



MAKING PARTICIPATION VISUAL AND ENGAGING: VIPP TRAINING IN THE PHILIPPINES

By Toni Bauman and Christiane Keller

Between 18 and 22 November 2013, Toni Bauman, Senior Research Fellow in Governance and Public Policy at AIATSIS attended an international training course on Democratising Governance through Visualisation in Participatory Processes (VIPP). The course was held at the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR), its sponsor, in Silang, Cavite in the Philippines. The IIRR is an organisation that aims to strengthen the capacities of community groups and organisations and development practitioners in the promotion of participatory development approaches (<http://www.iirr.org/>).

The course was delivered by Dr Hermann Tillmann and Dr Maruja Salas of the Partnership Society for VIPP-Practice and Creative Learning. Dr Tillmann and Dr Salas, German and Peruvian, are both anthropologists, specialising in Indigenous knowledge systems, and have practiced and trained in participatory methods in various parts of the world. Using VIPP tools in 2009 they facilitated 'The Summit on the Summit' which brought together Indigenous Peruvians and Bolivians from the Andes to discuss food sovereignty.

The course taken by Toni Bauman was called 'Democratising Governance through Visualisation in Participatory Processes (VIPP)'. It was aimed at local NGOs, government and extension personnel engaged in training as well as facilitators and trainers who want to practice and improve their facilitation and trainer skills for democratic governance. Information for the course described it as follows:

The course focuses on promoting participation, accountability and effectiveness at all levels of the organization using VIPP. The aim is to create an accountable, transparent, inclusive and responsive organization for democratic governance that is able to respond to the needs of the changing times without disregarding the important inputs and ideas of the majority.

http://zunia.org/sites/default/files/media/vi/463252_vipp_course_brochure_2014_agc_nov2713.pdf.

There were eight participants, five of whom were researchers from an international, non-profit research organisation, Worldfish,¹ which focuses on food secure futures (www.worldfishcenter.org). Two of the Worldfish staff came from Cambodia, two from the Solomon Islands and the fifth from the Philippines. Other participants worked for the IIRR.

The VIPP techniques and tools have evolved from concepts developed by Metaplan, the German Foundation for International Development and the University of Hohenheim in Germany. The philosophical roots come from the Emancipatory Pedagogy of Paolo Freire. They are seen as a creative

¹ WorldFish is a member of the CGIAR Consortium, a global partnership that unites organisations engaged in research for a food secure future. CGIAR research is dedicated to reducing rural poverty, increasing food security, improving human health and nutrition, and ensuring more sustainable management of natural resources. It is carried out by the 15 centres who are members of the CGIAR Consortium in collaboration with hundreds of partner organisations, including national and regional research institutes, civil society organizations, academia, and the private sector.

and systematically organised way of applying participatory methods to improving group interaction in problem solving, decision making, planning, training, and creating new visions and directions. The VIPP methodology and approach can be effective irrespective of literacy levels.

The training combined short visualised inputs, individual tasks, group work, team cooperation, learning by doing and constructive feedback. A co-operative working style, employing a variety of senses and cognitive and emotional components, was encouraged and good group dynamics were essential parts of learning and practicing. http://zunia.org/sites/default/files/media/vi/463252_vipp_course_brochure_2014_agc_nov2713.pdf.

A manual titled *VIPP visualisation in participatory programs: How to facilitate and visualise participatory groups processes* includes some of the tools and the book can be purchased at http://www.southbound.com.my/Vipp/Vipp_VisualisationParticipatory.htm.

The VIPP team is organising an international summit of VIPP facilitators and trainers in Germany at the Monastery St. Ulrich Training Centre from 20-22 June 2014. The summit will be followed by the Advanced Creative VIPP Training of Facilitators (<http://www.southbound.com.my/VIPP/index.htm>). The focus of both events is to develop the future of the VIPP approach and practice, including a community of practice involving a global trainer pool and a decentralised non-bureaucratic training program facilitating the democratic governance of institutions and societies.

Ms Bauman aims to employ VIPP tools in future governance workshops and training to assess their value in the Australian Indigenous governance context: governance and public policy is a research priority at AIATSIS. The need to develop avenues to democratise governance and processes of Indigenous consensus-building, decision-making and engagement that are responsive to Indigenous needs and where outcomes are owned and sustainable is ever present.



VIPP course participants, trainers and IIRR support staff.

Back row left to right: Try Vanvuth, Orly Buenviaje, Gregory Bennett, Wilson Barbon, James Faiau, Joycen Sabio, Dulce Dominguez, Lily Lando, Toni Bauman
Front row left to right: Trainer Hermann Tillmann, Annie Secretario, Marissa Espineli, Sheilah Vergara, Trainer Maruja Salas, Sean Vichet.



Trainer Dr Maruja Salas and Toni Bauman putting the finishing touches on a VIPP plan for training Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate in decision-making processes.



Toni Bauman working with Sean Vichet from Cambodia.

Credit for all images: H Tillman & M Salas.