan groups.

We facilitated discussions with stakeholders about language development in four different language areas. For each language, we held a meeting in each's own language area. We invited participants by working through some of our contacts in the language and asked those contacts to invite stakeholders who would be able to take responsibility for further planning and action. About 20-30 people participated in each meeting.

The participants were mixed; they included teachers, politicians, locals, NGO workers, social workers, and media. Three of the groups had people from several districts attending the meeting. In those meetings, each person only knew about five people. To help the participants feel comfortable, we had an introduction session during which we asked them to state their names and a favorite food.

It was a two-day event. In addition to the participatory discussions, we had other topics and used a number of tools including Appreciative Inquiry to understand their hopes and *Stakeholder Analysis* to understand more about local stakeholders. We also included sessions during which we informed them about language development and the components of a literacy program.

We planned how we would facilitate the discussions. One of us was the main facilitator for a tool: asking questions, drawing people into the topics, and encouraging them; the other one would hand out materials.

For the participatory activities, we used paper strips and asked participants to write down everything that was shared in the group. It was very new for them. During the Appreciative Inquiry discussion, the participants felt honored to share good things. They did not know about all of the things that were happening in their language. One person would share something and others were happy to hear what was happening in their community and language.

In these discussions, the focus was on developing their language. Many expressed hope. Some of these languages already had literacy classes and in those an alphabet had already been developed. People in all four language areas expressed a desire to preserve and develop their language.

Some had ideas about community-based literacy from their experiences with literacy in the national language. They have seen literacy campaigns for Nepali launched many times. But developing or having literacy in their own languages was a new idea. They did not know how or where to start. Some felt it was not possible to start literacy in their mother tongues. But as we went

through the process many went from "We need this…" to "We can do this…"

We found that some communities were aware of their cultural or ethnic identity. Some of leaders talked a lot about their mother tongue and their culture. However, the implementation process was the missing part. They thought their job was to give speeches and get people excited.

The groups were composed of a variety of peoples. When the meeting was held in a rural area, everyone was ready to write. However, one group felt some hesitation to write and put things on the floor because of their status: they were educated. They thought it was too simple and they did not want to lower themselves in this way. Another response we experienced was when we asked them to write down their hopes for their communities and languages. Some asked, "What will happen?" or "Do you promise to do this?"

We explained that we were just encouraging them to dream and that it did not mean we would do it for them. Some said, "These are just hopes" and did not take it too seriously. Others would write

things which seemed impossible. The facilitator needs to be aware of how to handle each situation.

In one of the language groups, about half of the people were not literate. To help the less literate ones to participate fully, we asked the literate ones to write. The illiterate ones would say their answers and their points were written. Before putting a paper on the floor, the person would read it, saying, "This is what you said."

When we talked about the good things happening in their languages and communities, at first answers didn't come. Then, one said something, then another said something, then some answers came about the good things. It was the questions that motivated them to share their answers. In that group, most of the participants knew each other. They made a good plan and were able to agree because they were from just five villages in one district.

From the Field 2: Reflections on Using a Participatory Approach

Benefits of Thinking about Good Things and Good People

When we facilitate using participatory tools, we are asking people to answer this question: "What have you in your village done so far?" At first, they think we just want to hear about their problems. Their mind is already looking for a problem or a need and they are trying to guess at what we want to hear. So they just name one or two things. They believe that if they share how many good things have happened, good things that improved their lives, then more development and help will not come to their village.

When they talk about good things, they don't just tell about physical things or projects, they talk about people as well. They say, "We have this person who did development things in our village." They are proud of him or her and may name a teacher or a simple person. Later, they realize that he or she is a resource person.

One person was a teacher in a village who tried to do some development things, but there were

many politicians in the village who were always quarrelling. This man tried to do many good things, but some of the villagers were against him because of the political parties. People were back-biting about him, but he continued doing good things and eventually had a high post in an indigenous organization.

In the Lhomi community, people thought they needed a good leader. But after listing many good things happening and several people doing good things, they soon said, "We can do these things also." They felt both happiness and pride.

How the Group Process Works

Sometimes, when we ask a group to think about good things, they believe we only want to hear about the really big things. But when smaller ideas come, the discussion changes. It happened in a discussion in my home area, where we only had one weekly newspaper. When someone mentioned we had a newspaper, people started mentioning other smaller things as well. Another time, someone said the name of an old person who had many stories in our language. Then, others said, "We have a lawyer—and politicians, and policemen."

This is good for facilitators since it means they do not need to ask many other questions. The momentum starts and keeps going through the group.

Being Careful about Expectations

My preparation for the discussions must be done very well. I must not expect participants to say what is in my mind. I have visited many people in many communities and because of that knowledge, I may have some ideas that I will want them to express, but those ideas might not come. Sometimes, my expectations may not be fulfilled. They may say different good things and different goals than I expect.

Appreciative Inquiry Helps the Community and the Facilitator to Be Positive

When I led the Appreciative Inquiry tool, participants listed many happy things and soon my own mind started to think in a positive way. What are the good things in our community? Sometimes, that speaks to me as well. I ask myself, "What are the good things in me? What are the good things in our community?" Asking these questions leads people to think in a positive way about their

community; it does the same for us, as it helps us to think in joyful ways. When we have a long list of good things, we celebrate it with a big clap. I say, "Look! So many good things! Let's enjoy it!" Then, everyone claps. Appreciating the good things helps all of us to be positive.

What Helps the Community to Give Honest and Open Answers?

When you facilitate a discussion, it is very important that you build a relationship with the participants. The first time they answer a question, they just answer something. It may be right, or it may be made up. If I facilitate with a group that I do not know well, many times I don't know which answer is honest or which is made up. They don't want to offend people. They always want to be good to the outside people. This is true in most cases; however, in remote areas, people are honest. In either case, we must build a relationship.

Humility is also very important. If you look very big, like an important man, or if you let people expect everything from you, then they will not look at the good things they have done. They will always look at the problems. They will say, "Oh, this person has money, so we have to say this and this…" Knowing the community is very important.

When you spend time asking participants a few questions and encouraging them to share their thoughts, then pop! They pour out their thoughts. That pop happens because of your relationship, how you present yourself, how you build trust.

Getting People Back on Track

At first, participants find it difficult to answer. When one or two people begin, something clicks and people start sharing things either related to the topic or not. One time, we asked for good things about the language. Many answers came about language, but many were also outside the language topic—a school had been built, a drainage system had been developed, etc. They wrote down everything and later we explained, "We are trying to know about your language." They would then put everything related to language to one side and everything else on the other side.

As a final reminder, facilitators must always remember to use the community's own language.

From the Field 3:
Reflections on a Village Facilitation about a Community's Real Needs

A Nepali man who had lived in the U.S. for 25 years was back in Nepal. He had started an organization in the U.S. to raise funds for Nepal and had also started a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Nepal. He had brought a group of Americans with him to Nepal. He wanted to have a discussion with people in a village about a school building which needed repairs. Some of the villagers knew that he was interested in giving them money to repair the school.

The day we went to the village, he asked me, "How can we dialogue with the villagers? How can we convince them?" He did not know about using a participatory approach. In the Lhomi area, the people have a certain way of talking. I talk, and then you talk, and in the middle another one talks. There is lots of noise and it is very difficult to keep track of what has been said or decided.

I already had in mind that I would use the Appreciative Inquiry tool so that the villagers

could talk about the good things that have been happening and then share their hopes for their village with this man. I thought about how I would translate some words from the tool: words like *happy* and *hope* into the Lhomi language.

There was a larger group of villagers—more than 100—who ranged from 17 to 60 years of age. When speaking, I used both Nepali and Lhomi. About 70% of them were literate in Nepali. I did not know quite how to facilitate. I decided it would be good to do parts of the Appreciative Inquiry in small groups. With so many people, it was impossible to use the paper on the ground, so I used the whiteboard.

We started out asking them, "What has your community already done?" The community realized so many things that they had done! They had never thought about it before—it seemed people were always looking for the problem. Outsiders typically ask, "What is the problem?" And they say, "Oh, we need this and

this. There are water problems and environment problems and health problems."

This was the first time they looked back at their community from a different viewpoint. They found that lots of development had happened: sanitation, health, a toilet program, pure drinking water, etc. They said, "Oh, we have this building here also. We want this building rebuilt." They felt a good kind of pride. As a facilitator, starting this way helped me to engage with the people more on the topic. The people identified local resources—they considered both what we needed and what we had.

After listing many good things, I asked them to divide into three groups to talk about their hopes for their village. There was one group for women, one for men under 40, and another for those over 40. After writing down their hopes, the groups prioritized their lists. They then came back to the big group and shared: the over 40 group, the below 40 group and the women's group. When they shared, I wrote on the whiteboard in Nepali and in English because of the American group present. Then, those in the village prioritized the five major

points because the donor wanted to support five major things.

The women's participation was especially interesting. When there is a big group, the women will simply say, "Whatever [the men] say is okay." So when we invited the women to make a group, their priority shifted. The others put the school as their first priority because they knew the meeting was organized because the donor wanted to fund the school. For the women, their number one priority was a machine that helps to thresh millet. The women were also the ones who wanted a daycare center. Wherever the women go for work, they need to carry their children: to the field, to other villages, etc. The elder children also must carry and watch their younger brothers and sisters. This makes it difficult for them to go to school. So the women want to start a daycare center.

So the top priorities of the villagers were rebuilding the school, purchasing a threshing machine, and starting a daycare center.

The villagers also spent time planning. They identified problems with the building: the windows were broken, the

foundation was not good. The villagers agreed to provide all the labor, as well as providing the rock and the wood. The villagers were happy to use all the materials from the old school that is still useable such as rocks, wood, and a tin roof for the new building.

We also called another meeting for all the mothers. They discussed the requirements of the daycare center teacher and the helper. Then, they selected one teacher and one helper.

The donor from the U.S. agreed with the decisions and the plans.

From the Field 4: Reflections on What Helps Us and Hinders Us from Applying God's Word

We had a large meeting of people here who are involved in encouraging Christians in Nepal to use scripture that is available in their own languages. We talked about many things, but we had two sessions in which we used participatory methods in small groups. There were about ten groups with more than ten people in each group.

The first time we had small groups, they were mixed. Some people did not know each other very well. The level of the participants also influenced the discussion. Many of the participants were from the national level, but some were village pastors. Even though all were believers, our worldview includes a hierarchical system.

The first time we were in small groups we focused on how applying the word of God in our daily life helps us to glorify God and live transformed lives. I facilitated one small group time during which we discussed helpful and hindering things about applying God's word in our lives. Discussing things together was new for the participants. Some even thought that discussing things together was wrong and that we needed to revert to giving lectures from a pulpit.

If the high-level person answered a question, others said, "Oh yes, he is right!" or "Oh, yes, that answer

includes everything!" So I asked, "So, what are the hindering things?" and the man said, "Galatians chapter five verses nineteen to twenty. Those are the things that hinder you." Then, I tried to encourage them to think more deeply and list smaller practical things instead of broad sweeping things. The high-level man again suggested first and everyone felt obligated to agree.

I was not fully satisfied with the result in our small group because some participants were very quiet. Others did not know each other very well. They were from different communities and organizations and I tried to encourage them, but I also felt a little intimidated by the high-level people. I showed respect and tried to move on.

After the small groups finished, we looked at diagrams made by other small groups. This was very effective. People felt affirmed to see the same answer they had. This also led to new ideas. When they walked around and looked at other diagrams, they said, "Oh, yes, this is the same as ours!" And when they saw different things, they said, "This one is also right. We have not written it, but it does help."

After the discussion, each person wrote down two personal action items on paper. I saw that the people became very serious when they started writing down their own ideas. We let them pray and they became very quiet. They also spent time praying for each other.

The second time we got into groups we had people from three different, but related language teams in our group. In my group, we talked about the good things happening to help the people in each of these ethnic groups to engage well with God's word. One language group mentioned many things: churches in villages, people sharing good news to their village, scripture portions, and storying things. Another language group mentioned how they study the Bible in their fellowship group. When the groups thought about hopes for the future, they mentioned that they wanted the whole Bible. One group said they wanted to make gospel tracts.

This was an effective way to engage members in the church. It helped them discover what was hindering them from applying God's word. They realized that they can't just listen; they need to participate and have discussions.

Languages Spoken in Nepal
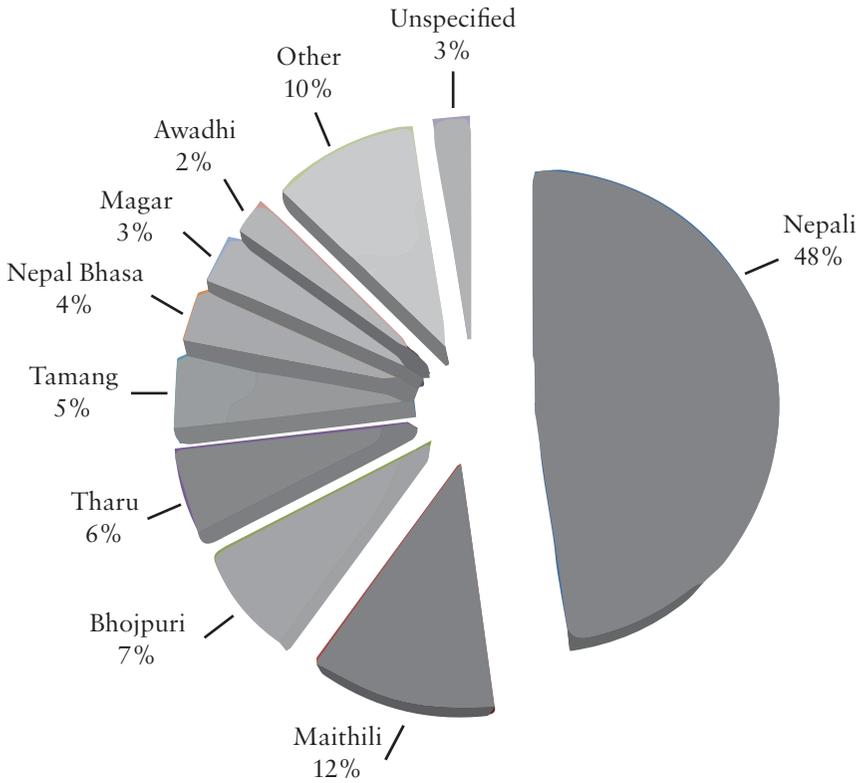
From Wikipedia, Wikimedia Commons

"Net" Worth of Fishers of Men

Christians have enormous financial resources, which they could use to spread the gospel, feed the poor and fight for the cause of justice in the world.

Jesus called his disciples to re-orient their thinking from "net worth" to "net" casting. This includes using our financial resources for our assigned purpose:

Follow me and I will make you fishers of men. (Matt 4:19 ESV)
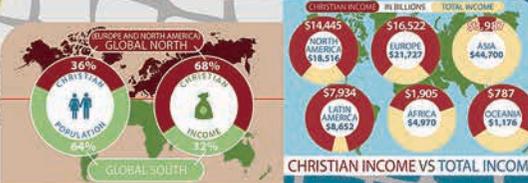
Potential For Giving

Christian income is concentrated in the wealthiest regions of the world — Europe, North America and part of Asia.

Middle and upper class Christians are increasing in number in some developing countries.

Christian GNI per capita = $18,841 while Global GNI per capita = $13,617
(GNI=Gross National Income)

CHRISTIANS AS PERCENT OF WORLD

CHRISTIAN POPULATION 33%
CHRISTIAN INCOME 46%

GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHRISTIANS

GLOBAL NORTH (EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA)
CHRISTIAN POPULATION 36%
CHRISTIAN INCOME 68%

GLOBAL SOUTH
POPULATION 64%
INCOME 32%

CHRISTIAN INCOME VS TOTAL INCOME

Region	Christian Income (in billions)	Total Income
NORTH AMERICA	$14,445	$18,514
EUROPE	$16,522	$21,727
ASIA	$9,180	$44,700
LATIN AMERICA	$7,934	$8,652
AFRICA	$1,905	$4,970
OCEANIA	$787	$1,176

POTENTIAL vs ACTUAL CHRISTIAN GIVING

Potential / Actual (in billions)

Region	Potential	Actual
NORTH AMERICA	$1,445	-$367
LATIN AMERICA		$793 / $104
EUROPE	$1,652	$285
AFRICA	$191	$22
ASIA	$399	-$51
OCEANIA	$79	
WORLD	$4,558	-$851

"POTENTIAL" = A TITHE

Actual Giving

"The last part of a man to be converted is his wallet."
— John Wesley

GIVING AS PERCENT OF INCOME

2.5% 1.3% 1.7% 1.2% 1.3% 2.7% 1.9%

NETS WITH HOLES

Money Lost to Ecclesiastical Crime

$3 million lost
2007
Radio Maria
Costa Rica

$3.65 million lost
2011
Uniting Church of Australia

$12 million lost
2014
Yoido Full Gospel Church
South Korea

$190 million lost
2010
Universal Brokerage Services
USA

CHRISTIANS AS PERCENT OF POPULATION, INCOME AND GIVING

CHRISTIANS / INCOME / GIVING

NORTH AMERICA LATIN AMERICA EUROPE AFRICA ASIA OCEANIA

CASTING OUR NETS FURTHER

Being so overwhelmed by God's grace that we overflow into giving.

Being transformed from a consumer mentality to a fishing mentality; keeping up with Jesus instead of the Joneses.

Practicing systematic generosity — disciplined tithing and above-and-beyond gifts as God guides.

Making small adjustments: The $100 spent on monthly coffee drinks could instead provide legal help for a woman rescued from sex trafficking.

For more data like these on the global Christian community, please visit the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary at www.globalchristianity.org

Sources and other explanatory notes at www.missiographics.com/christian-finance

To find more infographics from GMI visit www.missiographics.com

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"Net" Worth of Fishers of Men

Upcoming 2015 and 2016 International Orality Network 'Linked-In' or Sponsored Events:	
October 12th - 15th	All Africa 'Orality and Theological Education' Consultation Daystar University By Invitation Only Nairobi, Kenya
November 27th - 28th	International Orality Network Manila Conference Grace Christian Church Manila, Philippines
December 2nd - 4th	Finish The Task Conference Saddleback Church, CA, USA http://www.finishingthetask.com/events.html
2016	
March 30th - April 2nd	Pre-EMDC Training Chiang Mai, Thailand
Apri 4th - 7th	EMDC 2016 Chiang Mai, Thailand
June 15th - 22nd	Global Proclamation Congress for Trainers of Pastors Bangkok, Thailand
June 27th - 30th	Call2All Seoul, Korea
August 3rd - 11th	Lausanne Younger Leaders Gathering By Invitation Only Jakarta, Indonesia

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