



Title: GCHERA/AMEAS Global Conference "Transformational change in higher education to address challenges of the 21st Century"

Session 3/Roundtable: "Challenges, knowledge and skills of the 21st Century - what do we need to know".

Prof. Dr. Hildegard Lingnau, Executive Secretary GFAR

Alessandro Meschinelli, Coordinator of GFAR Collective Action on Transformational Learning/Curricula change

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1. Introduction

GFAR - The Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation
- is an open, collective movement

- driven by 600+ members from 13 constituencies,
- working towards putting small-scale producers at the center of agricultural innovation and
- making agrifood research and innovation systems more effective, responsive and equitable



2. Definition and meaning of GFAR Collective Actions

- an innovative partnership mechanism in which diverse members agree to partner, and commit and generate resources to work together
- initiated and co-created by three or more members, always including small-scale producers and with a particular focus on women and youth
- addressing a recognized problem/demand/need that cannot be addressed by one organization alone
- following a work plan and producing applicable, replicable, specific, measurable, attainable and time bound results
- adhering to the GFAR principles of complementarity, volunteerism, accountability and subsidiarity
- adopting, following, and monitoring adherence to the Partnership Principles

Role of GFAR

Catalyzing, facilitating and supporting
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning



3. Higher education transformation: changing context

- System analysis/thinking, integrating various rural development dimensions (environmental, social, economic, etc.); farmer first and participatory approaches.
- Transition from transfer of technology (ToT), linear top-down models of innovation to circular/interactive models of innovation conceived as the result of a social process, i.e. based on the interplay of diverse actors as holders of knowledge > towards co-innovation, co-research.
- New learning approaches: combined knowledge and experience of professionals + learners themselves determine curriculum content in a dynamic way leading to interactive learning processes.
- Co-innovation and co-research imply new roles and functions played by rural advisory services and research agents.
- Evolving towards "innovation broker"/"knowledge broker" (IB/KB) roles/professional profiles: stimulating collaboration among different stakeholders not holding equal power, not controlling each other and not linked to each other in a hierarchical structure but rather in a "partnership" or "innovation platform" comprised of independent members.



4. Innovation/knowledge broker job description/responsibilities/tasks/roles

Overall: facilitate the creation of strategic partnerships constituting an "innovation community"

- Scout/identify key actors of change, sensitize them on innovation opportunities
- Mobilize the collaboration between partners in their complementary roles/bring key actors on board ensuring that all stakeholder interests are represented
- Ensure balanced role of each stakeholder/levelling the playing field between actors with unequal power
- Build trust
- Create a shared responsibility/joint ownership of the innovation process
- Guide the partners to agree on well-defined shared objectives
- Promote communication and information sharing among partners
- Promote consensual decision making agreeing on common challenges/desired future situation
- Support joint planning and definition of complementary roles and responsibilities
- Mediate and resolve conflicts
- Support the emergence of collaborative leadership
- Promote documentation, monitoring and evaluation of the process and learning from the collaborative experience



(NB: GFAR/KFPE partnerships principles support advances in these directions)

5. Identification of key capacities/core competencies/attitudes needed (life/soft/functional skills)

- actors' analysis capacities
- problem solving attitudes
- group dynamics understanding
- gender sensitivity
- knowledge of agricultural innovation systems (AIS) functioning
- ability to facilitate and manage multi-actor innovation processes
- ability to understand the different cognitive and value frameworks of various actors
- capacity to learn, from the confrontation between these diverse frameworks, how to foster collective innovation processes
- listening capacities
- self-reflexive/critical capacities
- communication skills
- inter/transdisciplinary competences
- ability to facilitate change

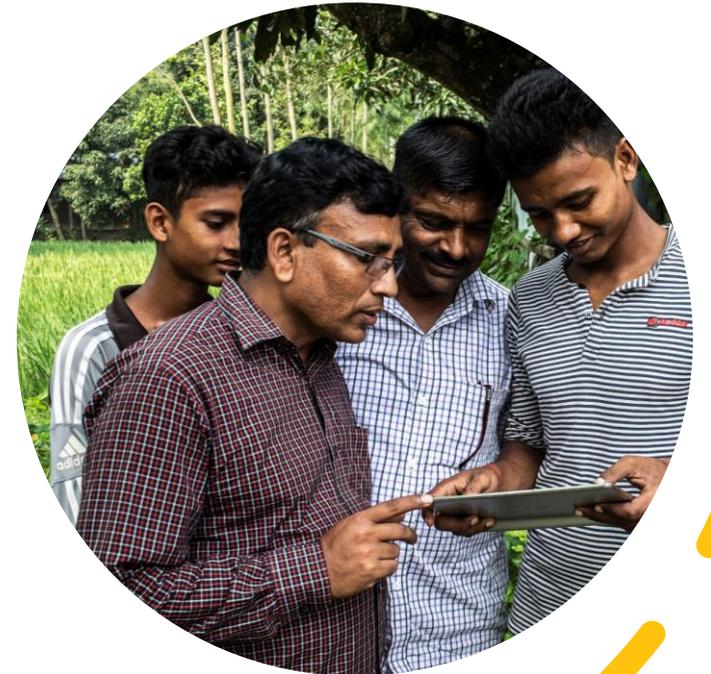


6. New educational contents and approaches: (from conventional methods towards participatory curriculum development):

- Curricula are too often technical in content and do not develop appreciation of the value of different cognitive and value systems, along with fostering the capacities to integrate these
- Curriculum development is led by experts and is product oriented, assuming there is a consensus on education objectives, goals, outcomes whereas this consensus has to be jointly developed by all the concerned actors
- Teaching methodologies tend to be rather conventional, offering scarce intensive mentoring, practical field application and reflection on experience
- Non-formal and informal learning activities are not connected to the formal education system (example Farmer Field Schools with agronomy courses)
- Demand-driven curricula is focussing more on processes than on products, ensuring that teaching methodologies and contents are relevant/adapted to the environment and circumstances of the students
- Adult-learning methods need to be mobilized, valorizing existing individual competencies, emphasizing dialogue and recognizing expectations of learners
- Participatory curriculum development is based on experiential and action-learning (on-the-job). In this approach participants are included in multi-actors teams directly engaged in collaborative management of an innovation process
- Learning supports are provided to multi-actors teams, stimulating reflection on joint experience, defining and applying improved practices
- Students are assisted in the analysis of the shortcomings of conventional paradigms, cognitive and value frameworks to recognize the value of others

7. Collective Action on Transformational Learning and Curricula Change: Background

- This Collective Action builds upon previous meetings, particularly one held in 2017 in Nairobi with RUFORUM, where knowledge, skills and attitudes of the future graduates were identified.
- This involved also a redefinition of the role of the instructor, of the pedagogical practices and of the purpose of the universities, encompassing transformed learning processes.
- GFAR provided assistance in preparing together, in collaboration with the stakeholders ready to be mobilized, a Collective Action.
- The Collective action aimed at incorporating in the training modules of voluntary academic institutions the relevant themes to build entrepreneurial, agribusiness competencies but also the soft/life/functional skills which are needed to complement the technical abilities towards building "collaborative management of innovation" capacities.



8. Collective Action on transformational learning and Curricula Change: key requirements

For the collective action to be implemented successfully the following is required:

1. a better definition of the new roles played by advisory services and researchers (tasks / ToRs)
2. identification of new competencies and skills
3. Work towards developing the appropriate learning approaches and contents (curricula, capacity development methods)

The Collective Action facilitated by GFAR with EFARD coordination aims precisely at creating the conditions for diverse families of actors to come together on the same ground.

This multistakeholder group will support a selected number of universities to reflect and act upon higher innovation transformation requirements to meet the emerging professional needs of researchers and extensionists.



Your comments?
Your thoughts?
Your expectations?
Thank you for your attention!
