

Agricultural Extension Workers' Education in Indonesia - Roles of Distance Education

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Abstract : This paper addresses the roles of distance education in the agricultural extension workers' education. Agriculture plays an important role in both poverty reduction and economic growth. The technology of agriculture in the developing world should change continuously to keep pace with rising populations and rapidly changing social, economic, and environmental conditions. Therefore, agricultural extension workers should have several competencies in order to carry out their duties properly. One of the essential competencies that they must possess is the professional competency that is directly related to their duties in carrying out extension activities. Such competency can be acquired through studying at Universitas Terbuka (UT). With its distance learning system, agricultural extension workers can study at UT without leaving their duties. This paper presenting sociological analysis and lessons learnt from the specific context of Indonesia. Diversities in geographic, demographic, social cultural and economic conditions of the country provide specific challenges for its distance education practice and the process of social transformation to which distance education can contribute. Extension officers used distance education for personal benefits and increased professional productivity. An increase in awareness is important for the further adoption of distance learning for extension purposes. Organizations in both the public and private sector must work to increase knowledge of ICTs for the benefit of stakeholders. The use of ICTs can increase productivity for extensions officers and expand educational opportunities for learners. The use of distance education by extension to disseminate educational materials around the world is widespread. Increasing awareness and use of distance learning can lead to more productive relationships between extension officers and agricultural stakeholders.

Keywords : agricultural extension, demographic and geographic condition, distance education, ICTs

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