



Highlights on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and recommendations of AEAS for resilient agriculture and food systems

Dr. Richard Miiro
UFAAS and Makerere University



Introduction

We share the highlights on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities of AEAS that came through presentations and discussions on:

- Youth Engagement in AEAS and agri-prenuership
- Climate smart AEAS-Capacity and needs of actors
- Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management in AEAS
- Emerging competitive e-extensive models
- AEAS in urban agriculture
- Positioning of Agricultural Education for resilient agriculture
- Experiences of agricultural inputs provision with AEAS
- Farmers' perspectives on the effects of the disruptions



Strengths of AEAS

- The established Policy framework
- Strong political will for an enabling environment, support and guidance
- Government support to pluralistic extension
- Presence of a multiplicity of AEAS actors - public and private providers across the country
 - Government projects like ACDP
 - Projects by Development partners
 - OWC/NAADs – Regional Farmer Service Centres
 - Private Sector AEAS
 - Civil Society NGO e.g SG 2000; VEDCO, Self Help Uganda



Strengths of AEAS

- Increased use of ICTs in AEAS by a many actors (input, output, insurance, finance and extension bundled)
- Improved staffing at local government level which has increased to 3811 extension workers
- Increased investment in AEAS capacity building, retooling programs of MAAIF, OWC
- Attention to youth in AEAS



Strengths

- Have a number of education institutions offering agricultural education across the country
- The Rural Farmer Service Centers – OWC
- Climate Smart Agriculture and EAS programs and models
- Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices are documented and published
- SLM practices have been put in an electronic form and are downloadable for public use



Weaknesses of the AEAS system

- Limited appreciation of current policies of agriculture and AEAS by most AEAS providers
- Limited coordination and cross learning among the EAS actors, duplication of services
- Low capacity in providing market oriented extension advisories among public EAS actors
- Limited integrated e-extension system, ICT infrastructure and capacity to utilise ICTs for extension



Weaknesses of AEAS

- Bundled services with EAS support are still limited in their reach to farmers
- Inability to deal with widespread risks, insurance
- Lack of guidance and channels to deal with over production and lack of markets for produce
- Lack of policy awareness and knowledge of emerging trends such as markets, other services, on how they operate to support farmers - among AEAS actors



Weaknesses of AEAS

- Weak linkage between agricultural education institutions with EAS actors to ensure relevance of education to field needs
- Lack of strategy on how to conduct agricultural education training in the disruptions
- Lack of risk management training and capacity among AEAS actors
- Lack of confidence, capacity of extension to deal with domestic challenges such as GBV, farm succession
- Lack of technical skills in post-harvest handling



Opportunities of AEAS despite the shocks

- Recognition of the importance of Agriculture in the economy
- High population growth, this demands increased food production, extension services
- Recognition of the contribution of scientists
- The focus on agro-industrialization – will create a pull effect on various AEAS services across the agricultural value chain



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Opportunities of AEAS despite the shocks

- Availability of IT services and platforms for exchange
- Social media (WhatsApp chat groups; E-mails; Facebook & YouTube video clips).
- The inevitable need to integrate ICTs in extension by AEAS actors
- Farmers openness to engage with ICTs and social media platform to receive EAS



Opportunities...despite the shocks

- The many youth who can enter into agriculture and EAS with good business and career guidance
- Urban farming has picked-up in many parts of the country, and EAS is needed
- Youth led urban farming growth: youth have become change agents/trainers of others.
- Increasing number of Farmers Organizations, Cooperative and associations



Opportunities despite the shocks

- Space is now open to design and pilot online student learning including students of agriculture
- E-registration platform is an opportunity to know who the AEAS actors are so as to coordinate
- Link social protection to AES
- Forecasting, risk management curricula in place



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Recommendations for AEAS policy and practice

- Pass the Extension Bill to institutionalize and support the implementation of policies for EAS
- A framework to improve coordination of AEAS actor activities across the country, and local government
- Support UFAAS to champion the above coordination process
- Promote the practical Climate smart AEAS models to scale including reaching the last mile
- Increase farmer participation in the design and operations of the Rural farm service centers



Recommendations

- Capacity strengthening in digitization of agriculture including e-extension innovations, collective action in farming, marketing, and the rest of the value chain
- Scale up the models that are successfully involving the youth in EAS, especially in agri-prenuership
- Promoting and scaling out integrated landscape management approach effective illustrating visibility of SLM practices and encourages farmers to work together



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Recommendations

- Improve coordination between extension service providers including public, private, NGOs among others to bridge the gap during this crisis
- Extension professionals should be supported to conduct continuous research that provides evidence for improving EAS, UFAAS and academic institutions to take lead
- Provision of social protection for small-scale farmers and build linkages - insurance schemes, other support



Recommendations

- Support the Higher Education Institutions and other training institutions for agricultural students with e-learning infrastructure
- Enact an urban farming policy, to support farming and AEAS since this too is a new normal especially in the growing number of cities



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Thank you for listening to me

