

Communication in Research, Extension and Education

Report from Working Group 3
9 September 2004

What we agreed

Development communication in Research Extension and Education (RExE) is:

- A two way process –is about people coming together to identify problems, create solutions, the poorest being empowered
- about the co-creation and sharing of knowledge
- Involves all stakeholders, identified by mapping the local context from the beginning
- Indigenous knowledge plays a key role and should be given profile
- Local context is key
- Is communication which contributes to sustainable change for the benefit of the poorest
- Focus on agriculture, central for rural development, as part of livelihoods approach
- Success is dependent on having an enabling environment
- DevComm in RExE uses money and time in the short term but pays off in the longer term

Key challenges

- Dominant models do not provide desired outcomes in the longer term
- Challenges are old but environment is new with key changes being active role of private sector, decentralisation of many services, new opportunities for application of ICTS, agricultural services reform, farmer organisation development, social pro-poor extension, non-production-oriented extension
- A number of successful examples exist including AKIS but these are small scale

Making the links-between

- Research, extension, education
- Local- national-international in globalised world)
- Organisations/institutions also at local to international levels
- Effective linkages which give voice to the poorest and ability to engage with policy, influence decision-making

Successful examples

- Communication radio for mobilisation in southern Africa
- Ghana – Agricultural Knowledge centres at district level
- Participatory approaches linked to GIS
- Romania –stakeholder meeting at the beginning of the process
- Uganda- competitive grants with assessment criteria including demonstrated involvement of all stakeholders including farmers, govt., private sector, NGOs
- Burkina Faso
- Bangladesh “Communications Fair” and district level policy engagement group

Recommendations when scaling up

- Bring field successes to the attention of policy makers and donors
- Pay attention to changing attitudes and profiles at all levels of the system – links with education systems
- Subject matter specialists should understand DevComm and have communication skills
- Communication specialists (e.g. media) should understand DevComm and their potential role
- Pay attention and catalyse organisational /institutional changes
- Political context key, needs political will, seek opportunities

Recommendations to practitioners and donors in PME

There is need for:

- Participatory baseline formulations, including communication needs assessments
- Multidisciplinary approach in communication from beginning
- Include and allow flexibility for participatory planning and decision-making
- Evaluations to cover process and impact
- Use quantitative and qualitative indicators

Recommendations to UN

- Recognise that DevComm is essential to achieve impact in rural development
- Call for National Governments to implement a legal and supportive framework favouring the emergence of a pluralistic information system

Recommendations to the UN

3. Set up an inter-agency group to:
 - analyse communication experiences (success and failure) in RExE
 - Develop a framework and a process which can and is implemented in all contexts
 - Develop a common approach to identify indicators of success linked to existing indicators (MDGs, PRSPs)
 - Verify present status of rural education, linking hard and soft sciences (including higher education)