



ICAE 2021
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS
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Organized Symposium

**“Games for triggering
collective change in natural
resource management”**

Discussion points by Ilkhom Soliev



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Policies,
Institutions,
and Markets
Led by IFPRI



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RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Water, Land and
Ecosystems

Starting discussion points

- 1) What are the challenges/peculiarities of **development research** especially compared to other types of research without the goal to facilitate learning or development?
- 2) What are your experiences and thoughts on **unintended consequences and ethics of interventions**?
- 3) How to **prioritize the key factors** of success (and failure) when there are so many different ones? Which three would you name as the most important ones based on your experience?
- 4) What are your (early) lessons on the role of **cultural and political context** for the success of the games?
- 5) In what ways should **gender** be considered in such interventions?

Starting discussion points (full & suggested respondents)

- 1) **RUTH:** What are the challenges/peculiarities of **development research** especially compared to other types of research without the goal to facilitate learning or development? When using experimental games a research objective is often about understanding the behavior and change that happens during the game, here researcher should be very careful about causality in interventions and reduce any bias, including the impact from researchers and facilitators. When using the games for development the research focus is often on what happens after the game and there is a motivation to facilitate change, which sometimes requires nuanced leadership and facilitation and more active tailoring of the interventions for the needs of individual target groups. What are your thoughts and experiences in this regard?
- 2) **PRATITI (RUTH and THOMAS could also add briefly from theoretical perspective?)** What are your experiences and thoughts on **unintended consequences and ethics of interventions**? Some theoretical concerns exist in terms of interventions in large resource systems. If the intervention is not large enough, it might be that this relatively small proportion of the communities change their behavior, let's say plant crops that are less water-intensive (as demonstrated in the presentations by Thomas and Pratiti), but the large proportion of communities continue using more water-intense crops. If they all use the same groundwater aquifer, those who change behavior might actually end up being worse off. It is then of course an economic concern as the aquifer might continue to deplete but also an ethical one as those who change their behavior might be punished.
- 3) **THOMAS and PRATITI:** How to **prioritize the key factors** of success (and failure) when there are so many different ones? As can be seen from all of the presentations, especially by Thomas, experiential games as a tool for triggering social learning and collective action might sound easy and simple but in reality one has to take into account so many factors to make it work – ranging from the game design to various contextual factors. Based on your experience and observations so far, if you had to name up to three most important factors that can facilitate or hinder the desired effects of the games, what would those be?
- 4) **WEI:** What are your (early) lessons on the role of **cultural and political context** for the success of the games? Based on your experience and observations so far, what do you think is the role of varying cultural and political context, particularly looking at the presentations of Thomas and Wei who provided insights from different countries, but there is a great deal of variation also within countries (again, presentations of Pratiti, Thomas indicate this already)? In other words, do games work in some places better than other because of cultural and political contexts?
- 5) **RUTH:** In what ways should **gender** be considered in such interventions? In using experiential games as a tool for social learning and collective action, what are the key considerations that need to be kept in mind related to gender? One point that was at least implicitly raised in the presentation by Thomas was whether one should conduct the games for women and men separately, right? What other questions researchers and practitioners should ask themselves in this regard?