Is Extension Education Philosophy a Myth in Sierra Leone?

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Introduction
The extension education philosophy (EEP), which is, helping people to help themselves, remains unchanged in application across the world. But the information delivery processes (IDP) varies from country to country, and organization to organization based on social, economic, cultural and political implications. And still, the design and implementation of IDP largely depends on the farming audience. The audience is receptive to the information delivered when media channels are appealing to them.

The IDP have had goals and methods of working that do not reflect the genuine needs of the beneficiaries nor sensitive to their characteristics, local customs, beliefs, and values. Messages delivered do not carry the motivating rudiments that adequately engage the farming audience to influence behavioral change. It is this communication method may have been the cause of agricultural information delivery failure in Sierra Leone. Nevertheless, the EEP continues to serve as the basis of a foundation to information delivery processes, although its performance is a myth.

The myth is three fold: First, the design of information delivery system is exclusive of target audience participation. Second, the process carries with it choices which does not allow the farming audience to choose from their own initiatives. In fact, the choices are imposed rather than provide options for local indigenous knowledge utilization. And third, extension education choices are biased to a particular class of clientele which does not promote sustainable development among the farming population.

Purpose
The purpose of this poster is to examine the EEP performance when choices are imposed on the audience versus EEP performance when choices are not imposed. The poster identifies potential challenges the IDP encounters in the latter situation and determines strategies of implementation. The poster further examines the characteristic behavior of extension educators and beneficiaries during EEP performance.

Major Points
The proposed poster will address the concerns and potential challenges of the audience and educators. Accepting and managing choices from the audience will be an integral portion of the IDP. This will serve as base line data that can be used to evaluate future success.

Conclusion
The implementation of IDP is a critical factor affecting program delivery organizations in Sierra Leone. The present delivery approach of EEP dictates a top-down method which limits utilization of indigenous knowledge by audience. If the choice or local knowledge of the audience is practiced within IDP, sustainability will be maintained.

Educational Importance
A study of this nature will be useful information for the following reasons:

1. Extension educators will be able to use IDP strategies to enhance transferability of indigenous knowledge, and optimize the audiences' local practices.
2. Extension educators could learn new communication strategies using this approach.
3. The audience will be participatory and this will increase their confidence level.