

## **Work in Progress**

*Doing Science Together: The Politics and Practices of Participatory Research*

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Over the past decades professional scientists have come to value the contribution of local experts and local knowledge to scientific inquiry. This change was strengthened by the shift in conservation practice towards community-based conservation. The shift, in turn, has led to greater interest in how participatory research can contribute to scientific understanding of the conservation, use and management of the natural world.

Three main streams of participatory research literature—celebratory, critical, and how-to descriptions—are almost all written from the standpoints of professional researchers. *Doing Science Together* takes an innovative approach to participatory research: What can local experts teach us about doing research with professional scientists in ways that also benefit themselves and their communities.

Five successful participatory research projects-- forest management (Indonesia, Sweden, United States, Zimbabwe) and plant breeding (Honduras) --are explored in matching chapters, one written by a professional scientist and the other written by local experts on her/his research team. The professional scientists' chapters tell why and how participatory research methods were used and explain the research results. The local experts' chapters tell the story from their standpoint: What they think is the significance of the research project, what they learned from participating in the research, how their participation affected their lives, and what advice they would give to researchers intending to do participatory research. Two commentaries complement the case studies. The first, by a Kenyan plant pathologist, describes how his extremely reluctant involvement in participatory plant breeding led him to recognize why it made his work more effective and efficient. The second by three Honduran farmers/organizers analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of participatory research projects they observed, including a gender standpoint. The book's conclusion develops the uniquely reciprocal ways in which participatory research can be improved for the benefit of local experts, their communities, and science.