Creating enabling frame conditions for landuser – scientist communication

B. Koelle, D. Kotze

Indigo development & change

The challenge...

- Ever increasing complexity of problems and possibly of necessary responses
- Limited ability to implement complex and fragmented recommendations
- Both land users and scientists are expert in the field, but may lack appreciation for each other‘s expertise
- Synergies are urgently needed
- Capacity development of scientists is needed
- Climate change scenarios

Increasing social and environmental pressures

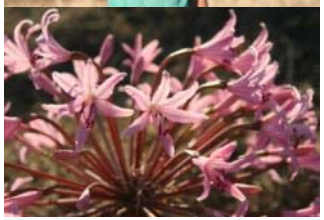
Urgent need for applied solutions

The resources...

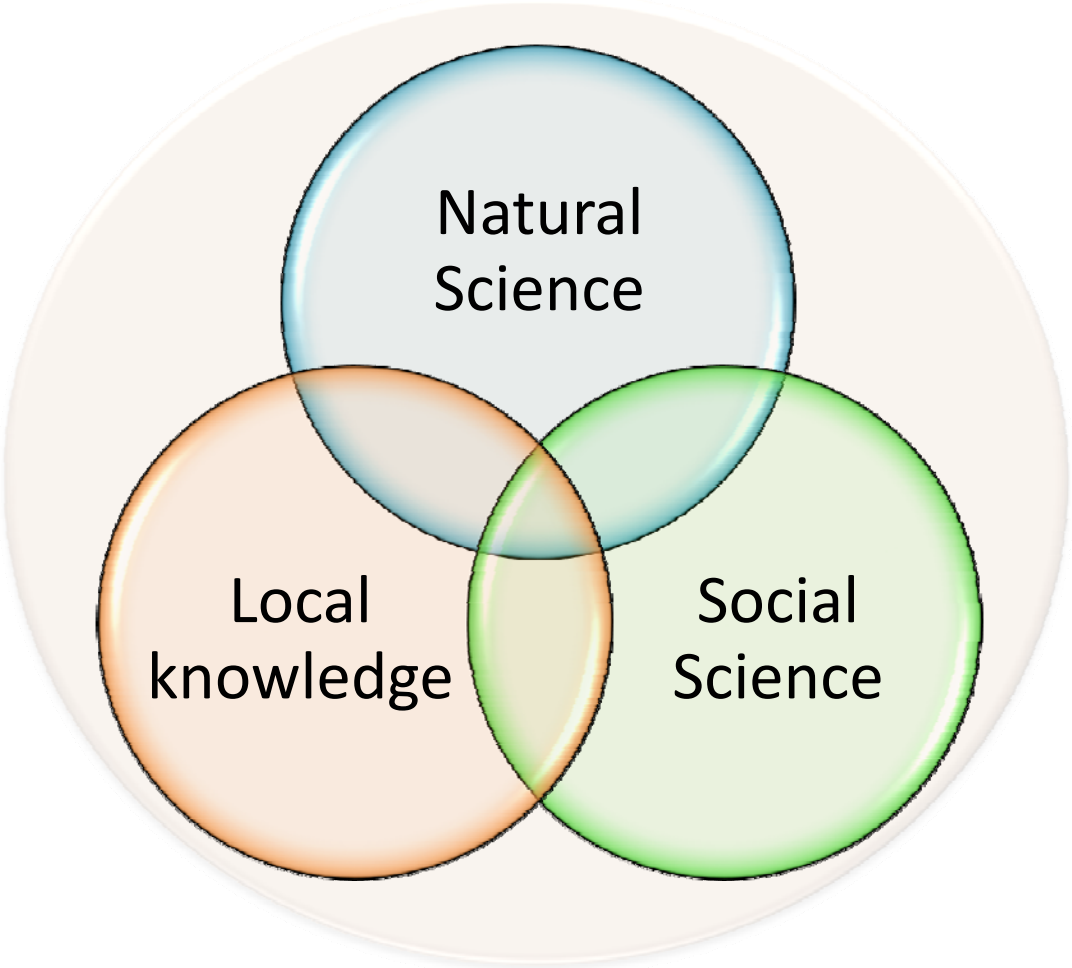
- Increasing body of scientific research (social and natural sciences)
- Continious observation along the transect
- Variety of data, analysis and processes
- Data nodes and observation networks

- Willingness of land users to improve practice and share knowledge
- BIOTA para-ecologists as links between scientists and land users
- An increasing awareness that communication and joint solutions will be key for our future



Transdisciplinary research as the solution?



"**Trans-disciplinarity** is an approach that is an attempt to **generate greater understanding** that reaches beyond the outlines of strict disciplines. ... To understand something ... requires a **personal involvement that surpasses disciplinary frontiers**, thus making it a trans-disciplinary experience"

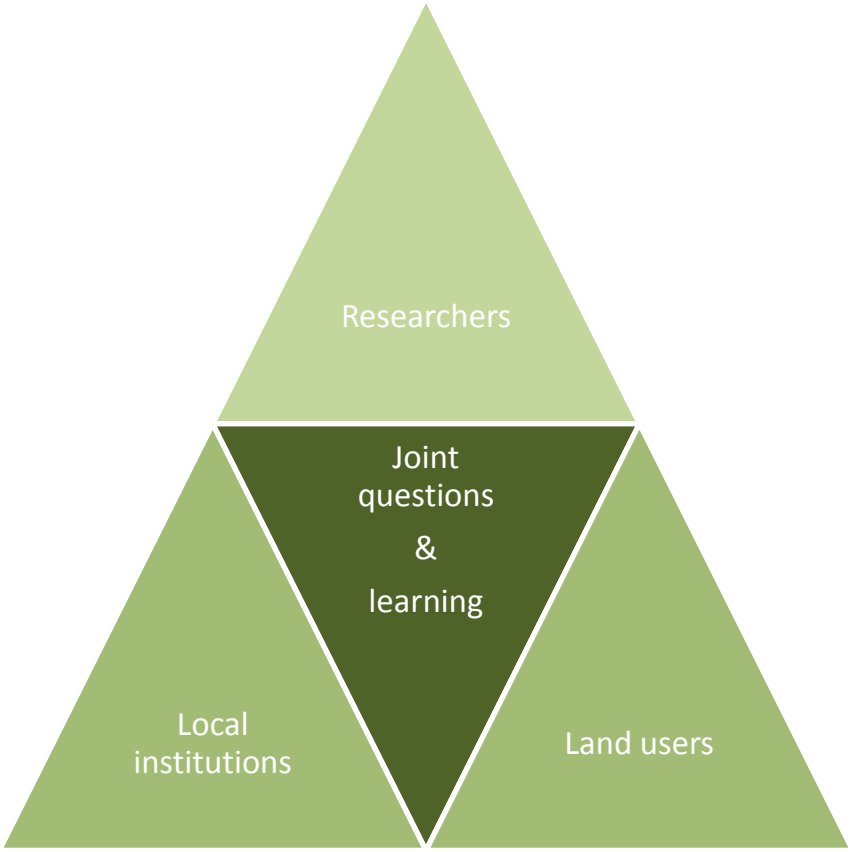
Max-Neef, M.A. (1991)

Types of particpation...

Typology	Characteristics
1. Manipulative participation	Participation is simply a **pretence**
2. Passive participation	People participate by **being told what has been decided** or has already happened. Information shared belongs only to external professionals.
3. Participation by consultation	People participate by **being consulted**, or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information gathering processes, and so control analysis.
4. Participation by material incentives	People participate by c**ontributing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives**. Yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end
5. Functional participation	Participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to **meet pre-determined objectives related to the project after major decisions have been made.**
6. Interactive participation	People participate in **joint analysis**, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions. The process involved **interdisciplinary methodologies** that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systemic and structured **learning processes.**
7. Self-mobilisation	People participate by **taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems**. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used.

Source: Pretty, J. N. 1995. "Participatory Learning for Sustainable Agriculture". *World Development* Volume 23, Number 8, August. Pages 11 - 17

Participatory Action Research provides a framework within which all roleplayers can learn together



"Participatory Action Research is a methodology aims to bring about improvement ... by activating in the people involved in the situation a learning cycle"

Buellow (1989)

Increasing problem solving capacity

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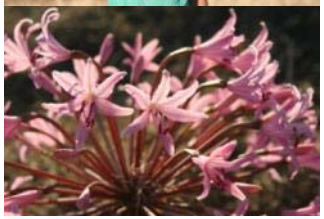
Partnership Principles

1. Partnerships are built on **trust** and partnerships enhance trust.
2. Effective partnerships **require transparency** and access to information.
3. Partnerships must provide members with **equal voice and shared decision-making** responsibility while recognising comparative advantage.
4. Partnerships must be **goal-oriented, results-driven** and progress towards these results must be measurable.
5. Partnerships must reflect local priorities and help create an enabling **environment for effective action**.

Dr Charles Mc Neill, UNDP

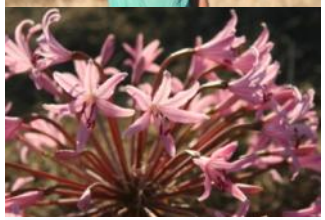


Building trust takes time and energy.

Ways of promoting trans-disciplinary research and communication



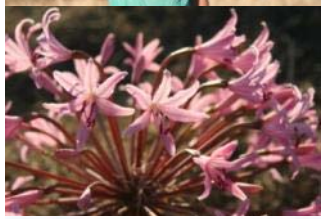



Examples from BIOTA

- **Training courses** for para-ecologists and scientists in Germany and South Africa
- **Support** for scientists and para-ecologists in the application of participatory methods in the field
- **Facilitation** of community interactions & joint learning
- **Documenting the learning** from BIOTA, towards a trans-disciplinary methodology

Ways of promoting trans-disciplinary research and communication



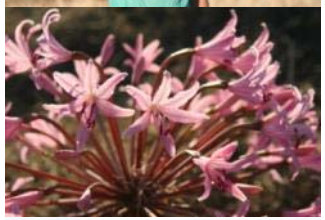
Training of para ecologists

- Social skills are needed for linking scientists to land users
- Conflict management skills
- Personal development
- Linking scientitsts and land users

Ways of promoting trans-disciplinary research and communication

Capacity development of scientists to become better facilitators

- Participatory Methods
- Faciliation and communication
- Conflict management
- Training workshops in South Africa & Germany



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Ways of promoting trans-disciplinary research and communication

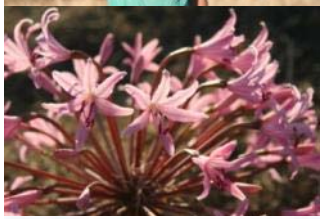
Community involvement and feedback workshop

- Various community workshops along the transect
- Creative activities adapted to local conditions

BIOTA Cup in Kenya – Combining sport with awareness raising (Photos: Robert Gliniars, BIOTA East E 01)

Ways of promoting trans-disciplinary research and communication



Capacity development of scientists to influence policy more effectively

- Training course in South Africa
- Translating findings for policy makers
- Lobbying for positive change
- Compilation of a handbook:

  "*Promoting conservation by influencing policy*"

Ways of promoting trans-disciplinary research and communication

Learning from our own practice and improving methodology

- Creating space for internal and informal trans-disciplinary learning spaces/ places...
  - What are experiences in BIOTA South?
  - What were the challenges and how have they been addressed?
  - What are methodological recommendations for inter-disciplinary projects in the future?

Towards trans-disciplinary methodology

NOT an evaluation of approaches or projects

Looking at what we can learn from the rich experiences of all participants in BIOTA and other large research programmes

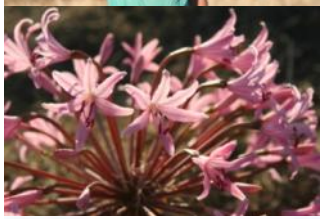
- What went well?
- What did not go so well?
- What changes are recommended for trans-disciplinary projects?

Email questionnaire will be sent out in the coming weeks

We are looking for your experiences, insights and creative ideas!

Conclusions

- Complex problems require excellent science and local knowledge to ensure that solutions are appropriate
- Joint learning with land users is crucial to ensure sustainability and effective implementation informed by research results
- Trans-disciplinary methodology is needed to address complex challenges we are facing
- We need to ensure joint project development
- Programmes should be designed to reward effective collaboration and include team reflection processes
- It is important to engage effectively with policy makers to positively influence frame conditions so as to promote sustainable land use



Thanks to all partners, including funders, researchers and land users.
And for your attention.

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