

Strengthening Human Resources for Effective Agricultural Extension Delivery



By

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Background

- The Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) realized that front line extension agents were ill-equipped to effectively and efficiently work with African smallholder farmers.
- It thus became imperative to upgrade their knowledge, technical and human leadership skills.
- Sasakawa Africa Fund for Extension Education (SAFE) was therefore established in 1991 to address this crucial issue of human capital development.

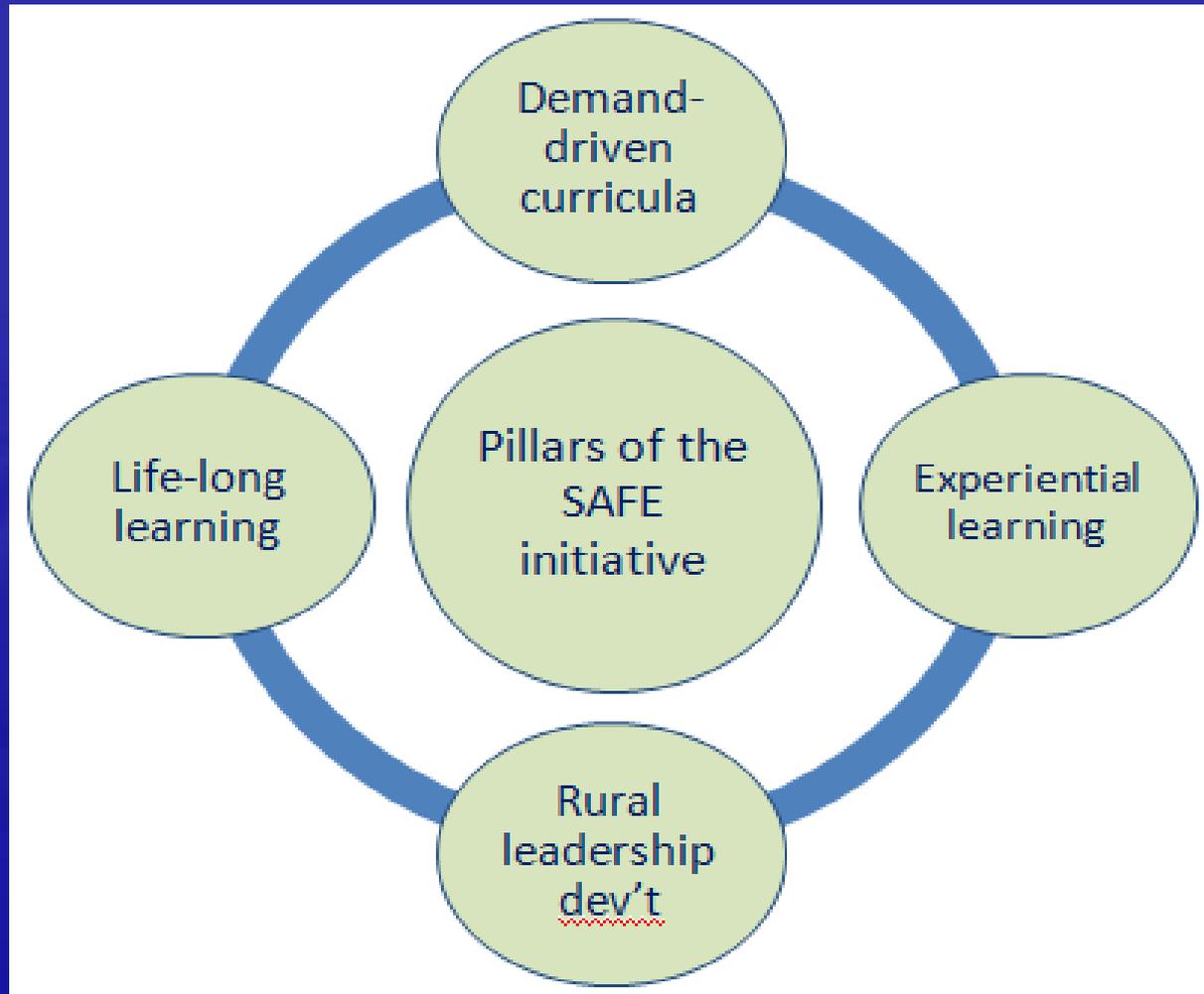
Background...Cont'd

- The initial plan was to grant individual scholarships.
- Plan changed into institutional capacity building of universities and colleges (a cost-effective & more sustainable way of addressing the issue).
- An increased number of mid-career staff can thus receive quality extension education at local universities/colleges.
- The SAFE programs are implemented in partnership with Winrock International (USA).

Background...Cont'd

- **Mission:** To promote more effective, demand-driven agricultural and rural development advisory services through appropriate training of mid-career advisory staff.
- **Vision:** Effective extension delivery systems in sub-Saharan Africa that are based on farmer's needs and demands along the entire agricultural value chain, with a special focus on poor and marginalized farmers, most of whom are women.

Pillars of the SAFE Initiative



Curriculum

- The curriculum development process is participatory.
- All stakeholders are involved in the process.
- Curriculum is streamlined to focus on the needs identified.
- Curriculum is demand-driven and value chain oriented.

Partnership Arrangements

- The SAFE programs are designed to run as partnerships between employers (Ministries of Agriculture, NGOs, Private Sector...) and Universities/Colleges.
- A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is established between employers and universities/colleges.

Partnership Arrangements...Cont'd

➤ Employers agree to:

- ❖ Identify and send candidates to the program;
- ❖ Grant them study leave with full salary;
- ❖ Pay fees as determined by the university;
- ❖ Support students during their practical field projects;
- ❖ Participate in curriculum review/revision;
- ❖ Re-engage the staff upon completion of their studies.

Partnership Arrangements...Cont'd

➤ Universities/Colleges agree to:

- ❖ Select candidates from those identified by the employers;
- ❖ Provide competent academic staff;
- ❖ Provide facilitation for academic staff to conduct field supervision of students;
- ❖ Provide accommodation for the trainees at normal fees.

Key Features of the SAFE Programs

- The programs admit candidates who possess certificates and diplomas in agriculture or related fields.
- A minimum of 3-5 years of field experience is required.
- The programs emphasize experiential learning (combination of theory, experience, critical reflection and practice).

Key features...Cont'd

- The SAFE initiative places great emphasis on the off-campus, farmer-focused Supervised Enterprise Projects (SEPs) component of the training program.
- Students identify problems & develop proposals; employers assess the relevance and the importance of the projects.



Key features...Cont'd

- After a period of training on the university campus, students undertake 6-8 month off-campus Supervised Enterprise Projects (SEPs).



Lecturers in Ethiopian universities conducting SEPs field supervision

Key features...Cont'd

- The SEPs provide unique opportunities for academic staff to assess the relevance and the effectiveness of their teaching.
- The SEPs bring the university closer to the farmers and issues pertaining to the farming sector.
- The SEPs make the SAFE programs different from other academic programs.

Achievements/Impacts

- The 1st SAFE program was launched in 1993 at the University of Cape Coast (UCC), Ghana.
- So far, it had spread to 21 universities and 2 colleges in 9 countries in Africa.



Achievements/Impacts ..Cont'd

- More than 4,200 extension staff have graduated.
- They constitute the pool of true change agents with improved performance.
- They are playing strategic leadership roles in the extension systems of their respective countries.

Students	Male	Female	Total
Graduates	3,367	875	4,242
Current	958	310	1,268
Total	4,325	1,185	5,510

Achievements/Impacts ..Cont'd

- At farmer's level, the SEPs have positively impacted on:
 - ❖ Access to technologies (better access)
 - ❖ Productivity (increased productivity)
 - ❖ Farm families' livelihood (increased income).
- The SAFE model has also positively impacted on faculty and university activities with respect to teaching-learning process.

Lessons learned

- The SAFE program has demonstrated that:
 - ❖ Employers can influence the design of the curricula.
 - ❖ Universities/Colleges can respond to well articulated needs.
 - ❖ Field experience can enrich curricula & teaching.
 - ❖ Effective and close collaboration between universities and stakeholders is a condition for success and impact.

Challenges

- **Low female Intake** (The average annual female intake is 22%).
- **Hard to set up** distance education & e-Learning due to inadequate facilities.
- **Inadequate needed resources** to scale up the model beyond the current 9 countries.

Conclusion

- The SAFE program is a well established formal training program for mid-career agricultural and rural development extension agents.
- The program is well accepted by all stakeholders.
- There is huge demand from many countries.
- There is a need to secure resources to scale up the model beyond the current 9 countries.
- Our website is: www.safe-africa.org

Thank You