

P15 One Health and EcoHealth: the same wine in different bottles

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Although “One Health” and “EcoHealth” are both holistic approaches to health, their development has been driven by different scientific concerns and cultures. “One Health” appears to be mainly concerned with biomedical questions and historically more health science-driven. “EcoHealth” is defined more as an ecosystem approach to health, focusing more on environmental and socioeconomic issues and initially designed by disease ecologists working in the field of biodiversity conservation. Moreover, the field of “One Health” is evolving on a large scale and at official levels while “Ecohealth” operates on a more grassroots, pragmatic level.

Yet both approaches are informed by the conviction that health concerns must be addressed at the interface of human, animal natural and social environments. Both are trying to integrate scientific disciplines in multi-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches. Both aim to mitigate risks threatening ecosystems and public health, including veterinary public health. Both struggle to properly define the boundaries of their concepts. If their points of origin differ, the relative synchrony of the success of both ideas is timely and not purely by chance: they are responding to a growing and common perception of the complexity of public health and conservation issues.

In our view, the convergence, even the fusion, of the two concepts should be seriously considered and mutually beneficial. Such a move would deter the creation of new divisions among human and animal health experts, ecologists and conservationists, and would facilitate the incorporation of social sciences. In so doing, a sole paradigm, one that can be adapted to different socio-ecosystems and different operational levels, from the local to the global, could be defined to achieve greater efficiency in biosphere health management.

In this context, Cirad teams and partners intend to implement “One Health” and “EcoHealth” field activities in the framework of their research and training overseas platforms in partnership: in Southeast Asia, the research network for the management of emerging risks (GREASE: <http://www.grease-network.org>); in Austral Africa, the Research Platform “Production and Conservation in Partnership” (RP-PCP: <http://www.rp-pcp.org>); in Madagascar the research platform “forests and biodiversity” (DP-F&B: <http://www.forets-biodiv.org>). Sustainable socio-ecological systems benefiting from Human-Nature healthy interfaces are our common goal.