6th GFRAS Annual Meeting

Global Good Practices in Rural Advisory Services

14 - 17 September 2015, Issyk Kul, Kyrgyzstan

Using ICTs in RAS: Challenges and Ways Forward
Summary of Parallel Workshop[1]

The session was organised in two sequential sections:

- First section was a set of five presentations form contributors with Q&A
- Second section was discussion and exchanges using World Café method

The following sections highlight main ideas, discussion topics, recommendations and decisions for action-taking after the workshop.

What is the potential of ICT4RAS? Why is ICT4RAS so important?

- It is entertaining and can attract rural youth and reach more women in an efficient way
- It can improve delivery of RAS and reach a wide audience in a short period of time
- It can improve participation, exchanges, and networking (i.e through social media)
- It can be very efficient, saving time, money, energy
- It can be a solution for different blockages in the past: illiteracy, gender consideration, language considerations …

What are the challenges in ICT4RAS?

- Lack of awareness (the potentials of ICT) and lack of understanding
- Partnerships and participation in the development of solutions is missing or weak among players (public sector with private sector with development agencies)
- Content: not enough in quantity, quality, and issues of relevance
- Lack or weakness of policies (and regarding understanding and involvement of policy makers)
- Weak leverage of private sector potential
- Lack of institutional business models (to sustain initiatives)
- Poor outreach to poor small holder farmers, youth and women
- Technical and literacy barriers
- ICT is considered a diversion or a purpose instead of a tool
- Security and privacy issues

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[1] Compiled by Sophie Treinen, Andrianjafy Rasoanindrainy

What are the recommendations?

- Arrange exposure visits for policy makers to show them places where ICT4RAS has done well
- A right mix of human and ICT intervention must be found for each case. Extensionist mustn't forget that ICT is a mean and not a purpose in itself
- Always adopt participatory approach. Usage and adoption of ICT should be demand driven
- Organise digital literacy training for trainers and for lead extensionists and farmers

Which concrete actions can be taken immediately after the workshop?

- For GFRAS:
  - Create a discussion group to continue the discussion and follow up on ICT4RAS (already discussed with Lorenz Schwarz)
  - Develop more GGPs on ICT4RAS
  - Develop and share policy models, strategies and master plans to inspire members of the community
  - Arrange exposure visits to show policy makers and decision makers examples of ICT4RAS successes
- Organise awareness creation workshops on ICT4RAS for different segment of audience
- Start using ICT in RAS where ever it is possible (classrooms, workplace, field …) using increasingly complex tools
- Start partnerships (especially with private sector) where possible
- Organise ICT4RAS starting with digital literacy trainings
- Encourage the inclusion of ICT in educational curriculum
- Involve more youth and women in ICT4RAS
- Call and involve private sector in identified areas