

## **A systematic approach to debiasing – instructions from Robert Chambers**

We need a systematic, timely and cost-effective approach offsetting the biases and for finding and exploring the seas between the islands. Here is what, again and again, I have found works astonishingly well, and far better than one might suppose.

- Ring fence a day. Take a day's leave if necessary. Do not have any government or NGO person with you – just a driver, perhaps a colleague, and (in my case usually) an interpreter.
- Hire an unmarked vehicle.
- Drive out from your urban centre in any direction for 15-20km.
- Turn off left or right and drive for 5-10km.
- Turn left or right again and stop anywhere, perhaps a poor or typical village or other settlement.
- Wander around on foot, meet people, explain who you are and your interests, notice and ask about things, be friendly and interested, ask what people would like to show you, seek out those we might not meet – women, children disabled, low status, living on the fringes, key informants like teachers, local representatives, masons, health workers and so on.
- Tea shops can be brilliant. Go to a tea shop and chat. A male bias can be expected, but discussions can be immediately frank and revealing. You can carry out quick order-of-magnitude surveys based on people's knowledge of different villages and other questions.
- Follow up on offers to show you things, or take you to see people or things.
- Go to several contrasting places during the day.

Robert Chambers, December 2018