Role of Multi-Stakeholder Engagement in Research for Development

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Research aimed at promoting the development of products, methods or policies which are directly relevant for improving the livelihoods of poor people in developing countries and contribute to sustainable development.
Complexity

• The complexity of natural systems (NS)
• The complexity of social, economic & political conditions (SEP)
• The complexity of interaction between NS and SEP

Consequences

• Necessity of Multidisciplinary Approach. (Biophysical researchers; economists & social scientists and gender experts)
• Researchers alone cannot solve developing problems (Necessity of involvement of practitioners, extensionists, communities, NGOs and civil society organisations, decision makers, private sector (financial services, cooperatives, inputs providers...))
• Multi-institutional collaboration
Linear Approach

• Researchers take initiative, define the problems and design the methodology.
• Research → Extension → Users

Limitations/ Consequences:
• A large number of the results are not used. Some of them are rejected by communities or ignored by policy makers.
• Investments on research are considered as non-profitable especially by decision makers.
Participatory Action Research (PAR) Approach

- PAR links research with action.
- PAR involves practitioners and users in the research process from the initial design of the project through data gathering and analysis to conclusions and actions arising out of the research.
- PAR approach has three pillars: (1) social research methodology, (2) participation in decision making by all relevant stakeholders, and (3) technical systems thinking to address technological issues.
- CSOs played a major role in developing PAR.
  - Interested in action research rather than research for the sake of research. Research is seen as an instrument for enhancing dialogue among stakeholders.
  - Collaboration with researchers from universities and scientific bodies to undertake research/isobtain evidence to support advocacy activities as a strategy to influence social and political actions.
  - Frequent engagements to share information between researchers, CSOs, and decision makers facilitated through local, regional, and national fora.
Participatory Action Research Approach

1. Identify an issue/gap/question to explore that relates to improving the situation of people.
2. Develop, implement and evaluate a strategy to answer the question/address the issue.
3. Implement an improved or changed strategy using insights.
4. People engaged in everyday practice.

Note: The diagram illustrates a cyclical process involving the participation of individuals in everyday practice, identifying issues, developing strategies, implementing and evaluating them, and then refining the strategy through insights gained.
Challenges Encountered

- NGO-Academies’ relationship are largely on consultancy basis
- Limited time-frame for field data collection by consultants
- Identification of key stakeholders
- Relevant for small communities and not at a regional or national level
- Limited impact
- High cost induced by multiple consultations and feedback
For a fruitful Partnership

• Joint design of the research

• Common vision

• Clear allocation of roles and responsibilities

• Equitable sharing of resources

• Good internal communication

• Sharing success and acknowledgement
Innovation Systems

• The concept of the **innovation** system stresses that the flow of technology and information among people, enterprises and institutions is key to an **innovative** process.

• It contains the interaction between the actors who are needed in order to turn an idea into a process, product or service on the market.

• Adopting an innovation systems approach to research means that technical, institutional and policy questions are not longer tacked in separate projects. Instead it means investigating these in an integrated fashion (Andy Hull).
The agricultural Innovation Systems (IS) concept appraises agriculture as a system that is made of many sub-systems that must work together to foster development.

It engages all actors, organizations and institutions that are involved in the agricultural sector to interact and jointly foster the development of the sector. The IS concept combines both the system and the commodity approach, and engages all actors along the commodity value chain, including external actors like policy makers, financial institutions, meteorologist, insurance etc, that influence the chain to interact and proffer solution to the jointly identified constraints on the platform.

The Innovation Platform (IP) as its operational instrument. The IP is a forum for group of relevant actors selected along the value chain of specific commodity or system of production. The actors include farmers, researchers, extension agents, traders, processors, cooperatives, local entrepreneurs, financial institutions, policy makers, regulators, output market operators, consumers and others. They interact to jointly identify problems, investigate solutions leading to generation of innovations and its accompanying socio-economic benefits.
Pillars and Principles

1. IS simultaneously addresses research and development as a fused continuum for generation of innovation.

2. Informing technology/innovations developers about technology/innovations users’ needs and market requirements.

3. All stakeholders on an IP have a contribution and benefits which sustain their interest and continued participation. But we still have to select who to work with: Bringing in too few will miss the point of the innovation systems concept. Bringing in too many can end up being unmanageable and even ritualistic. Similarly not all partners need to be involved in all activities all the time (Andy Hull)
4. Innovation generated will benefit all stakeholders on the platform. A key incentive for researchers is publishing papers. Private companies and NGO respond to other incentives and it is important to recognise this in project design as these non-research partners need to see some point in being part of a project.

5. IS engages the policy makers at different levels all along the process of R&D till innovation is generated.

6. IS ensures a smooth public-private partnership in ARD.

7. All inclusive partnership arrangement to address technological and non-technological issues.
What is Scaling Up?

The **process** of increasing the reach, breath, scope and sustainability of the changes, benefits and ultimate **impacts** that innovations and results, recommendations bring to people

Two parts:

**Process ---- Impacts**
Impacts = Improvements in peoples’ lives

• Enhanced production, more income, etc.
• Increase in access to food, to protein sources, etc.
• Enhanced nutrition, calorie intake, micronutrients, etc.
• Women’s access to resources, etc.

Each project has its own impact pathway, and its own targets and ways to measure them.

All projects ultimately lead to enhanced food security and nutrition for men and women.
What factors influence (enhance or hinder) the scaling up of innovations?

- Innovations’ characteristics (relative advantage)
- Individual choices
- The day-to-day repertoire of practices
- Socio-technical regimes (local, sectorial)
- Organizations and institutions
- Chance and opportunity
- Other context factors

In practice, the scaling up of an innovation is the result of a very complex set of factors
1. **Finding the right partners.**

This is the single most important challenge: there is a need for partners that:

- Help co-develop (together with researchers and the farmers themselves) effective and practical business models that work in "the real world"

- Are connected to informal and formal networks to boost the scaling up process

- Are interested in both business and social impacts.

Key partners are private sector actors, including: individual entrepreneurs, SMEs, farmers associations & cooperatives.
2. Reading the context and taking advantage of opportunities.

Scaling up is not a straightforward process; a number of context conditions need to converge be in place and, many times luck and chance play a critical role.

We cannot control or design this, but we can be prepared to take advantage of them.

Good partners are key to gather this kind of intelligence from the context/environment.
3. Leadership for the long run
Results at scale will take time and are not guaranteed.

Funding, of course, is essential but can be obtained.

Dedicated leadership from "champions", that can take the innovation beyond institutional
Thank you / Merci
Asante sana