Developing Local Extension Capacity

Improving agricultural extension and advisory services through action, evidence and advocacy

The Feed the Future Developing Local Extension Capacity (DLEC) project measurably improves extension programs, policies and services by creating locally-tailored, partnership-based solutions and by mobilizing active communities of practice to advocate for scaling proven approaches. The five-year (2016-2021) project is designed to diagnose, test and share best-fit solutions for agricultural extension systems and services across the Feed the Future countries. Led by Digital Green in partnership with Care International, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS), DLEC is an action-oriented, evidence-based learning project that generates evidence through diagnostic studies and engagement activities, which in turn are used as a catalyst for mobilizing global and country-level communities of practice to advocate for improved extension and advisory services (EAS).

Diagnostics

DLEC conducts diagnostics in Feed the Future countries to evaluate the EAS ecosystem. The diagnostics provide insight into the strengths and challenges faced by national extension systems by evaluating the access, quality and sustainability of the governance structures and policy environmnent, organizational and management capacities and cultures of country EAS organizations, and advisory methods used within each system. The diagnostics also review the extent to which the system is market-oriented, how the system engages different communities, including youth and women, and how it supports overall livelihood strategies of farmers. Recommendations on customized improvements and solutions are then provided. View our latest diagnostics here: http://www.digitalgreen.org/resources-dlec/.

Engagements

DLEC works with USAID missions and other actors to implement engagements and action research to test best-fit solutions adapted to each country's context. Activities are based on country-specific needs, and range from integrating information and communication technologies (ICT) to promoting methods of inclusion of multiple actors to developing content about demand-driven practices. For instance, in Bangladesh DLEC is working with the USAID-funded Agricultural Extension Support Activity (AESA) Project to introduce digital tools for output marketing. And in Uganda, DLEC is testing if the gender of the extension functionary has an effect on the adoption of new practices among men and women maize farmers who receive extension messaging. In Nigeria, DLEC is working with value chain actors on private extension methods.

Communities of Practice

As a learning project, DLEC's objective is to share knowledge, evidence and best-fit practices, not only from the project, but from the agricultural extension sector as a whole. This objective will be acheived via a global and national communities of practice and an online portal. Results from the DLEC engagements are used as a catalyst to advocate for change and contribute to current or future extension programs implemented by our community members. The DLEC communities of practice are forums where extension stakeholders, whether they are implementers, donors or policy makers, can convene to share their expertise, findings, innovations and problem-solving skills to build better capacity to reach smallholder farmers. Please join the global community of practice at https://dlec.hivebrite.com/.

For more information about the DLEC project, contact Dr. Kristin Davis, Project Director, k.davis@cgiar.org.

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