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Objectif Sciences International | Participatory Research: The key to effective Education and achieving the SDGs
Since 1992 - Special Consultative Status to United Nations (ECOSOC)

Recherche Participative au service de l’Impact

- Act Yourself - Resources Center - Communities of Practice -

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Suite au webinaire international organisé le 27 mai 2026, cette page présente une monographie (des types d’acteurs, pays concernés, pratiques, enjeux, publics) et plusieurs outils qui y avaient été présentés. Cette page est disponible pour la communauté de pratiques.

Sommaire

Participatory Research for Impact is not another additional sector, but rather a choice in the objectives and organization of possible Participatory Research projects. It is therefore a way of organizing the production of knowledge, structuring action, and making projects more useful, more robust, and more sustainable, more specifically in service of the SDGs. It makes it possible to connect, in a single movement, research, education, territories, public policies, operators, local communities, and funders.

The purpose of the webinar was not only to present the +50 projects that had been submitted through the continuous call for proposals over the previous 3 months, but also to show that there is already, at the international level, a very concrete basis for bringing about a global coalition of participatory research projects capable of producing scientific results in service of local transformations and solid development trajectories.

The presentation was able to highlight that in a great many countries, project leaders, researchers, NGOs, educators, local authorities, citizens, and economic actors are already working on the same major questions. The challenge is no longer only to generate ideas, but to structure them, make them compatible, fundable, replicable, and give them continuity.

Participatory Science Hackathon for the SDGs

In 2026, two major Participatory Science hackathons invite you to move from idea to real project: in **August in Spain**, around the total solar eclipse [https://www.training-for-development.com/In-August-Participatory-Science-Hackathon-ECLIPSE-Science-Climate-and-Humanity], then in **November in the Indian Ocean** [https://www.training-for-development.com/En-Novembre-Hackathon-Vagues-de-changement-a-la-Reunion], to design and structure projects useful to territories, science, and sustainable development. Two strong opportunities to join multidisciplinary teams, build skills, and leave with a project, a network, and a concrete framework for action.

Project Monograph

See the Monograph presentation

An already international dynamic

The projects mentioned in the context of this work already cover a very wide range of countries, regions, and contexts. Initiatives exist or are proposed in Africa, Europe, Latin America, North America, and in very diverse territories: rural areas, cities, coastlines, mountains, forests, Indigenous territories, border regions, vulnerable areas, or areas with limited infrastructure.

Among the countries and areas mentioned are notably:

- Burkina Faso, Zambia, Mozambique;
- Congo-Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d’Ivoire;
- Togo, Cameroon, Benin, Senegal;
- Kenya, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Comoros;
- Morocco, France, Spain;
- Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Peru, Mexico;
- United States / Texas;
- Yasuní, Lithium Triangle, Uganda, Greenland, San Diego–Tijuana region, Colombian Amazon, subantarctic Patagonia, Sahel, East Africa, coasts, mountains, forests, and Indigenous territories.

This overview is already strategic information in itself. It shows that Participatory Research for Impact is not a juxtaposition of isolated micro-projects. It already outlines a living geography of needs, skills, initiatives, and therefore a credible basis for large-scale cooperation.

The main types of actors concerned

The strength of this approach comes from the fact that it does not rely on a single type of actor. It relies on structured partnerships, where each party contributes a specific function. This is precisely what was recalled during the webinar.

Among the main types of actors concerned, we find:

Research organizations

- universities;
- academic laboratories;
- scientific institutes;
- field stations;
- technical and scientific centers.

They provide the formulation of questions, methodological soundness, bibliographies, validation of protocols, analysis, and promotion of results.

Educational organizations

- primary schools, middle schools, high schools;
- higher education institutions;
- training structures;
- non-formal education actors.

They provide access to audiences, educational continuity, connection with learning processes, capacity building, and dissemination of knowledge.

Science mediation actors

- science education associations;
- science culture centers;
- museums, parks, reserves;
- mediation networks.

They make projects accessible, desirable, understandable, and appropriable by varied audiences.

Territorial and public organizations

- local authorities;
- environmental agencies;
- site management structures;
- public operators;
- technical services.

They provide local anchoring, links with public policies, access to field sites, institutional continuity, and concrete uses of results.

Field organizations

- local, national, or international NGOs;
- community organizations;
- cooperatives;
- naturalist associations;
- Indigenous or local knowledge organizations.

They provide detailed knowledge of social and ecological realities, relationships with the audiences concerned, the capacity for local implementation, and territorial legitimacy.

Economic actors

- responsible tourism operators;
- consulting firms;
- technical structures;
- impact enterprises;
- scientific or logistical service providers.

They provide means of execution, professionalization, dissemination, scaling up, and sometimes the solvency of the

model.

Funders and supporters

- foundations;
- patrons;
- international institutions;
- public donors;
- impact investors.

They make it possible to finance structuring, seed funding, continuity, and scaling.

Citizens, participants, and communities

As required by the definition of so-called Participatory Research, they are not simple “beneficiaries” but are called upon to be observers, co-investigators, data producers, local relays, testers, knowledge brokers, ambassadors, and co-designers.

This is one of the most important ideas of the webinar: Participatory Research is not done on people nor only for them. It is done with them, and always as much as possible by them.

The areas of life and issues covered

The projects presented show that Participatory Research can be mobilized in almost all major areas of life:

Health
Human, community, reproductive, maternal, and child health, access to healthcare, vulnerabilities, relationships between environment and health.

Biodiversity
Fauna, flora, pollinators, medicinal plants, forests, discreet species, coastal ecosystems, algae, species monitoring, and restoration.

Agriculture and food
Food security, subsistence crops, aflatoxins, animal nutrition, biotechnologies, agroecological adaptation.

Water, coastlines, and oceans
Water quality, rivers, lakes, coastal areas, marine and subantarctic environments, waste monitoring, uses, resilience of coastal territories.

Climate and resilience
Natural risks, floods, drought, adaptation, environmental management, transformation of uses, community resilience.

Education
STEAM pedagogies, mathematics, educational artificial intelligence, free culture, capacity building, teacher training, and youth involvement.

Peace, justice, citizenship
Social cohesion, access to rights, local governance, citizen participation, mediation and trust-building mechanisms.

Digital technology and AI
Data, mapping, drones, GIS, gamification, visualization, digital infrastructures, open applications.

Participatory Research is a cross-cutting method for producing useful knowledge, mobilizable whenever a territory or organization needs to understand better in order to act better.

The directly concerned audiences

The projects described do not target a single “audience.” They mobilize very different audiences, because the problems themselves are multidimensional.

For example, we find:

- children, adolescents, students;
- teachers, educators, school leadership teams;
- families and educational communities;
- rural women, women farmers, women entrepreneurs;
- peasant, Indigenous, Mapuche, Amazonian communities;
- residents of cities, peri-urban areas, and coastlines;
- fishers, livestock farmers, farmers, cooperatives;
- caregivers, midwives, healers, mediators;
- vulnerable, displaced people, people in situations of conflict or precariousness;
- researchers, laboratories, NGOs, justices of the peace, community radio stations, local media.

What this changes concretely is the very way projects are designed. A project is not solid because it is well written. It becomes solid when it is capable of identifying who is truly concerned, who can participate, who can use the results, who can fund, who can relay, who can learn, and who can decide.

Concrete practices of Participatory Research for Impact

The webinar showed that practice is not limited either to a citizen workshop, to data collection, or to awareness-raising. A practice that is always as rich as possible relies on a complete chain:

- an explicit research question;
- a bibliography or minimal state of the art;
- clearly formulated hypotheses or issues;
- identified partners;
- an understandable and realistic protocol;
- participants prepared for their role;
- effective production of data, observations, measurements, samples, traces, maps, or structured narratives;
- an analysis phase after the fieldwork;
- scientific, public, or educational dissemination;
- capitalization making it possible to improve the project in the next operation.

In other words, we are not talking only about “doing a scientific activity.” We are talking about truly contributing to a

research project, even if the formats are educational, community-based, territorial, or citizen-based.

Follow-up to be given to the monograph presented during the webinar

The monograph presented aims to show, in a single document, the diversity of the proposed projects, the diversity of the countries represented, the diversity of the audiences involved, and the diversity of the issues addressed.

It makes it possible:

- to make visible what already exists;
- to show that common logics run through very different projects;
- to identify possible convergences;
- to identify blind spots, overlaps, and structuring needs;
- to reveal a potential coalition already in formation.

In its strategic function, it makes it possible to move from an impression of dispersion to an overall vision. It helps identify the topics, territories, actors, skills, audiences, opportunities, tools, and nodes to be addressed.

In an impact logic here as well, the monograph is therefore not only a synthesis document but also a tool for orientation, dialogue, and credibility for partners, institutions, and funders.

The tools presented during the webinar

Several tools were presented. They form a coherent set, ranging from the call for projects to operational management and scientific monitoring.

The continuous call for proposals

This tool makes it possible to bring projects to the surface over time, without depending on a single deadline. It is particularly suited to international and multi-actor dynamics, because it makes it possible:

- to welcome the diversity of initiatives;
- to progressively map needs, skills, and territories;
- to identify possible synergies;
- to structure entry into a coalition or program.

In practice, this tool is useful for any organization that wants to open a framework for welcoming and selecting projects without blocking innovation within an overly rigid calendar.

Submit a project: Participatory Research Project Creation – Permanent Call for Proposals

(See the Participatory Science Hackathon for the SDGs:
https://www.training-for-development.com/-Participatory-Science-Step-1-)

The partnership framework for operations

See presentation of the Frame of partnership roadmaps

This tool recalls that any serious participatory science operation is based on a clear composition of functions. It is used to identify:

- which partners are necessary;
- what each one contributes;
- what is missing;
- how to avoid an operation relying on a single structure or on implicit expectations.

It is a particularly useful tool in the development phase, but also in the contracting or role-clarification phase.

The NGO Objectif Sciences International makes this tool available to any organization deploying one or more Participatory Research operations. For any interest in collaboration, contact us at info-un osi-ngo.org .

(See the Participatory Science Hackathon for the SDGs: https://www.training-for-development.com/-Participatory-Science-Step-1-)

The operation plan

See the presentation of the Operation plan tool

The operation plan was presented as a central tool. It is used to transform a field intention into a secure and manageable operation. It brings together in a single document:

- the objectives;
- the participants;
- the responsibilities;
- the planning;
- the itineraries;
- the resources;
- the communications;
- the safety and emergency elements.

Concretely, it is the tool that prevents operations from relying on oral memory, scattered messages, or implicit decisions. It makes it possible to know who does what, where, when, with what means, and according to what criteria.

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The research monitoring tool

See the presentation on the Real research monitoring tool

This tool makes it possible to verify whether a program is truly conducting participatory research, or only an interesting, educational, or useful activity.

It helps ask the right questions:

- is the research question clear?
- is there a bibliography?
- have the scientific partners been identified?
- are data actually being produced?
- are analyses planned?
- will the results be shared?
- do the participants understand what they are helping to produce?
- does the operation create value useful to the territory?

It is a quality-securing tool. Its main value is that it transforms a qualitative judgment into an improvement roadmap.

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Impact-oriented Participatory Research tools

The document on Impact-oriented Participatory Research tools showed that there are several complementary building blocks to move:

- from an intention to a structure;
- from an idea to a project;
- from a project to a fundable mechanism;
- from a local dynamic to a replicable model.

These tools notably make it possible to:

- clarify the problem;
- identify the value created;
- connect concerned audiences, partners, funders, and operators;
- make projects more readable for scientific, institutional, and philanthropic partners;
- avoid projects that are attractive on paper but weak in the field;
- give teams a common language.

What these tools change in practice

Taken separately, each of these tools is useful. Taken together, they profoundly change the way projects are developed and managed.

They make it possible:

- to distinguish what belongs to intention from what belongs to real research;
- to better distribute responsibilities;
- to make missing resources visible;
- to anticipate blockages;
- to secure operations;
- to communicate better with partners;
- to better convince funders;
- to capitalize on lessons learned instead of starting from scratch each time.

Above all, they make it possible to professionalize without rigidifying, and to structure without stifling.

Why Participatory Research is a lever for impact

Participatory Research for Impact is valuable not only because it “gets people involved.” It is valuable because it makes it possible to achieve several objectives at the same time:

- produce useful data and knowledge;
- train the people concerned;
- strengthen local capacities;
- legitimize decisions;
- create new forms of cooperation;
- make projects more fundable;
- improve the dissemination of results;
- anchor transformations in territories.

In other words, it reduces the separation between research, action, pedagogy, and governance.

What to remember in order to move into action

For project leaders, organizations, institutions, researchers, and territories, several practical lessons clearly emerge.

First, do not remain alone. The quality of a project depends strongly on the quality of its partnerships.

Second, do not confuse facilitation, awareness-raising, and research. The three can coexist, but they do not obey the same requirements.

Third, document from the outset. A research question, partners, a protocol, an operation plan, a monitoring tool: all of this must exist early, even at a simple level.

Fourth, think from the beginning about what comes after the fieldwork: analysis, promotion, dissemination, improvement, uses of the results.

Fifth, accept the diversity of audiences and formats, but without losing scientific, educational, and institutional coherence.

Conclusion

Participatory Research for Impact opens up a particularly strong perspective for the years to come. It makes it possible to bring together worlds that still cross paths too rarely: citizens, researchers, educators, territories, funders, operators, institutions.

The webinar showed that the materials are already there: countries, projects, audiences, partners, powerful questions, structuring tools, methods, field examples.

The issue is therefore no longer only to have good ideas. The issue is to give these ideas a form that lasts over time, produces results, learns from its own operations, and can be understood equally well by citizens, scientists, local authorities, donors, and partners.

This is precisely where Impact-oriented Participatory Research gains its full strength: when it becomes at once a way of researching, a way of learning, a way of acting, and a way of sustainably transforming the links between science and society.