



Organizational innovation in times of crises: The case of extension and advisory services during COVID-19

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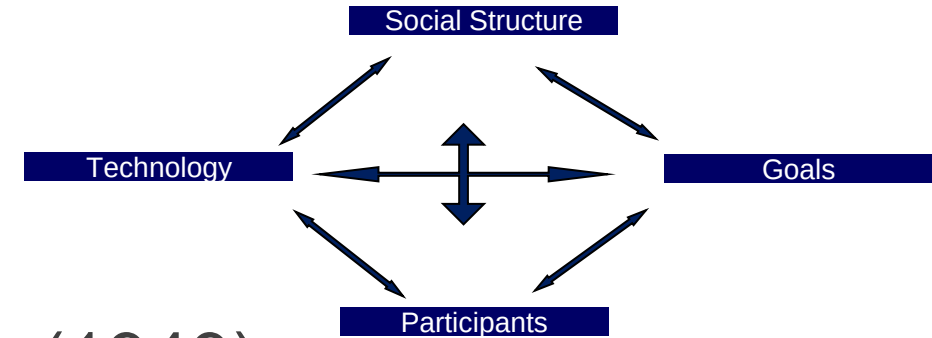
Introduction

- Extension's role in helping people adapt
- Past crises: natural disasters, political disruptions, conflict, Ebola, avian influenza, desert locust, fall armyworm
- These crises forced extension to innovate *moderately*



Credit: Digital Green

Theoretical Framework



- Leavitt's diamond model of organizations (1949)
- How do organizations modify
 - **inputs** (*human capital, technology, equipment*)
 - **outputs** (*services*)
 - **organizational components** (*social structures, participants, goals*)
- **Levels** of change (organizational to industry-wide), **type** of change (incremental to radical), **mode** of change (prescribed versus voluntaristic)

Theoretical Framework: Schemata

First-order change

- small modifications within already-established schemata, reinforcing existing paradigms

Second-order change

- conscious modification of schemata

Third-order change

- requires intentional coaching of organizations to change schemata

Purpose and Objectives

- Provide theoretical framework to examine organizational change in extension organizations in response to crises
- Provide recommendations to facilitate more resilient extension organizations

Methods

- Document analysis
- Participant observation
- Content analysis



Credit: Bjorn van Campenhout

Results: Examples of Change

- **USA** – Offered virtual programming, aggregated information, worked with local partners to provide services to vulnerable populations, moved from in-person to online teleauction formats
- **China** – Developed digitalized agricultural extension service for knowledge sharing + management of staff
- **Malawi** – Switched to online platforms: Zoom, WhatsApp, virtual agricultural fairs
- **Iran** – Public awareness campaign; social distancing, switch to mass media and electronic devices instead of face-to-face

Results: Type of Change

- **Level:** Change at *industry* level—collective change in multiple organizations
- **Type:** Second-order (radical) change
- **Mode:** Voluntaristic rather than deterministic or prescribed

Conclusions: Extension and Change

- Extension globally has innovated in response to COVID-19
- Goals remained focused on a *service orientation* paradigm, allowing organizations to innovate to continue serving
- Organizations modified *technology, structure, participants, and services*
- Change often started with *technology*

Implications and Recommendations for Reaching Women

- **Equity issues:** Embrace technology for benefits of reach and cost-savings, but cautiously
- **Capacity issues:** Provide staff with skills to adapt and problem solve
- **Relationship issues:** Ensure flexible and collaborative organizational structure, able to form strong partnerships



Thanks!



Credit: Sven Torfinn/Panos Pictures