

# Complexity Facilitation: The GOAL Approach



## Why?

As humanity today, we are facing many complex development challenges such as climate change and global inequality. The causes are various, conflicting, interconnected and difficult to master. Different definitions and understandings of the problems and how to solve them exist among us.

Most of the tools and approaches that have been used over the last decades in the management of development interventions are based on a simplistic and linear understanding of the world. Although they produced notable results (e.g. the green revolution), they had unintended consequences (e.g. the erosion of bio-diversity) and are not suited to address the augmented levels of complexity. The core challenge for international cooperation today is to test innovative approaches to accommodate and respond to complexity.

## What?

GOAL's approach of complexity facilitation is based on (1) the paradigm of complex adaptive systems, (2) the recognition of internal and psychological drivers of change (e.g. values, beliefs) and (3): the effective participation of people to ensure full ownership of the desired change. These are crucial for the success of an intervention.

The approach provides a roadmap for the design of capacity building interventions and multi-stakeholder projects. Complexity facilitation can be integrated into ongoing projects or can be the basis for the design of new projects.

## How?

At the core of complexity facilitation is the creation of a multi-stakeholder platform that includes various stakeholder groups that are connected to each other. Think about farmers, market vendors, consumers and local authorities

in case of an agro-food-system. Complexity facilitation will nudge this group through a process of (1) exploring the system, (2) dialogue on a shared understanding of the challenges and the individual roles and (3) testing out niche innovations in a rapid feedback cycle.

## Who?

GOAL - Global Options and Linkages - is a non-profit organization based in Vienna. As a "think-and-do" tank, GOAL is dedicated to the transformation of development processes: from linear to complex system processes that place peoples' wellbeing and resilience at their core. Our services can be provided through donors, NGOs, governmental, bi- and multilateral organizations concerned with sustainable development.

## Where?

We work globally and in several languages. For further inquiries please contact us.

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