MATERIALES DE ENSEÑANZA EN

# EXTENSION



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# BASIC TRAINING FOR EXTENSIONISTS AND AGRICULTURAL LEADERS

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# BASIC TRAINING FOR EXTENSIONISTS AND AGRICULTURAL LEADERS

Joseph Di Franco

It is quite evident that the success of extension work in many countries of the world is limited due to lack of sufficiently trained individuals. The number of qualified persons (1) is below the number needed to do an effective job; (2) limits the total effectiveness of the efforts of those assigned to do extension. This is true at all levels: field workers, supervisors, regional and national administrators.

In all developing nations there is a great gap between the amount of trained talent needed to support development efforts and the number of trained nationals available. There are many activities being employed to diminish this gap but so far most of them fall short. In-service training courses, international short courses and conferences, bi-lateral exchange schemes and special foreign tours are some of the ways training is being provided. Another procedure used is the importation of experts from international organizations and from developed countries. Gradually, some of the national educational institutions are improving and expanding their offerings, to turn out better qualified individuals and more trained talent.

In extension the very nature of the job calls for special training and skills. The basic training required for extensionists is being recognized more and more as basic for other development

efforts, i.e. land reform programs, agricultural credit schemes, salesmen for agricultural products concerns (fertilizer, insecticides, agricultural implements), agricultural marketing organizations and cooperatives of all kinds. In a developing nation all of these programs and supporting organizations are growing at the same rate as the extension services. They compete for the limited supply of available agriculturally trained talent. The total demand for trained talent continues greater than the supply.

Since this is evident, it would seem logical that we explore further the basic units of training that are essential for extension. And if this is desirable for the other needs, we should attempt to broaden and expand these basic units for all agricultural graduates. Not only should we train individuals for extension staff, but accept the fact that once trained many will be lured away by government, industry, commerce and service organizations. To meet the countries' needs we must find ways to train many more individuals. We should not concern ourselves with which specific job he will handle but train him so that he qualifies to support all development programs.

The basic training for extension personnel should include:

1. Fundamental training in agricultural technology.
2. Fundamental training in social science.

In almost all agricultural faculties in the past the social sciences area has not been given much attention. The emphasis has been on the training of agricultural technology. Only in recent years has there grown an awareness and interest in the social sciences.

In the social sciences agricultural institutions need individuals who have a basic understanding of the following areas:

1. Fundamentals of education
2. Fundamentals of rural sociology
3. Educational psychology
4. Cultural anthropology
5. Agricultural economics

These include:

1. Education

   Methods
   Communication
   Philosophy
   Learning process

2. Rural Sociology

   Group patterns
   Group and individual relationships
   Leaderships

3. Educational Psychology

The physical structure of man (the senses)
Differences in individuals, age
Likes and dislikes
Personality

4. Cultural Anthropology

Cultural differences
Habits, customs
Religion, governments
Movements of people

5. Agricultural Economics

Labor and capital
Markets, cooperatives
Agricultural administration
Statistics

These are the units that should be given specific attention. They must be included in training agricultrual leaders; those individuals who must plan, execute, evaluate and train others for national institutional programs and organizations. In this group is included political leaders, social leaders, agricultural institutional administrators, agricultural teachers and university professors. Not only is it necessary to train enough of these individuals as leaders for development, but to create a national atmosphere that results in (1) better understanding of what the total development effort is and how to do the job, and (2) a better relationship and understanding between the organizations and institutions assigned to do the development jobs, in a nation. Not until the political leaders understand the need to provide support

to the agricultural institutions and rural families, can development take place. Not until there is a common basis of understanding between the universities, the research stations, the government, private enterprises and agricultural workers at all levels, can there be progress.

Every effort must be made to train as large an agricultural "army" of trained talent as possible. The universities are the logical place to start. They must adjust their curricula to meet the challenge of modern day agriculture. Unless they act promptly they are not fulfilling their responsibilities: to provide the trained talent and leadership necessary to best utilize the human and natural resources available in promoting the interests of its people and the nation.

Agricultural technology is important, but it is only a part of the total picture. Of equal importance is how to put this knowledge to work. This calls for trained agricultural leaders who know modern agriculture, their country environment, their people, their relationships and how to plan, execute, administer and involve the total resources of materials and people to get the job done. The sooner trained talent in sufficient numbers can be provided, the sooner can progress be obtained. In fact, until this is done, very few real benefits can be expected in extension organizations, or any other development program or development institutions.

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