Building Education Agendas for the Extension Service in the Republic of Moldova: Changing the Approach

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Introduction
The Agency for Consulting and Training in Agriculture (ACSA) (Moldova Extension Service) was created in 2001 through a governmental decision and with the financial support of the World Bank. The main goal of ACSA is to develop a network of sustainable rural advisory Service Providers (SPs) for the improvement of agricultural producers’ income and enhancement of rural livelihoods. Approximately 400 local and regional advisors are involved in the ACSA network working in 35 regional and local extension offices. Usually, advisers are specialists with 15 - 30 years of experience in different domains of agricultural development (e.g. agronomists, economists, engineers) and most have high-level technical skills in these fields (AGREX, 2003).

Purpose of the poster
The purpose of the poster is to explain the development of Agricultural and Extension Education in Moldova.

Major points of information
- The description of Extension Education in Moldova after agricultural reforms.
- The overview of present educational programming in the Moldova Extension Service.
- The presentation of implications regarding international agricultural and extension education professionals for the development of agricultural extension and education system in Moldova.

Conclusions
About 20% of the clients of ACSA have indicated that the information contained in ACSA publications is too complicated and they can not easily understand its meaning. At the same time, only about 50% of clients of the ACSA SPs consider that the advisory centers contribute to the improvement of rural population quality of life and community development (AGREX, 2003). The limitations noted here are due to lack of adequate training of agricultural extension staff. The focus has been only on agricultural production and not on needs of the rural communities. According to Bruening (1998) meeting these challenges will require new educational and training strategies in order to train active contributors to sustainable agricultural and rural development through innovative teaching, research and extension.

In response to this situation, a group of professors from State Agricultural University of Moldova (SAUM) in collaboration with EU consultants wrote and published the first extension methodologies handbook in Moldova – “Extension Consultant’s Guide”. Also they developed and implemented an Extension Methodology training course (Stiopca, Rurac et al. 2003). In the same context, the Organization for Reform and Development of Education System in Moldova (ORDSE) is offering the 4-H program “Apiculture – a way of life in Moldova’s Orphanages”.

Educational importance
The implications of international agricultural and extension education professionals in the development of agricultural and education system in Moldova are numerous.
- There is a need to develop a department of extension education at SAUM in Moldova.
- There is also need to sustain and strengthen adult and youth education in Moldova through professional development activities.