AESOP4Food
Participatory Learning and Action Research

Intro for AESOP4FOOD course 2022

Principles, approaches, tools and validation

Jeroen de Vries

Roxana Triboi

LE:NOTRE Institute

The scope of PAR

Rational pragmatics of problem solving

Psycho-social focus on awareness building and transformative learning

Critical-emancipatory struggle for greater social justice

PAR in only meaningful if it meets and integrates the minimum threshold of genuine participation, tangible action and scientific research.

PAR, Theory and Methods, Chevalier and Buckles, 2020, page 3 and 31

Principle of Participatory Action Learning and Research

A form of co-operative enquiry where knowledge is created through dialogue and the development of critical subjectivity.

Subjectivity refers to the development of an awareness of self and others as entities with agency, identity, perspectives, feelings, beliefs and desires.

Wood, 2020, p 26

Transformative, collaborative and democratic

Transformative: a way of thinking that is continually open to change, and constantly in search of new ideas, innovations and ways to bring about improvements

Collaborative: actively seeking out and liaising with others, particularly those who hold knowledge that we may not hae access to, to create a synergy that will broaden our minds to the possibilities of change as we work toward attaining mutual goals.

Democratic: everybody should have an equal say in decision making about het what, why, how, who, where and when of the collaborative learning process.

Wood, 2020, p 3

Values:
Education as a common good

A humanistic vision of education and development based on the principles of *respect for life* and *human dignity, equal rights and social justice*, respect for *cultural diversity* and *international solidarity* and *shared responsibility*, all of which are fundamental aspects of our common humanity.
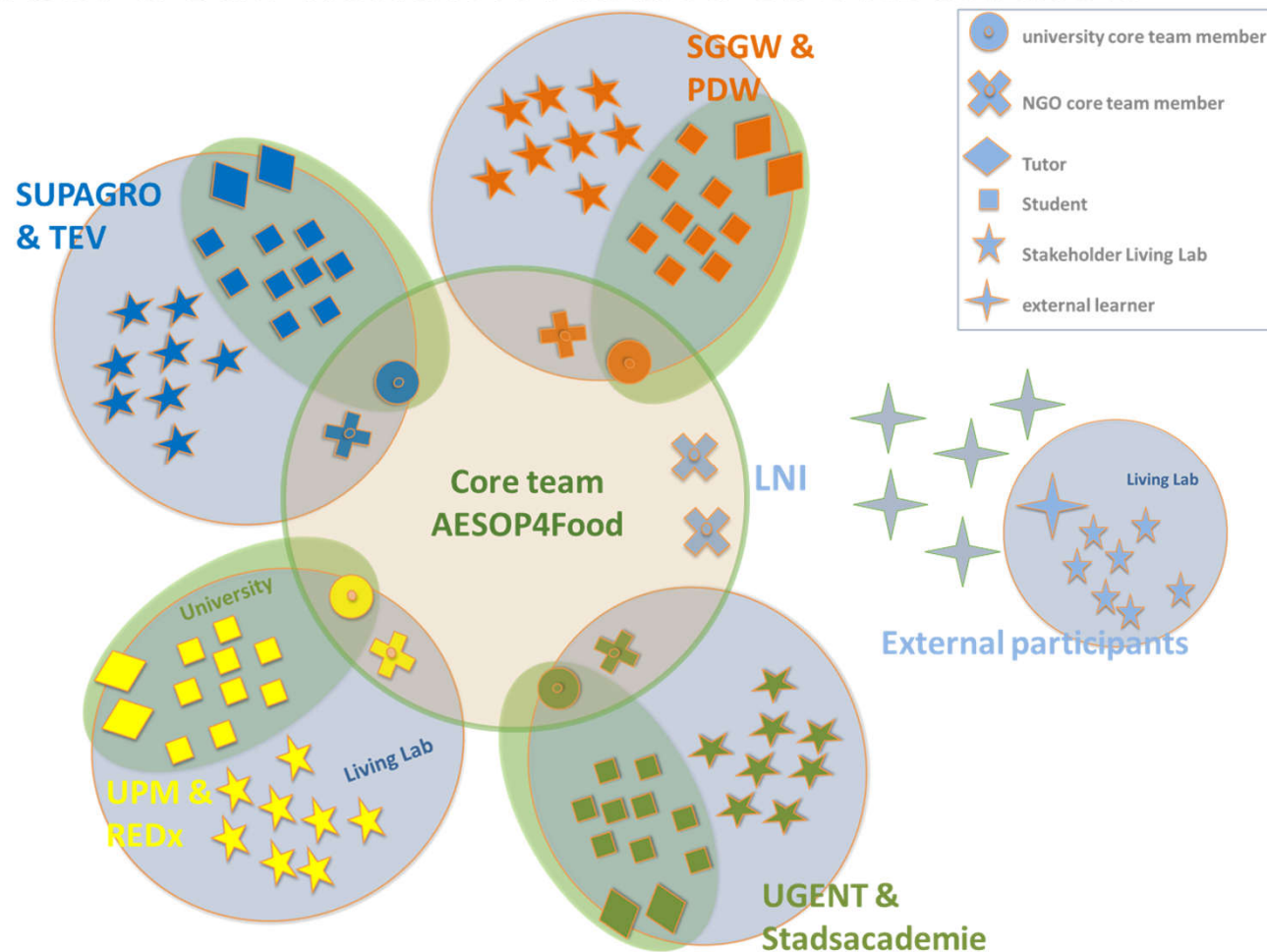
Wood, 2020, p 29- referring to UNESCO (2015) Rethinking Education as a global common good.

SDGs for the common good

AESOP4FOOD ACTION LEARNING COLLABORATION

AESOP4FOOD
Action for Education
Spatial Organisation
and Planning For
Sustainable Food

SGGW & PDW

SUPAGRO & TEV

Core team AESOP4Food

University

UPM & REDx

Living Lab

LNI

UGENT & Stadsacademie

External participants

Living Lab

Legend:
- ⦿ university core team member
- ✕ NGO core team member
- ◆ Tutor
- ■ Student
- ★ Stakeholder Living Lab
- ✦ external learner

LE:NOTRE Institute
Linking landscape education, research and innovative practice

UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA DE MADRID

UNIVERSITEIT GENT

l'institut Agro
agriculture · alimentation · environnement

RED DE MUNICIPIOS POR LA AGROECOLOGÍA

pracownia dobr wspólnych

Terres des villes

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The Action Learning Collaboration

A group that includes teachers, researchers and students:

- collaborating towards a shared vision
- giving mutual support
- enabling all to learn with and from each other
- where ideas are evaluated, rather than people

The action learning takes places in each group of AESOP4Food:

- core team of partners developing the outputs
- teachers, NGO partners, students of the seminar
- teachers, NGO partners, living lab & communities in the ISPs
- Each of the living labs with its community members, students, teachers and researchers.

Wood, 2020, p 67 and 78

Quality Criteria for collaborative action learning and research

- The validity has to be grounded in claims of **positive transformation**, ideally at **personal, professional and systemic / policy levels**.

- Criteria for validity relate to the **design, authenticity and the ability to bring about benefit** for all the participants including the academic researcher. For each aspect **evidence** needs to be reported.

- Authenticity: this is manifest if the results are **recognisable** and **confirmed by the participants** in the research in terms of **mutual benefits.**

- Since the process is per definition unpredictable, part of the validation consists of showing ho the project partners **adapt to change** and how they use **findings of reflections to improve** the next steps of the cycle.

- Proof needs to be presented that the **action has led** to **positive change**, in which it is clear that the **participants** have contributed to generate this proof.

Validation of Living Lab Research

- The research should be made public, in order to be open to criticism, to make sure that the explanations are as valid as possible.

- There needs to be a process of social validation. For instance by a validation group of peers answering four questions:

  1. how might the researcher improve the comprehensibility of the research?

  2. Does the research provide sufficient evidence to justify the claims in the explanation? How could this be strengthened?

  3. Does it show the understanding of the socio-culture basis of the researchers and participants own values, e.g. democratic design.

  4. Is the research authentic: does the researcher takes personal responsibility and really acts upon the values that he/she claims.
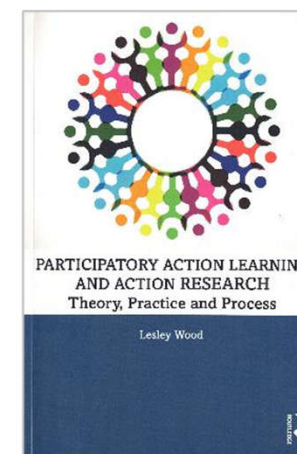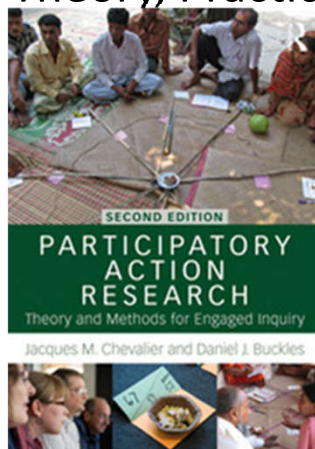
References

Chevalier, J. M. & Daniel J. Buckles, 2019. Participatory Action Research. Theory and Methods for Engaged Inquiry, Routledge

Wood, L., 2020. Participatory Action Learning and Action Research, Theory, Practice and Process, Routledge

Internet sources:

- *Action Research: https://journals.sagepub.com/home/arj*

- *Action Learning, Research and Practice: www.tandfonline.com/loi/calr20*

- *www.sas2.net/mca*