



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE AND PRACTICES OF PROGRAMME
DEVELOPMENT STEPS AND PRINCIPLES BY EXTENSION
SUPERVISORS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
MALAYSIA**

WAN HANISAH BT. WAN ISMAIL

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By

WAN HANISAH BT. WAN ISMAIL

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By

WAN HANISAH BT WAN ISMAIL

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Chairman: Associate Professor Dato' Mohd Nasir
Ismail, Ph.D

Faculty : Centre for Extension and Continuing
Education.

Enormous efforts have been made by the government to improve local extension services. However, weaknesses and discrepancies in extension services relating to programme development are still being voiced out. This study was an attempt to determine the importance and frequency of practice in the field, of the steps and principles of programme development in the field as perceived by extension supervisors in the Department of Agriculture. Another objective of the study was to identify



the constraints faced by the extension supervisors, who are graduates of the Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, in their effort to carry out the programming steps and principles as being taught in the University.

The respondents were 14 Agriculture Officers and 50 Assistant Agriculture Officers from three state Departments of Agriculture in Peninsular Malaysia. Questionnaire schedules were used for data collection. Follow-up group interviews were also conducted with selected respondents.

The analysis of data revealed that all except two of the eight programming steps (analysis of the situation and preparation of the programme document) taught in the University were perceived as important in programme development. However, none of those steps were reported to be frequently practised in the field. Similarly, five of the principles of programme development tested (except Cooperation and coordination) were perceived as important, but none had been consistently emphasised by the extension supervisors during the process of extension programme development.

The extension supervisors faced constraints with three of the eight programming steps. The



biggest constraints were with evaluation and accountability. The most frequently mentioned constraints were, problems related to clients who were part-time farmers; lack of time due to work over-load on the part of the extension supervisors; lack of adequate knowledge and skills in extension programme development; lack of up-to-date information about the clients; insufficient funds; low cooperation among extension officers; environmental situations; political influence and low interagency cooperation.

Several recommendations were suggested to improve the programme development practices in the DOA. These include strengthening the pre-service and in-service training by the DOA and UPM, reviewing the teaching approach by these two institutions, training local leaders in programme development, making early provisions for cooperation and coordination with other agencies, and providing clear statements of roles of those involved in programme development. It was also recommended that the extension supervisors be relieved from most administrative duties so as to enable them to give more concentration on extension activities. Lastly, a follow-up study using the qualitative approach was



proposed to determine an indepth picture of the status of programme development practices and constraints faced which resulted in their low level of practice in the field.



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**PERSEPSI PENYELIA PENGEMBANGAN TERHADAP KEPENTINGAN
DAN AMALAN PEMBENTUKAN PROGRAM PENGEMBANGAN
DI JABATAN PERTANIAN, MALAYSIA**

Oleh

WAN HANISAH BT. WAN ISMAIL

JANUARI 1993

Pengerusi: Prof.Madya Dato' Mohd. Nasir Ismail,Ph.D

Fakulti: Pusat Pengembangan dan Pendidikan Lanjutan

Kelemahan-kelemahan di dalam khidmat pengembangan tempatan yang menjurus kepada amalan pembentukan program, masih banyak dipersoalkan walaupun banyak usaha telah diambil oleh kerajaan untuk memperbaikinya. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk memberi penumpuan terhadap amalan pembentukan program pengembangan di kalangan penyelia-penyelia pengembangan dalam Jabatan Pertanian.

Kajian ini merupakan satu percubaan untuk menentukan persepsi penyelia-penyelia pengembangan terhadap kepentingan dan kekerapan terima pakai langkah-langkah dan prinsip pembentukan program. Masalah-masalah yang dihadapi oleh penyelia



pengembangan berkaitan penerimaan pakai langkah-langkah serta prinsip pembentukan program pengembangan yang di ajar di Universiti Pertanian Malaysia juga cuba dikenal pasti.

Kajian ini melibatkan 64 orang responden yang terdiri daripada Pegawai Pertanian dan Penolong Pegawai Pertanian di tiga Jabatan Pertanian negeri di Semenanjung Malaysia. Borang soal-selidik telah digunakan sebagai alat mengumpul data. Ini disampaikan sendiri oleh penyelidik kepada responden. Temubual berkumpulan dengan responden terpilih juga diadakan untuk menyokong data daripada borang soal-selidik.

Analisis data menunjukkan bahawa sebahagian besar langkah-langkah pembentukan program dianggap penting oleh penyelia pengembangan. Hanya dua sahaja dianggap sederhana penting, ia itu analisis situasi dan pembentukan dokumen program. Walau bagaimana pun kelapan-lapan langkah pembentukan program tidak diamalkan secara berterusan. Lima daripada enam prinsip pembentukan program yang dikaji dianggap penting oleh responden. Kerjasama dan koordinasi dianggap sederhana penting sahaja di dalam pembentukan program . Namun begitu, keenam-enam prinsip tersebut didapati tidak diberi penekanan



sapenuhnya oleh penyelia pengembangan semasa pembentukan program pengembangan.

Penyelia-penyelia pengembangan didapati menghadapi masalah untuk mengamalkan tiga daripada langkah-langkah pembentukan program, iaitu, analisis situasi, pelaksanaan program dan penilaian dan akauntabiliti. Masalah yang paling kerap dihadapi ialah untuk melaksanakan langkah penilaian dan akauntabiliti. Di antara masalah yang disebutkan ialah berkaitan dengan kumpulan sasaran yang merupakan petani separuh masa, kekurangan masa disebabkan beban tanggung jawab yang banyak oleh penyelia pengembangan, kekurangan pengetahuan di kalangan penyelia pengembangan di dalam pembentukan program, maklumat semasa yang tidak mencukupi mengenai kumpulan sasaran, masalah kekurangan peruntukan kewangan; kurang kerjasama antara pegawai pengembangan; masalah situasi persekitaran; pengaruh politik serta kerjasama yang lemah antara agensi.

Beberapa cadangan telah dikemukakan untuk mempertingkatkan amalan pembentukan program di jabatan ini. Di antaranya ialah memperkukuhkan lagi kursus pra-perkhidmatan dan kursus dalam perkhidmatan oleh UPM dan Jabatan Pertanian, menyemak semula kaedah pengajaran pengembangan yang digunakan di



kedua-dua institusi ini, melatih pemimpin tempatan di dalam pembentukan program, mengadakan peruntukan lebih awal untuk kerjasama dan koordinasi antara agensi dan menyediakan kenyataan yang tepat mengenai tugas dan tanggungjawab orang-orang yang terlibat di dalam pembentukan program. Adalah dicadangkan juga supaya penyelia pembangunan dikurangkan beban kerja pentadbiran supaya dapat memberi tumpuan yang lebih kepada kerja pembangunan. Akhir sekali, adalah dicadangkan supaya kajian susulan menggunakan kaedah kualitatif di laksanakan untuk meninjau dengan lebih mendalam status sebenar dan sebab musabab mengapa amalan pembentukan program pembangunan rendah di Jabatan Pertanian.



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of Problem

Agricultural extension has always been closely linked with developmental efforts, especially in the third world countries. The main focus of the extension activities in this context is to improve human conditions. This involves teaching people in the rural areas how to raise their standard of living, by their own efforts, using their own resources with minimum assistance from the government.

According to Boone, as quoted by Blackburn (1989), the aim of extension, as a field of professional educational practice, is to teach people in their own context and life situations how to identify and assess their own needs and problems; help them to acquire the knowledge and skills required to cope effectively with those needs and problems; and inspiring them to action. These in turn will lead to the achievement of the development target, which is to improve the well-being and self realization of the people through collective effort.



Malaysia, since gaining her independence, has been putting up numerous efforts towards improving the socio-economic standards of the people particularly those in the rural areas. The national development efforts are clearly evident by the significant increase in budgetary allocations for development programmes since the last five Malaysian Development Plans and continuing into the Sixth Malaysian Plan. Since then, the significance of extension work began to surface and was emphasised by policy makers and planners in their efforts to meet the new challenge of development work.

The growing concern for extension work has prompted the government to increase budgetary allocations for extension projects channeled through various extension agencies such as the Department of Agriculture (DOA), the Rubber Industries Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA), and the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA). At the agency level, the growing concern to improve the extension service is much more obvious. Efforts to increase the number of extension workers by these various extension agencies can be seen as a nationwide phenomenon that a more effective and wider scope of extension services could be provided to the rural people.



Realising the need for training of extension workers, these extension agencies have established their own training units, institutes or training schools to strengthen their extension services. Besides that, RISDA, for example, had proceeded even further by getting the World Bank technical assistance to sponsor consultants to examine its extension activities and to recommend improvement measures.

The emphasis on the importance of the extension component is also shown by one of the local academic institutions, namely the Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (UPM). The extension courses which were initially made compulsory to students in the Agriculture Faculty are now being extended to those in other faculties in the university such as the Faculties of Fisheries and Marine Science, Engineering and the Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences. At the same time, UPM also provides in-service training for all levels of extension workers of various extension agencies. It training of trainers for local training officers of various extension agencies so that more effective in-house training could be delivered to extension workers in their respective agencies.



Despite the above efforts by the government and extension agencies to strengthen their extension services, questions still arise as to whether the national development goals have actually been achieved. It is generally felt that the success of extension programmes implemented by development agencies in the country are still not up to a satisfactory level. Wide gaps still exist between abundant research findings and their application by the end users who are the farmers and rural people (Mohd. Yusof and Chin, 1980). There are people in remote areas who have not benefited from development efforts. Could this be due to wrong targeting of clients for the extension programmes implemented? Were these programme designed to solve the immediate problems and needs of the actual target audience? Were the above problems and needs selected based on a comprehensive background information about the clients?

Proper targeting requires knowledge about the type of rural household involved, their available resources, production objectives, soils, crops, technology and farming practices adopted (Roling, 1988). Such information provides an integrated picture of the client's farming system, their

constraints, potentials and objectives. In the targeting process, one must assume an obstinate audience (Roling, 1988). Extension efforts should then be deliberately targeted at homogeneous categories of rural people (in terms of access to resources, production objectives and opportunities).

The discrepancies between extensive developmental efforts and the actual benefits gained by the ultimate target audience may also be due to certain weaknesses in the extension service itself. Several weaknesses in the extension service have been exposed and highlighted by research findings and comments made by researchers, professionals, administrators and politicians through the media as well as in seminars and conferences. One of those weaknesses often highlighted is lack of coordination between extension agencies. As reported by Mohd.Yusof and Chin (1980), wide gaps still exist between existing agricultural practices and the backlog of research findings which have not reached the farmers. Sinha (1982) reported that coordination was also lacking at the decision-making level and between various extension agencies, voluntary organisations, statutory bodies and media organisations. This contributed to the unsatisfactory achievements of the implemented extension programmes.

Transmission of new technology to the operational points is not always efficient. As pointed out by Sinha (1982), a lot of time is devoted to processing research information into extension recommendations, packaging it into proper extension messages and distributing it to different utilisation points. This effort is time consuming and quite often, the required information does not reach the field in time, thus rendering the message useless.

Another important problem highlighted by professionals about the existing extension system is the lack of feedback. There is very little two-way communication in the existing extension administration system. Most of the time, the flow of information is one-way, from the top to the bottom. There is hardly any upward flow of information from the farmers to the planners (Sinha, 1982).

Low farmer participation and motivation in extension activities is another problem highlighted by researchers in the country. A study by Bahari (1984) on RISDA's small farmer development programmes reveals the absence of participation by small farmers and extension personnel in the process of those programmes. He suggests that similar studies be conducted with other small farmer agencies in