Action research collaboration agreement with ChangeHub/oikos St.Gallen

Version: 2023-10-05
This project has served as the basis for the collaboration between Tobias Fehr-Bosshard (action researcher) and various members of ChangeHub/oikos (see History below) since 2021-09-07. It has most recently been updated on 2023-10-05 in exchange with Camille Rousseau.

About this action research collaboration agreement

- This action research collaboration agreement was co-created by the participants of this action research project
- The nature of this agreement is that of a memorandum of understanding, i.e. its is supposed to ensure that the participant share an understanding of the project and how it is to be conducted but the agreement is not legally binding in any way

Context information on this project

- This action research project was initiated as part of the PhD project by Tobias Fehr-Bosshard with the title "Potential of action research for social innovation (AR4SI) from a business school perspective" based on initial talks between Anna Kurth, Louise Maunoir, and Tobias Fehr-Bosshard
- In 2022 the scope of of the action research project was extended to "Co-creating scaffolding for a sustainability transformation at University of St.Gallen (HSG)" and involving additional stakeholders
- Action research is an approach to research that is impact- and action-oriented, participatory, and iterative. More information on action research, social innovation and overall PhD project is available in the research proposal

Project goals

- Action research always simultaneously aims at knowledge that is relevant and useful in building capacities of participants and helping them solve their concrete problems on the one hand, and more generalizable, scientific knowledge on the other; similarly this action research project hast the two main goals:
    - The action research project and accompanying facilitation help ChangHub/oikos students develop ChangeHub, implement impactful projects and build relevant individual and organizational capacities
    - Generalized knowledge out of this action research project provides new insights into action research and how it can facilitate social innovation and sustainability transformations

Current key participants (alphabetic order)

- Camille Rousseau
  - Organization: ChangeHub/oikos
  - Contact: camille.rousseau@student.unisg.ch
  - Role: Co-Head ChangeHub
- Tobias Fehr-Bosshard
  - Organization: Competence Center for Social Innovation at the University of St.Gallen (CSI-HSG)
  - Contact: tobias.fehr@unisg.ch, +41 76 530 70 55
  - Role: action researcher, facilitator
  - Responsibility: support oikos participants, facilitate (keep alive) the process, particular focus on methodologies and relevant learnings
- Over the course of the project new participants can join the research team, depending on direction of the research and agreement of the current participants

Timeline

- Beginning: September 2021 (formal kick-off; initial discussions started in June 2021)
- End: early 2024 (PhD deadline September 2024)
- Upon mutual agreement and depending on available resources and capacities the project can conclude earlier or run longer
- In the spirit of pro-active communication all participants aim to communicate foreseeable changes in their participation at least two months in advance

Principles of collaboration

- Assumption of a win-win-constellation: if the assumed benefit to different participants (for potentially different reasons) does not materialize, participants bring that up in discussions
- Trust and transparency about information and issues related to this action research project
- Availability to participate in the project
- Ongoing and timely communication
- Pro-active discussions of potential challenges
- Organizational embedding

Collaboration infrastructure

Below are the agreed upon tools and setups for meetings and workshops. They can be adjusted over time based on new insights by the participants.

Tools

- Written communication: Email / Slack / ...
- Video communication: Teams / Zoom / ...
- Calendar: Unisg Invites / Google Calendar / ...
- Virtual whiteboard: Miro
- Project management: Airtable / Trello / Miro / ...
- Documentation of learnings: Word / Google Docs / Wiki / Website / ...

Meetings, workshops

- Strategic meetings (project steering)
    - What: concerning the overall action research collaboration, regular updates to keep everyone informed, key decisions
    - Who: All project participants
    - When: every three months; ad-hoc if necessary
    - How: in-person when possible, virtual otherwise
- Project meetings and workshops take place in-person or virtually and in a frequency that is appropriate to the goals pursued at any given time

Activities Overview

- The activities are open to changes depending on the needs of the participants, for the "working on" activities there is some additional information below
- Working on / focus activities
    - Strategic & organizational development of ChangeHub
    - Collaboration around the HSG Ecosystem Navigator
- Potential additional / future activities can be defined by the project partners

Ownership of research data, permissions, and dissemination

- In principle, this action research project is a co-creation project; consequently, what is developed as part of this project is co-owned
- As one of the project goals is the development of new knowledge, the participants agree that the data and knowledge co-created as part of this project can serve as the basis of research reports, academic publications, and similar
- Participants grant permission for findings and new knowledge from this action research projects to be published
- Participants will be informed about and invited to review and comment any reports, academic publications
- Where desired and/or appropriate the organization and participants will be anonymized
- Where possible and appropriate the participants support each other in disseminating the knowledge developed in the project

Financing of the action research project

- For the action research project as currently envisioned, there are no payments required nor foreseen
- If in the course of the project it would become evident that additional capacities or financial resources would be required, the participants could decide to collaborate on that fundraising

History

This is a high-level summary of the development of the project so far. Updated 2023-10-05
- First generation of collaborators: Anna Kurth (President oikos), Louise Maunoir (Co-Head ChangeHub), Noah Ghisleni (Co-Head ChangeHub); main focus: conceptualizing ChangeHub, establishing ChangeHub at SQUARE
- Second generation of collaborators: Tom Ingenhoven (Co-Head ChangeHub), Sandro Tissi (President oikos), Sandra Ramme (ECOnnect); main focus: clarity of mission, relationship to key stakeholders (oikos, ECOnnect).
- Third generation: Esmee Weltevreden (Co-Head ChangeHub), Amélie Madrona (Co-Head ChangeHub); main focus: clarity of mission, strategic & organizational processes), reflection & learning, development of HSG Ecosystem Navigator (proof-of-concept)
- Fourth generation: Pierrine Imboden (Co-Head ChangeHub), Robin Düblin (Co-Head ChangeHub); main focus: strategic & organizational processes, reflection & learning, soft launch of HSG Ecosystem Navigator, incl. Participation in ECOnnect Challenge (won)