

Side Event **Consortium on Extension Education and Training**

Berlin, September 23, 2013

Notes from working in groups

REFORMS:

The New Extensionist provides a description of the **Destination** (page 8, individual capacities, see handout). **How do we get there?** What is your experience on how to go about successfully reforming courses and curricula?

- Standards and context of extension must be defined
- Employer-university-clients-alumi platform developed
- Continuous professional development of trainers and extension personnel
- Integration of other components in the curriculum
- Changes in methods of delivery for more practical orientations
- Support for extension reforms

Examples:

- Philippines: initiated curricula reform based on SWOT, employer analysis, consultation with authorities, and identification of champions of change
- Germany: Primarily, it is the professor that control any change in courses and curricula. Participatory curriculum reform may be possible through workshop and seminars
- Indonesia: There is a National Framework of qualification in Education. The standards set by the framework define what curriculum to follow
- Ethiopia: Many years and lengthy reform that ended as aggregation of text book materials with no capacity for the delivery of content
- South Africa: The curriculum review is initiated by Department, get approval from School-faculty-senate and council

Additional thoughts

- RA's based local, regional, state and country
- RA's who are specialists, generalists , researchers – different types of jobs yet work together
- RA's in Agriculture, natural resources, family development, youth development, community development not just agriculture
- DACUM job chart as basis for curriculum reforms
- Curriculum revision as agenda of national RAS forum
- Identification of core competencies
- Modular structure of training
- Colombia: virtual course for vocational training in extension (for technicians)
- Extensionists and technical experts teaching /training together

CONSORTIUM: How to move it forward?

This group has as its aim, to lay a foundation for taking the consortium initiative forward. To achieve this aim, the group focused the discussion on the following aspects of the consortium:

1. The purpose of the consortium:
 - The consortium intends to be a global professional network affiliated to GFRAS the all educators and training personnel can affiliate with.
 - The Consortium intends to be champions of the new paradigm of the “New Extensionist” leading the way in creating a new generation of extension workers with the required competencies to respond to the new demands for extension delivery.
2. How membership should be structured:
 - All entities interested or involved in curriculum issues should be given space to be members
 - It is critical that the consortium ensure that there is representativeness of all potential stakeholders
 - The range of stake holders should include potential employers and the private sector.
3. What should be the issues the consortium should be focused on
 - The consortium should collect and disseminate standards and products to provide tangible outputs
 - Set standards for quality and certification of curriculum contents
 - Promotion of core competencies
 - Provide incentives for submission of materials related to curriculum, education and training
 - Provide a pool of expertise to deal with issues of curriculum, education and training
 - Develop guidelines for the development of curriculum
 - Document reform progress and challenges
 - Seek support to carry out the functions outlined
4. What processes should be used to move the consortium forward
 - Determine clear cut priorities for the consortium to focus on
 - Provide justification (value/benefit) for stakeholders to become members
 - Set up working groups to focus on aspects of activities the consortium should work on
 - Develop products with strong brands
 - Undertake a vigorous marketing of consortium products to potential stakeholders
 - Provide visibility of the consortium through the GFRAS websites and other for a
 - Cultivate the ethos of Subsidiarity, Accountability and Collective responsibility
 - Use the Country For a as a vehicle to disseminate membership and packages
 - Ensure that messages aimed at stakeholders are clear to enhance buy-in

In carrying the consortium forward, two factors should be given due consideration:

1. Clearly articulating the concrete returns envisaged
2. Ensuring that there is sufficient inclusiveness of stakeholders by taking language, gender and other cross cutting issues into account.

Still work out details of:

- **Membership:**
- **Database** of Institutions, Courses, ... How to make it useful
- **Linkages and Synergies** between the consortium and other networks, organizations, etc.
- **Communication** internally/externally

RESEARCH: What is the role of research in extension?

Research can generate data and information on what works and what does not. For example:

1. Centralized versus decentralized extension – which one works better?
2. Public versus private extension services – which one works better?
3. Need for extension policy – do countries with an extension policy do better than those without?
4. Pluralistic or “monolithic extension – which one is more effective?
5. How effective are the different methods/approaches/strategies that are being used?
6. What are adaptable methodologies?
7. Why should governments invest in extension? What are the returns to investment in extension?
8. What is the role of extension in reducing poverty?
9. We need research on contemporary issues like gender, youth, intergenerational farm succession.
10. Research must be conducted on needs analysis prior to defining extension.
11. We have case studies that could be synthesized systematically.

However research in extension is a challenge in that we don't know how to conduct extension research? Methodologies are not clear. Therefore not much extension research is done.

There was debate on whether we should consider evaluations as research. Some felt that studies on effect, impact pre and post comparison are evaluation research. However, many

evaluation reports are 'spin' reports for purposes of attracting funding. Extension research should not be biased.

Other general points raised:

- What is the rationale for broadening our view of extension to embrace rural development and community development?
- Define a hypothesis and do research to test whether the hypothesis is true or not.
- Innovation scouting.
- Scholarship of:
 - i) Discovery
 - ii) Application
 - iii) Integration
 - iv) Extension teaching

OTHER TOPICS:

- Breaking institutional inertia
- Participatory Curricula development
- (Multistakeholder) Advisory Council with .. to advise.
- Partnership with private sector (new areas)
- Certification standards (e.g., Global Gap)
- Trainers Training
- Periodic Review of Curricula
- Consultation with employers
- Public private partnership (e.g., IFAD-MSU-Nebraska) \leftrightarrow Funding to facilitate partnership
- Working with new private universities
- Concern over institutional settings that don't change
- Beyond training
- Incentives to apply what you learn

Isn't the real challenge of upgrading the skill set of the hundreds of thousands already on the job as extension field staff but terribly ill-equipped

Type of education and training

- Short term courses/training vs. certifications and degrees

Vocational training

- Global federation: IMA (based in the UK)
- South Africa: Agriceta
- NEPAD is interesting in supporting vocational training
- Colombia: Fundacion Manuel de Mejia designed virtual / online training course for ag technicians
- Germany: dual system of combining education in a Berufsschule (vocational training) with already working on the job/being employed in the field that one is studying. Combining theory and broader skill set with applied learning

Higher education

- Pre-service training, in-service training (Associate degrees, Bachelor degrees)
- Higher level: Master, PhD
- Colleges, Universities
- What is the role of RUFORUM, African Virtual University, and ANAFE in supporting the reform?

Massive Open Online Courses, MOOCs:

- Could MOOCs help train thousands of technicians and field staff? (what about technical barriers such as lack of equipment, difficult or costly internet access? Literacy and educational levels?)
- What role could the consortium play in certifying the quality of such courses?

Evaluation Analysis

Respondents: 19

Parameters	Rating of Parameters (%)			Comments on Parameters
	3-High	2-Average	No Response	
Satisfaction	74	26	-	Learnt new things, Wide cross section of topics, Session gave broad ideas on reforms to education and training in extension, Understood extension in a new light, Good that there were initiatives after Pretoria, we are moving forward and people are contributing genuinely, The initiative is interesting, understood the philosophy of curriculum reform
Duration	63	37	-	Sufficient, more time should have been given to discussion of linkages
Interactive Session/ Working groups	58	10	32	Shared ideas and experiences, Varying points of views, Ideas such as participatory curriculum development and public- private partnerships, Broad focus was helpful, helped my understanding of the debate, new ideas to generate ideas and proposals, both approaches were good, will be useful to take these ideas to Colombia
Outcomes	47	37	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some of the so called new roles are not different from the old ones - Take discussion on extension research further, - General agreement on the need for change, - Innovation and extension go hand in hand, need for more professionalism - Openness in the discussions - Stimulating ideas - Useful ideas for my work - We will like to share these ideas among our network stakeholders,
Organization/ Facilitation	63	11	26	Well organized and facilitated, clear and precise, introduction of other topics was good, groups had a free hand to explore issues

General Feed-back and Comments:

- Scope of topics should be well explained
- Moving us a great step forward
- Need more emphasis on the “new Extensionist”
- Need to specify concrete investments and returns
- More introductions needed for the main issues
- Need to broaden focus not just on universities but other training programmes