

Institutional Innovations: challenges of knowledge management



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Outline

- Why new knowledge is needed for agricultural progress?
- From Research to Innovation, how information, communications and knowledge management is changing?
- What is needed for organizational and institutional innovation?

Knowledge and Agricultural Innovation

New knowledge is critical for the rapid innovation required in agriculture to meet new challenges in production, productivity and profit from agriculture that are arising from:

- Globally competitive markets for agricultural commodities
- Constraints and barriers in accessing resources necessary for agriculture
- Coping with increasing risk from fluctuating climatic and environmental conditions

Information and Learning

- New information from outside that of the “local” agricultural community is critical for problem solving and agricultural innovation to happen.
- However, providing information is not adequate, enabling learning in communities to use the information effectively in the local context is essential to complete the “knowledge” cycle for innovation.



Paradigm Shift for Information and Communications Management

There is a paradigm shift in information and communications management from research to enabling innovation.

What have we learnt?

There is no “transfer of technology” when innovation happens within an agricultural community. Knowledge and skills are imbibed continuously in innovation.

What have we learnt?

The flow of uni-directional information flow from Research -> Extension -> Farmer becomes pluralistic and multidirectional as in a network when innovation as a system is considered.



What have we learnt?

Information sharing and exchange between all innovation actors is continuous and not “event driven”.

What have we learnt?

Learning takes place through “continuous social conversation” between “peers” and not in a top-down teacher-learner relationship with teachers being researchers/extension workers and learners being farmers.

What have we learnt?

Pluralistic information flows requires all actors in the agricultural community to act as “information organizations” and have their own “information platforms” that may use multiple media for their messaging through a variety of channels for multi-directional information flows.

What have we learnt?

When ICTs are considered for information sharing and exchange and in enabling learning opportunities, multi and mixed channel approaches that include face to face, print, “old” and “new” ICTs all have a role to play.

As an example, information platforms may have radio, video and text based messaging through community radio, cable TV, Internet and Cellular Telephony SMS as also linking a radio station that broadcasts to an SMS or postcard based Question and Answer system.

What have we learnt?

When new ICTs are being involved we are realizing that 3G use for cellular telephony and broadband Internet access through wireless are revolutionizing how information access can be transformed for rural, remote areas and for agricultural communities.

What have we learnt?

Messaging is now not only through face to face meeting within the community but through a variety of “messaging” objects that include text, audio, photographs, graphics, video, datasets, maps etc.

What have we learnt?

The most successful information platforms are those that tailor the use of media with the message through “interactive” channels for “continuous social conversations”. That means that the use of “social” media, such as blogs, wikis, question and answer services, is increasing in agricultural information sharing..



What have we learnt?

For learning, communities need access to both messages and “learning” objects to tailor to their learning needs for innovation.

What have we learnt?

Information and communications management for agricultural innovation is thus totally transformed when compared to that for agricultural research.

What have we learnt?

Pluralistic, multidirectional information flows that allow interaction for continuous social conversations among peers for learning in an agricultural community for innovation will require new information systems, Institutional structures and information processes.



What we need to know?

We need to know more so that we can rapidly reorient and transform existing information systems, Institutions and processes that provide not only information but enable learning in agricultural communities for learning.

What we need to know?

We know some contours of the new management of information, communications but and knowledge for innovation but we need to know more about the theory and practice of this ongoing transformation to design new, efficient organizations and Institutions for agricultural innovation



Need for systematic exploration of Institutions

We need systematic exploration of this phenomenon by agricultural development institutions.



Thank You