



## Short Summary of Discussions

Dialogue session “Conceptualizing and measuring social learning: challenges and ways forward”,  
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### What have we learned as community?

- Probably we first need to improve conceptual clarity and clarity about how we operationalize social learning before we are able to draw comparisons
- Comment on the paper by Reed et al (2010). In their definition, they do not refer to the field of natural resources management and how the concept of social learning is used in this field. Also, they make no link to educational science. Having a look at concepts from other disciplines working with learning would be useful, e.g., educational science.
- Many empirical studies have been done and we need to synthesize now from that. Yet, social learning is an interdisciplinary field with different disciplines having different needs and having different epistemological backgrounds. There is no community yet that meets and exchanges. This is needed and it would be very welcome to establish a Community of Practice (CoP).
- Mostly, scholars look at cases or certain phenomena (a problem at stake) and social learning happens or is analyzed rather as “by-product”.
- A protocol may help to create clarity so that it at least becomes clearer with what one agrees or disagrees, and to be clear about methods used and implicit knowledge.
- There is a difference between theories, concepts and frameworks. What we need for social learning is a framework like the social-ecological systems framework that can function as a map rather than a coherent definition that everyone should apply. A framework would be something that could be used as a starting-point.
- The ‘what for’ question has not been addressed. What about scaling up and achieving transformation?
- Social learning is a container concept that is used as a header and defined differently in different research streams. There is no single definition and there should be space for fine-tuning of different definitions within one overarching definition. Diversity will remain as researchers have diverse epistemological backgrounds. It is questionable whether a joint definition can be reached, and whether a specific definition is needed at all.
- Relevant to notice is that Communities of Practice seldom just emerge. Why do people come together?
- We are ourselves, as participants of the session, in a social learning process. We should use the richness of diversity and keep space for diversity. At the same time it may be useful to have a working definition.

## **On methods and transformation**

- The concept of loops of learning is briefly discussed. Triple-loop is of particular interest when one is interested also in transformation.
- Over time more methods have become available to investigate the impacts of learning processes. Knowledge utilization theory (as was presented by Joanne in her presentation) is a rather simplistic approach and you may rather look at innovation theory.
- Natural Resources Management is the focus of the research presentations in the session. It may be interesting to also look at transformations in other sectors (e.g. health).
- It is a challenge to connect learning to processes of societal transition.
- It may be interesting to pay attention to concepts like shared leadership and wisdom of the crowd.