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Needs Assessment

Developing and Utilizing Needs Assessments to Enhance Farmer-Driven Extension Systems

by Robert Strong, Texas A&M University

Introduction: The module concentrates on addressing professional development needs of individuals involved with farmer-driven extension systems by developing competencies in conducting needs assessments. Extension workers serving farmers in developing countries need enhanced abilities in developing, disseminating, and evaluating educational programs. Developing an understanding of farmers' needs is the first step in planning educational programs targeted to specific farmers. Extension systems that fail to accurately assess farmers' needs will not be as successful in improving community sustainability as extension systems that do assess the needs of farmers. Improving the ability of extension systems to examine farmers' needs benefits farmers, communities, and assists extension systems in accomplishing their organizational goals.

Picture credit: Brent Simpson

The Training Manual, handouts, and presentations are attached below and can be easily downloaded.

We invite users to widely share the material. We would appreciate feedback on how it is being used and welcome suggestions for improvements.

See contact information at the left to contact us for training requests to be conducted by MEAS.

Target Audience: The module is targeted at (international) extension workers collaborating with or working directly in farmer-driven extension systems. The needs assessment module is action oriented and developed for adult learners.

Curriculum Overview: Many organizations, institutions, or agencies conduct needs assessments to understand how they can serve farmers more effectively. Results from needs assessments may allow for organizations to set priorities when developing educational programs, allow the organization improve its credibility among farmers it serves, and provide farmers a sense of ownership in the teaching and learning process. This module is developed over a four day training in order for participants to be knowledgeable about how priority areas are defined, and what typical issues or problems that require educational programs. The main objective of a needs assessment is to gather information for setting priorities on needs of farmers. Data from needs assessments are used to set criteria for allocating resources and for developing new or improved programs or services to meet farmers' needs. Case studies, handouts, group discussions, presentations, experiential and collaborative learning, lectures, and individual reflections are employed to teach this module. An evaluation is provided at the conclusion of each section within the module. Participants will develop each needs assessment technique addressed in this module by the conclusion of the fourth day and be able to implement that technique in their respective community.

Program Objectives: Upon completion of the module, participants will be able to:

* Define Needs Assessment
* Understand the Benefits of Conducting a Needs Assessment
* Develop an Awareness of the Role of Needs Assessments in Program Planning
* Utilize a Borich Needs Assessment to Direct Programming Efforts
* Define Target Populations
* Identify Target Populations
* Utilize Target Populations as Focus Groups

- Understand the Objectives of Advisory Committees
- Characteristics of Advisory Committees
- Develop Effective Advisory Committees
- Develop an Understanding of the Four Steps in a Nominal Group Technique
- Identify Strengths of a Nominal Group Technique
- Develop an Understanding of Components of an Audience Analysis
- Understand Audience Analysis Techniques to Identify Needs
- Develop an Understanding of Methods to Acquire Information
- Identify How to Interpret Quantitative and Qualitative Needs Assessment Data
- Utilize Findings to Strengthen Agricultural Production and Marketing
- Communicate Findings with Stakeholders to Develop Industry Alliances
- Develop an Awareness of the Advantages of a SWOT Analysis
- Identify the SWOT of Farmer-Driven or Market-Led Extension Systems
- Produce a Successful SWOT Analysis to Facilitate Trade and Enhance Family Assets
- Identify the Components of a Participatory Rural Appraisal
- Develop an Understanding of Utilizing a Participatory Rural Appraisal to Improve Farmer-Driven Extension Systems

Instructional Procedures

- Involve participants and challenge their critical thinking in each activity
- Relate information to everyday challenges in a Farmer-Driven Extension System
- Relates to prior knowledge of working with farmers and stakeholders
- The instructor should incorporate discussions, lecture, individual and group work.
- Participants will actively and collaboratively acquire objectives through interacting with the content, other participants, and the instructor.

Note: This training material was used in June 2012 in **Timor L'Este** *(click for more info)*

📁 **Day 1**

☐	W	MEASTrainingManualonNeedsAssessment-Strong-Oct2011.docx View Download	Microsoft Word version of the Training Manual. Best for those who which to use parts of the manual or do make modifications to the course.	258k	v. 3	Oct 27, 2011, 7:39 AM	Andrea Bohn
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📁 **Day 2**

☐	P	Presentation2.90NominalGroupTechniqueasaNeedsAssessmentTool.pptx View Download		142k	v. 3	Oct 27, 2011, 7:40 AM	Andrea Bohn
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📁 **Day 3**

☐	📕	Day3_SWOTAnalysisofHorticulturalFarmsinBulgaria.pdf View Download		94k	v. 3	Oct 27, 2011, 7:40 AM	Andrea Bohn
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		Day3_SWOTAnalysisWorking Group.pdf View Download	14k	v. 3	Oct 27, 2011, 7:40 AM	Andrea Bohn
		Presentation3.90UtilizingSWO TAnalysisasaNeedsAssessme ntTool.pptx View Download	546k	v. 3	Oct 27, 2011, 7:40 AM	Andrea Bohn

📁 **Day 4**

		Presentation4.90RapidRuralA ppraisalstoGatherNeeds.pptx View Download	141k	v. 3	Oct 27, 2011, 7:40 AM	Andrea Bohn
		Presentation4.91PRAtoGathe rNeeds.pptx View Download	178k	v. 3	Oct 27, 2011, 7:40 AM	Andrea Bohn

📁 **Handouts**

		NeedsAssessmentforFarmers HealthandSafety.pdf View Download	403k	v. 3	Oct 27, 2011, 7:40 AM	Andrea Bohn
		NeedsAssessmentforHorticult ure.pdf View Download	129k	v. 3	Oct 27, 2011, 7:40 AM	Andrea Bohn
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		NeedsAssessmentforSeeds.p df View Download	264k	v. 3	Oct 27, 2011, 7:40 AM	Andrea Bohn
		NeedsAssessmenttoBuildthe CapacityofAgriculturalFacilitat orsandFarmersinGhana.pdf View Download	123k	v. 3	Oct 27, 2011, 7:40 AM	Andrea Bohn

Subpages (1):   Report for the Needs Assessment and Participatory Evaluation Skills Training

Comments

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Andrea Bohn   Oct 27, 2011 • Comments off

This Needs Assessment module has been tested and utilized with extension systems in the Caribbean Region. Those extension systems are directly affiliated with the local Ministry of Agriculture or a specific university. Extension workers in the Caribbean Region have little formal education and training or professional development opportunities. The Needs Assessment module has offered Ministries of Agriculture or a university's managing extension systems curriculum and techniques to assess farmers' needs in order to better assist in developing educational programs. The Needs Assessment module was developed to be functional and applicable to farmer-driven extension systems.

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