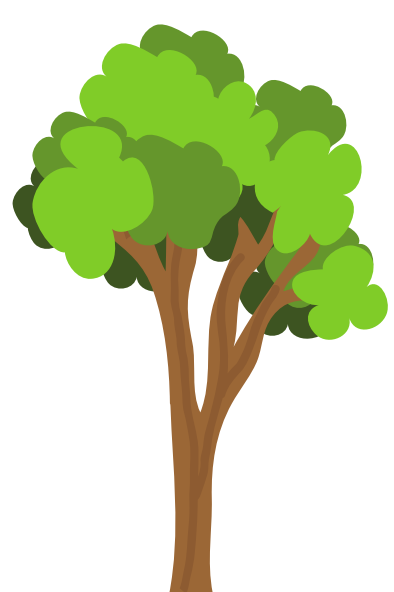


# GROWING TOGETHER: FROM RESEARCH TO ACTION

Participatory action research (PAR) is a collaborative research approach that involves community members and researchers working together to identify issues, develop solutions, and implement changes. This method ensures the research is directly relevant and beneficial to those involved.



This case study explores the Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Program (SFLR), a community-based initiative aimed at addressing challenges faced by African American landowners in the South. Through collaborative efforts between researchers, landowners, and outreach foresters, the SFLR integrates research and practice to improve land management, resolve property issues, and enhance engagement in sustainable forestry.

## Step 1:

Community engagement is key in PAR. In the SFLR case, researchers built trust and gained insights by attending community meetings with African American landowners. Listening to their stories helped researchers understand the cultural and sentimental value of the land.



## Step 2:

Collaborative planning involves community members and researchers working together to set research goals and methods. In the SFLR case, researchers and landowners developed a rapid appraisal tool for data on landownership and forestry. This teamwork guaranteed the research was relevant and tailored to the people that were involved.

## Step 3:

Data collection in PAR means gathering information, often with the active help of community members. In the SFLR case, researchers conducted interviews with landowners at their homes, gaining deep insights. Data analysis then identified patterns and themes using qualitative software. This collaborative process highlighted issues like land attachment and forest management challenges.



## Step 4:

The implementation of findings applies insights to address community issues. In the SFLR case, research findings refined outreach, improved engagement, and supported policy changes on property. Early reports influenced the SFLR program's evolution, better meeting African American landowners' needs and building trust with forestry providers.

Participatory action research (PAR) engages community members in all stages of the research process, from identifying problems to carrying out solutions. This collaborative approach builds empowerment and knowledge sharing within communities. PAR enables more accurate problem identification, culturally sensitive methodologies, and sustainable solutions tailored to local contexts. By involving the community, PAR promotes social justice and generates insights that better address different community issues, leading to more impactful and lasting outcomes.

