APLU KNOWLEDGE CENTER for ADVANCING DEVELOPMENT through HIGHER EDUCATION

Increasing the power of higher education institutions as sustainable and scalable engines of development

Webinar Summary

A Model of Change for Institutional Capacity Building: Lessons from iAGRI

October 22, 2015

INTRODUCTION

In this webinar, David Kraybill and Laura Alexander share the experience of the Innovative Agricultural Research Initiative (iAGRI) in the institutional capacity building of Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA).

ABOUT iAGRI

iAGRI Innovative Agricultural Research Initiative

iAGRI is a Feed the Future project funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The project mission is to build a sustainable food system through training, research, outreach and institutional transformation that encompasses private and public sectors.

iAGRI Stakeholders in Tanzania:

- Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA)
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives

US Partners:

- Ohio State University
- Michigan State University
- University of Florida
- Virginia Tech
- Tuskegee University
- Iowa State University

TANZANIAN CONTEXT

Tanzania is situated in one of the most rapidly growing regions in the world. The country experienced population increase of 2.9% each year during 2003-2013 and the population is expected to double in the next 25 years.

Urbanization has grown very rapidly in Tanzania. By 2030 over 50% of the country's population is expected to live in urban areas. This creates a growing demand for more food, housing of different types, and new types of urban services.

Malnutrition in Tanzania is high, although it has been declining slowly. Nevertheless, there is a need to improve production and marketing of nutritious foods, as well as plant/animal genetics. Moreover, livelihoods and incomes need to be improved to support home production and purchase of nutrition food.

Employment in Tanzania represents a challenge, since only 7.8% of adults (age 20-59) participate in the formal employment sector. It leads to a growing need for alternative and supplemental employment activities, as well as entrepreneurship.

HIGHER EDUCATION CHALLANGES

Tanzanian tertiary institutions have experienced significant changes in the context of their work over the most recent decade. While the governmental spending on higher education industry steadily decrease, higher education has expanded both in number and size of universities. Enrollment has increased fivefold in the decade from 2003-2012. Consequently, universities face a challenge of a growing need to expand facilities and infrastructure on their campuses to accommodate a growing student population.

Furthermore, institutions of higher education in Tanzania face a need to revise their curriculum to ensure its relevance to meet the needs of employers, provide skills needed by new and emerging markets and products/services, as well as the needs of a whole person/community (including humanities and arts).

Technological and management innovations represent another area of challenge and opportunity for Tanzanian higher education institutions. Innovations are needed across the entire food value chain. They are needed to alter human behavior in desired ways, particularly in the areas of nutrition and health. Likewise, innovations are desired in the areas of protecting natural environment, provision of adequate shelter, transportation, and health care.

Addressing these challenges of Tanzanian higher education system requires universities to overcome their limited human and institutional capacity, and show the need for organizational and infrastructural transformations.

iAGRI CHANGE MODEL

iAGRI organizational transformation model introduced a conversation-based change approach and a 12-step model adopted to measure organizational transformation at SUA.

The change model addresses the need for organization transformation at SUA by focusing on strategy, structure, and systems. It works best for projects or activities where the goal is to develop institutional capacity focused on organizational transformation.

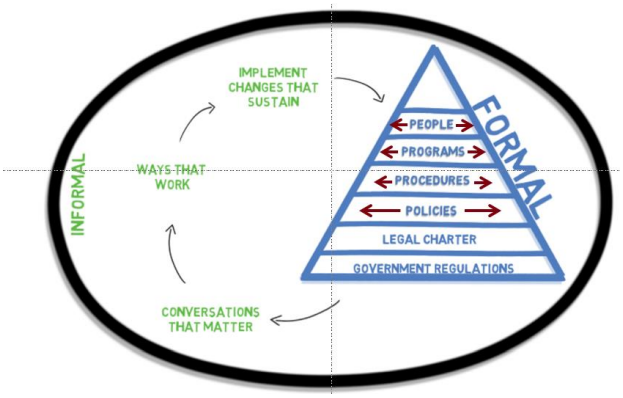
Assumptions of the iAGRI Change Model:

- Goal is institutional capacity development focused on organizational transformation;
- Host organization is committed to transforming its strategy, structure, processes, and organizational culture;
- Sponsor is committed to bring about long-term, sustainable change;
- Change agent is able to spend long periods of time on the ground interacting with host organization.

iAGRI Theory of Change:

The theory of change relies on the interplay between the formal and informal systems in an organization. Informal systems in the iAGRI theory of changes are represented by the multiple ways that people interact, which are not reflected in the organizational chart. Examples include: conversations in the hallway and/or coffee room, telephone calls, e-mails, ad-hoc committees. Formal system includes people, programs, procedures, policies, legal charter, and government regulations.

Considering that formal systems are almost always resistant to change, the experiments on solving the problems are carried out in the informal system. Successfully developed practices are then brought into the formal system to ensure sustainable changes. The process consists of three stages.



STAGE 1 - Conversations that matter.
iAGRI initiates conversations on the gaps of the formal system in the informal setting. The goal of the stage is to specify the problem and commit to action. To achieve clear results three major questions are addressed: what exactly is going to be done? who is going to do it? when will it be done?

STAGE 2 – Ways that work.
iAGRI sustains the conversations to identify ways that work through experiments. They can appear in a form of an actual experiment within the organization or during a study tour to another institution of higher education, which has demonstrated a successful practice on the relevant issue. At this stage solution are identified and commitment to their formalization are made.

STAGE 3 – Changes that sustain.
Finally, lessons learned from the experiments are implemented into the formal system through the changes in policies, procedures, programs, and the mindsets of the people. This stage is focused on the

sustainability of the changes and performance monitoring.

iAGRI'S 12 STEP INDICATOR

Each stage in the iAGRI transformation model is broken into concrete, measurable steps. These steps have value both as a tool for monitoring progress towards transformation and as a management tool that guides strategy on individual experiments.

Stage 1: Conversations that matter.

1. Did the conversation end with identifying a problem to be solved and specifying next steps in terms of what will be done, who will do it, and when it will be done?
2. Did the conversation result in agreement to conduct a rigorous search, such as an organizational experiment or study tour, to find a solution to the problem?
3. Has a participatory exercise been conducted to identify objectives of the rigorous search and to identify challenges to solving the problem?

Stage 2: Ways that work.

1. Have procedures for the experiment or rigorous search been documented and initiated?
2. Has a solution based on the rigorous search been identified and documented?
3. Has an analysis of the benefits, costs, and challenges of implementing the solution been conducted?
4. Have persons involved in the experiment or rigorous search agreed to next steps, including how to introduce results into the formal system

Stage 3: Changes that sustain.

1. Has the documented solution been translated into changes in policies and/or procedures in the formal system?
2. Has the formal system adopted the solution by specifying reporting relationships, assignment of responsibilities, and budgets (if funding is required)?
3. Have performance standards been adopted for the implemented solution?
4. Does the formal system monitor and document compliance with its performance standards for the implemented solution according to a specified frequency?
5. Is the solution adequately resourced with staff and funds so that long-term sustainability can be achieved?

Statistical Collaboration Laboratory is an example of one of the 25 current iAGRI organizational experiments taking place on the SUA campus. It is one among twenty such laboratories that will be established in developing countries by 2020 under the Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Statistics Analysis (LISA) project based in the Department of Statistics at Virginia Tech. To learn more about LISA2020 project visit http://www.lisa.stat.vt.edu/LISA2020/

CONCLUSIONS

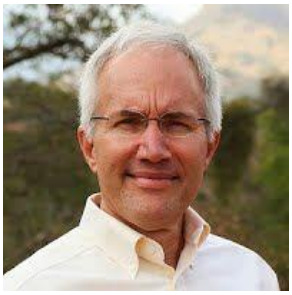
Organizational transformation is a labor intensive and long-term process. It requires commitment from a host organization to transform its strategy, structure, processes, and organizational culture. Organizational change needs a sponsor, whose goal is to bring a long-term sustainable change. To ensure organizational transformation a change agent needs to spend long periods of time on the ground interacting with a host organization. The skills it should inquire include collaboration, negotiation, communication, and adaptability.

Organizational change requires transformation of both formal and informal systems. The informal systems can be a vital source of changes in the formal system. Thus, ensuring true participation of a host university is essential in planning and implementation of change. Moreover, mindset

change and organizational change in the university's system occur simultaneously and interactively. Therefore, changes in one reinforce changes in the other.

Finally, organizational transformation is a non-linear dynamic learning process, so begin with the end (sustainability) in mind.

PRESENTERS



Dr. David Kraybill is a Professor of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics at The Ohio State University, specializing in African economic development. As a teacher, researcher, and project administrator, Dr. David Kraybill has extensive experience working in Africa. He leads the Project Management Unit of iAGRI, residing currently in Tanzania for that purpose. In the past, he has been a consultant to World Bank, Rockefeller Foundation, International Food Policy Research Institute, Southeast Consortium for International Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, numerous governments, and other organizations.

Laura Alexander is the Program Manager for Organizational Transformation at iAGRI. manages the implementation and ongoing development of iAGRI's organizational transformation strategy, including testing and adapting an innovative change model, interpreting the model for program staff, and supporting continuous learning and adaptation within iAGRI's organizational transformation activities. She also works directly with partners at Sokoine University of Agriculture on several organizational experiments. Prior to joining iAGRI in 2013, Laura served as a Rosenthal Fellow at the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. She has more than 10 years of experience in HICD program management and non-profit administration, including serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Tanzania's Mufindi District.

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