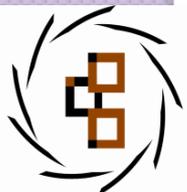


Reinventing Public Extension: Ways Forward

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Structure

- Why public funding and public extension are still critical?
- Increasing pluralism and the changing role of public extension
- What constrain public extension?
- Ways of reinventing public extension for better coverage and impact

Why public funding for extension?

- Application of new knowledge is critical for increasing production, productivity and rural incomes & to deal with new challenges, Invest in Knowledge generation and transfer
- Extension is an important tool for the national governments to achieve its policy goals of achieving food security and reducing poverty through behavioral changes
- Governments invested in public extension and continues to fund it, as on its own, public extension wont be able to meet its costs

What changed?

Decline in public funding and capacity during the last two decades

- Lack of donor support (end of T&V) and inadequate public investment
- Very low operational budgets
- Vacancies
- Declining capacity (lack of regular updating, weak linkage with research and others)
- Poor image

Meanwhile.....

- Nature of agriculture changed, new challenges and opportunities
- Traditional extension approaches became inadequate
- Several new actors emerged on the research and extension scene

However, irrespective of the increasing pluralism in extension funding and delivery, large sections of the farming community still not reached effectively by extension

Many tasks of extension have a public good nature

And therefore..

- Governments must play a continuing role in extension (WB, FAO, GFRAS)
- An effective and responsive public extension is still important
- Public funding is important though all resources need not be spent on public extension (different financing and delivery models)
- Pluralism is important and has to be encouraged as different agencies bring different knowledge and skills that are critical

Implications for public extension

- Apart from direct provision of services (wherever required), public extension should be doing more of setting the agenda, developing policy frameworks, ensuring co-ordination, undertake quality control, build the capacity of the different service providers ..
- Improve its own relevance, by broadening its mandate beyond technology dissemination to deal with the new challenges
- **However, the progress has been painfully slow on both these aspects**

So what constrain public extension?

Lack of adequate Resources :

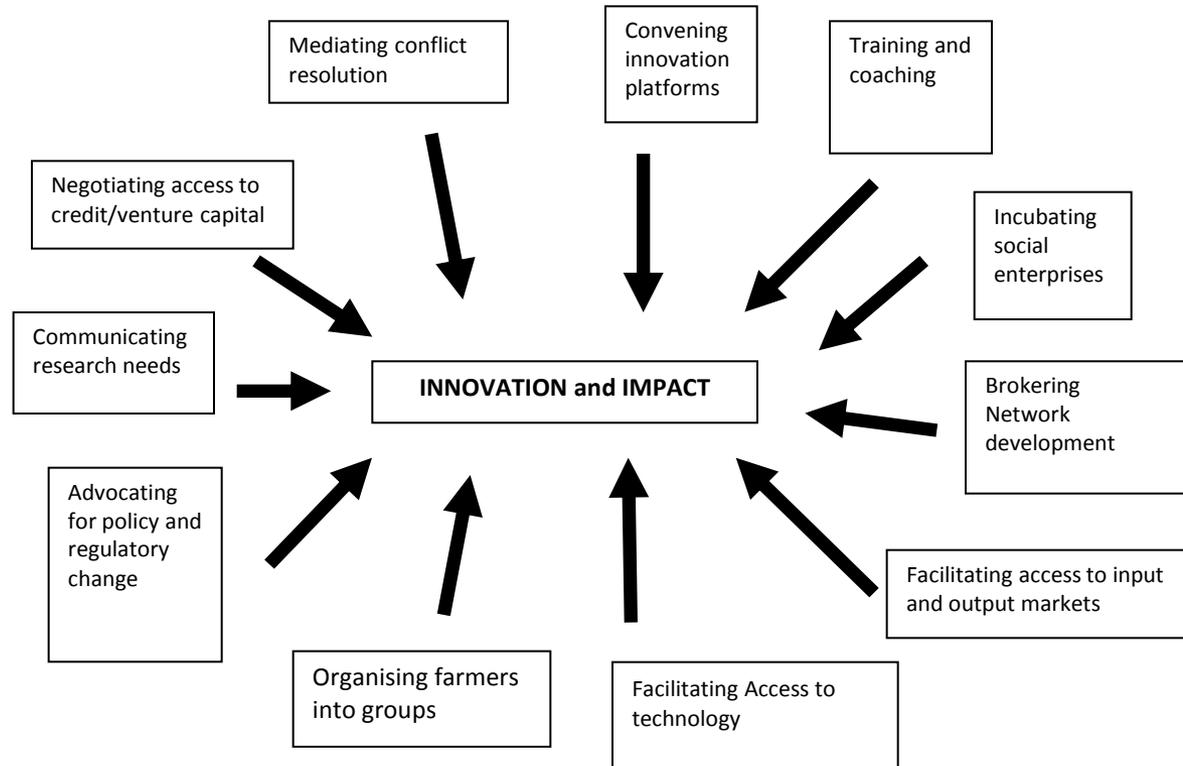
- **Financial:** Inadequate investments in extension, Need much higher investment (both public and private) in promoting a wide range of extension tasks
 - Need for policy advocacy at global regional and national levels
- **Human:** Increase in manpower (but better qualified manpower from diverse backgrounds);
 - *there is no ideal ratio* : manpower placement to be dependent on the kind of challenges, nature of farming systems, geographical features/ mobility; potential for leveraging the use of ICTs

So what constrain public extension? (Cont'd)

Lack of capacity

- Need to go beyond strengthening technical capacity
- Knowledge management, relationship building , managing partnerships evaluation and planning, manpower planning
- innovation management a wide range of tasks that are critical for putting new knowledge into use

Figure 1 Innovation management tasks (Sulaiman et al)



So what constrain public extension? (Cont'd)

Linear framework (Diffusion of innovations)

- Extension as an intermediary between (Public) Research and Farmers;
- Assumption that farmers adopt new knowledge developed by research if it is effectively communicated
 - Knowledge produced by others
 - Need for adaptation to the local context
 - Technical and institutional knowledge

So what constrain public extension?

(Cont'd)

- Renewed understanding on communication, innovation and extension during the last one decade.....But yet to make any inroads into teaching/training curricula or extension practice
- Need new frameworks such as “Innovation Systems”:
 - Innovation as a process by which new knowledge is generated, adapted, diffused and used
 - Innovation as an outcome of interactions among a wide range of actors
 - Importance of brokering and facilitation
 - Capacity to innovate is much more than financial and human resources in research and extension.....
 - **Redefining the role of extension as a bridging organisation**

So what constrain public extension?

(Cont'd)

Approach to extension reforms

- Quite often, new models incubated outside ...pilot projects with donor support and later promoted allover without the factors that contributed to its success and ignoring the diversity
- Limited evaluation of what worked and what didn't (within public and outside)
- Up-scaling models and not the factors behind apparent success
- “One size fits all” - need as many approaches as possible to deal with different situations

So what constrain public extension?

(Cont'd)

- What is required is support for undertaking Change Management Process
 - Support for experimenting with different extension approaches at various levels
 - Support for drawing lessons and engagement with policy
 - Experimentation, learning and change owned locally
 - Reform as a continuous process
 - Reform not only in extension but also among other actors
 - Need patience, hand-holding and long term support

Improving coverage and impact of public extension

Ways Forward

- Policy Advocacy to ensure much higher investments (both public and private) in extension
- Building new capacities at various levels- coordination, planning, evaluation, managing partnerships, innovation management
- New paradigm for reforming public extension
- Support to change management process

Thanks

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