

Section VII: Conference summary, comments, speakers and participants

Section introduction

41. Rapid assessment methodologies: A conference summary

42. Rapping on RAP: Selected comments and responses from the conference

Section introduction

A goal of the International Conference on Rapid Assessment Methodologies for Planning and Evaluation of Health and Nutrition Programmes was to provide a forum for professionals and academics developing and using RAP and similar qualitative techniques, as well as donor agencies and other funders of health and nutrition programmes to come together and discuss the current state of the art. The presentations, discussion periods and open communication sessions were organized in such a way as to encourage a free flow of discussion and debate around several themes. In this section the summary of the conference is presented along with a set of comments from a wide variety of participants. Dr. Ngokwey Ndolamb, a medical anthropologist and a UNICEF Programme Officer in UNICEF service in Cotonou, Benin demonstrated his own skill in the conference summary. Both his summary and the summary of conference comments which follows it are self explanatory. The comments were abstracted from discussions both of individual papers and general sessions. While each speaker has been identified, the editors utilized session notes as the source for this section and thus, the comments are not direct quotes.

This short section provides evidence that RAP has now entered a stage of development where issues such as its institutionalization and acceptance, and issues regarding training are moving to the fore. As can be expected, experience is leading to further improvements in the methods. The comments, in general, suggest a strong need for orientation within donor organizations and other decision making bodies on RAP despite the potentials for qualitative methods. They also suggest a need to avoid viewing qualitative and quantitative methodologies as mutually exclusive and to derive the choice of method more systematically from the perspective of information needs by decision makers be they in the village or at the level of government and donors.

Lists of participants and speakers with their addresses and affiliations at the time of the conference are also provided. These have been updated as of January 1992 where possible.

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