

ForHeal Forestry Higher Education Advancement in Laos

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Collaborative research approaches

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Options for Action

1. Go back to the identified challenges and prescribed improvement categories and think about possible actions to achieve such
2. Prioritize the three most promising options
3. Think for each action, who should do, how, and with what resources

The role of Research

Think of the role of academia (universities, researchers, scientists) in the classic diffusion system

ForHeal The role of research in the classic approach to local development

- Dominated by the researcher
 - Identification of the problem
 - Search for the solution (research)
 - Definition of the solution
 - Communication and transfer of the solution
- Transfer of the solution by specialized agencies governmental and no-governmental

ForHeal The classic diffusion system

- **Centralized**
 - Full control by governmental officials and technical experts
 - Innovations come from Research and Development (R&D)
 - Top-down from experts to users

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    graph LR
      Experts[Experts] -- Information --> ChangeAgents[Change agents]
      ChangeAgents -- Education --> Clients[Clients]
      ChangeAgents --> Clients
    
```

ForHeal Separation of actors involved


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    graph LR
      Researcher[Researcher (Expert)] -.-> Communicators[Communicators (Change agents)]
      Communicators -.-> Producer[Producer (Client)]
    
```

Unidirectional (top-down)

ForHeal Difficulties

- Disciplinary treatment of the problem
- Selection of problems in accordance with researcher's competence, but not necessarily due to local priorities
 - Technical aspects (natural sciences)
 - Theoretical discussions (social sciences)
- Proposed solutions may insufficiently consider local realities
 - Little knowledge of the local situation
 - Risk of misinterpretation of local capacities
- Limited possibilities for locals to adapt the proposed solution to the specific needs and dynamic reality

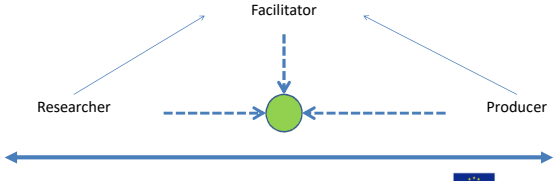



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COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH




ForHeal Collaboration between actors

ForHeal Expectations

- Caption of priority problems of the local population
- Understanding of the problem in its complexity
- Inclusion of local knowledge and capacities in the research process ensures that the solutions developed correspond to the interests and capacities of the local producers
- Local ownership guarantees **adaptability**



ForHeal Why collaboration?


Local producers, researchers, politicians, NGOs etc.

Different knowledge, abilities, skills, resources	Interests, values, understandings
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Collaboration vs. Isolated Action

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency • Increased understanding • Full adoption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of communication • Mistrust • Limited adoption
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Social Acceptance Quality of the solution



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RESEARCH APPROACHES

Understanding differences




ForHeal Approaches

- Conventional empirical expert research
- Participant observation and individual interviews
- Rapid Rural Appraisal
- Participatory Assessment
- Participatory Rural Appraisal
- Participatory Action Research
- Participatory Extension
- Integrated Natural Resource Assessment

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ForHeal Conventional Empirical Expert Research

- **Aim**
 - Capture of statistically relevant and objective (scientific) data
- **Characteristics**
 - Expert driven research
- **Typical Methods**
 - Application of structured interviews and questionnaires, use of sophisticated analytical tools

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ForHeal Participant observation / individual interviews

- **Aim**
 - Gain information about community's values, dynamics, internal relationships, structures and conflicts
- **Characteristics**
 - Observations instead of (normative) statements
- **Typical Methods**
 - Involvement with the community

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ForHeal Rapid Rural Appraisal

- **Aim**
 - Gain information and insights from rural people and about rural conditions in a cost-effective and timely manner ("quick and dirty")
- **Characteristics**
 - Reflected expert driven research with local information
- **Typical Methods**
 - Semi-structured interviews by local experts, case studies and stories, transect walks, group dynamics, mapping, Venn diagramming, seasonal calendars, [triangulation](#)

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ForHeal Participatory Assessment

- **Aim**
 - Gain information about rural conditions together with rural people
- **Characteristics**
 - Local research organized by externals
- **Typical Methods**
 - Same as RRA but with additional tools for analysis and/or planning: scenarios, time lines, shared presentation and analysis, ZOPP

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ForHeal Participatory Rural Appraisal

- **Aim**
 - Enable rural people to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life as basis to effectively plan, act, monitor and evaluate (Absalom et al. 1995, Chambers 1996)
- **Characteristics**
 - Locally driven research facilitated by externals
- **Typical Methods**
 - Learning loops, emphasis on the process

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ForHeal Participatory Action Research

- **Aim**
 - To address practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation
- **Characteristics**
 - Locally driven research supported by externals on locally defined topics
- **Typical Methods**
 - Systematic application of learning loops
 - Learning by doing - a group of people identifies a problem, does something to resolve it, sees how successful their efforts were, and, if not satisfied, tries again.

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