Extension Education Philosophy in the 21st Century in Sierra Leone: Changing the “Mindset” of Programmers

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Introduction In this research the current trends forcing a restructuring of Extension Systems in Sierra Leone are explored. These include a move to Outreach and Engagement. The Outreach and Engagement characteristics include humane “goodwill” and “mindset”. By implication, “goodwill” is defined as the ability to initiate and be creative in a changing world. The “mindset” is defined as the ability to awaken the senses and grow alongside the increase in societal needs. In other words, it is an attitude of character that responds to a changing situation. These definitions come as a result of the field observations made over the years. The belief is that the Extension Education Philosophy (EEP) is the basis of the extension strategies in the 21st century. Specific questions to ask the stakeholders or programmers include:

- Has extension fulfilled its purpose?
- What are the current trends in extension?
- What is the future of extension?
- How to change the mindset of programmers?
- These questions are asked using surveys, focus groups, and case studies to determine the epistemological facts.

Major points or information to be shared

- Outreach and Engagement phenomena are not anywhere disconnected from the EEP.
- “Goodwill” and “mindset” are tools to the Outreach and Engagement characteristics that individuals and organizations can utilize.
- With the current trends in extension, what is seen as the future?
- Change is an individual desire

Conclusions or lessons learned To some practitioners and programmers, the current trends in extension and its future may be overwhelming. But from the reflections on the fundamental principles of extension, there may be that courage of hope “To better the lives of people and communities.” To fulfill the task at hand, that is, adding value to what already exists within the extension practices, requires “goodwill” and “mindset” individuals or organizations. Changing the “mindset” of programmers that see Outreach and Engagement as nothing more than relations between them and the public with a dimension a little more than the traditional information delivery system. Only if this is done, as believed, can extension fulfill its vocation on philosophy and be of use to humanity to address issues in the 21st century in Sierra Leone.

Educational importance By considering the “goodwill” and “mindset” of programmers in the current extension education system, Outreach and Engagement will achieve the value that it is striving toward. Such a value added strategy is what extension in Sierra Leone needs in the 21st century.