Green Extension: An Introduction

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Let’s start with Agroecology

The common element

Holistic perspective

- An holistic perspective of food and farming systems shifts the focus of attention away from individual parts to the *relationships* between them.
- Especially how certain interactions contribute to the overall health of the system, which can be seen in terms of productivity, resilience, safety, justice.. and sustainability.
- Those interactions take many different forms, including relationships between production factors, species, actors and institutions.
- Back to Wezel’s typology:
  - As a discipline AE deepens our understanding of these relationships
  - As a set of practices AE improves our management of these relationships
  - As a movement AE advocates and defends certain types of relationship
Implications for learning processes

- The holistic perspective of AE also requires a shift in how we generate knowledge and make decisions.
- Understanding and managing relationships within the food system cannot be done from within technical silos.
- And must take account of the diverse and dynamic nature of those relationships.
- This can only be achieved through learning processes that are:
  - location specific
  - multi-stakeholder
  - and iterative
Green Extension

- **Green extension** is the name we are giving to learning processes that support the scaling up of sustainable agriculture.

- **Green Extension** is a rural advisory service provided by both state and non-state actors that supports the development of smallholder farming in a way that secures the future wellbeing of rural communities.

- **Green Extension** is not a single approach or blueprint for achieving sustainability. It includes many different methods that are used to promote various types of content.
Local knowledge is essential

- What all these Green Extension methods have in common is *the creation, sharing and application of local knowledge.*
- Sustainable agricultural practices must be adapted to local conditions. These conditions are both diverse and dynamic in the uplands of Laos.
- Therefore Green Extension has to support farmers in analysing local problems and opportunities, and testing alternative practices under local conditions.
A sustainable response to local problems and opportunities is only possible through participation and experimentation.
Learning together

- **Green Extension** is not an idea that belongs to one organisation or project. Everybody can contribute!
- To share experience and identify good practice, a capitalization process is already being carried out by DTEAP and PAFO Xieng Khouang, with support of Helvetas and FAO.
- Today we have an opportunity to continue that process:
  - Presentation from PAFO on what has been happening in XK, including a workshop conducted last week attended by 50 practitioners
  - Presentation from DTEAP about the experience in implementing **Green Extension** with support of the LURAS project
  - Discussion among conference participants about how to address the issue of ownership and accountability... *and collecting your big ideas!*