

KNOWLEDGE MAPPING STUDY IN LEBANON

Abir Abul Khoudoud

MS in Agricultural Extension - Knowledge Mapping
expert

Cairo, 2011

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Under Karianet- TOR :

- To identify existing knowledge and organizations' database in the fields of food security, rural enterprise development and knowledge management in Lebanon.
- To identify knowledge management experts involved in sharing and communicating knowledge and transferring technologies to small-scale farmers in Lebanon.
- To explore the existing policies and/or national strategies regulating KM-KS in rural and agricultural development In Lebanon.
- To identify the different ways of sharing and communicating the knowledge between the diverse actors to reach the small-scale farmers in rural development in Lebanon

Methodology- Study Population

- Public entities – line ministries and their attached institutions involved in food security, rural enterprise and knowledge management and sharing;
- Agricultural research, technology transfer and universities institutions;
- Local NGOs (included local NGO”S and local NGO”S with international affiliation and CCIA’s with KM interest);
- Private companies (only major ones having research and development units as part of their structure);
- Private SME institutes.

Data Collection Tools and Methods

- Desk review
- Combining different data collection tool: literature review (previous surveys and studies of the organizations and their related programs or projects, published related research, reports and documents), with websites research, phone interviews with selected institutions or practitioners
- Structured interview (16 organization)
- Case studies presentation
- Policy review

List of organizations 44

STUDY LIMITATIONS

- KM and KS in is a relatively new concept in Lebanon .
- Rare pr no previous studies
- Introducing the concept and developing common understanding while trying to consult or interview the different human and material resources on the issue was important

Results and Findings

- national and international NGOs deliver a wide variety of extension services to farmers and rural communities, ranging from specialized commodity extension to integrated community development services especially targeting poor rural communities.
- Their work often lacks coordination and sometimes sustainability.
- There is no mechanism for sharing and expanding successful experiences and lessons learnt at national level.

Results and Findings -cont

- When interviewed organizations were asked about the terminology knowledge management and sharing nearly 98% affirmed negatively. And when they were asked whether their organization has a depicted knowledge management strategy, it was nearly absent.
- Knowledge management experts could not be identified. Yet there exists knowledge management practitioners

Results and Findings -cont

- As far as knowledge management tools and methods nearly all are **still using the conventional types of extension service and advisory services.** SMS through mobile phones initiatives are still linked to project basis, when project or funds ends the service stops.
- **Inter-organizational Knowledge** Sharing is project bound and through joint consultative or steering committees. No any form of social networking between organizations has been recorded.

Results and Findings -cont

- **Internationally based NGO"s** are the one mostly resorting to the use of social media (like SMS through mobile phones, Blogs or social networking groups) but they often lack sustainability of activities and they even leave behind empty building infrastructure when funds just stop for any reason or when project comes to an end.
- **Individuals inside organizations** like the CCIA and some of NGOS has started using social networking in their KS

Results and Findings -cont

- **Internationally based NGO"s** are the one mostly resorting to the use of social media (like SMS through mobile phones, Blogs or social networking groups) but they often lack sustainability of activities and they even leave behind empty building infrastructure when funds just stop for any reason or when project comes to an end.

Results and Findings -cont

- Local NGO'S working in the **forestry and protected areas** are using social networking (facebook) groups. Their audience are educated volunteers active on the issue.
- International NGO's like Mercy Corps use ICT and media techniques rather **on awareness and good governance**

Results and Findings -cont

- Local NGOs (Safadi, RMF, ADR, Hariri foundation, ARCENCIEL..). provide Training and technical assistance to farmers through **workshops and seminars, newsletters and brochures, and field visits that are conducted to farms to offer specific recommendations.**
- CCIA in particular are providing market information through their **websites, emails and newsletters**

Results and Findings -cont

- When respondents were asked about **ranking the methods of extension and dissemination** of information that they usually adopt in order of preference by farmers it was shown that one-on-one visits method came first, and the least preferred is the printed matters.
- And when asked about the **kind of information that farmers frequently ask for** it turned out to be those pertaining to pest and disease control, good agricultural practices and marketing of produce.

Results and Findings -cont

- **MOA** is actually delivering extension to farmers through its extension centers all over Lebanon. They adopt individual visits, group workshops and lecturing, on-farm demonstration in conjunction with project based activities. SMS was introduced with grape growers only in Bekaa area in collaboration with LARI.
- Networking is through consultative steering committees for project activities and thematic value chain committees (main crops and sectors)

Results and Findings -cont

- **Research** that is technology and knowledge generation in the field of agriculture is mandated by the national institution. They are often weak and lack integration with the farmers and rural communities' needs and conditions. They are conveying their research results to farmers through brochures and field days.

Results and Findings –Regional networks

- International organizations and foreign aid agencies play an important role in fostering and coaching regional networks and CoPs. A previous study (2005) conducted in MENA region, it was evident that networking for the purpose of learning takes on very different forms in the region. However, these activities are mainly conventional, combining meetings, conferences and the exchange of information through publications and newsletters. On the other hand, chatting and conferencing through websites remains limited.

Regional networks hosted by Lebanon national entities

- Among the regional networks hosted by Lebanon is **The Sustainable Livelihoods in Drylands CoP** that brings together professionals from across the MENA region to exchange know-how, build capacities and influence policy toward sustainable livelihoods in drylands. It is hosted by ESDU
- ESDU is also the seventh center of the Resource Centers on Urban Agriculture and Food Security (**RUAF**) network serving the MENA region.
- Of the Public research institutes, **IRI** hold a regional platform on agricultural industrial research for development of agricultural processing enterprises for MENA countries.

Challenges and Constraints Facing KM KS in Lebanon

- At the knowledge production level
- At the Knowledge sharing infrastructure and capacities
- At the cultural level
- At the cost and budget level
- Farmers perspective and accessibility
- [Table 1](#)

Farmers perspective

- New ICTs such as the Internet and computers are not directly used by many farmers. Internet is no replacement for traditional information sources for farmers. Farmers say if Extension continues to push the idea of streamlining information by simply putting it on the Web, many farmers are going to be without the valuable agricultural information they are looking for and need. *This is will really raises the issue of equity in reaching all enusers and especially small uneducated farmers.*

Conclusion and recommendations

- In Lebanon 4 aspects needs to carefully addressed:
- (i) strengthening knowledge-sharing and learning processes through training and capacity building;
- (ii) equipping Lebanon with a more supportive knowledge-sharing and learning infrastructure;
- (iii) fostering partnerships for broader knowledge-sharing and learning;
- and (iv) promoting a supportive knowledge-sharing and learning culture.

Conclusion and recommendations - Cont

- **Public extension systems – MOA** need to assume the role of quality of extension delivery services and need to transform to make effective use of new ICTs but to consider it as a mean and not as an end. On the other hand, **LARI** need to assume, in collaboration with all players, the role of knowledge identification knowledge creation and quality assurance of knowledge.
- **Dedicated leadership and direction**, are critical factors to its success as “Evidence has shown that KS methods (mainly CoPs) are most active and dynamic when there is an expressed need for their existence by the members themselves.

Conclusion and recommendations - Cont

- Finally, it is recommended to have a national workshop to explore the way forward.