



FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

Implementing Programs: Lessons Learned from Agricultural Extension Best Practices



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Outline

- My argument and thesis
- Why invest in extension for development?
- Introduction to MEAS and associated projects
- Lessons from MEAS experience for small and medium sized NGOs and small farm resource centers

Most of the world's poor are rural people

In 2010, over 900 million poor people (78 percent of the poor) lived in rural areas, with about 750 million working in agriculture (63 percent of the total poor). (World Bank 2015)

Farming groundnuts in Bong County, Liberia



Agricultural growth is effective in reducing poverty

"Overall, growth originating from agriculture has been two to four times more effective at reducing poverty than growth originating from other sectors." (World Bank, 2015)

A Sierra Leonean woman farmer expanded this rice field with a micro-loan



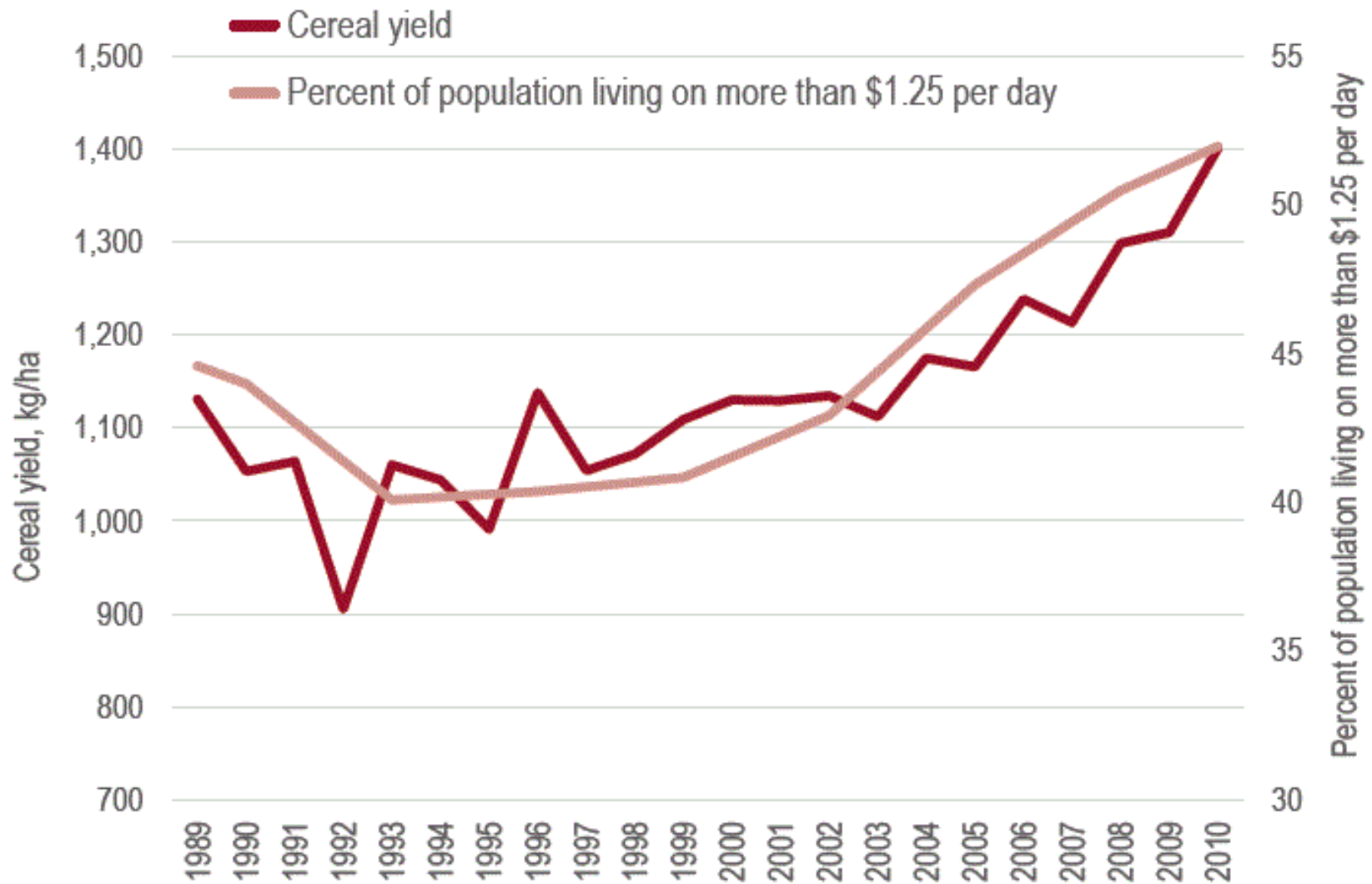
Higher incomes help improve food security and nutrition

- In the poorest countries income growth reduces caloric deficiencies
- Estimates show a 60% increase in income per capita can lead to reduced stunting and underweight prevalence by 35% and 45% respectively (World Bank, 2015)

A Sierra Leonean farmer with cocoa seedlings in his nursery



Reducing poverty linked to agricultural productivity increases



Source: World Development Indicators, POVCAL. From Ending Poverty and Hunger by 2030, World Bank, 2015

Why invest in extension?

“Investing in extension so that it helps more farmers in more places – women as well as men, smallholders as well as commercial farmers – is the only way to reap the full benefit of innovation.”
(Gates Letter, 2015)

An irrigation innovation in West Africa (photo Jim Stipe)





Consortium Partners



Cornell University



MEAS



Leader with an Associate (LWA)
Project over 5 years, funded by



Goal:

to help transform and modernize extension and advisory systems, so they can play a key role in both increasing farm incomes and enhancing the livelihoods of the rural poor, especially farm women.

Project Objectives:

to define and disseminate good extension management strategies that will help establish efficient, effective and financially sustainable extension and advisory service systems in selected developing countries.

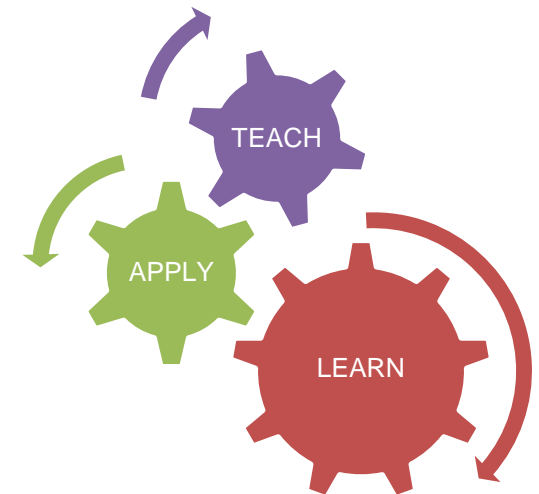
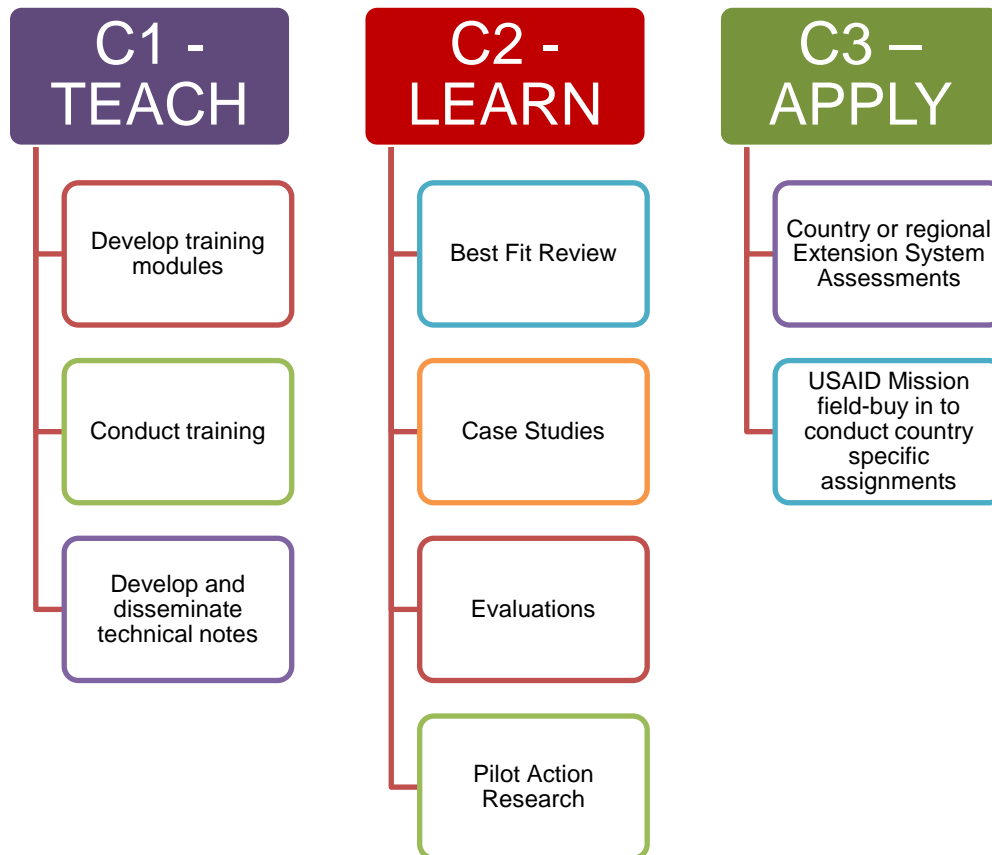
See: www.meas-extension.org for extension training materials and resources

MEAS – 3 Key Components

TEACH - Disseminating Modern Approaches to Extension

LEARN - Documenting Lessons Learned and Good Practice

APPLY - Designing Extension and Advisory Service Programs



INGENAES



A Liberian farmer explains her needs for extension services at the Margibi County Agricultural Office

- At the country level improve access to extension services and technologies and finance for women farmers
- Integrate gender-sensitive and nutrition-sensitive approaches into extension programs
- Use networks, partnerships, mentoring, action-research and training in the approach

FAST (Farmer Advisory Services in Tajikistan)



Real time design and implementation of an extension program aimed at household farms. Policy support in the areas of agricultural policy, land policy and water policy. Special issues of post-Soviet, post-conflict, and post-colonial status. FAST has one academic professional on the ground in Tajikistan: Dr. Patrick Ludgate, COP. FAST works with the Tajik NGO PO Ruyo as the partner to deliver the extension program.

A map of Georgia and its surrounding regions. The map shows the Black Sea to the west, with cities like Sokhumi and Poti. To the north is Russia, with the Greater Caucasus Mountains and the city of Tbilisi. To the south is Turkey, with the Lesser Caucasus Mountains. Other regions shown include Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Ajaria. The map includes a scale bar from 0 to 40 km and 0 to 40 miles.

Extension system strengthening through design and policy level technical assistance and a training program for 400 newly hired agricultural consultants (extension agents). Texas A&M is a key partner on this project. Mr. Ben Mueller is the COP. Winrock International assists as the local business entity for the project. Emphases in year 2 include ICTs and additional training and a high-level conference on extension in Georgia.

My role in extension strengthening

Associate Professor and Project
Director and Extension Specialist
Appointment in Extension, Research
and Teaching

Research areas: rural development,
health and consumer economics,
extension

Margaret and I have six
children and they keep us
active!



In South Cotabato Province, Philippines 1982 with Project
Gamtabeng – a PCEC project working in B'laan upland
communities



Defining Extension

“Extension is defined broadly to include

- all systems that **facilitate access** of farmers, their organizations and other market actors **to knowledge, information and technologies;**
- **facilitate their interaction** with partners in research, education, agri-business, and other relevant institutions;
- and **assist** them to develop their own technical, organizational and management skills and practices.”

Ian Christoplos, FAO, 2010 (emphasis added)

Defining Extension

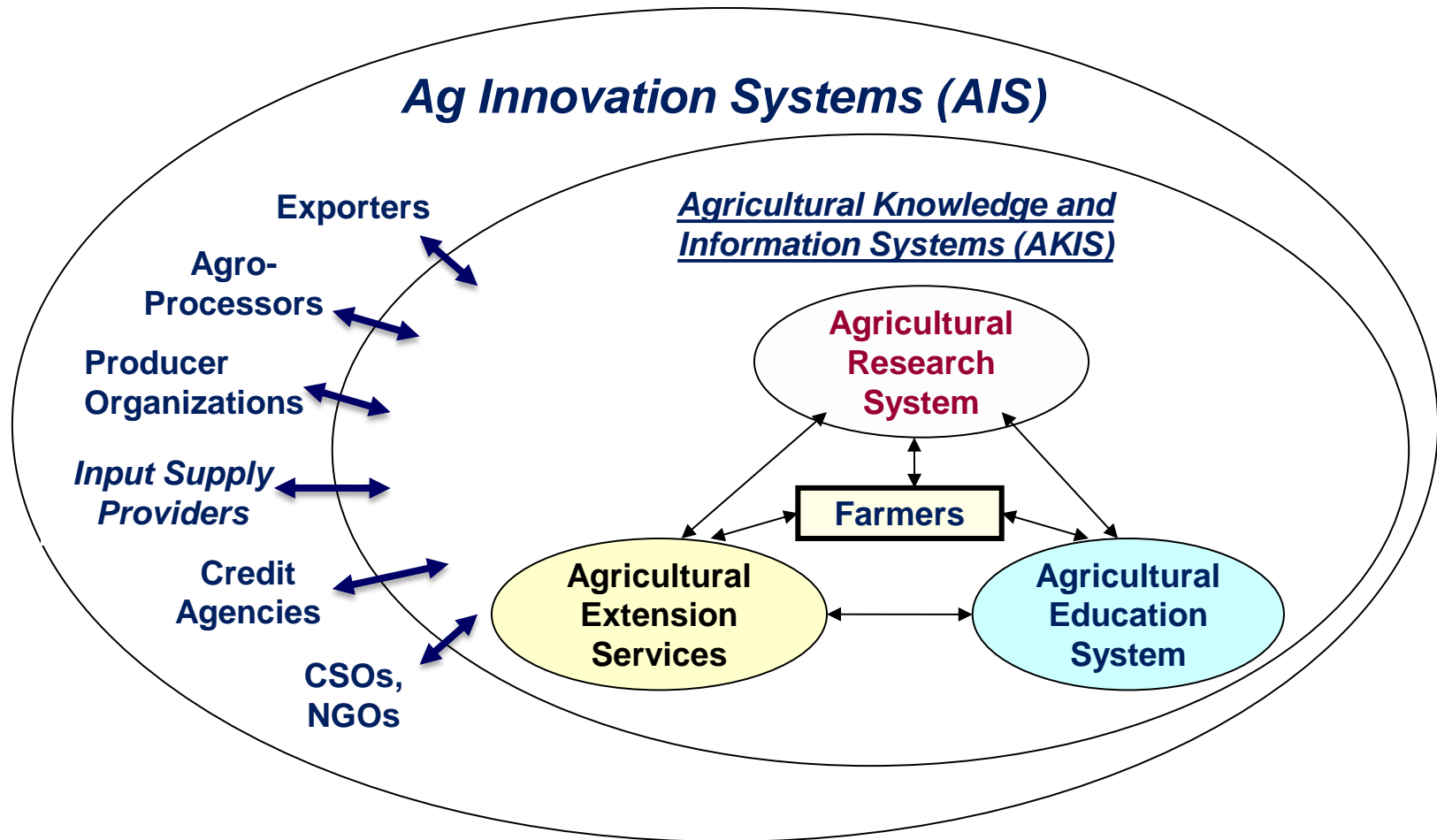
“Extension and advisory services consist of all the different activities that provide the information and services needed and demanded by farmers and other actors in rural settings to assist them in developing their own technical, organisational, and management skills and practices so as to improve their livelihoods and well-being.”

Source: The New Extensionist, GFRAS (2013)

Four Paradigms of Agricultural Extension



From AKIS to AIS: Agricultural Innovation Systems



Hallmarks of a Modern Extension System

Decentralized

- Decentralized services may be able to better address regional differences in terms of agro-ecological conditions, socio-economic structures, and market opportunities.

Farmer led

- Services will be more effective if they are provided in response to producer's actual needs and interests. Requires: formation of farmer interest groups and farmer representation in advisory boards.

Market oriented

- Advising farmers to produce for the market, rather than marketing what is produced. With economic growth will come more opportunities for high value crops, livestock, fish and other products.

Tailored

- Needs and opportunities for improving rural livelihoods will differ by target groups depending on gender roles, educational level, land ownership, etc. Tailoring services to the rural poor is challenging.

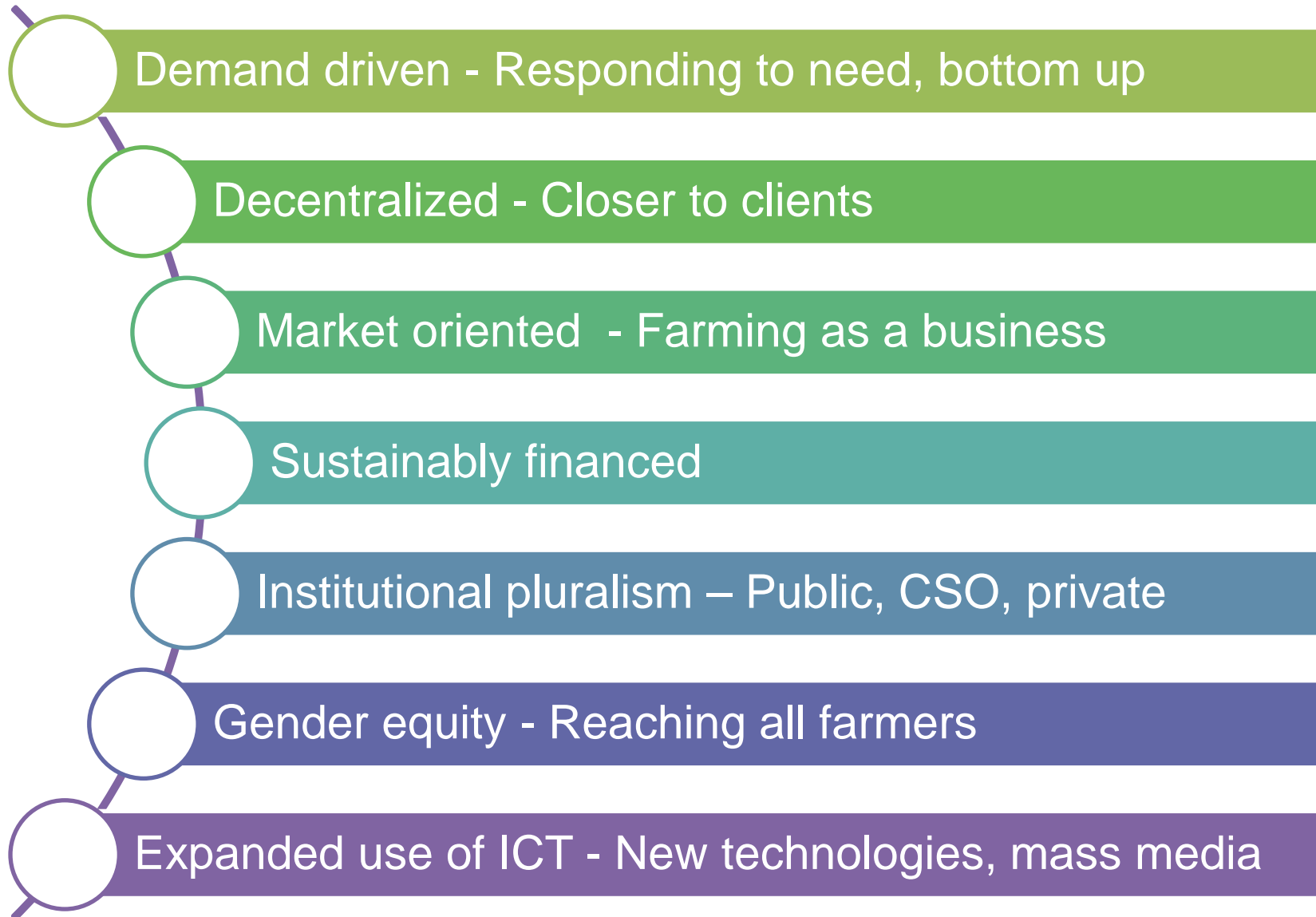
Pluralistic

- Different types of institutions (public, NGO, input supply dealers, etc.) have different comparative advantages in providing different types of extension services. Public services are difficult to sustain. Build PPP.

Innovative

- In a more innovative extension system, the field extension workers become facilitators and knowledge brokers for both process and product innovations

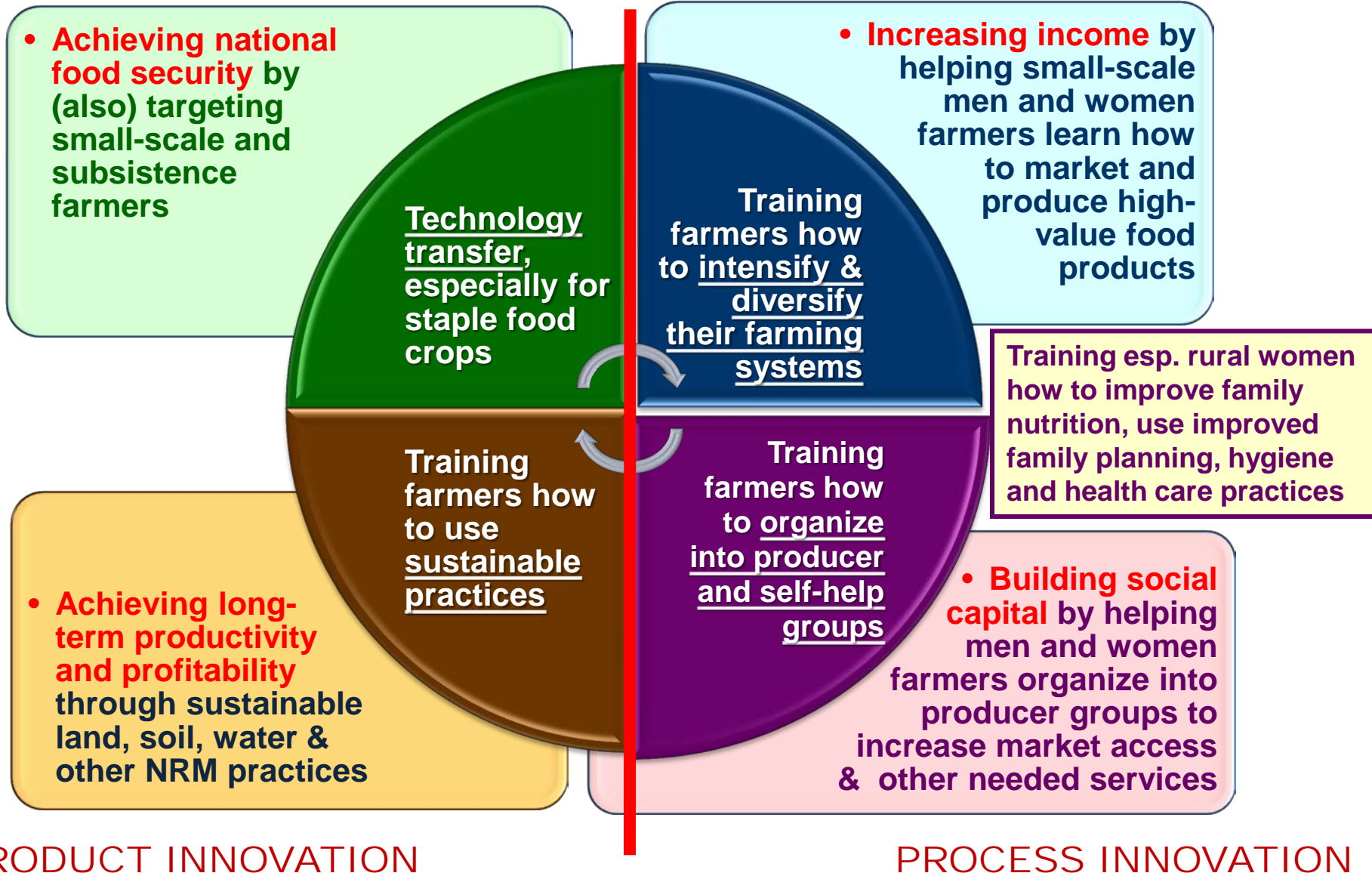
Key Elements of Extension Strengthening Include:



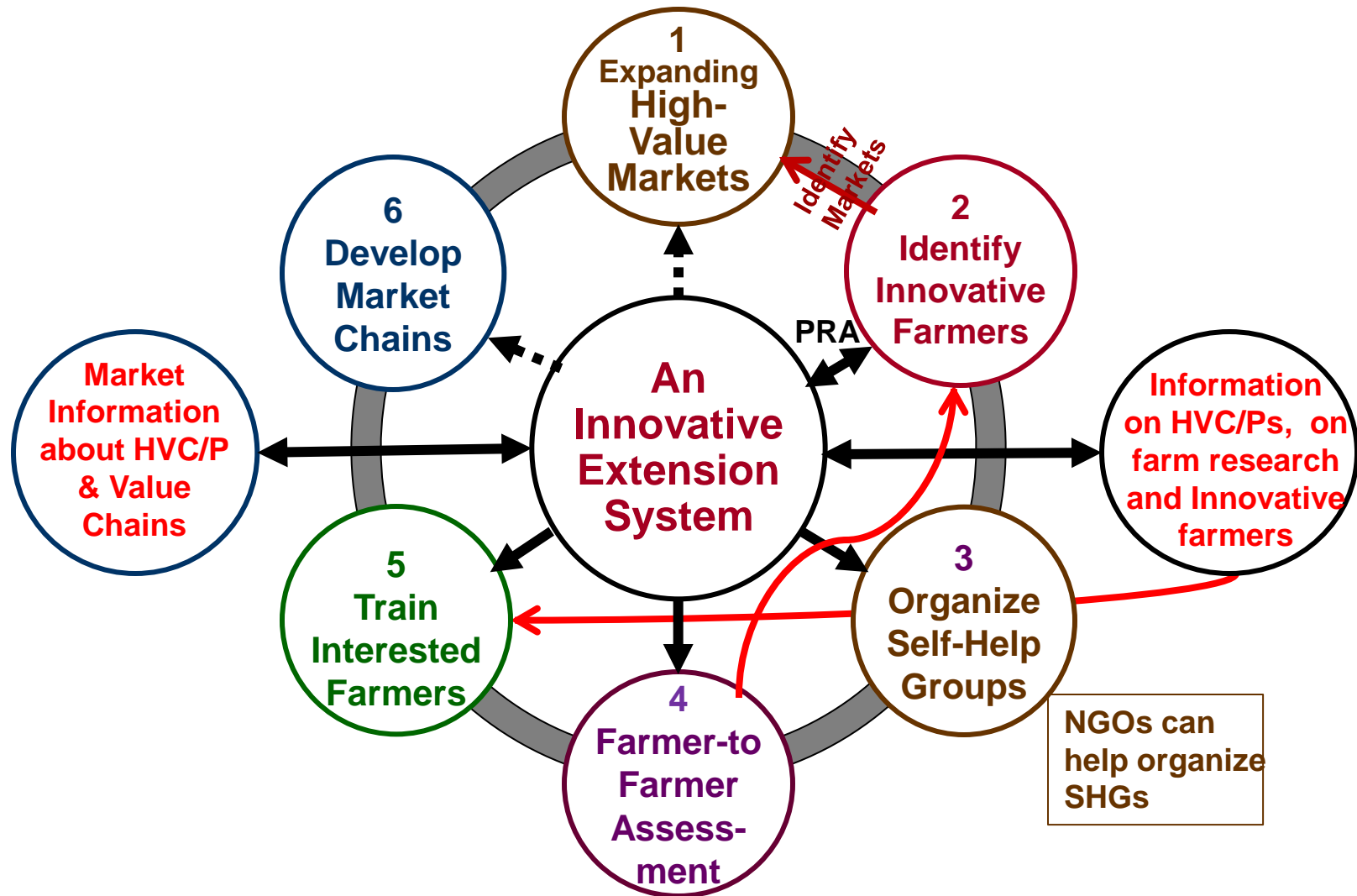
Key Functions of an Effective and Comprehensive EAS

Maintaining National Food Security

Improving Rural Livelihoods



Elements of an Innovative System



Lessons for Small and Medium Size NGOs and Training Centers Doing Extension

- Assets and strengths of small and medium size NGOs and Centers
 - Commitment to a region/people
 - Mission
 - Staff
 - Program and project implementation experience
 - Partnerships and collaborations and linkages
- Limitations
 - (Sometimes) Personalized governance and leadership
 - Financial limitations



Women Farmer Association member and her vegetable farm near Surkhet, Nepal

Lessons 1: Learning Organization

- Is your program or organization committed to learning?
- Extension is fundamentally about learning and increasing capacity. Do you manage and operate in a way that builds this emphasis into the way you function?
- Inservice training for staff
 - Peer to peer training for field extension workers and within the staff team
 - An expectation of learning both in technical domains and well as in process and “soft” skills
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Leadership development and organizational capacity

Lessons 2: Targeting

- Who? A fundamental design question
- Implications for staffing, training, extension approaches that are appropriate



Tajik farmers washing and sorting tomatoes – Farmer Advisory Services in Tajikistan Project

Lessons 3: Peer to Peer Training and Farmer Volunteers

- Effective use of “model farmers” or “lead farmers” can increase program impact through leveraging.
- Farmer volunteers need training and on-going coaching and supervision to have a lasting participation and impact



Liberian farmer with an integrated rice/fish/vegetable/piggery system which also serves as a demonstration for other farmers

Lessons 4: Linking, Partnerships, Collaboration

- Coordination difficulties and competition across programs and ngos and other participants remains a fact in many places
- An essential extension function is linking farmers to:
 - Research knowledge
 - Market opportunities
 - Finance
 - Infrastructure



Morning meeting at a milk collection point near Nepalganj, Nepal

Lessons 5: Market Orientation

- Many extension programs remain focused on production and stumble on agricultural marketing
- Challenges include:
 - Building staff capacity in agricultural business
 - Building organizational capacity for market and market relationships
 - Time and finance
 - Simple and low cost ways of processing and storing



Meeting with a farmer based organization that markets cocoa and rice in Sierra Leone

Lesson 6: Private sector extension

- Large variety of approaches in play
 - Farmer-based organizations, associations
 - Value chain based – input suppliers, marketing/buyer
 - Social entrepreneur companies – One Acre Fund
 - Outgrower, nucleus farmer
 - ICTs – Esoko, Monsanto, many others
- Farmer-based organizations, association, cooperatives have great potential and in some cases impact
- Potential for more public/private and ngo/private partnerships here
- Private organizations with a product to sell – eg input suppliers, will not likely provide public good aspects of extension (NRM, building farmer organizations, health, nutrition)
- Mobilize finance and resources for extension through private sector extension
- MEAS work with FNC, Esoko and others

Lesson 7: Partnering with government

- Recognize that the issues around working with government vary dramatically by context
- In many cases however it is possible to work with government – a range of possibilities
 - Inform – coordinate with local officials
 - Involve local frontline agriculture staff in the program
 - Invite to train Min Ag staff in ngo trainings
 - Link – communities and farmer associations to government resources/programs/infrastructure grants etc.
 - Realize the potential magnitude if communities can benefit from public resources
 - Directly partner with local agriculture officials
 - Strengthen local (District/County) agricultural extension programs such as Savelugu Nanton, Ghana effort by EWB Canada

Lesson 8: Expand Program Reach Through Information and Communication Technologies

- ICTs include print, radio, audio cds, videos, websites, cellphone based information systems and others
- Use multiple means to reach your audience
- Begin with the audience not the ICT tool
- For small ngos radio, print, video are all very doable
- A Grameen Uganda Community Knowledge Worker with his smartphone



Conclusions

- Level of investment in extension activities is still far too low
- Small and Medium Sized NGOs and Farm Resource Centers have an important role and bring very valuable assets to reaching small-holder farmers with extension services
- Can increase impact through building on strengths and what is working
 - Public/private partnerships, partnerships with commercial entities, ICTs, increasing human and institutional capacity, strengthened research linkages

We can do a lot when we work together

