

MANAGE Agricultural Extension "Evening4Learning (E4L)" Webinar Series

Topic: "New Extensionist: Extension Roles and Capacities for the Future"

Schedule:
21-11-2022, 19:30-20:00 PM

MANAGE - Center for Agricultural Extension Innovations, Reforms and Agripreneurship (MANAGE- CAEIRA)
National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad- 500 030, INDIA



About the Program

The MANAGE Agricultural Extension "Evening4Learning" Webinar Series is aimed at enhancing knowledge and professional engagement in the field of agricultural extension. The twelve-day series is structured with each day focusing on a distinct topic under a common theme, allowing participants to gain comprehensive insights into key areas of extension. The program is intended for a diverse audience, including postgraduate and doctoral students, agricultural faculty, and industry professionals. It covers broad themes ranging from entrepreneurship and sustainability to emerging technologies in agriculture.





Speaker

Dr. Kristin Davis

Senior Research Fellow

IFPRI

K.Davis@cgiar.org

Kristin Davis

About the Speaker

Dr. Kristin Davis is a Senior Research Fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and a globally recognized expert in agricultural extension, rural advisory services, agricultural innovation systems, and capacity development. She holds a Ph.D. in Agricultural Education and Communication (Extension) from the University of Florida, USA, and has over two decades of experience in research, policy, and capacity strengthening. Dr. Davis previously served as Executive Secretary of the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) and played a leading role in developing the internationally acclaimed New Extensionist framework and the New Extensionist Learning Kit (NELK) for extension professionals. She has authored numerous publications, served as President of the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education (AIAEE), and contributed significantly to the professionalization and modernization of agricultural extension systems worldwide.

Introduction

Agricultural extension systems worldwide are undergoing significant transformation. Traditional extension approaches primarily focused on the linear transfer of technologies from research institutions to farmers. However, the increasing complexity of agricultural and rural development challenges now requires extension professionals to perform broader roles involving innovation facilitation, partnership development, market linkages, capacity building, and stakeholder coordination.

Recognizing this shift, the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) initiated the development of the "**New Extensionist**" concept and the **"New Extensionist Learning Kit (NELK)"** to strengthen the competencies required by extension professionals to function effectively within Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS).

Evolution of the New Extensionist Concept

GFRAS initiated discussions around 2010 to position agricultural extension within the broader agricultural innovation ecosystem. A position paper entitled "The New Extensionist" was developed to provide a conceptual framework explaining the role of extension in strengthening the capacities of individuals, organizations, and systems involved in agricultural development.

The concept promotes a broader understanding of extension involving public agencies, private organizations, civil society institutions, farmer organizations, and market actors. This perspective recognizes extension as a key component of Agricultural Innovation Systems rather than merely a channel for technology dissemination.

From Technology Transfer to Agricultural Innovation Systems

The resource person emphasized the need to transition from the conventional linear model of research–extension–farmer linkages to the Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) approach. In the AIS framework, farmers, researchers, extension personnel, market agencies, policymakers, and other stakeholders interact continuously to generate and utilize innovations. Innovation was described as the introduction and application of new knowledge within economic and social processes. This transition has expanded the responsibilities of extension professionals, requiring new technical, functional, organizational, and system-level competencies.

Capacity Development Requirements

The New Extensionist framework recognizes capacity development needs at three levels:

1. Individual Level

Extension personnel require both technical and functional competencies, including communication, facilitation, adult learning, partnership building, and innovation management.

2. Organizational Level

Organizations require capacities related to strategic planning, staff management, partnership facilitation, resource allocation, and regulatory compliance.

3. Systems

Agricultural systems require capacities that support interaction, learning, adaptation, and collaboration among stakeholders.



Development of the New Extensionist Learning Kit

The New Extensionist Learning Kit emerged through a collaborative and evidence-based process involving literature reviews, expert consultations, surveys, peer reviews, action inquiry, and consensus-building exercises conducted through the GFRAS Consortium on Extension Education and Training. The consortium sought to identify the core competencies required by extension professionals globally.

The resulting learning kit was designed to equip extension professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to operate effectively within Agricultural Innovation Systems and respond to emerging agricultural and rural development challenges.

Purpose and Features of the Learning Kit

Although extension workers often possess strong technical expertise, they frequently receive limited training in functional competencies such as communication, facilitation, adult education, networking, and leadership. The learning kit was therefore designed to strengthen these competencies.

The learning materials support:

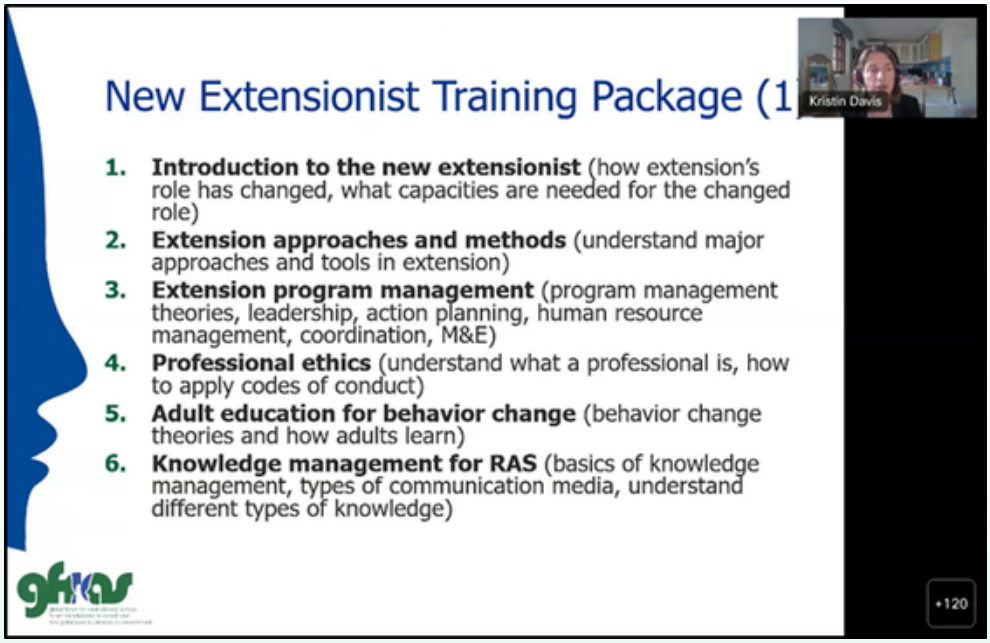
- Self-directed learning
- Face-to-face training
- Blended learning approaches
- University teaching and curriculum development
- Capacity-building programmes for extension organizations

Structure of the New Extensionist Learning Kit

The learning kit consists of three major packages:

A. NELK Training Package

The core package contains 11 modules developed based on the envisaged role of the New Extensionist. These modules cover the capacities required at the individual level for extension professionals to operate effectively in a dynamic and rapidly changing rural environment.





B. NELK Thematic Package

The thematic package consists of seven modules addressing emerging issues in agricultural extension and rural advisory services.



C. NELK Technical Package

This package currently includes two modules focusing on specific technical knowledge and skills related to agricultural development

- Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion (SHEP)
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Each module contains manuals, workbooks with practical activities, lecturer guides, PowerPoint presentations, online learning resources, and YouTube video materials to facilitate learning and training delivery. The kit can also be tailored according to the requirements of the target audience and the duration of the training programme.

Global Adoption and Mainstreaming

The adoption of the New Extensionist Learning Kit has followed a phased approach involving sensitization, training, curriculum integration, certification, and accreditation. Universities, training institutions, and extension organizations in several countries have incorporated NELK modules into their programmes and curricula.

The learning kit has also been mainstreamed through regional networks and country forums of GFRAS. Countries such as Madagascar, Cameroon, Kenya, and several Caribbean nations have utilized the learning kit to strengthen extension capacities.

GFRAS is also exploring opportunities to host the entire learning kit on the FAO e-learning platform to enhance its global accessibility and outreach.

Key Highlights

- Agricultural extension is evolving from a technology transfer approach to an Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) approach, where farmers, researchers, extension personnel, market actors, policymakers, and other stakeholders collaboratively generate and utilize innovations.
- **The "New Extensionist"** concept developed by GFRAS redefines the role of extension professionals from technology disseminators to facilitators of innovation, partnerships, learning, and capacity development within complex agricultural systems.
- The New Extensionist framework emphasizes capacity development at three levels—individual, organizational, and enabling environment—to strengthen the effectiveness and responsiveness of extension systems.
- The New Extensionist Learning Kit (NELK) was developed through a global consultative process and provides competency-based learning resources focusing on functional skills such as communication, facilitation, adult learning, leadership, networking, and innovation management.
- **NELK comprises three components—**Training, Thematic, and Technical Packages—and has been integrated into extension education, training programmes, and curricula in several countries, with ongoing efforts to expand its reach through digital learning platforms and global partnerships.

YouTube Link:
https://youtu.be/gQwDALu9Fag?list=PLcfEugbo2RL0&t=2074

E4L Report Prepared by:
Dr. Vavilala Priyanka
MANAGE Fellow