

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

A comeback with impact?



SKOV Study Circle
for Development Issues

UPS-AND-DOWNS OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA OVER THE PAST DECADES

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- **Colonial times (- 1960's):**

'White' agriculture: Plantation/cash crops; large holdings; dedicated research institutes; high input levels

- **Post-colonial times / Independence (+ 1960's):**

Smallholder agriculture: Food crops/mixed systems; low input levels; linear extension systems; poor knowledge linkages; different ministries involved (Agriculture, Science and Technology; Education)

- **Development aid (1970 – 2000):**

Aid partners and NGO's active; capacity strengthening and institutional development; farming systems research; participatory approaches

- **Donor-imposed structural adjustment (1980's):**
Virtual collapse of national extension services, knowledge systems and physical infrastructure; unemployment; dwindling interest in agriculture; NGO's taking over
- **Development collaboration (2000 – present):**
Changing roles of research for development (CGIAR, NARS and ARI's, AGRA, IFDC, CTA, B&M Gates); knowledge circulation; co-creation of knowledge; indigenous knowledge
- **Development collaboration 2.0 (2010 +):**
Private sector involvement (AAA, RijkZwaan, Syngenta, YARA); smart/interactive info systems; stronger farmer organizations (ROPPA; EAFF, SACAU, PROPAC); the comeback of 'extension':
Farm advisory services (AFAAS and national chapters)

Some points of concern:

- Agriculture's restricted appeal to youth (YPARD, CTA, Young KLV,)
- Africa's enormous diversity (climates, natural resources, demography, policies, economies, land tenure, ethnic groups, cultures)
Ref: IFPRI's Atlas of African agriculture, research and development (2014)
- Research's and extension's struggle with up- and out-scaling
- Marginalized peoples in marginal lands

Thank you for your attention