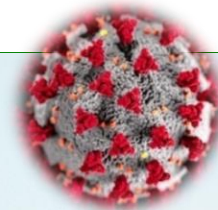




MAAIF
Ministry of Agriculture
Animal Industry and Fisheries

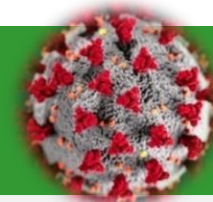


Realigning agricultural extension education to national priorities under the COVID 19 challenges: the case of Makerere University

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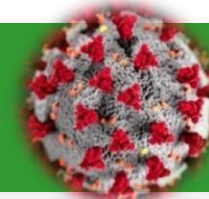
Introduction



- Uganda has just implemented one full cycle of its NAES strategy 2016/20.
- Aim to reorient agricultural extension from the privatized, demand driven farmer led service system to a single spine, pluralistic and public system under the Directorate of Agricultural Extension and Advisory services (MAAIF 2016a).
- Reforms meant to assure quality services to the extension clientele and restore the credibility of extension service as a public good
- For the first time in over 20 years, agricultural extension officers have gained confidence in their work and being facilitated with motorcycles and other paraphernalia they require
- The staffing positions at Districts and Sub County local governments have largely been filled



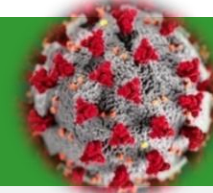
Introduction



- In spite of challenges from extreme weather vagaries, locusts and COVID 19, the agriculture sector has largely exhibited resilience and food prices have largely been stable.
 - Partly due to improvements in agricultural extension and advisory services coupled with those of Operation Wealth Creation.
- Agriculture sector has been rightfully recognized as a key pillar of the ‘true economy’ that has kept the country afloat even under the COVID 19 extended lockdown measures.
- Yet agriculture absorbed COVID 19 knock-on effects from other sectors of the economy such as closure of restaurants, bars and general leisure industry that left most farmers without market outlets for the most perishable farm products such as poultry, eggs, fruits and vegetables.
- Many farmers have incurred huge losses because of the COVID 19 lockdown measures.



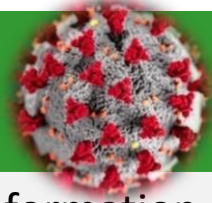
Place of Extension Education



- Extension is the engine for mobilization of the masses for national socioeconomic transformation as envisaged under the National Development Plans and Uganda's Vision 2040.
- It was born out of the desire to extend lifelong learning opportunities to persons outside the educational institutions in places **where they work and live** (*hence the Teaching, Research & Outreach mandates of higher education*)
- In Uganda and Africa generally, the AKIS system is historically dislocated by the separation of extension work from universities and research institutes
- Often times, extension officers only rely on their college notes as their source of advisory information to the farmers (**weak institutional linkage among research, extension and education**) **or innovation system generally**

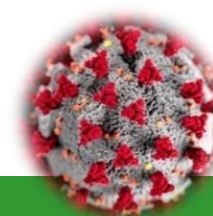


Alignment to National Priorities



- The Agriculture is a key priority sector for Uganda's socioeconomic transformation and achievement of vision 2040
 - by assuring food security, household incomes and employment opportunities for majority of the population (GoU, 2010).
- The sector's vision is an agricultural sector that is competitive, profitable and sustainable. The mission is to transform the sector from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture.
- The new strategy recognizes the need for stronger linkages with training institutions because of their role in agricultural research and manpower development
 - MAAIF to offer technical guidance to the Agricultural Training Institutions through collaborative curriculum reviews, student internships, accreditation of agricultural extension workers, refresher training courses, and support to postgraduate training of extension officers as well as specialty courses for practitioners.
 - Also need for career development and universal agricultural literacy via schools and youth associations

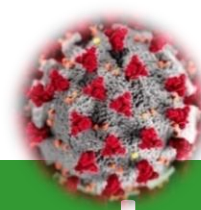




Extension Education under COVID 19

- The contribution of agricultural extension education institutions to national priorities depends on how well they are aligned to the other actors in the AKIS system.
- In the past, Agricultural Education Extension and training has tended to be dislocated from the national agricultural development agendas and relied more on obsolete textbook knowledge.
- The growing public discourse about the relevance of education system to the national aspirations is forcing educators to rethink their contribution to society (BTVET, 2013; Kasozi, 2003).
- No other sector is under pressure to show relevance of curricula than agriculture because of the large majority of the population that is engaged in farm related livelihoods





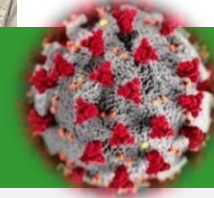
New Paradigm Shifts under COVID 19

1. The COVID 19 lock down affected students' internship placements and semester calendars
2. Graduate research supervision and funding priorities changed
3. In private institutions personnel have been cut off the payrolls
4. There has been a shift towards online course offerings (MUELE, MTN learning platform) staff need training in simulated practicals, inequalities..
5. Greater need for interconnectivity of various agricultural actors (Public, civic and private)
6. Farmer friendly extension fact sheets versus ICT platforms
7. Makerere University should in future set up regional centers for continuing agricultural education (post graduate and need-based training)

Business as usual before COVID 19

"New normal" after COVID 19





Conclusions

- The COVID 19 pandemic has presented a number of challenges to the agriculture sector and to extension education alike
 - Closure of educational institutions
 - Social distancing for gatherings for farmer training
 - Pressures to develop online learning platforms etc (simulated practicals, retooling FEOs, University credits??)
 - Supporting COVID 19 response activities (broken livelihoods and AG-Returnees)
- Opportunities that can be explored to keep extension education relevant
 - Greater public-private actor engagement to find sector-wide lasting solutions
 - Innovative ways to practical training of agriculture graduates (social distancing)
 - Management of student internships (own projects & home farm improvement)
 - Redevelopment of teaching farms (Can private sector participate?)
 - Online teaching platforms and
 - Strengthening actor connectedness with Extension Education Institutions

Thank you

