

Introduction

Agricultural extension program is one of the major undertakings of a government, Non Agricultural Groups, as well as other stakeholders with in the agricultural sector to educate, disseminates, provide logistical inputs and organized training programs and workshops aims at educating our clientele considered as the farmers. This will enhance and support the livelihoods of farmers. Extension teaches farmers about improved technologies so that they can increase agricultural production and productivity, thereby improving their living standard.

EXTENSION APPROACHES

Liberia and its extension approaches

Since the 1950, Liberia for example has practiced several extension approaches, with support from donors or from the government's own resources. In Liberia some of the basic approaches practiced are the T&V the General Agricultural Extension approach, the cost sharing approach, the commodity approach amongst others. Although all these approaches have some strengths and weaknesses, they have made significant contribution for transfer of technology to the farmers

The general agriculture extension approach. In contrast to several other approaches, this approach assumes that technology and knowledge that are appropriate for local people exist but are not being used by them. The approach is usually fairly centralized and government-controlled. Success is measured in the adoption rate of recommendations and increases in national production. This approach is considered as a top to bottom government, Through which decisions making, resources, and major assistance to the farming communities are supervised by the government arm responsible for extension services in different regions, zones, and at the county level.

The commodity specialized approach. The key characteristic of this approach groups all the functions for increased production - extension, research, input supply, marketing and prices - under one administration. Extension is fairly centralized and is oriented towards one commodity or crop and the agent has many functions. For example in Liberia we have the fire stone rubber company specializing in rubber and latex products, The Sime Darby palm production cocoa, and rubber as well company specializing in three products for the Liberian market and exportation.

The training and visit approach. This approach is based on a rigorously planned schedule of visits to farmers and training of agents and subject matter specialists, SMS. Close links are maintained between research and extension. Agents are only involved in technology transfer. Success is related to increases in the production of particular crops or commodities. There are three methods used in the T&V which include the individual, method Group method, and the mass media method.

The agricultural extension participatory approach. This approach often focuses on the expressed needs of farmers' groups and its goal is increased production and an improved quality of rural life. Implementation is often decentralized and flexible. Success is measured by the numbers of farmers actively participating and the sustainability of local extension organizations. This approach is fully participatory with both parties feeling a sense of belonging of the project to be implemented.

The project approach. This approach concentrates efforts on what is needed and required by the beneficiaries and the donors, meaning that projects to be implemented must be a consensus of the general audience and must be necessary and demand driven as projects identified must meet the immediate needs of the beneficiaries or the end users.

The farming systems development approach. A key characteristic of this type of extension is its systems or holistic approach at the local level. Close ties with research are required and technology for local needs is developed locally through an iterative process involving local people. Success is measured by the extent to which local people adopt and continue to use technologies developed by the programmed. Through this approach is implemented with the full participation of the general audience.

The cost-sharing approach. This approach assumes that cost-sharing with local people (who do not have the means to pay the full cost) will promote a programmed that is more likely to meet local situations and where extension agents are more accountable to local interests. Its purpose is to provide advice and information to facilitate farmers' self-improvement. For example local farmers in Liberia are considered as poor, but are also rich in knowledge, natural resources, and the availability of man power as part of the cost sharing approach.

The educational institution approach. This approach uses educational institutions which have technical knowledge and some research ability to provide extension services for rural people. Implementation and planning are often controlled by those who determine school curriculum. The emphasis is often on the transfer of technical knowledge.