Workshop 1.1: Innovation and change facilitation for rural development – Conceptual issues
Convenors: Artur Cristóvão and Alex Koutsouris

Rethinking communication in innovation processes: creating space for change in complex systems
Cees Leeuwis and Noelle Aarts
Communication and Innovation Studies Group, Wageningen University, The Netherlands

In innovation studies, communication received explicit attention in the context of studies on the adoption and diffusion of innovation that dominated the field in the 1940-1970 period. Since then, our theoretical understanding of both innovation and communication has changed markedly. However, a systematic rethinking of the role of communication in innovation processes is largely lacking. This article reconceptualises the role of everyday communication and communicative intervention in innovation processes, and discusses practical implications. It is argued that we need to broaden our perspective on the types of (communicatively supported) intermediation that an innovation process includes and requires.

Social capital and entrepreneurial behaviour advancing innovativeness in interaction between small rural entrepreneurs and researchers – Phenomenographic study
Paula Kyrö, Sari livonen, Sinikka Mynttinen, Marjo Särkkä-Tirkkonen and Helena Kahiluoto
Ruralia Institute, University of Helsinki, Finland

Innovation processes are activated by interactions and depends on player’s ability to cooperate and interact. In this study we adopt a theoretical approach that combines social capital and entrepreneurial behaviour in order to understand better how entrepreneurs behave and what their expectations of cooperation with researchers are. As a result of interviews with 15 food production entrepreneurs a system of categories was compiled as phenomenographic method assumes. Our results show that the key dynamics of the cooperation between entrepreneurs and researchers is embedded in shared understanding of entrepreneurial behaviour and trust-building. Both themes should be considered in research cooperation.

The emergence of the intra-rural digital divide: A critical review of the adoption of ICTs in rural areas and the farming community
Alex Koutsouris
Agricultural University of Athens, Greece

The impact of ICTs on (rural) development is a much contested issue, with the ‘digital divide’ been highlighted as one of the most visible components of the current development divide. In the present paper, based on a review of the available international literature, especially on research in Greece, it is argued that an intra-rural digital divide emerges which, in turn, may be detrimental to human development, and thus to sustainable rural development. It is therefore maintained that the dominant, ‘supply-driven’ policy approach needs to be reversed, utilizing participatory experiences from the fields of sustainable rural development and rural extension.

Farmers manipulating the elite: Right, wrong, reasonable?
Adalbertus Kamanzi
University of Dodoma, Tanzania

With the liberalisation of the economic and political structures, Tanzania experienced an outbreak of complex amalgamations, among which the farmers’ organisations. With these organisations, however, farmers are faced with a siphoning system from their representatives. Nonetheless, farmers, as active agents, are able to engage in organising practices to busy these representatives in making use of the available opportunities in the organisations. The phenomenon of organising practices raises an ethical question as to how justifiable they are. The response suggests going beyond the right and/or wrong dichotomy to reasonableness.

The governance or rural regional learning and innovation - Towards an analytical, reflexive research framework
Wiebke Wellbrock, Dirk Roep and Johannes C. Wiskerke
Rural Sociology Group, Wageningen University, The Netherlands

Knowledge economies have been studied as (regional) cooperation and clustering of high-tech, knowledge intensive businesses around academic research centres (learning regions). This constellation does not suffice to account for the high diversity of Europe’s rural economies. We extend the regional learning concept to the field of developing predominantly rural areas and present a revised framework that considers the specific issues, various actors and diverse public policies associated with rural regional development. First empirical results will be presented, suggesting that the quality of operational interfaces and the founding (institutional) arrangements are decisive for the success of rural regional learning strategies.
Workshop 1.1: Innovation and change facilitation for rural development – Knowledge systems and change agents

Convenors: Artur Cristóvão and Alex Koutsouris

Does sustainability require new skills for change agents in agriculture?

Marianne Cerf, Marie Guillot and P. Olry, UR SenS, INRA, France

We carried on a constructive and action-training approach amongst advisers of two extension agencies. We analysed their diverse ways of understanding their role as change agents as well as their ways to perform it. On the basis of this field work, we argue that change agents have to develop skills which enable them to support farmers, as individuals or as collectives, in building both the vision of the future for agriculture and the means to achieve it at a practical level. Nevertheless, they perform their role differently according to their way of seeing how change can be achieved at farmers and farm level.

From collaborative heroes to collaboration as a culture: The importance of internal collaborative skills for sustained collective action

Jenny Höckert, Magnus Ljung and Nadarajah Sriskandarajah, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

This paper presents the case of three extension organisations in Sweden. It then analyses the constraints facing farm advisors and their organisations when attempting to work collaboratively. One main reason why farm production advisors do not become active in the sphere of business and rural development is that they and their organisations lack a collaborative culture. We conclude that for organisations to be trustworthy partners for external collaboration and to be able to initiate processes of collective action for sustainable agricultural and regional development, they must first build up a well-functioning collaboration on individual, team-based and organisational level.

Building knowledge systems for sustainable agriculture: Supporting private advisors to adequately address sustainable farm management in regular service contacts

Laurens Klerkx and Jolanda Jansen, Communication and Innovation Studies, Wageningen University, The Netherlands

Advisory service provisioning on sustainability issues is considered suboptimal in privatised agricultural extension systems. Hence policy measures have been proposed to stimulate farmer demand for such sustainable farm management (SFM) advice and build capacity amongst private advisors to proactively address SFM. We assess these measures and conclude that awareness building is a prerequisite to create demand for SFM advice and appears more important than economic incentives. However, a lack of awareness may not be the main problem: the broader institutional context may not be conducive to a proactive approach to addressing sustainable farm management if regulatory frameworks are unclear.

Identifying a new role for agricultural extension to provide service to small food industries in rural areas of Iran

Shohreh Soltani, S. Jamal F. Hosseini, Mohamad Chizari and S. Mehdig Mirdamadi, Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Iran

To investigate the new role for agricultural extension in providing services to small food industries (SFI) in rural areas, 60 SFIs were selected and 111 managers were interviewed. The AIS framework was used to identify ways to improve linkages between extension services and SFIs. The findings show that lack of consultation in addition to special constrains in rural areas and in small businesses makes competition difficult for managers. As a result 40% of manufacturers are currently not active. Managers would welcome the opportunity to exchange their experiences through extension services.

In search of structural innovations in the Dutch green knowledge system

Eelke Wielinga, Marijke Dijkstra and Jifke Sol, Agricultural Economic Institute, Wageningen University, Netherlands

The paper reports about an ongoing research, investigating structural barriers that hamper the innovative capacity of the Green Knowledge System in The Netherlands. Innovation is supposed to benefit from co-creative networks of knowledge workers and practitioners. The research team interviewed successful change agents of such processes, and proceeded by asking opinions of managers in research and education about room for change. As a theoretical framework for the research the Triangle of Change was used, focussing on ambition and energy, rather than objectives and interests. The modified model offers perspectives for strategic action, taking the initiative as a starting point.
Workshop 1.1: **Innovation and change facilitation for rural development – Social capital, participation and empowerment**

**Convenors:** Artur Cristóvão and Alex Koutsouris

---

### Equity, power games and legitimacy: dilemmas of participatory learning processes

**Cécile Barnaud** and Annemarie Van Paassen

UPR GREEN, CIRAD, France

CU-CIRAD ComMod Project, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

Participatory approaches are widely used in rural development and natural resource management. But lessons from the past tell us that more efforts need to be done to achieve equitable impacts. Now the question is how to address the issues of power asymmetries and social inequities in participatory processes? Based on a field experiment of a learning and negotiation process between two communities and a national park in northern Thailand, this study tests the potential and limits of a critical companion posture which recognizes the necessity to take into account local power asymmetries to avoid the risk of increasing initial inequities.

---

### From agriculture to rural development: the case of saffron (*Crocus Sativus*) in Umbria (Italy)

**Fabio M. Santucci**

Faculty of Agriculture, University of Perugia, Italy

On- and off-farm diversifications are relevant keywords for EU rural development policy. Quality, novelties, typical products are mentioned as strategies for survival and development. But who builds the novelty? How is a novelty launched with a bottom-up approach? How can farmers and economic operators join their forces to drive out of stagnation? This 2005 study, updated in 2009, describes the case of saffron, totally abandoned some centuries ago and now rediscovered by groups of producers in two areas of Umbria. Their experiences, human relationships and institutional involvements are described, and guidelines for similar cases are proposed.

---

### Farmer field schools and farmers’ empowerment in Mozambique

**César Dzecho, Castilho Amilai** and Artur Cristóvão

Faculty of Agronomy and Forestry Sciences, Maputo, Mozambique

Empowerment is a key element of popular participation in rural development projects. In this sense, it is crucial to know the different approaches and methodologies with the potential to generate empowerment. This paper presents the results of a study done in the district of Boane, Mozambique, with the objective of evaluating the impact of the Farm Field Schools (FFS) approach (in Mozambique called “Escolas na Machamba do Camponê”) in terms of farmer and community empowerment. To collect the data we used semi-structured interviews with both farmers and extension agents involved in the FFS activities.

---

### Going uphill: Laying stepping stones for family farmers’ capacities to connect, voice and be heard in large-scale irrigation schemes of Morocco

**Nicolas Fayssse, Mostafa Erraham, Marcel Kuper and Catherine Dumora**

CIRAD, G-EAU Research Unit, Ecole Nationale d’Agriculture de Meknès, Morocco

Family farmers in developing countries increasingly need to voice their stakes in negotiation arenas. The paper presents a praxis that aims to enhance family farmers’ capacities to connect, voice and be heard in large-scale irrigation schemes of Morocco, where farmers are weakly associated with decision-making processes. Local collective action experiences were made more visible, national research capacities were reinforced and networking between local farmer organizations was supported. While outcomes take mostly place on the long term, such “uphill” actions appear as a promising pathway to trigger changes in farmers’ capacities to innovate and interact with the organizations they deal with.

---

### Strengthening social capital with excluded rural populations in Portugal

**Timothy Koehnen, Alberto Baptista, Vilma Silva and José Brás**

Centre for Transdisciplinary Studies, University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (UTAD), Portugal

A funded study evaluated training courses in low-density rural areas within Portugal. This paper will focus on the changes in the lives (empowerment) of these participants as a result of the training courses. Some of the training program objectives were concerned with improving social and employment skills and the venture within entrepreneurial preparation. The discussion will also address social capital and empowerment to emphasize a pro-poor non-formal educational strategy for excluded rural populations and the implications. The paper will also present the educational initiatives in some training courses that strengthened social, employment and entrepreneurial skills.
Workshop 1.1: **Innovation and change facilitation for rural development – Collective action and collaborative learning**

**Convenors:** Artur Cristóvão and Alex Koutsouris

**Social learning in a multi-actor innovation context**

*Pieter J. Beers, Jifke Sol, and Arjen Wals*

Wageningen University, The Netherlands

Social learning is the process in which actors share and confront their knowledge and perspectives to produce innovative solutions. We introduce a new research framework for social learning, to derive ways to facilitate social learning. We report on an explorative interview study to substantiate the framework. One interesting conclusion was that hidden agendas were shown to undermine trust, which in turn undermined the social learning process. This explains the importance of openness for social learning. Our results substantiate the research framework, and show that it can be used to derive methods to facilitate social learning.

**Collective action for effective environmental management and social learning in Wales**

*Jane Mills, David Gibbon, Julie Ingram, Matt Reed, Chris Short and Janet Dwyer*

Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI), UK

Collective agri-environment schemes (AES) are one mechanism for achieving landscape-scale land management, but such schemes are in the early stages of development in UK and uncertainty exists as to their appropriate design and delivery. This paper provides in-depth analysis of three existing farmer cooperatives in Wales and using the theory of collective action explores ways in which AES could be used to encourage and enhance the success of co-operative groups in delivering landscape-scale resource management. It concludes that improving the farming community’s capacity to co-operate will help to advance social and rural development objectives, alongside environmental ones.

**Institutions for collective action among settled Fulani agro-pastoralists in southwest Nigeria**

*Eniola Fabusoro and Ibironke Sodiya*

University of Tokyo, Japan

The study identifies two institutions for organizing collective action among settled Fulani agro-pastoralists. The justification is that local institutions are the foundation by which local society organizes itself. Four Fulani communities were selected purposively in Ekiti State, Nigeria and data were collected from 55 settled pastoralists. The institutions are the Fulani traditional council (FTC) and the local herders’ association (MACBAN), negotiating with host communities for land accessibility. The confluence of their activities gives birth to collective action and effective negotiation with host communities. The institutions will become more relevant to socioeconomic development of Fulani communities if their activities are coordinated towards policy negotiation.

**Enabling collaborative learning: Lessons from group-based extension in Vietnam’s smallholder pig husbandry**

*Iven Schad, Regina Roessler, Andreas Neef and Volker Hoffmann*

Chair of Agricultural Communication and Extension, University of Hohenheim, Germany

Group extension is an efficient option for diffusion of innovation in agriculture and opens spaces for participation to the marginalized. In Vietnam, a profound reform during the past two decades encouraged development of a well-organized extension system and supported new approaches to extension, but is at the same time slow in out-scaling. Accordingly, this research analyses five current extension groups in the pig sector and looks at constraining and enabling factors. This is done by exploring stakeholder perceptions through applying ethnographic research methods. We find that delineation of social processes from technical procedures are key to sustaining and scaling-out group-approaches.
Workshop 1.1: **Innovation and change facilitation for rural development** – Communities of Practice and ICT

**Convenors:** Artur Cristóvão and Alex Koutsouris

---

**Communities of practice and social learning in associations of organic farmers in Wales**

*Selwyn Morgan*

School of City and Regional Planning, Cardiff University, UK

This paper applies a Communities of Practice (CoP) approach to social learning processes among farmers, and considers how, or whether, this approach may be useful for extension services. The approach is applied to conventional family farmers who have converted to organic farming, and to farmer associations differentiated in terms of their structure, aims, and objectives. The paper also illustrates how the CoP approach may help to categorise organic farmers based on the CoP concept of Joint Enterprise. Extension may be facilitated by regarding farmers as de-facto members of communities of practice and by understanding how these communities form and develop.

---

**Communities of practice as a learning theoretical perspective on developing new water environmental planning processes in a Danish context**

*Mads Lægsgaard Madsen*

and Egon Noe

Department of Agroecology and Environment, Aarhus University, Denmark

A Danish water environmental planning project aimed to develop new motivations for farmers to change their agricultural practices. The dualistic learning theoretical presumption was that knowledge would lead farmers to more environmentally friendly practices, but the project could not prove that. The theory of Communities of Practice suggests an alternative strategy to create change in agricultural practice. Learning incorporates a broader definition of practice integrating social networks and negotiations in a learning theoretical whole. This perspective can help create efficient learning processes that provide possibilities to create new identities for farmers in the communities of practice around a farm.

---

**Building capacity in collective action: learning from dairy industry workforce planning and action in Australia**

*Ruth Nettle*, Pauline Brightling

and Jim Williamson

University of Melbourne, Australia

Facilitating change as part of rural development is increasingly about aligning the action of diverse groups of interests, knowledge-types and practices. The emergence of joint activity to support the entry and retention of dairy farm workers in an Australian context is described and principles and processes of collective action defined. Ethical concerns appear to motivate a particular type of collective action that enhances social capital as well as the quality of action. The capacity of mediating organizations to lead, design and support ethical collective action is central, but remains largely unrecognised and unsupported in rural development.

---

**Internet development as a change driver in rural areas: Potentials and pitfalls**

*Anastasios Michailidis,*

*Maria Partalidou* and

Afroditi Papadaki-Klvdianou

Dept. of Agricultural Economics, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

This paper examines data for the rural Greece concerning the internet subscription and internet access of households, farms and firms. In addition it examines the potentials and pitfalls of internet development and explores the factors that influence patterns of internet subscription. The paper also presents data on aspects of digital infrastructure, including points of internet presence, internet service providers and digital subscriber lines, which suggest that there are major shortcomings in most Greek rural communities. Results showed significant relation between internet development and several desirable changes: communication improvement, rural system, increased productivity, social, increase of home-based rural businesses and recreation.
Workshop 1.1: **Innovation and change facilitation for rural development** – Comments of the panel on workshop papers and open discussion

**Convenors:** Artur Cristóvão and Alex Koutsouris

**Innovation and change facilitation for rural development**

**Artur Cristóvão**  
Centre for Transdisciplinary Studies, University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (UTAD), Portugal

**Alex Koutsouris**  
Agricultural University of Athens, Greece

**Cees Leeuwis**  
Communication and Innovation Studies Group, Wageningen University, The Netherland

**Marianne Cerf**  
UR 1326 SenS, INRA, France

**Ruth Nettle**  
Rural Innovation Research Group, Melbourne School of Land and Environment, University of Melbourne, Australia

This Workshop continues the debates held in Clemont Ferrand (IFSA 2008), in the Workshop on “Knowledge Systems and Extension Approaches”. Four major topics are addressed: knowledge systems configurations and roles of change agents; social capital, participation and empowerment; collective action and collaborative learning; communities of practice and communication technologies.

Some of the key questions the pannelists will discuss are: What are the theories and concepts relevant to analyze innovation and change processes in the context of rural development? Which organizational forms (networks, partnerships, CoP, etc.), methods (soft systems, participatory action research, strategic communication, etc.) and tools (NICT, etc.) have been used to promote collective action and collaborative learning? What are the constraints to collective action and collaborative learning? What are the results obtained in different situations? What are some of the critical research issues?