



National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP)

MANAGE-University Alliance for Advancing Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow's Agricultural Extension



Roots, Routes and Refresher at the Right Time: NYPDP – Sparks of Thought and Fields of Possibility

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Introduction

Every meaningful journey begins with strong roots, a clear sense of direction and the right moment for change. For me, NYPDP arrived exactly at that point. Roots represent the foundational values and philosophy of Agricultural Extension that shaped my understanding of the discipline. Routes reflect the many pathways, roles and possibilities that Extension offers today, far beyond its traditional boundaries. The Refresher captures the shift in mindset, clarity and confidence that this programme helped nurture within me.

I say it came at the right time because NYPDP did not simply add information; it encouraged reflection, realignment and readiness. The experiences, discussions and interactions during these days planted seeds of thought that unfolded into fields of possibility, revealing new ways of seeing Extension and my place within it. What follows is a reflection of how those sparks took root, shaped direction and opened meaningful paths forward.

Key Learnings from Each Day of the Programme

Day 1 Redefining Extension, Mindset and the MANAGE Ecosystem



Day 1 laid the foundation by reshaping how I perceive Agricultural Extension and myself within the discipline. Beyond the sessions, observing the working environment at MANAGE was itself a learning experience. The seamless teamwork, meticulous planning and coordinated efforts visible in every way and corner of programme organisation reflected a culture of professionalism, commitment and purpose. It demonstrated how institutional values translate into impactful learning experiences.

Key learnings:

- Agricultural Extension goes far beyond communication and Transfer of Technology
- The discipline offers multiple career routes rather than a single defined role
- Employment anxiety often stems from a narrow understanding of Extension
- Self-exploration of strengths, skills, and limitations is essential
- Challenges in Extension are often mindset-driven
- Teamwork, planning, and commitment at MANAGE exemplify institutional excellence

Day 2 Reflection, Research Values and Digital Readiness

Day 2 emphasised reflection and relevance. The recap session on unlearning, learning and application helped consolidate insights meaningfully. Discussions on changing Extension roles reinforced that professional identities evolve with context and need. Importantly, the sessions reshaped how I view research value.



Key learnings:

- Unlearning outdated ideas is crucial for growth
- Extension roles are dynamic and need-based
- Research aligned with global and national priorities gains wider relevance
- Every research has value, even if not directly linked to national or global priorities, when pursued sincerely, rigorously and with an intriguing mindset
- Exposure to a holistic list of platforms, websites, and tools offering free and paid certification courses highlighted pathways for continuous competency development
- Digital upskilling is central to professional readiness today
- Peer learning and alumni interactions strengthen confidence and direction

Day 3: Methods, Practice and Global Research Perspective

Day 3 deepened methodological rigour and practical competence. Sessions moved beyond concepts to real-world application, reinforcing the global relevance of Extension research tools.



Key learnings:

- Delphi technique supports structured and evidence-based decision-making
- The global-level importance of monitoring, Evaluation, and impact assessment was clearly understood

- Frameworks and strategies help assess programmes beyond outputs, focusing on outcomes and impact
- Hands-on exposure to Focus Group Discussion strengthened qualitative research skills
- Serving as a co-moderator helped me learn how to note participant insights and summarise FGD discussions effectively
- Insights on entrepreneurship, gender, and organic farming highlighted how sincere field-level efforts can create global impact
- Long-term success in Extension comes from consistency, sincerity, and commitment

Day 4: Ground Realities, New Tools and Experiential Learning

Day 4 connected Extension theory with grassroots realities and innovative tools. The sessions highlighted the importance of external engagement and experiential exposure for strengthening research and practice.



Key learnings:

- Collaborating with NGOs is vital to understand real ground-level scenarios
- NGOs offer meaningful professional opportunities for Extension professionals
- Conceptual and practical exposure to Social Network Analysis and Textometry provided clarity on their research applications
- The visit to Pragati Exotica offered a unique experience of farmer welfare combined with business-orientated approaches
- Exposure to bonsai, exotic plants, biochar, and sustainable practices highlighted innovative livelihood and environmental possibilities
- Experiential learning strengthens understanding beyond classrooms

Day 5: Policy Engagement, Synthesis, and Commitment

The final day brought clarity on the ultimate purpose of Extension research and practice. It bridged research with policy and action.

Key learnings:

- Policy engagement is the ultimate goal of Extension research
- Writing policy briefs does not depend on sample size, clearing a common misconception
- Exposure to platforms such as AESA, GFRAS, and APIRAS highlighted global Extension networks and engagement avenues
- The recap through commitment cards reinforced personal responsibility toward applying learnings



A Five-Day Experience

The five-day NYPDP training experience was immersive, well-structured and deeply enriching. It offered a balanced blend of reflection, conceptual clarity, practical exposure, and real-world relevance, creating a space that encouraged thoughtful engagement and professional growth. Each day built seamlessly on the previous one, making the experience both coherent and transformative. Overall, the training was not just informative but empowering, leaving me with greater confidence, clarity of purpose, and readiness to move forward in my academic and professional journey.



Change in Perspective

The training significantly changed my perspective on Agricultural Extension. Earlier, I viewed Extension largely through defined roles and conventional functions. NYPDP helped me see it as a dynamic, evolving discipline with a clear purpose of empowerment rather than a fixed set of activities. The programme broadened my understanding of Extension as a field that adapts to emerging challenges, integrates research, practice, and policy, and creates multiple pathways for meaningful contribution.



It also made me realise that effective Extension begins with self-awareness and adaptability, enabling Extension professionals to respond creatively and responsibly to real-world needs. This shift from seeing Extension as a role to understanding it as a purpose-driven process has fundamentally reshaped how I now relate to the discipline.

Atmosphere and Environment

The atmosphere throughout the training was welcoming and respectful, starting right from the first day. The warmth and hospitality at MANAGE, the way we were received and the care taken in every small arrangement created a sense of comfort and belonging. At the same time, the respect given to us and to our degree quietly reminded me of the responsibility that comes with it. It was not intimidating, but it created a healthy sense of seriousness and commitment towards learning. This balance of care, value, and professionalism made the environment highly motivating and pushed me to be more attentive, responsible, and engaged throughout the training.



Peer Interactions and Networking

From peer interactions and networking opportunities, I gain much more than information. Engaging with participants from different universities, backgrounds, and regions broadens my perspective and helps me see Agricultural Extension through multiple lenses.

The informal discussions, shared experiences, and mutual reflections create a sense of belonging and collective learning.



Listening to peers and alumni builds confidence, reduces uncertainty, and reinforces the feeling that challenges are shared and navigable. These interactions strengthen collaboration, motivation, and clarity, making the learning experience richer and more meaningful.

What I appreciate

What I appreciate most about the training programme is the way it focuses not only on what is taught, but on how we think and grow as professionals.

Instead of offering fixed answers or predefined career paths, the programme encourages reflection, self-awareness, and personal responsibility. The balance between highlighting advancements in the discipline and reinforcing its foundational values makes the learning meaningful. The emphasis on discipline, sincerity, and consistent effort creates a strong sense of purpose, making the training not just informative, but genuinely transformative.

Most Significant Takeaway

My most significant takeaway from the training is the realisation that Agricultural Extension is already a discipline at a great height, with the capacity to contribute meaningfully across sectors and at a global level. To contribute effectively to such a discipline, I need to grow higher myself rather than expect the discipline to adjust to my limitations. Extension is inevitable in many other disciplines and aligns naturally with diverse sectors, creating wide-ranging opportunities beyond conventional boundaries. The programme also made it clear that empowerment begins from within—confidence, clarity, and commitment of the Extension professional are essential to create real impact. Another important understanding was that careers are built by matching competencies to job descriptions, not by chasing role titles, and every course and exposure in NYPDP is designed to strengthen career readiness by aligning skills with real-world demands.

Action plan

I plan to apply the knowledge and skills gained through this programme by continuously exploring and engaging with global-level Agricultural Extension platforms and networks and by actively following up on opportunities related to research, internships, and professional development.



I intend to align my research interests with relevant priority areas while staying grounded in the foundational roots of Extension and keeping pace with recent advancements. A key focus will be understanding the competencies required in real job descriptions and development roles, rather than being guided by role titles alone, and shaping my skill set accordingly based on global demand.

I will make effective use of available online resources, digital platforms, and certification courses to strengthen my competencies and professional readiness. Alongside this, I see it as my responsibility to actively share the importance, relevance, and wide-ranging opportunities of this degree programme and the discipline with my fellow mates, juniors, and friends, helping them gain clarity and confidence in the value of Agricultural Extension.

A Sense of Gratitude

I express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Saravanan Raj (Director, Agricultural Extension, MANAGE), Dr. S. Raahalya (MANAGE Fellow) the entire NYPDP team for their vision, guidance and dedicated efforts in shaping NYPDP into a meaningful professional experience. I am thankful to all the coordinators and resource persons whose sessions and insights made the programme truly impactful.



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It was a journey that helped me understand where I stand in my discipline and where I need to grow. NYPDP gave me clarity, confidence, and a realistic view of the opportunities ahead, making me more responsible, focused, and prepared for my next steps.



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