
The contribution of higher agricultural education to learning and development in rural areas: *experiences and policy implications*

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The new environment of Higher Agricultural Education (HAE)

- World Education Forum (Dakar, 2000) : commitment of the international community to achieve Education for All by 2015
- Development strategies : focus on poverty reduction (PRSPs) - Rural is often associated with poverty
- Higher education restructuring (search for greater efficiency, increasing competition)
- Decentralization: accountability and relevance to the local community

The transformation of rural labour markets

- Impact of globalisation on rural labour markets
- The rise of non-farm employment and income (30% to 40% of rural households ' income in South Asia)
- Diversification of employment patterns
- The new challenge : **from agricultural education to education for sustainable rural development and for strengthening rural communities**

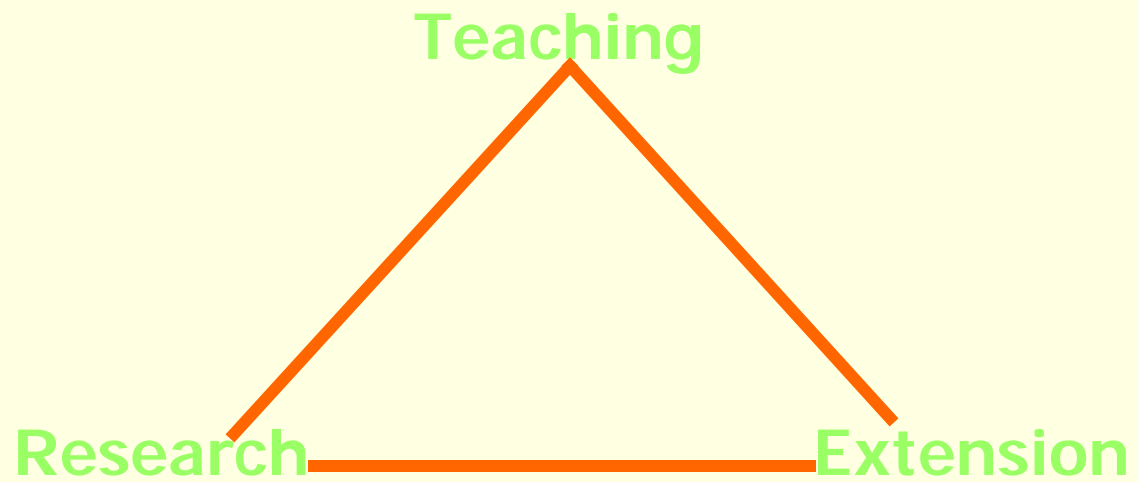
The current rural development agenda

- Focusing on poverty reduction;
- Recognizing the potential of indigenous knowledge;
- Promoting the use of participatory approaches;
- Emphasizing community involvement;
- Coping with state retreat;
- Adopting an holistic view of the development of the rural space;
- Preparing rural people for agriculture and off-farm employment;
- Understanding the complementarity of urban/rural linkages;
- Developing partnerships with NGOs and civil society;
- Mainstreaming gender issues;
- Concern for HIV/AIDS issues.

Implications for HAE institutions

- **Higher education has “to contribute to the development and improvement of education at all levels”** (World Conference on Higher Education, UNESCO, 1998)
- Higher education institutions also have a role to play in poverty alleviation
- HAE institutions must serve rural people and contribute to solve development problems felt by rural people

University's Trilogy Functions



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- Beyond its traditional role, higher agricultural education can support other levels of education with knowledge and information on agricultural and natural resources management
 - Responding to this challenge requires renewed attention to local/territorial development
 - Lifelong learning is also essential for stimulating innovation in local economies and communities
 - To further contribute to learning and rural development, universities should engage more directly in partnerships with local educational institutions and their surrounding communities

Examples of the contribution of universities to EFA

- Contribute to teachers' training, curriculum development, development of training materials
- Initiate adult education programmes in and off campus, including through the use of distance education modes;
- Introduce national service for students to teach in basic education schools;
- Organize 'open door' meetings with the community to discuss learning needs;
- Participation of university students to school management committees of local schools
- Etc...

The contribution of HAE institutions to learning and rural development in Asia (UNESCO-FAO research project 2004-2006)

- Document good practices
- Contribute to the exchange of experiences
- Promote the role of higher agricultural education institutions in the pursuit of EFA (including lifelong learning) and poverty reduction (through rural development).

Partner institutions

- **China Agricultural University**
- **Bogor Agricultural University (Indonesia)**
- **Universities of Nagoya, Obihiro and Tsukuba (Japan)**
- **Universiti Putra Malaysia (Malaysia)**
- **University of the Philippines Los Baños**
- **and Kasetsart University (Thailand)**

Thematic scope

- The contribution of HAE to community development
- The contribution of HAE to poverty reduction and sustainable development through community driven research
- The transformation of the HAE sector in Japan (long term changes in curricula)
- Partnership between HAE institutions and schools

The importance of country specific conditions

- Size of the rural population
- Level of rural poverty
- Size and evolution of the agricultural sector
- Employment trends in agriculture
- Globalization (e.g. China joining WTO)/sovereignty issues (concept of food sovereignty in Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia)

Challenges for HAE

- Lack of relevance to labour market needs
- Low contribution to increasing productivity in agriculture
- Management issues (top/down planning, lack of partnership)
- Curriculum reform
- Development of linkages with industry and farmers
- Increasing autonomy within the framework of the broader HE reform

Some research findings

- Community services are often part of the mission statement
- Great diversity of programmes :
 - Support o agricultural extension;
 - Community education programmes
 - Farmers-centered research
 - University-school partnerships
- Impact on the regular university programmes (introduction of participatory methods derived from Participatory Rural Appraisal approaches)
- Issues of sustainability (project-based financing) and policy consistency (poverty reduction versus funds raising)

Synthesis of the Influences of the Projects to Rural Learning and Development (UPLB)

- ❑ **Instruction:** Enrich Curricular programs disseminated through its various degree and non-degree programs.
- ❑ **Action Research:** Innovating development approaches/tools techniques/methodologies
- ❑ **Policy Advocacy:** Continuous involvement in advocacy work on issues of interest to the development
- ❑ **Extension/Outreach projects** through capacity building activities had been changing the way development workers and other stakeholders undertake extension

Remaining challenges

- Changing the academic culture
- Establishing appropriate staff incentive/rewarding systems
- Strengthening inter-ministerial collaboration
- Designing appropriate funding mechanisms for HAE
- Developing appropriate evaluation systems and performance indicators