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Challenges and Strategies in Place-Based Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration for Sustainability: Learning from Experiences in the Global South

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Description / Abstract

Addressing complex environmental problems requires the collaboration of stakeholders with divergent perspectives, a goal that is challenged by diverse factors. Challenges hindering multi-stakeholder collaboration (MSC) for sustainability have previously been addressed in the context of transnational partnerships. However, less is known regarding how place-based MSC operates, especially in the context of the Global South. To contribute to addressing the factors that hinder place-based MSC for sustainability in the Global South, we analyzed 38 MSC projects spanning diverse ecological and social contexts across Mexico. In a series of participatory workshops, 128 stakeholders from academia, government, business, local communities, and civil society organizations discussed factors that hinder place-based MSC and co-constructed strategies to strengthen collaboration. Some challenges coincided with those identified in previous studies (e.g., divergent visions, inadequate project planning), whereas other concerns that have not been commonly regarded as important emerged as crucial obstacles for MSC. We discuss these challenges in the context of areas of limited statehood and point to the traditions of popular education and participatory action research as a source of valuable tools for place-based MSC. We identify strategies capable of addressing diverse challenges, a result that could aid prioritizing resource allocation to strengthen MSC.

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