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TIAS

HOW A SOCIAL LEARNING APPROACH CAN SUPPORT THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERVENTIONS

TUESDAY, 27 JUNE 2017, 14.30 – 16.00 AM CET (GMT +2)

Background and Focus

Social change has been widely investigated and is still of a great interest to scholars who seek to understand its underlying mechanisms. Much of that knowledge is used to inform interventions (e.g. projects and other activities) meant to support change towards more sustainable futures. As part to this, there is a growing interest for interventions that, while seeking to achieve specific short and long term objectives (e.g., reduce pollution, restore a mangrove), are also able to trigger and support learning processes among involved individuals and affected communities. A commonly shared assumption is that learning based interventions can reconcile problem solving with capacity building and in so doing offer additional opportunities for communities to take an active role in leading their own change processes.

The literature on social learning and natural resource management has been reporting on case studies where interventions were understood to function as a trigger for social learning. Yet, since this literature mostly focuses on reporting on the positive cases, issues with the design and implementation are largely unacknowledged and under-discussed. This webinar aims to present and explore:
- How social learning concepts and theories can inform the design and implementation of interventions;
- The influence given choices of intervention design, coupled with contextual factors, have on social learning processes.

Concrete examples of selected interventions will be presented and discussed. In doing so, the purpose of this Webinar is to kick-off a discussion and offer a platform for an exchange among those interested in the design and implementation of learning-based interventions.

This webinar is the second in a series of webinars of the Learning Community and is chaired by Romina Rodela (Södertörn University) and Joanne Vinke-de Kruijf (University of Twente). The learning Community is an international, online community of circa 80 scientists, policymakers and practitioners who share an

interest in learning for sustainable development. This community was set up in 2016 to enhance the learning capacity of those who examine or seek to stimulate or organize learning processes. It brings together people working on learning in transitions and those working on social learning in natural resources management. By connecting these usually rather separate communities, we hope to create synergies and to identify and address cross-cutting questions. The learning community is coordinated by Johannes Halbe, Claudia Pahl-Wostl, Geeske Scholz and Joanne Vinke-de Kruijf and kindly supported by The Integrated Assessment Society (TIAS).

Agenda

14:30	**Welcome and introductory remarks** *Romina Rodela and Joanne Vinke-de Kruijf*
14:40	**Expansive social learning: the work and role of the formative interventionist researcher** *Heila Lotz-Sisitka, Environmental Learning Research Centre, Rhodes University, South Africa* In the natural resources management literature, social learning is often described in case study terms and in terms of its contributions to outcomes such as adaptive management. However, more insight is needed into the actual processes of facilitating transformative social learning in natural resources management and other social-ecological contexts of risk. In this paper, I will focus on some of the methodological and social processes involved in catalyzing and supporting the emergence of social learning in contexts of social-ecological risk in southern Africa, where matters of concern of local people come to the fore. I focus particularly on the role of the *formative* interventionist researcher who explicitly sets out to support social learning processes via co-engaging with matters of concern. I comment and 'lift out' some of the features of their practice as they support and mediate change-oriented learning over time. I conclude with noting the importance of in-depth situational, cultural and historical understanding, responsive and emergent mediation competence, and reflexivity in social learning research. **Q&A**
15:05	**Social learning in development interventions: A reflection on the limits and opportunities** *Blane Harvey, Risk and Resilience Programme, Overseas Development Institute, UK; Faculty of Education, McGill University, Canada* One of the fields where social learning has seen the greatest amount of interest is international development programming - particularly at the interface of environment and development. This is owing, in part, to the complexity of many of the development challenges these interventions seek to address, as well as to the growing awareness of how central learning processes are in responding to these challenges. However, the donor-driven and project-oriented nature of most development interventions imposes limitations on social learning design. Drawing on a review of case evidence and recent empirical evidence, this presentation reflects on whether and how social learning design can be made compatible with current norms of practice in international development. I conclude with recommendations on ways forward for social learning practice for environment and development. **Q&A**
15:30	**Roundtable discussion**
15:55	**Wrap-up**
16:00	**Close of webinar**

Registration and Participation

Space is limited. Therefore, registration is requested by Monday, June 21st. Registrations can be made on: http://www.tias-web.info/webinar-registration-27-june-2017/. Although the webinar is free of charge, we very much appreciate your support to TIAS. Your membership fee and donations make it possible for TIAS to maintain operations and make webinars and other events and activities possible.

The webinar will be hosted on Adobe Connect™. Registered participants will be sent the link to virtual meeting room together with their registration confirmation. An audio-visual **recording** of the webinars as well as the presentations and highlights will be made available within one week of the event.

About the presenters

Professor **Heila Lotz-Sisitka** works in the Environmental Learning Research Centre at Rhodes University in the Faculty of Education, where she holds a South African National Research Foundation Chair in Transformative Social Learning and Green Skills Learning Pathways. The Chair's work focusses on ways in which transformative learning and green skills learning pathways can strengthen people's participation in securing more socially just and sustainable forms life and living. It foregrounds collective agency for transformative change in society. Professor Lotz-Sisitka has a background in critical research methodologies and a long standing commitment to furthering and extending participation in education. Her current research interests focus on the relationship between environmental learning, agency and social-ecological and social system transformation.

Blane Harvey is a Research Associate with ODI's Risk and Resilience Programme and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University (Canada). His research examines the construction, validation and diffusion of climate change knowledge, and how learning-based processes can support action on climate change in the global South. Blane previously led work on learning and knowledge sharing the IDRC's Collaborative Adaptation Research Initiative in Africa and Asia (CARIAA) and with the Climate Change Team at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex.

About the organizers

Romina Rodela is a researcher working in the interdisciplinary field of environmental governance. She has a research interest in participatory approaches, collective action and social learning. As part to past projects she was engaged on research synthesis of conceptual and methodological aspects of the literature on social learning in the field of natural resource management. Romina is currently managing the project "Environmental Governance in Context" at Södertörn University (Sweden). She is collaborating with Wageningen University (the Netherlands) and Can Tho University (Vietnam) on the assessment of the learning effects of serious games in the context of climate smart technologies in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam.

Joanne Vinke-de Kruijf is Assistant Professor at Civil Engineering and Management, University of Twente and the honorary secretary of The Integrated Assessment Society. Until recently, she was postdoc researcher at the Institute of Environmental Systems Research, University of Osnabrück. Her current research focuses on smart and resilient cities with specific attention for international cooperation, (social) learning, policy transfer and governance in the domains of water management and climate change adaptation. Before joining the University of Osnabrück, Joanne worked for one year as international project manager at a Dutch regional water authority. She obtained her PhD degree from the University of Twente, the Netherlands in 2013.