

# 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.

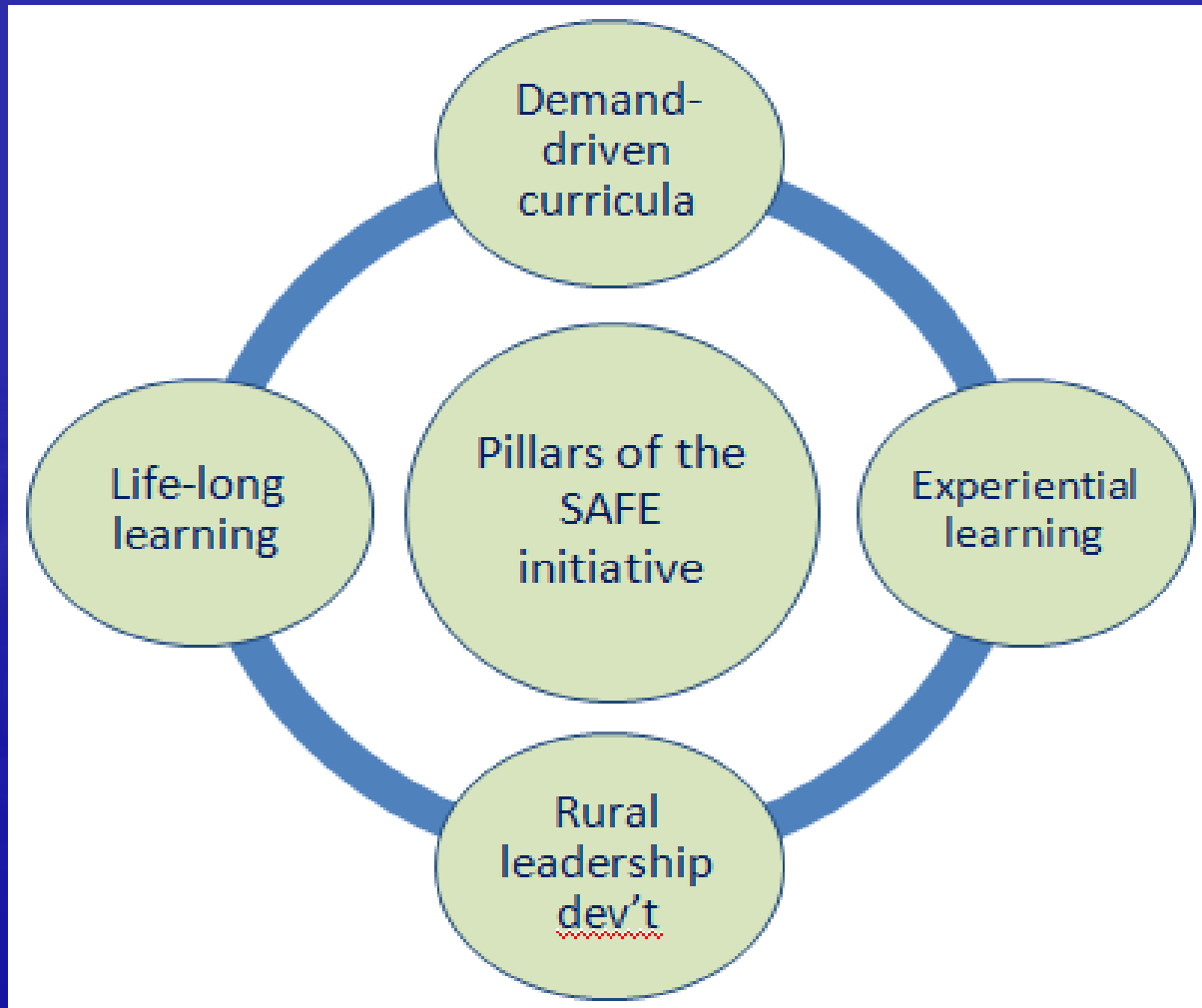
# Background...Cont'd

- 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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
<b>Graduates</b>	3,367	875	4,242
<b>Current</b>	958	310	1,268
<b>Total</b>	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](http://www.safe-africa.org)

Thank You