Building a solid and lasting One Health through an agroecological perspective

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Vétérinaires Sans Frontières International (VSF International) is a network of 11 non-governmental associations. Its members are the individual national VSF associations of Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Canada and Czech Republic. VSF International members implement altogether more than 200 projects in 40 countries in the field of livestock production, animal health and welfare and agriculture to support small-scale farmers.

Interdisciplinary collaborations and communication among scientists

- Researchers
- Social scientists
- Physicians
- Policy makers
- Biologists
- Veterinarians
- Agronomists
- ... 

Combine the concept of One Health with agroecology, a methodology which integrates the management of ecosystems and productive systems with economic, social, cultural and political aspects.

VSF concept of One Health goes beyond the multi-disciplinary approach where collaboration occurs mostly between academic experts, but includes also traditional farming knowledge and practices developed by local farmers.

Agroecology and traditional farming knowledge and practices

- Ecosystems management
- Biodiversity
- • Minimize toxins
- • Food sovereignty
- • Manage pests, diseases and weeds instead of “controlling” them
- • Ethnoveterinary
- • Increased welfare for the community
- • Renewable energy sources
- • Re-establish naturally occurring relationships
- • Indigenous knowledge
- • Local breeds and seeds
- • Food and water security (for people and for animals)
- • Soil conservation
- • Recycle on-farm nutrients
- • Social movement, empowering people, advocacy
- • Equitable relationships
- • ... 

Applied agroecology enables animal, human and ecosystems health in the broadest sense, promoting improvements in the physical and psycho-emotional states of animals through:

- food and water security;
- appropriate husbandry practices;
- appropriate breeds and species for the local environment and cultural settings.

In order to promote economic well-being for local communities, VSF advocates avoiding dependence on single crops or products; using short food chains; applying conventional and non-conventional medicine and using local ethnoveterinary practices; exploring alternative income generating activities for farms; avoiding dependence on external subsidies; keeping bank debt to a minimum and privilege ethical banks; all this resulting in sustainable implementation of “One Health” concept.

The “one-size-fits-all” principle should be replaced by systemic approaches based on local specificities and on mobilization and participation of local communities.

Applied agroecology enhances not only animal and human but also environmental health in the broadest sense, and ultimately results in food security and food sovereignty for humans and animals, the foundations for a stable One Health.