A Case Study of Innovation Platforms for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Development:
Implications for Non-Formal Leadership and Adult Learning

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Stakeholder organizations clearly need to have more than a symbolic role in IAR4D decision making. They are currently hindered by their lack of knowledge of leadership roles and capacity to implement the IAR4D. In this chapter, the authors have presented the use of the IAR4D in Sierra Leone with clear justification of how it fits into contemporary approaches and interventions at the national, regional and global levels. The chapter focuses on the "Dissemination of New Agricultural Technologies in Africa (DONATA)" project in Sierra Leone as a shining example of leadership development and adult learning in both formal and non-formal settings. The authors highlight current challenges of the use of innovation platforms through IARD and articulate implications of the case study for adult education, agricultural extension and non-formal training in agricultural research institutions. The chapter ends with recommendations for surmounting the current challenges of the case described.

INTRODUCTION

This case is taken from the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI) using the success story of the Dissemination of New Agricultural Technologies in Africa (DONATA) project. The project was implemented by the Njala Agricultural Research Centre (NARC), which is one of the seven constituent centres of (SLARI). The case is developed from the reports covering the work of Sahr Fomba, Lansana Sesay, and Alhaji Massaquoi between 2008 and 2014. As Projects Development and Management Officer at one time and now Research Coordinator of SLARI, the lead author of this article participated in several of the activities of DONATA Project but he takes no responsibility for the reports from which the case is developed. Rather credit is fully given to the authors of those reports from which excerpts are taken.

The Authors' understanding of the aim of the publication for which this chapter is meant is the following:

1). Selection of a leadership case
2). Demonstration of why the selected case qualifies to be a shining example of leadership within the context of adult education (e.g. Agricultural extension, or other non-formal education projects)
3). Highlights of current challenges facing the case of leadership described.
4). Recommendations for surmounting the current challenges of the case described.

Within the above framework, we have structured the chapter into six sections as follows. The first section is the introduction which provides the reason for this chapter, what the chapter entails and the manner in which it is structured. The second section provides the historical perspectives of research in Sierra Leone including the various institutions conducting research, the approaches used and a clear differentiation of efforts before the IAR4D approach and what pertains presently. In the third section of the article, the authors specifically present the use of the IAR4D in Sierra Leone with clear justification of how it fits into contemporary approaches and interventions at the national, regional and global levels. The fourth section is about the case study on the "Dissemination of New Agricultural Technologies in Africa (DONATA)" as a shining example of leadership development and adult learning in both formal and non-formal settings. Following the case presentation, the authors focused discussion on the implications of the case for adult education, agricultural extension and non-formal training on innovation platforms. The sixth section of the article addresses the challenges facing the use of Innovation Platforms (IPs) which is presented in the case study as model example for the promotion, dissemination and adoption of agricultural technologies. Finally, the article ends with a discussion of the implications of the case study for leadership development in adult education settings.

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