

A Two Day Capacity Building Workshop for Students and Rural Farmers on Understanding How to Choose and Work with Partners in Agricultural Extension in Rural Communities in Liberia

PRESENTED BY

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SUMMARY

This Workshop is intended to create awareness and design a module for students and Farmers in rural communities in Liberia in support of extension services. Often the farmers in rural Liberia have been marginalized in the process of forming a part of the selection of partners that work with them. Consequently, much of the decisions per the mode or criteria for acceptance, advantage and disadvantage relevant to their growth and development as small scale farmers are often imposed. This scenario has one way or the other disadvantaged rural farmers which require intervention. This mitigation can be provided through the formal exposure of students for the sole purpose of dissemination and reaching out to rural communities. To this end, a tool for easy access will be developed for extension purposes and using local languages to inform stakeholders. This extension framework will help both students and farmers to work with partners to develop a practical, accessible, relevant tool for engagement at the local level.

OBJECTIVES

- Students and Farmers will be able to **identify** the key words “partnership and extension in the context of rural communities in Liberia
- Students and farmers will be able to **describe** appropriate partnerships and **assess** needs and opportunities
- To enable students to **build capacity** of rural farmers to support implementation of extension model
- To enable rural farmers and partners to **prioritize** and **provide** community level needs and support to rural farmers
- To enable key players to **develop** models and protocols for communication and implementation plans
- To enhance key players’ capacity to demonstrate their ability for networking and field implementation and evaluation based on identified needs

TARGETED BENEFICIARIES/ AUDIENCE

- The primary key players will be students and rural farmers. They together will identify their major needs and opportunities in finding solutions

STRATEGY

- To ensure best practice, a merger of formal and traditional approaches will apply; with the use of radio, local vernaculars and other available local means

EVALUATION

- How to improve different aspects of the process

DURATION

- This workshop will last for two days.

PROCEDURES / STEPS

Key questions

Who are the key players?

What are their technical and capacity building needs?

- Understand existing information channels of communication and key players. Where do the different groups get their needed information?
- Identify existing mode of communication and key players that are successful and why?
- What are other potential factors of successes?
- Conduct focus group discussion to identify priority needs and opportunities. Needs and opportunities will need to be identified at both the beneficiary level (farmers) and at the level of the information providers (e.g., The Koo System, Farmers' Cooperation and input suppliers, etc.).
- Build capacity as needed in needs and opportunity prioritization
- Literature and village review. The identification of information both traditional and formal modes plus the needs and opportunities.

OUTCOMES OUTCOME

- It is expected that at the end of the workshop, students and rural farmers will have a

“clearer understanding of what partnership” is and its importance “what is meant by Extension in a rural context “and how they as players can work together for the common good in achieving their goals.

RESULT

- With the appropriate mechanisms put in place, it is anticipated that an adoptable structure will be tailored in all of our rural communities to ensure adherence.

EVALUATION

- After the conduct of the workshop, regular follow-ups will be carried out in the identified communities to ensure compliance. Additionally, workshops, discussions, documentation of impact will also be considered. Periodic follow ups will be done to ensure that students and farmers are adhering to agreed to protocols.

WORKSHOP PRESENTATION

INTRODUCTION

- **What is a partnership?**
- **What is Extension?**
- **What is the importance of agricultural extension for rural farmers?**
- **How has partnership influence extension work for rural farmers Liberia?**
- **What are some factors that influence partnership for rural farmers in Liberia?**
- **What are some Factors affecting partnership for rural farmers?**
- **What are some ways for Mitigations and adaptation?**

WHAT IS A PARTNERSHIP?

A type of organization in which two or more individuals pool money, skills, and other resources, and share profit and loss in accordance with terms of the partnership agreement. In absence of such agreement, a partnership is assumed to exist where the participants in an enterprise agree to share the associated risk and reward proportionately.

WHAT IS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION?

- Agricultural extension is a general term meaning the application of scientific research and new knowledge to agricultural practices through farmer education. The field of 'extension' now encompasses a wider range of communication and learning activities organized for rural people by educators from different disciplines, including agriculture, agricultural marketing, health and business

WHAT IS EXTENSION?

- The essence of agricultural extension is to facilitate interplay and nurture synergies within a total information system involving agricultural research, agricultural education and a vast complex of information-providing businesses
- Extension is a series of embedded communicative interventions that are meant, among other goals, to develop and/or induce innovations which help to resolve multi-actor problematic situations

RURAL FARMER

- A rural farmer: a person engaged in agriculture, raising living organisms for food or raw materials in a rural setting. The term usually applies to people who do some combination of raising field crops. A farmer might own the farmed land or might work as a laborer on land owned by others.



WHY PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are critical to development success, especially in agricultural research and extension.

CHOOSING YOUR PARTNERS

1. **Project driver.** Identify someone locally to assume a leadership role – Select someone who will (and can)
 1. Fully “buy in” to and promote the project,

2. Coordinate activities, and
 3. Make sure that outputs are delivered on time and as desired.
2. **Work with "leaders"**. Work with self-motivated, influential people - be they farmer collaborators, extension partners, etc. They will provide independent drive to help achieve success.
 3. **Common Commitment**. Partners must have common goals and have financial, personnel, institutional and organizational stability and support. Activities need "buy-in" from the top, the middle and the implementing levels. Individual self-interest or egos can override any institutional commitment to partnerships – so be ready to manage these factors.

WORKING WITH YOUR PARTNERS

1. **Trust & Respect**: Trust and respect are critical for people to work together well. Building such trust and establishing confidence requires time, openness, shared goals and commitment.
2. **Collaborate**. Engage key partners (including potential critics) to jointly develop and set goals.
3. **Build Capacity**. Work jointly to develop knowledge and skills to better understand, test and implement activities.
4. **Meet Real Needs**. Make sure activities meet both the real and the perceived needs of your target audience.
5. **Simplify**. Keep proposed actions simple and clear, but ensure all critical components are considered.
6. **Resources & Contribution**. Good programs and partnerships need commitment and the financial resources to succeed. While resources can help create good will, all participants, even farmer collaborators, should contribute some of their own resources. Such commitment contributes to sustainability of effort.
7. **Transaction costs**. Establishing and maintaining partnerships requires time and effort.
8. **Accept Differences and be Open**. Organizations have different mandates, goals and motivations. For successful collaboration, each institute (and individual) has to see benefit for its participation. Seek “win-win” situations.
9. **Flexibility**. Change can lead to resistance due to many reasons such as: opposition to change per se, disagreement with the approach, or misunderstandings etc.. Modify your approach to understand people’s motivation and thinking and so respond in appropriate ways.

REMEMBER THAT MUTUAL RESPECT IS VERY KEY TO PARTNERSHIP

Keys to Good partnerships: Respect, Share common goals, Engage, Be Clear, Share Decision Making, Invest Time, Share Credit, Be Positive

References:

1. State Extension Leaders Network (SELN) 2006 'Enabling Change in Rural and Regional Australia: The role of extension in achieving sustainable and productive futures', online resource: www.seln.org.au.
2. MEAS Tips and Facts: "Choosing and Working with Partners" Originally prepared by Mark Bell, Shahid Akbar (BIID) and Paul Marcotte © 2013; by the USAID/MEAS Project.

THE END
