Communities and local service providers: key stakeholders for operationalizing One Health

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One Health implementation in remote rural areas requires a multi-dimensional understanding of the problems and solutions (responding to different expectations and needs), and input from every stakeholder under a transdisciplinary approach. For this, participatory methodologies to involve local communities, farmers organizations and local service providers in the design, implementation and evaluation of the actions are needed.

Local communities and farmers/pastoralist organisations:
- At the forefront of food production, at the interface between animal health and productivity, sustainable management of the environment and people’s health
- Deep understanding of local context
- Inclusion of women and youth
- Traditional knowledge

Local service providers:
- Decentralised technical services from different ministries: Public Health, Agriculture, Livestock, Animal health services, Environment, Water, Forestry, …
- Community-based workers, either in Animal Health or in Human Health
- Rangers, forest guards in the context of Community-based Natural Resources Management
- Private sector small-scale businesses as village pharmacies

The One Health for Humans, Environment, Animals and Livelihoods (HEAL) Project

Objective: Strengthening governmental and private human, livestock and environmental health services

Involvement of local stakeholders though:
- Multistakeholder Innovation Platforms (MSIP): diagnostic phase, in order to identify the needs of pastoralists and design the types of services that respond their needs in a more effective manner
- Participatory Rangeland Management (PRM) and Livestock Routes Mapping (LRM)
- One Health Units (OHU):
  - Static or mobile, depending on the context
  - Gender-sensitive composition
  - Based on existing or reinforced Community-based workers
  - To provide tailored services to communities in different sectors (health, nutrition, AMR, NRM, WASH,…)

TWO PROJECT EXAMPLES:

The One Health for Humans, Environment, Animals and Livelihoods (HEAL) Project

Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia [VSF Suisse, AMREF, ILRI, Trim]

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Thiellal « Une Seule Santé »: enabling environment for community action to address One Health determinants for agro-ecological transition and better health

Senegal [AVSF, Solthis, Casades]

Objective: Mobilising communities to act on OH at territorial level, focusing on chemicals (vet drugs, human drugs, and pesticides)

Involvement of local stakeholders though:
- Empowerment of community, from the diagnostic phase to the implementation phase
- Farmer Field Schools (FFS) to experiment and pilot new practices collectively
- Joint training with community based worker, traditional healers and technicians from decentralised services
- Funds allocated to local projects from local initiatives

CONCLUSION

- Bottom-up approaches to OH are needed to generate consensus amongst local communities, health service providers and institutions = shared vision of major daily health problems; ensure a better management with limited resources, mutualisation and better efficiency.
- Participatory platforms contribute to gender- and youth-sensitive strategies for coping with current challenges including environmental threats related to climate change.
  Therefore:
- Participation of local communities and local service providers should be a pre-requisite for a sustainable implementation of OH approach. Without community-based workers recognised, supported and well-connected, it’s not possible to decentralize One Health policies – when existing – in remote rural areas where communities are highly and directly dependant on their animals and environment.

VSF International is a network of 13 non-profit organisations working in the field of agriculture and livestock production, animal health and animal welfare, to support small-scale farmers and pastoralists. The One Health approach is central to the mission of the VSF International network to create resilient and sustainable livelihoods at the interface of human, animal and environmental health.

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