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## **NGOs and CBOs Structures and Mechanism for Collaboration in Agricultural Extension Delivery in Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper provides the structures and mechanisms for collaboration in technology generation, adaptation, dissemination and utilization with clear roles and responsibilities that NGOs and CBOs will play to improve the performance of agricultural extension delivery services in Nigeria. NGOs and CBOs services are usually well managed, efficient and cost effective. Also, they can be more flexible in their programmes than the States extension system due to their size, closeness to the ground in rural community and usually have established credibility with the farmers. These advantages ensure positive impact in extension delivery if they work in hands with the States extension agents.*

**Key words:** *Collaboration, GEOs-NGOs-CBOs interaction and partnership.*

### **Introduction**

The World Bank (2001) defines Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development. In wider usage, the term NGO can be applied to any non-profit organization which is independent from government. NGOs are typically value-based organizations which depend, in whole or in part, on charitable donations and voluntary service. Although the NGO sector has become increasingly professional over the last two decades, principles of altruism and voluntarism remain key defining characteristics.

Community-based organizations (CBOs) refers to private non-profit organizations, existing as a group in a particular community with the feelings of sharing, belonging and joint use of resources in order to achieve a particular objective, such as agricultural development, health care improvement or environmental management (Ekong, 1998). These organizations are becoming very effective in developmental activities. They are generally referred to as formal voluntary social groups that are found in the community, which vary in sizes, objectives and degree of interaction among members. Formal voluntary associations possess certain characteristics which makes them effective in the activities they undertake. These include: established offices; regular meetings on agreed dates and places; established criteria for membership; formalized activities; and constitutions which govern their operations.

The impact of CBOs in terms of performance has been recognized at all levels of development, such as serving as medium or agent of change, most especially in the diffusion of agricultural information, mutual aid, sympathy support and financial assistance to members in the case of illness, collaborative activities, encourage member patriotism, conflict resolution, discipline and social control, increased food

production and general agricultural development. The emergence of CBOs and the role they play in all contemporary development activities in the communities were as a result of inadequate planning and commitment of the government as well as low resource allocation to the sector.

The World Bank (2001) described CBOs as grassroot organizations or peoples' organizations that are distinct in nature and purpose from other NGOs. While national and international organizations are "intermediary" NGOs which are formed to serve others; CBOs are normally "membership" organizations made up of a group of individuals who have joined together to further their own interests (e.g.: women's groups, credit circles, youth clubs, cooperatives and farmer associations). Many national and international NGOs work in partnership with CBOs, either channeling development resources to them or providing them with services or technical assistance (World Bank, 2001).

The backgrounds of NGOs and CBOs as grassroots organizations that are capable of promoting the interest of their members, coupled with their services that are usually well managed, efficient and cost effective will provide the opportunity to improve the extension activities if they collaborate with the government extension agents. Also, NGOs and CBOs can be more flexible in their programmes than the states extension system due to their size, closeness to the ground in rural community and usually have established credibility with the farmers. This paper provides the structures and mechanisms for collaboration in technology generation, adaptation, dissemination and utilization with clear roles and responsibilities that NGOs and CBOs will play to improve the performance of agricultural extension delivery services in Nigeria.

### **NGOs Categories**

The term NGOs is very broad and encompasses many different types of organizations. The World Bank classifies operational NGOs into three main groups: 1) community-based organizations (CBOs) - which serve a specific population in a narrow geographic area; 2) national organizations - which operate in individual developing countries, and; 3) international organizations - which are typically headquartered in the developed countries and carry out operations in more than one developing country. NGOs are well suited to assist the rural people through different types of social capital and poverty alleviation programmes (Swanson and Samy 2002).

Agricultural extension programmes are carried out using various approaches based on objectives, source of funds and the type of organization responsible for organizing activities. In the developing countries, public sector institutions are carrying out more than 90 per cent of the extension work. In the developed countries also extension was initially carried out by the public sector, but it is steadily shifting towards privatization. This trend is a consequence of the privatization technology and the loss of public support for extension during a period of agricultural surpluses and expensive farm subsidies (Senthil and Dupare, 2000). Due to the increasing inability of the governments to adequately fund its extension machinery, it is necessary to change the roles of public sector in agricultural extension. More emphasis is required in cost sharing approach and privatization, involving the farmers associations, NGOs and farm women club.

Madukwe (2006) concluded that the increased involvement of the private sector either in delivery, funding, or management of agricultural extension broadens the focus of extension personnel and makes extension services more responsive to client needs and changing economic and social conditions. It offers farmers value for their money. The result of increased private sector participation is higher in those aspects of extension service that are always profit-driven: for example, input procurement and distribution, cash crop extension, and veterinary extension. For services that are more of publicly oriented, for example, adaptive research, management and the administration of agricultural extension - including policy formulation, should continue to operate under the ambit of government.

Ojha and Morin (2001) established that partnerships between Government Organizations (GOs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Private Sector Organizations (POs) were more effective than the efforts of individual agencies in extending agricultural technologies to farmers, but only when the partners fulfilled their mutually agreed responsibilities. When any or all of the partners proved to be uncommitted, individual patterns were rather more effective than partnerships. Ollila (2003) agreed that the partnerships bring together resources and expertise from a wide variety of actors, including international organizations, government agencies from developing and industrialized countries, multilateral and bilateral donors, philanthropic foundations and non-governmental organizations.

### **The present status of agricultural development programmes (ADPs) in Nigeria**

National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS) and National Food and Reserve Agency (NFRA) (2009) reported that only 30% and 35% of Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) in Nigeria have good funding or enough qualified extension agents respectively throughout the country. Majority (62% and 43%) of the ADPs were identified to have poor funding and staffing inadequacy respectively. These factors have affected the performance of ADPs. Serious funding and staffing problems were identified in Adamawa, Sokoto, Benue, Taraba, Ekiti, Ondo, Bayelsa, Ebonyi, Enugu and Rivers States. Nevertheless across the nation, Bauchi, Gombe, Kano, Kogi, Lagos and Osun states were reported to have excellent /good funding and staffing of ADPs. Due to the relevance of ADPs' extension agents for overcoming the problems of new technologies usage, youth unemployment, poverty eradication, combating HIV/AIDs, women participation in agriculture among other development issues; the challenges of ADP funding and staff must be adequately addressed.

The increasing inability of the governments to adequately fund its extension activities and inadequate of staff from the above result is the real force behind the search for alternative approaches like NGOs and CBOs that will improve the extension activities in the country. The identified NGOs, CBOs and public agricultural extension service providers should collaborate or partner with each other. Ojha and Morin (2001) observed that the key to successful partnerships is the mutual understanding of and respect for each other's strengths and weaknesses. According to FAO, (2010) SWOT analysis makes it possible to assess the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities

and threats (SWOTs) within an organization or within the agricultural extension system as a whole (Table 1).

**Table 1: SWOT analysis of extension service providers**

Category	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Public agricultural extension providers	<p>High qualified, competent and experienced personnel.</p> <p>-Good in-house training programmes have produced credible staff.</p>	<p>-Limited financial resources: more than 75% of budget goes on salaries; very little left for operational costs.</p> <p>- Bureaucracy and long channels of communication.</p> <p>- Lack of self-discipline: few can work without supervision.</p> <p>- High staff turnover leaves some projects/ programmes unfinished.</p>	<p>-Improved collaboration and efficiency through department mergers.</p> <p>-potential for improved effectiveness and efficiency through transformations ( e.g. commercialization and cost recovery programmes)</p>	<p>-Inadequate budgets are decline in real terms (inflation)</p> <p>-Prevailing economic situation unlikely that government will increase budgetary allocations.</p>
NGOs and donor supported rural development programme	<p>-Abundant financial resources.</p> <p>-Good networking skills.</p> <p>-Use of participatory and bottom-up approaches ensures effective grassroots and community participation.</p> <p>-Greatly improved understanding of community needs.</p> <p>-Use multidisciplinary teams and more holistic approaches.</p>	<p>-Programmes that are too short to have much impact.</p> <p>-Programme that are too narrow to have much impact.</p>	<p>Potential for effective programme implementation: cooperative NGOs involve everyone.</p> <p>-Donors will fund well-designed programmes with demonstrated impact.</p>	<p>-Unstable sociopolitical environment not conducive to normal operations.</p> <p>-Donor fatigue and investment withdrawal.</p> <p>-Political pressure to extend the programmes or projects beyond the available resources.</p>
Farmers' associations	<p>-Grassroots representation.</p> <p>-More aware of farmers' needs</p> <p>-Specific interest groups provide specific, relevant information to clients.</p>	<p>-Inadequate budgets-</p> <p>-Technical weaknesses.</p> <p>-Work is too localized.</p>	<p>-Better services and more tangible benefits for members would improve the membership base.</p> <p>-Could be self-funding if membership base is improved.</p>	<p>-Most are likely to be affected by donor fatigue and investment withdrawal (but not the commercial farmers' union.</p>

Source: FAO, 2010.

### *NGOs strengths and weaknesses*

It is extremely difficult to make generalizations about NGOs as a whole because the nature and qualities of individual vary greatly. Despite this diversity, some specific strength generally associated with the NGO sector includes the following: strong grassroots links; field-based development expertise; the ability to innovate and adapt; process-oriented approach to development; participatory methodologies and tools; long-term commitment; emphasis on sustainability and cost-effectiveness. The most commonly identified weaknesses of the NGOs include: limited financial and management expertise; limited institutional capacity; low levels of self-sustainability; isolation/lack of inter-organizational communication and/or coordination; small scale interventions; and lack of understanding of the broader social or economic context (World Bank, 2001).

### **The national and international NGOs operating in Nigeria**

Examples of NGOs in Nigeria include: the Development Education Centre (DEC) which provides extension support to women to organize themselves into grassroots level self-help associations in South-Eastern Nigeria; the Women's Advancement Network (WOFAN) in the North-West, promoting income generation activities among rural woman; the Farmers Development Union (FADU) and the faith-based Diocesan Agricultural Development Project (DADP) in South-Western, Nigeria which aims at poverty alleviation among small-scale farmers. Unique in this group is the international NGO, Sasakawa-Global 2000 which not only works in very close collaboration with the ADPs, but actually uses the already established structures of the ADPs including selected staff that are seconded to the organization. (Arokoyo, Chikwendu and Ogunbameru, 2002).

### **The community based organizations (CBOs) in Nigeria**

They facilitate access to available services and inputs for agricultural development for members in the societies; CBOs provide structure through which people can influence the direction and implementation of development activities (Jibowo, 2000). CBOs have been commonly observed to be important in the development of communities, and therefore were classified according to their composition and functions. The different types of CBOs identified include Community Development Associations (CDAs) e.g. cooperative societies, town/village improvement/development unions, occupational professional associations, youth associations, religious organizations, tribal groups and other local groups. Good examples of CBOs are: Fadama II User Groups (FUGs); Fadama Users Associations (FUAs); and Women in Agriculture (WIA groups). These organizations perform different activities towards developing the society. For instance, the activities of Fadama II user groups are as follows: support the provision of marketing infrastructure; encourage participation of stakeholders on advisory and extension services in agricultural development; improve management of natural resources; mechanism of conflict resolution between farmers and pastoralist; development of rural non-farm enterprises such as livestock and fisheries agro-forestry and agro-processing and facilitating women participation in rural economy.

The above details indicate that, the CBOS are observed to engage in several development activities ranging from social to agricultural development in the communities. Though the CBOs were observed to play significant roles in community and agricultural development, sustainable growth in agriculture has been elusive. In spite of the vital roles CBOs play in Community and agricultural development, a systematic survey on the extent of their involvement and contribution to the development of the area has not been undertaken.

With the strengths of the NGOs and CBOs, there is need to incorporate the two organizations into agricultural extension delivery in Nigeria as have been integrated in some developing and the developed countries in the world. Involvement of NGOs and CBOs in extension services has been highlighted as the best way of improving the extension services and does not aim at substituting private sectors for public extension services. Figures 2 and 3 show how the collaboration and cooperation can improve the extension system.

### **Reasons for collaboration**

Collaboration is a process of participation through which people, groups and organizations work together to achieve desired results. Starting or sustaining a collaborative journey is exciting, sometimes stressful, and even new for many. Collaboration is also a form of partnership i.e. where two or more agencies work together to provide services to farmers. However, collaborative partnership is defined as a specific programme of activities that is agreed on in form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (National Network for Collaboration, NNCO, 1998).

NNCO (1998) described the foundations of Collaborations as:

- i. Vision: what the collaborators want to accomplish and how they will use the collaboration to get there;
- ii. Commitment: pledge to attain specific goals and benchmarks and to enhance the collaboration;
- iii. Leadership: qualities include personal commitment, enjoyable involvement and determination to achieve the goals and benchmarks vital to the development and operation of the collaboration;
- iv. Action: a plan to accomplish these goals and benchmarks, including responsibilities, resources and deadlines.

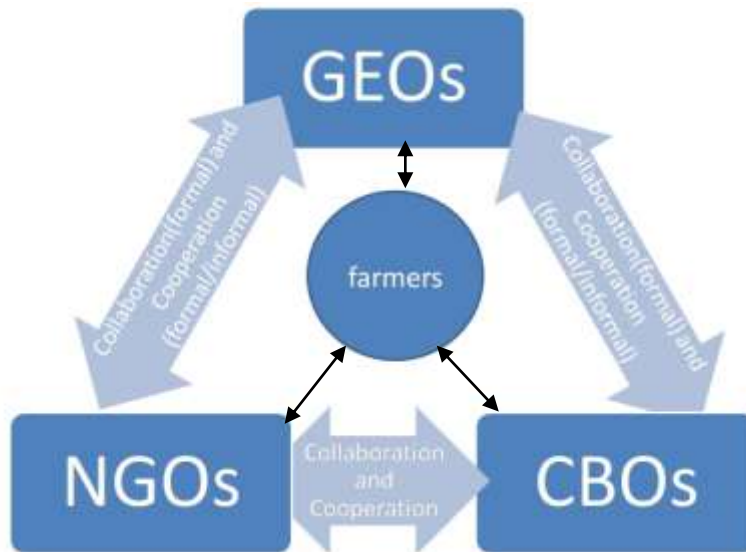
A good action plan must: sets goals and benchmarks; identifies partner roles; decides how to approach the issue or opportunity; establishes time lines; determines resources needed (not just what is in place ); decides what types of evaluation is needed; and documents agreement with partners. Vision, commitment and leadership should be weaved together with the action plan. The action describes the specifics of who does what, when and how. Each partner within the collaboration takes responsibility for specific tasks and makes a commitment to carry them out (NNCO, 1998). Hence, all these specifics should form the basis of collaboration among the government extension agencies, the NGOs and the CBOs in order to ensure a more effective and efficient extension service delivery to the clientele system. More so each of the collaborators will have opportunity to perform higher in those areas where it has comparative advantage over others in providing enhancing specialization with its inherent advantages.

### **Structure and Mechanism for Collaboration**

Table 2 and figure 1 represent how the GEOs, NGOs and CBOs will collaborate with each other.

**Table 2: Structure and Mechanism for Collaboration**

<b>Extension service providers</b>	<b>Roles and Responsibilities</b>
Government Extension Organizations (GEOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emphasize more on adaptive research, management and the administration of agricultural extension, including the formulation of policy.</li> <li>- Use high qualified, competent and experienced personnel to organize good in-house training programmes.</li> <li>- Provision of high level technical advice.</li> </ul>
NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Consult and attract donors to sponsor some of extension programmes/activities.</li> <li>-Establishment of link between the farmers and other private agencies that could subsidize farm inputs.</li> <li>-Be in charge of procurement and distribution of farm inputs, cash crop and veterinary extension activities.</li> </ul>
CBOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Mobilise the community support for the adoption of agricultural technologies.</li> <li>-There should be awareness by the farmers on new technology develop through CBOs.</li> <li>- Provision of information relating to farm level constraints, farmers needs and problems.</li> </ul>
GEOs-NGOs-CBOs Coordination Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Finalize the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)</li> <li>-Monitoring and Evaluating their activities.</li> <li>- Brings together resources and expertise from the involved actors</li> </ul>



**Fig 1: GEOs, NGOs and CBOs Structure and Mechanism for Collaboration**

**Ways to improve support to agricultural extension programmes**

- i. Help farmers to mobilize themselves and get organized to: i) formulate demand for advice, technology and skills; ii) commit them to action; and iii) hold public extension accountable and increase its relevance.
- ii. Help governments shrink to their core functions, decentralize most of their remaining services, use impact and performance indicators, and improve their capacity to get extension done, rather than doing it themselves.
- iii. Increase the financial sustainability of public extension by delinking public funding from private funding, by piloting, demonstrating and mainstreaming alternative funding mechanisms, by creating the enabling environment for private providers, by providing a legal framework for public/private partnering, and by demonstrating the benefits of extension to decision makers more effectively.
- iv. Reach farmers and other rural people, by better, and increased use of local media, and by extending the information superhighway.
- v. Establish and develop a public/private partnership to facilitate access to information, and assist in designing responsive, affordable extension systems. (Zijp 1998)

**Outcome of the GEOs, NGOs and CBOs Collaboration**

The structure and mechanism that described the means of collaboration among the extension service providers will change people’s thinking on agricultural extension system in Nigeria. Zijp (1998) concluded that involvement of major stakeholders in extension activities will change people’s orientation on extension programmes (Table 3).

**Table 3: Outcome of the collaboration**

From	To
Looking at extension as government service	Seeing extension as a set of functions, to be performed by a variety of players, at different



	level.
Looking at extension as a distinct, separate institution	Seeing a coherent, comprehensive knowledge system for the generation, transfer and uptake of knowledge and technology, that includes the farmers, research, extension and education
Using a linear, sequential and one-directional model of technology transfer	A more realistic, cyclical and dynamic model of information exchange and knowledge dissemination whereby farmers, researchers, educators and extensionists are all engaged in the generation of new knowledge, and in its transfer, and in its use.
Designing projects from a teaching perspective, and budgeting for teaching efforts	Allowing projects to develop a learning mode, engaging all major stakeholders.
Paying lip service to the potential of information technology for rural development	Taking some risks by including experimental information technologies in projects to link research institutes, extension managers, farmer organizations and others to each other and to the rest of the world.

**Source: Zijp (1998)**

### **Conclusions**

Pluralistic involvement of NGOs and CBOs that capitalize on their strengths, as extension service providers, play a crucial role. This is the best model especially when considering the present status of the public extension agents in the country that majority are identified to have poor funding and staffing inadequacy. When these organizations (GEOs, NGOs and CBOs) collaborate or form partnerships, the weakness of one will be complemented by the strengths of the others. This will improve personnel qualifications, competence, experience, and improve coverage in rural areas. It also gives chance for well-designed programmes with demonstrated impact that will attract donors to fund the projects.

Lastly, collaboration or partnership without a good action plan is nothing. There must be an action plan that will set goals and benchmarks, identifies partners' roles, establishes time lines, determines resources needed and documents agreement with partners. The action plan also specifies who does what, when and how.

### **Recommendations**

Government should encourage and support NGOs, CBOs, donors and other private sectors to collaborate with GEOs in agricultural extension delivery in Nigeria. There is also the need to further encourage membership and growth of CBOs as a vital strategy for efficient extension delivery system.

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