

Reflection on experiences of practice

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General Observations

- 1. The practice of SIA is commonly performed by professional consultants from private consultancy firms and rarely taken up by academics
- 2. The offering of SIA courses in tertiary education is not as common as anticipated; rather it is more common to see SIA being offered as professional training courses in the private sector by professional organizations such as IAIA
- 3. When SIA courses are offered, many are not in social science departments or taught by social scientists
- 4. There are virtually no cookbook-like textbooks catered for teaching SIA to beginners
- 5. When SIA is taught, many are focused on training in concepts and principles instead of empirical experiences

Community Perception

- 1. Consultation fatigue is common among general public
- 2. NIMBY (Not in my back yard) Syndrome is widespread, making it difficult to obtain in-depth or detailed information
- 3. Many are not well-informed about proposed projects/programs, and fewer could connect with the potential impacts on a community level
- 4. Most perceive those who are resistant to the proposed project as greedy trouble makers who are interested in obtaining the maximum compensation at the expense of economic development
- 5. The private sector is particularly weary of SIA as they see it as a liability and an obstruction for business/economy development
- 6. The public sector is equally conservative – developmentalism still reigns and hence shortchanged many necessary steps for conducting SIA properly
- 7. Role of SIA practitioner virtually unknown

Professional Practice

- 1. Most SIAs are conducted and performed by private consultants who have won their contracts by open tenders
- 2. Perpetuation of oligopoly of SIA contracts
- 3. Confidentiality clauses prohibiting public access to reports or findings, hence consultants are not accountable to local community/general public
- 4. Quality of SIA questionable when profits are more important than responsibility
- 5. Virtually no follow-up monitoring of recommendations or mitigation measures, leading to a post-study black hole
- 6. Reinforcing public and professional apathy

Moving Forward

- 1. Community education: taking steps to introduce SIA to the general public through community workshop, exhibitions and festivals
- 2. Developing introductory SIA courses and tool kits for community members to stimulate their interest in community development and identity
- 3. Professionalizing student SIA practitioners through establishment of young professional institutes, allowing them to design and own appropriate training programs that suit their need and interests
- 4. The wider use of social platforms for recruitment of interested young professionals, university students and retirees to work on SIA education programs targeting community leaders, service providers as well as local businesses

- 5. Develop tool kits that are locally appropriate – i.e., modify methodologies that are difficult to implement, or which produce disappointing results, to improve data collection
- 6. Experiment with innovative framework of methodologies for training and for data collection that are more appealing to current and upcoming generation of SIA practitioners – e.g., the use of internet-based tools, streaming, live events, and videos for promoting, teaching and feedback on popularizing SIA
- 7. Only when SIA becomes common knowledge among communities members, the quality and professional standards of SIA could be improved