



**van hall  
larenstein**  
university of applied sciences

CONFERENCE

# THIRTY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WITH VISUAL PROBLEM APPRAISAL

The imperative of mediated  
participation for problem  
analysis and social dialogue

7 MAY 2025 | 10:00-16:00  
VHL UNIVERSITY OF  
APPLIED SCIENCES  
VELP



# THIRTY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WITH VISUAL PROBLEM APPRAISAL

The imperative of mediated participation for problem analysis and social dialogue

**The focus on actor and system analysis led to a 1995 initiative to design an international, intercultural learning environment that would bring the real world into the classroom. The Visual Problem Appraisal (VPA) was created to support multi-stakeholder participation. Using film portraits, students could engage with diverse stakeholders and overcome barriers of time and space.**

The first VPA, "Rice from the Guayana's," has been used in MSc courses for over 20 years and was followed by titles such as Kerala's Coast, Flavours of Cocoa and Chocolate, and Rhine River Branches. VPA is applied both in professional policy contexts and academic curricula as a social learning tool. Its value has only grown, as today's complex sustainability and governance challenges require integrating diverse perspectives.

Now celebrating its 30th anniversary, the VPA continues to evolve with new productions and ongoing research into mediated participation and stakeholder consultation.

To mark the occasion, a VPA conference will take place on 7 May 2025. Researchers, stakeholders, and students will share experiences, and over 10 VPA sets will be showcased.

You are very welcome!

Kind regards,

Research group Communication, Participation and Social-Ecological Learning (CoPSEL)

VHL University of Applied Sciences



## PROGRAMME

**Date:** Wednesday 7 May 2025

**Location:** VHL University of Applied Sciences, Larensteinselaan 26a, Velp

**9:15 Walk-in – Tea/Coffee**

**10:00 Opening – Welcome**

by Dr. Jan Fliervoet (Conference Chair), John Riggers (Director of education, VHL) and Dr. Loes Witteveen (CoPSEL, VHL)

**10:30 30 Years of Experience with VPA**

- Transforming perspectives through mediated participation  
by Dr. Sarah Cardey (Reading University)
- VPA as a learning strategy in complex stakeholder settings  
by Dr. Hilde Toonen (WUR)

**11:00 Break – Tea/Coffee**

**11:30 30 Years of Experience with VPA (continued)**

- VPA Kerala's Coast: collaborative learning on problem structuring  
by Dr. Ir. Leon Hermans (IHE Delft/TU Delft)
- VPA and interdisciplinary understanding in Japan  
by Dr. Mariko Kihira (Nagoya University)
- VPA for professional training in river management  
by Astrid Bout (Rijkswaterstaat)

**12:30 Lunch**

**13:30 Future Motivations for Mediated Participation**

- VPA as a safe space for social dialogue in the Wadden Sea  
by Prof. Dr. Piet Hoekstra (Waddenacademie/Utrecht University)
- VPA Peatlands: visualizing voices for sustainable governance  
by Dr. Ir. Peter van der Maas (VHL)

**14:30 Workshops (in parallel)**

- 1. VPA in Higher Education** – Dr. Sarah Cardey, Dr. Rico Lie, Ilse Ronner
- 2. VPA Kerala's Coast** Dr. Hilde Toonen, Prof. Dr. Dinesh Kaippilly, Dr. Loes Witteveen
- 3. VPA Dutch Delta for Policy Design** – Dr. Jaap Evers, Dr. Jan Fliervoet
- 4. VPA in Transitiegericht Onderwijs** – Elise Hebbink, Karen Tuason, Rachel Polman, Leonoor Akkermans, Marcel Rompelman

**15:30 Plenary & Wrap-up**

Reports from the workshops and closing remarks by the chair

**16:00 Reception**



# REGISTRATION

You can register until 1 May via [THIS LINK](#).  
Participation is free, but registration is required.



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Agora 1  
Postbus 1528  
8901 BV Leeuwarden  
058 284 61 00

Larensteinselaan 26a  
Postbus 9001  
6880 GB Velp  
026 369 56 95

[www.hvhl.nl](http://www.hvhl.nl)