



Commonwealth of Learning (COL) & FARA

Lifelong Learning (L3) & Tech-MODE

A Paradigm Shift for ICT supported Extension in Africa

Sandton, South Africa

June 2007



Issues in Agricultural Extension...

- Less & less investment by governments.
- More and more challenges due to Globalization
- Inadequate information flow & knowledge management
- Lack of involvement of farmers & forward linkage stakeholders
- Absence of holistic perspective
- Financial viability, economic feasibility and social acceptability ?



A Paradigm Shift....

L3 through Technology Mediated Open and Distance Education & Learning (Tech-MODE)

- promotes self-directed personal-strategic learning among rural communities.
- Facilitates horizontal transfer of knowledge with vertical integration.
- Encourages demand driven extension process in the context of forward backward linkages...
- Uses various modern ICT such as computers, mobiles, community radios, Televisions etc.



Who should facilitate L3?....

- Agricultural extension cannot be donor-driven, externally promoted project..
- Scope for internalizing with local resources exists if appropriate stakeholders are identified and a win-win situation is evolved.
- Banking sector stands to gain in investing in Tech-Mode based agricultural extension with emphasis on L3 with the following hypothesis..
- *If rural credit is blended with appropriate capacity building the performance of credit would be much better vis-à-vis productivity, returns and non-performing assets (NPA) levels.*
- *The buy-back arrangements and insurance would further strengthen the safety of credits.*
- *Capacity building would also enlarge the market for bank credit among women and among other marginalized section of the rural poor.*
- *The modern information and communication technologies can facilitate the life-long capacity building process in a spatial-temporal context in the form of Tech MODE.*
- Involvement of such stakeholders would lead to self-sustaining, self-generative self-replicative process of extension.



What does L3 require?...

- A strong mobilization process
- Investment in cognitive social capital
- Consortium of knowledge creators for evolving holistic perspective
- Interactive learning in the context of credit ,market and value chain in the local, regional, national and international economy.
- Enabling the community define the process of content generation and delivery
- Adding value in the context of existing ICT infrastructure



L3 Pilot in operation...

- In India and Sri Lanka
- Partners in Kenya, Tanzania, Mauritius identified
- Jamaica is developing perspectives



Recommendations of the Side-Event Workshop

Strengthen the investment for mobilizing the farming, fishing and pastoral communities and build the cognitive social capital which would help to reduce the social and economic traction cost in extension and development.

Enhance the scope for self-directed personal-strategic learning among the farming, pastoral and fishing communities and use formal training for strengthening self-directed learning. Strengthen the process of horizontal transfer of knowledge among the rural communities with vertical integration.

The learning and extension should be in the context of entire value chain-backward linkages, credit, buy-back arrangement with market, insurance etc.

The knowledge institutions have to approach extension in a consortium mode to deliver knowledge as a holistic package using various Tech-MODE options.



Recommendations of the Side-Event Workshop

The banking and insurance sector should be involved in the extension and research and there is a scope for these sectors in investing in research and extension as business strategy.

Initiate pilot projects on the above themes in various parts of Africa which would help to strengthen the policies.

FARA should organize a meeting in which policy makers, bankers and insurance companies should come together and discuss the roadmap for strengthening the policies and laws for effective involvement of bank and insurance sector in agricultural credit, research and extension with particular emphasis on promoting Lifelong learning using Tech-MODE.