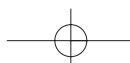
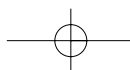
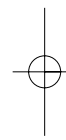
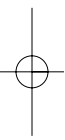




## Part II

# Strategic Issues in Planning Sound Research





# 2

## Doing Fieldwork in Developing Countries: Planning and Logistics

*Tony Binns*

- • The value of fieldwork in Third World countries • • Selecting a fieldwork location • • Developing overseas contacts • • Finding a research assistant and/or interpreter • • Being aware of local customs and protocol • • Evaluating what you and the host community will get from the field research • • Action-based fieldwork • • Power and the control of knowledge in field-based research

### Introduction

Thirty years ago, as an impressionable doctoral student, I left the UK on my first aeroplane flight to spend a year doing fieldwork in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Although I had studied a good range of geography and development courses, both as an undergraduate and postgraduate, I had received absolutely no training in 'doing fieldwork in developing countries'. I recollect that my pre-trip reading on fieldwork methodology consisted mainly of poring through manuals on conducting farm surveys and formulating and administering questionnaires. In those days (the early 1970s), there was an over-obsession with collecting mountains of quantitative data that could (often dubiously) be subjected to a gamut of statistical tests. Participatory research

had scarcely been heard of, to say nothing of the soul-searching involved in evaluating complex ethical aspects of the fieldwork experience. In retrospect, I now realize just how naïve I was about the practicalities of living and working among remote and poor communities in a tropical country. Yet at the end of the fieldwork, I was in no doubt that it had been the best year of my life. Indeed, it was an experience that provided the stimulus for me to embark on a career in teaching and researching about development issues.

In recent years, a number of authors have examined ethical issues related to 'First World' researchers undertaking fieldwork in 'Third World' countries (see, for example, Adams and Megaw, 1997; Madge, 1993, 1994; Potter, 1993; Sidaway, 1992, 1993). The coming together of the relatively rich 'researcher' with the relatively

poor 'respondent' does undoubtedly raise many questions about 'power' and 'positionality', which are considered briefly later in this chapter and then in more detail elsewhere in this book. It is certainly important to be aware of such issues, but I would disagree with Bronfenbrenner (1952: 453) that the only safe way of not violating professional ethics is to refrain from doing research altogether. While some academics have expressed firm objections to research by 'outsiders' (Kobayashi, 1994), others argue that research across boundaries (of ethnicity, culture, gender, etc.) can be justified because difference is an inherent aspect of all social interactions, and we can never truly be 'insiders' or 'outsiders' in any absolute sense (Nast, 1994: 57).

I would go along with Potter (1993), in asserting that teaching about the Third World should be informed by recent first-hand field experience. Indeed, across all sectors of the education system, I firmly believe that a detailed understanding of people and environment in different parts of the Third World is essential to the development of global understanding, empathy and action. In motivating the general populous to act during humanitarian crises caused by drought, floods, famine and civil war, up-to-date media reports and evidence from the field are essential if charities such as Oxfam, Christian Aid and Save the Children are to convey the urgency of the situation.

### Preparing for fieldwork

The decision to work in Sierra Leone on my chosen research topic (the relationships between food production, rural development and diamond mining), emerged from long conversations with my supervisor, who had worked in the University of Sierra Leone during the 1960s. In the absence of personal computers, the internet and email, communication with Sierra Leone was very difficult in

the early 1970s, other than through expensive telephone calls and painfully slow letters. Today, the internet provides an invaluable tool for discovering a wealth of information about a proposed location for fieldwork. Affordable long-haul and exotic travel were also in their infancy in the 1970s – trips to Africa were still the preserve of the wealthy. My air ticket to Sierra Leone in 1974 cost £750 (well over £1000 at today's prices), whereas 30 years later it is only about £600. Other useful sources that are now available include travel guides such as the *Rough Guide* and *Lonely Planet* series.

Irrespective of whether your fieldwork is in a rural location, I would strongly recommend that you read Robert Chambers' classic book, *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*, (Chambers, 1983). Although published over twenty years ago, it still provides a splendid introduction to some of the key issues concerning rural research in poor countries. Other valuable sources are *The Oxfam Handbook of Development and Relief* (Eade and Williams, 1995) and *Development Fieldwork: A Practical Guide* (Scheyvens and Storey, 2003).

In considering the logistics of fieldwork, you need to ask: *why? where? when? and how?* In answering the question 'why do fieldwork?', this will be determined largely by the nature of your research project, its key objectives and the methodology you have chosen. Formulating the methodology can take some time, but it is particularly important that you allow for a degree of flexibility in your fieldwork plans. From experience, interview schedules and other data collection methods often need to be fine-tuned when you are actually in the field, perhaps after conducting a small pilot study. In considering *where* you should undertake fieldwork, it is likely that a specific location is a key aspect of the research topic, for example, 'The sustainability of artisanal fishing practices in the Kenyan sector of Lake Victoria'. But in deciding where to do fieldwork, you should also be aware of such

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factors as the willingness of local elders and community leaders to support your research, local transport and travel arrangements, the accessibility of the research area, where you might live, the safety and security situation in your proposed location, and health aspects.

The timing of your fieldwork can be quite crucial and should be based on local knowledge that you have managed to acquire. For example, undertaking fieldwork during the rainy season can be difficult and uncomfortable. But if you avoid the rainy season you could actually miss much of the farming activity, when people are working at their hardest, when food may be in short supply (the so-called 'hungry season'), and when community health and welfare are often under considerable pressure. For example, the incidence of malaria and other diseases is generally greater during the rainy season. Chambers is critical of what he calls 'dry season bias', since field research undertaken entirely in the dry season, although perhaps logistically more straightforward, fails to appreciate the annual seasonal pattern and the pressures which exist at specific times of the year. Key aspects of rural poverty can be missed by not doing fieldwork in the rainy season (Chambers, 1983). In timing your fieldwork you should also consider cultural factors, such as the timing of religious festivals. For example, fieldwork undertaken in Muslim countries during the month of Ramadan can be interrupted by the obligation for Muslims to pray at certain times, and respondents may be tired or irritable due to not eating or drinking between sunrise and sunset. Understandably, the early evening meal, taken after the daily fast is broken, is an important social occasion and not a good time to conduct interviews.

While postgraduates will nowadays normally receive training in field-based survey methods, and are also generally introduced to issues concerning the ethics and protocol of undertaking fieldwork in Third World

countries, for many undergraduates there could be a limited induction in these aspects. Those who have already travelled overseas, or have worked on gap year programmes are at an advantage, but before setting off on fieldwork, it is essential that all fieldworkers should discuss their proposed study with someone who has had recent practical experience, preferably in the area where you propose to base your study. Some universities organize field courses in Third World countries that provide a useful insight to the nature of possible field research and the different field-based methods that might be used (Binns, 1992; Robson, 2002).

A good contact in the country where you plan to undertake your fieldwork can play a key role in advising on the practicalities of research and, if necessary, assisting with obtaining research permission. In the last decade, I have been involved in establishing three collaborative higher education links through the British Council with universities in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and South Africa. These links have proved invaluable in gaining research permission (where necessary) and in providing a supportive framework for both students and myself who are undertaking field research in these countries. It may not actually be necessary to obtain research permission if you are undertaking collaborative fieldwork with local researchers. Short periods of fieldwork might also be undertaken with a tourist visa, but where extended field research is planned, such as for a doctoral thesis, it is advisable to obtain official approval. This can actually take some time, but can be expedited with the assistance of a local university or NGO, which is familiar with the application procedure and can write in support of the application.

Before embarking on fieldwork, you may need to complete an 'ethical clearance' form for your own institution, in addition to undertaking a 'risk assessment' of your proposed fieldwork. This involves going through a series

of steps, such as identifying potential hazards, examining how they might affect you, evaluating the risk, and deciding on what precautions you should take to avoid risk. The risk assessment should then be under constant review during your time in the field, with contingency arrangements in place should problems

occur. Most higher education institutions and professional bodies publish guidelines for fieldwork risk assessments, many of which are available on the internet. The UK government's Health and Safety Executive (HSE) also issues advice on formulating risk assessments (<http://www.hse.gov.uk>) (see Box 2.1).

### Box 2.1 Checklist: Preparing for fieldwork

- Consult the internet, *Rough Guide* (<http://www.roughguides.com/>) and/or *Lonely Planet* (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>) for country information – currency, climate, visa requirements, international and local travel, accommodation, etc.
- The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) website (<http://www.fco.gov.uk>) gives up-to-date travel advice – details on safety and security aspects in specific countries.
- For health advice (vaccinations, malaria prophylaxis, etc.), there are various websites, for example MASTA (<http://www.masta.org/>).
- For information on field expeditions and expedition planning, contact the Royal Geographical Society Expedition Advisory Centre (<http://www.rgs.org>). See also Pawson and Teather (2002).
- Wherever possible, establish links with local individuals and/or institutions in the country you will be visiting. A local university or college, a non-governmental organization (NGO), the British Council, or your country's embassy or high commission can be useful contacts.
- It is vital that you obtain good travel insurance for yourself and your possessions for the duration of your time overseas. This should include comprehensive health cover, with repatriation by 'air ambulance' should that be necessary.
- Undertake a risk assessment and review it regularly.

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Concerning what clothing and personal items you should carry during your field research, Table 2.1 is a tried and tested 'kit list' for tropical countries, which may be helpful.

### Into the field

On arrival in the country where you will be doing fieldwork, you should first make contact with the individuals and institutions with whom you have been corresponding. Hopefully, they will provide you with a base

on arrival, probably in the capital city. If it is your first visit to that country, you should allow yourself some time to settle in and develop your networks further. Don't be in too much of a hurry to get into the field. You should visit government offices, NGOs and higher education institutions, where individuals can probably supply you with useful perspectives on your research, as well as providing reports ('grey' literature) and statistics that may be unobtainable outside the country. You will also need to talk about the logistic arrangements for your fieldwork. On the basis

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Table 2.1 Fieldwork kit list for tropical areas

| <i>Clothing</i>            | <i>Medical and toiletries</i> | <i>Other items</i>                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| towel                      | first aid book                | passport   |
| underwear                  | Elastoplast/ Band Aid         | ticket   |
| shirts – preferably cotton | anti-diarrhoea tablets        | traveller's cheques, cash,<br>debit/credit cards |
| socks                      | re-hydration powders          | insurance certificate                            |
| trousers/shorts            | lip salve                     | camera   |
| (smart) shoes              | analgesic tablets             | spare batteries                                  |
| training shoes, sandals    | malaria tablets               | films  |
| lightweight walking boots  | sterile needles               | vaccination certificates                         |
| plastic slip-on sandals    | antihistamine tablets         | address book                                     |
| swimming costume           | insect repellent              | calculator                                       |
| pullover or fleece         | wet-wipes                     | string (for clothes-line etc.)                   |
| waterproof jacket          | toothbrush                    | washing powder/liquid, pegs                      |
| hat                        | toothpaste                    | luggage keys                                     |
| belt                       | deodorant                     | coathangers                                      |
| glasses/sunglasses         | soap                          | sheet sleeping bag                               |
|                            | shampoo                       | penknife   |
|                            | flannel                       | small rucksack                                   |
|                            | razor & razor blades          | water bottle                                     |
|                            | shaving soap                  | scissors   |
|                            | comb/hairbrush                | radio (short-wave)                               |
|                            | sun protection cream          | clock  |
|                            | multi-vitamins                | torch  |
|                            | ear plugs                     | mirror   |
|                            | tissues                       | pens, pencils, notebook, maps                    |
|                            | other personal items          |  |

of up-to-date information from local experts, it may then be necessary to modify your plans, for example if there is a security risk in a particular area, or if the road is impassable due to heavy rain.

Another very important matter that you will need to resolve is who will actually accompany you on your fieldwork. It is likely that you will not be fluent in the local language(s), but even if you do regard yourself as competent linguistically, I would strongly advise that you should be accompanied on fieldwork by at least one local person. In the past, I have undertaken fieldwork with colleagues from local universities, and with local undergraduate or postgraduate students. It is

always useful to be able to 'bounce ideas off' someone else, and a local person will also be more aware of safety issues and protocols that could affect the success of your fieldwork. The opportunity to live and work with local people will add much to your fieldwork experience and should help you to discover so much more about the country. While working with local students, I have been able to discuss their own research and career interests; while with academic colleagues we have considered our joint plans for future research and publication, curriculum development and their reciprocal visits to UK. Being accompanied in the field by local people is also vital in the context of helping to build up rapport and trust with

potential respondents in the communities where your fieldwork is based.

University or NGO staff should be able to advise on who would be the best person to act as your interpreter and/or research assistant, and what payment they would expect for the work. University students are often keen to perform such a role, in return for having an opportunity to work closely with someone from overseas. It may not be necessary to pay them a wage as such, but it would be both polite and reasonable to cover their travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses, and to make a gift to them when the work has been satisfactorily completed. I have invariably found the fieldwork to be the most interesting and enjoyable phase of all my research projects. But the success of your fieldwork will depend on many things, most notably gaining the confidence, interest and support of the communities where you are working, and developing a good relationship with your interpreter/field assistant.

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Before embarking on fieldwork you will need to find somewhere to live during the field-based investigation. This may be a guest-house, possibly owned by the community or an NGO, or alternatively you may choose to live with a local family. There is much to be gained from the latter, as the family will be able to learn more about you and your research, and you will be able to learn about family life and local customs. You should make an allowance in your budget to pay the family for their hospitality. It is a good idea to have your own room, so that you can retire to rest and reflect, and also to allow both your hosts and yourself to 'have your own space'. It is important that you have a comfortable place to live while undertaking fieldwork. You should also take particular care of your health and nutrition, since ill-health could jeopardize your entire research project. Your host family may be keen for you to eat with them. Take care that you have a well-balanced daily food intake. You should take advice on

whether it is safe to drink the local water, and if in any doubt, you should drink boiled water or bottled mineral water, which is now available worldwide.

Ideally, you should try to make a short reconnaissance trip to your field location, to introduce yourself and explain the objectives. You should carry some form of identification, and preferably a letter of introduction from a local university or NGO. It is important to gain the interest and support of the community elders for your work. In most African communities, an audience with the chief at an early stage is an essential prerequisite for successful field research. Sometimes this will involve an exchange of gifts – you should take advice on what is expected. Understandably, the researcher will probably be asked by community leaders what the community is likely to gain from the research. This is always a difficult question to answer, but you should be prepared for this. Realistically, published books and journal articles, which are usually the principal outputs of most research projects, will have very little positive bearing on the lives of poor people in the Third World (Edwards, 1989: 123). It is important not to promise anything that you cannot deliver. As Sidaway observes: 'Particularly when the outsider is perceived as relatively powerful/rich (or even not), it is surprisingly easy for her/him to be drawn into commitments and promises that one may not be in a position to fulfil' (Sidaway, 1992: 406). Community members are often interested that the research will discover more about their community, which may or may not lead to some form of development intervention. Field researchers should be prepared to arrange regular feedback sessions, at which local people can ask questions and hear about progress in the research.

Well before commencing fieldwork, you should think carefully about your objectives and strategies for collecting data, and how these are likely to impact on individuals, families and the community as a whole. There has



## DOING FIELDWORK IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: PLANNING AND LOGISTICS

been much discussion in the past of whether research in Third World countries is 'parasitic', or may be characterized as 'data mining'. The field researcher should give careful thought as to how the community might be repaid for their help. You will need to take advice on whether respondents should be paid for giving their time and knowledge to the project. Arrangements vary from one location to another, and could be influenced by precedents created by earlier research projects. If you do not intend to pay respondents, then you should make this clear at the outset when discussing your project with community leaders. Rather than giving to individuals, it is a good idea to identify and give support to a community project that will benefit more people – for example, the local school or clinic. In Sierra Leone recently, after a successful period of field-based data collection, my research assistant decided it would be a good idea to give some funds for a local carpenter to construct a set of desks and benches for the local school – a gesture which was greatly appreciated by the community.

Elsewhere in this book there is much reference to different types of research strategy. Fortunately, the obsession with questionnaires in the 1960s and early 1970s has faded, though in the right place and at the right time questionnaires can still be useful. But the trend in recent years towards utilizing more participatory field-based research strategies has been a great step forward. If handled sensitively, such methods can play a key role in fostering a positive relationship between the researcher(s) and the individuals and communities being studied. Field researchers must be constantly aware of their position *vis-à-vis* the local people. As Adams and Megaw observe:

We come from outside the village. We speak other languages and follow arcane practices (socio-economic research), and we seem to have powerful friends because we bring letters of introduction. ... Above all, we can come and

go: we are not committed. (Adams and Megaw, 1997: 219)

The issue of power and control of knowledge is of concern here, in the context of the capabilities and ethics of 'outsiders' who are conducting research on, and ultimately speaking about 'others'. Ake (1979) describes the power of Western knowledge as 'academic imperialism', while Minh-ha (1989) suggests that Third World research is mainly a conversation of 'us' with 'us about them'. While undertaking fieldwork, it is essential to reflect constantly on how you as an outsider should relate to local people. The issue of 'positionality' has been raised, particularly in the context of men researching women, but is also of relevance when working with such groups as poor people and children. Howard (1994) warns that the positionality of the researcher can affect an interview, because there is often a tendency for respondents to tell the researcher what they believe he or she wants to hear, especially when there is a marked power inequality between the two.

It is important to ask yourself how relevant is your research to the local community? So many lengthy field-based data collection exercises merely end up as conference papers which are then subsequently published in books and journals. I believe there is a real opportunity for field-based development researchers to get involved in so-called 'action research', in which they might actually play a role in improving conditions in the communities where they are working. For example, one of my doctoral students, undertaking research recently among a poor farming community in Eastern Cape Province, South Africa, discovered that selling their impressive vegetable crop was proving to be a major constraint on economic upliftment. Nobody in the community owned a telephone, and there was only one rather unreliable public telephone nearby. Since South Africa has relatively good mobile phone coverage, the researcher

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decided to buy two (inexpensive) mobile phones for the community's agricultural project leaders. This enabled producers to liaise with wholesalers regularly, to alert the latter when produce would be ready for sale, and to make the necessary transport arrangements to get the produce to market. In the same community, a large debt had been accumulated for electricity to drive the water pump that irrigated the fields. The researcher was suspicious of the electricity account statement that the project leaders had received, so he arranged a meeting at the headquarters of the electricity company, in which he acted as a mediator between the electricity company officials and the project leaders. The meeting was successful and boosted the confidence of the project leaders. The company officials agreed to change the electricity tariff, such that the amount owed by the community was reduced considerably. In addition to delivering tangible benefits to the community, action research can also strengthen relationships between the community and the researcher. However, some caution is needed, since there is a fine dividing line between a researcher helping the community to deal with a specific problem and the community then looking to the researcher to solve all their problems. Megaw's involvement with an NGO in Ghana provides some useful lessons for those who may be considering more active involvement with their host communities (Adams and Megaw, 1997).

In relation to studying women, there has been some debate about whether men should actually interview women, but Scheyvens and Storey suggest that the key thing is that researchers are 'informed of and sensitive to local socio-cultural contexts' (Scheyvens and Storey, 2003: 170). However, in certain circumstances it is only possible for women to talk with women. In northern Nigeria, for example, a strict form of Islam exists, under which Hausa women of childbearing age are

in seclusion. I have been involved in a number of collaborative projects with Nigerian academics in this region, and in a field study which evaluated the incidence of urban agriculture, it was necessary to have a team of women researchers who went into households to talk with women who were growing fruit and vegetables inside the walls of their compounds. Without this team of women researchers, the Hausa women's quite significant horticultural activities would have been completely ignored. In sharp contrast to this, in South Africa, where women are generally more empowered and articulate, I recollect some very lively focus group meetings with both men and women, where women dominated the discussion.

In recent years, children have, somewhat belatedly, become an important focus of research in Third World countries. When working with children, it is important to explain the purpose of the research in simple and straightforward language and to use child-friendly and less intimidating data collection strategies such as drawing, story writing and roleplay (Scheyvens and Storey, 2003: 174). Matthews and Tucker are concerned that research with children should not misrepresent them, or be embarrassing or harmful (Matthews and Tucker, 2000).

The key point to bear in mind while conducting research in Third World communities is that during your fieldwork you are a guest in that community, and how you relate to individuals and groups will likely affect the responses you receive, and can ultimately determine the success of your entire research project. Above all, you should respect local customs and make a determined effort to be unobtrusive, polite and deferential. At the end of your fieldwork you should report back on your findings to the community, explaining how you intend to follow up the fieldwork after you have left (see Box 2.2).

## DOING FIELDWORK IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: PLANNING AND LOGISTICS

**Box 2.2 Checklist: Into the field**

- On arrival in the overseas country you should discuss your study and fieldwork logistics with local experts.
- Take advice on who would be best to accompany you as an interpreter/field assistant and discuss remuneration at an early stage.
- Investigate local travel and accommodation arrangements.
- Undertake a short reconnaissance trip to your fieldwork area, to meet community leaders and to conduct a small pilot survey.
- In the light of experience gained on your reconnaissance and pilot survey, you should consider carefully your field research objectives and methods.
- Remember that when you are in the field you are a guest of the local communities. Be polite, friendly and business-like in your work.
- Plan carefully your leaving the field. Ensure you have all necessary data and consider the best way to give feedback to communities and individuals.

**Leaving the field**

Leaving the field is often not easy and requires careful planning. If fieldwork has gone well, then it can be difficult to withdraw from a situation where you may have lived and worked for some time (Scheyvens and Storey, 2003: Chapter 10). It is often the case that you have just one opportunity to collect field data for your project, so it is vital that you leave with all the necessary data, since funding and time constraints may preclude a return visit. There is too often a tendency among field researchers to 'take the data and run', but it is important to reflect on how much time others have given to your fieldwork enquiries. Without their help, data collection would probably have been impossible.

It is particularly difficult to leave interpreters and field assistants, with whom you have developed a close relationship. Keeping in touch with communities and individuals with whom you have worked should be a high priority. In my own case, I have managed to maintain strong links with people I met in Sierra Leone during my doctoral field research thirty years ago, despite the political instability and civil war which have afflicted

the country and its people. In the intervening period, I have supported a community member through his education, and have maintained strong links with my former research assistant, who is now Dean at the university. On my recent return to the communities where I had lived in 1974, I took a series of laminated photographs that I had taken as a research student, and presented these to the community elders. The photos provided a valuable archive of the pre-war community.

Rather than abandoning local contacts after the fieldwork, it is important to involve them as far as possible in the data analysis and writing-up phases of projects, though there may be practical difficulties in doing this. For many Third World academics, research may be low on their personal agendas, primarily because of practical difficulties. As Porter so rightly points out: 'the difficulties of obtaining a livelihood have made sustained research problematic for most indigenous academics' (Porter, 1995: 140). While a lack of electricity, water, transport and fuel are everyday problems, inadequate salaries and impoverished libraries further militate against research by academics in many Third World countries. The UK Department

for International Development (DfID) 'Higher Education Links Scheme', managed by the British Council, has provided me with a valuable opportunity to collaborate with colleagues in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and South Africa. The Scheme has supported visits in both directions, which have enabled field-based data collection and joint publication. The formulation of research grant applications and the facilitation of research student supervision have also developed through these links. We have purposely targeted international journals for publication, a strategy that has strengthened the capacity and achievement record of African colleagues.

Returning to the field with the final results of your work may be difficult logistically, but local collaborators can usually assist in reporting back to the communities. It is useful for community leaders to have some clear policy recommendations emerging from the fieldwork that might lead to concrete action. Local collaborators can also make contact with government and NGO officials to report on the study's main findings and to identify ways of taking these forward. In the written output from the project, you should consider carefully whether it is best to maintain anonymity, in case there could be repercussions on specific individuals where sensitive issues are involved (see Box 2.2).

## Conclusion

Fieldwork in Third World countries is usually enjoyable, but there will undoubtedly be moments of exhilaration and despair, often in the same day. The important thing is to try to stay calm and do not be afraid to ask for help. You will need to take regular breaks from the fieldwork, to 'recharge your batteries', and to reflect both on what you have achieved and where you go next. Use these 'time-out' periods to possibly spend a weekend away from your field location, or alternatively to devote time to socializing with your host family and community. Teaching English to children or adults, chatting informally in the marketplace, or playing sport with schoolchildren, should help you to relax and at the same time strengthen rapport with the community.

It is likely that memories of your fieldwork will stay with you throughout your life. Share your experiences with others, and consider carefully how your fieldwork relates to your broader studies, perhaps exemplifying more theoretical statements on development issues. Preparing for fieldwork might be a daunting experience, but actually doing fieldwork and reflecting on it afterwards can be highly pleasurable.

### QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

1. Examine the arguments 'for' and 'against' undertaking fieldwork in Third World countries.
2. What are the key factors involved in choosing a location for field research?
3. How can you ensure that the results of your fieldwork are reported back to the communities where you collected data?
4. What specific strategies would you adopt in undertaking field-based data collection with marginalized and/or disadvantaged groups, e.g. women, children, disabled, poor, ethnic minorities?
5. To what extent is it necessary that the outcomes of field-based research should be relevant to planning future development trajectories in local communities?

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