

Ancient Chinese proverb, perhaps Confucius

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself.

Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

George Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman*, 1902

AET Institutional Transformation

A design review workshop

To elicit and document tacit knowledge for improved interventions in agricultural education and training.

In order to improve interventions for the sustained local production of highly qualified and motivated agricultural professionals and entrepreneurs.

A set of conversations

The Educational Challenge

Instructional quality is characterized by:

- Professor reading from the notes he took as a student
- Science taught as the memorization of facts
- A lack of syllabi and their use
- A lack of coherence between learning objectives, pedagogical practices, and student assessment

Although experiential learning is valued and emphasized by faculty and administrators, the tradition of memorization is profoundly engrained.

Undervaluing agricultural education leads to **low morale and rent-seeking behaviors** of talented faculty members.

There is a lack of **incentives for quality** (student-oriented) **teaching** suggesting that even minimal rewards may help to re-focus efforts.

Why?

Transformational –

The way teaching and learning is conducted affects the capacity of those trained to be open and adaptive (entrepreneurs/employees with initiative)

Institutions/organizations –

We have paid inadequate attention to the messy reality of culture, social structure, politics, and political economy

Its not that that we haven't been aware of these circumstances, but that we haven't effectively accounted for them in our interventions.

The Transition to Complex Adaptive Systems

In the early 20th century, Quantum theory taught us that instead of being objective observers of the universe **we are participants along with the objects of our observation.**

It is only now that the implications for the applied sciences are becoming apparent.

but AET institutions still hold to 19th century practices.

**requires knowledge & skills for adaptive management
and
changes in our underlying paradigm**

from

- Farming Systems Research and Extension (FSR/E) – 1970s
- Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems (AKIS) – 1990s

to

- Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS)

A shift from research to learning

Learning is not something we do apart from the world we live in

How do we foster change in AET institutions?

Social Learning for Adaptive Management

Learning by doing
is an iterative process

Characterized by:

- **Negotiation**
- **Resistance**
- **Accommodation**

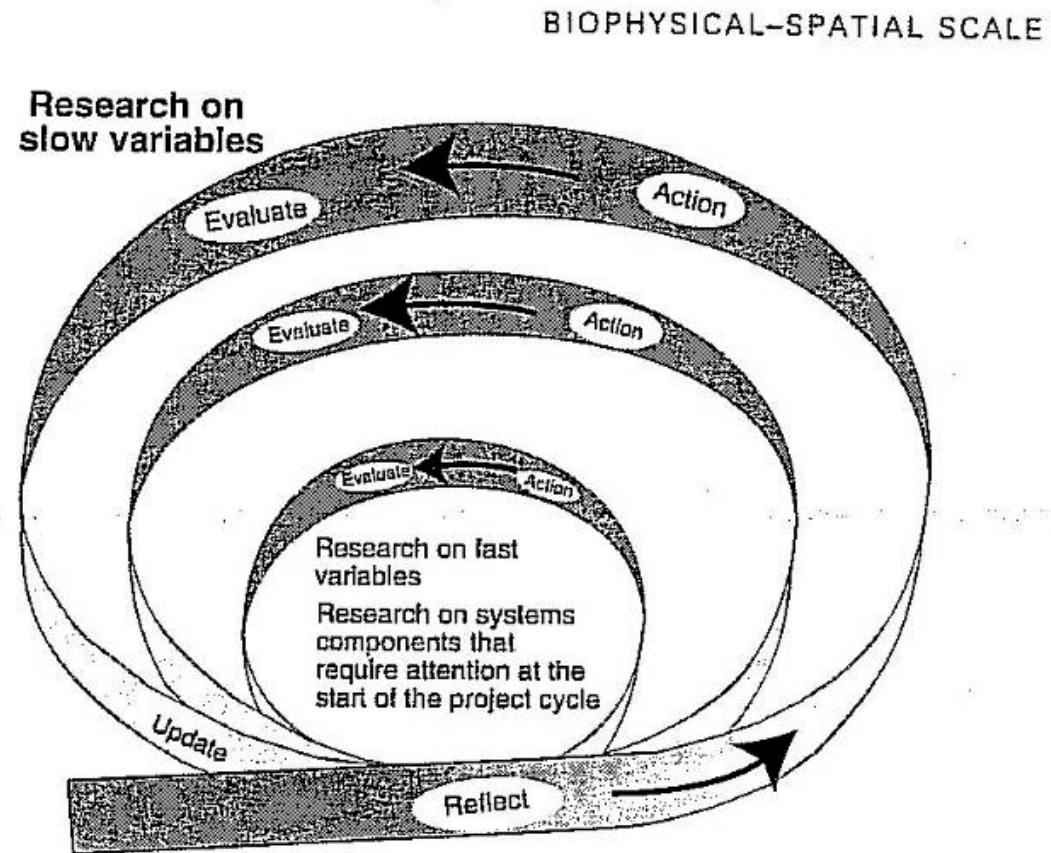


Fig. 4.1. Overlapping learning cycles for processes with different temporal characteristics.

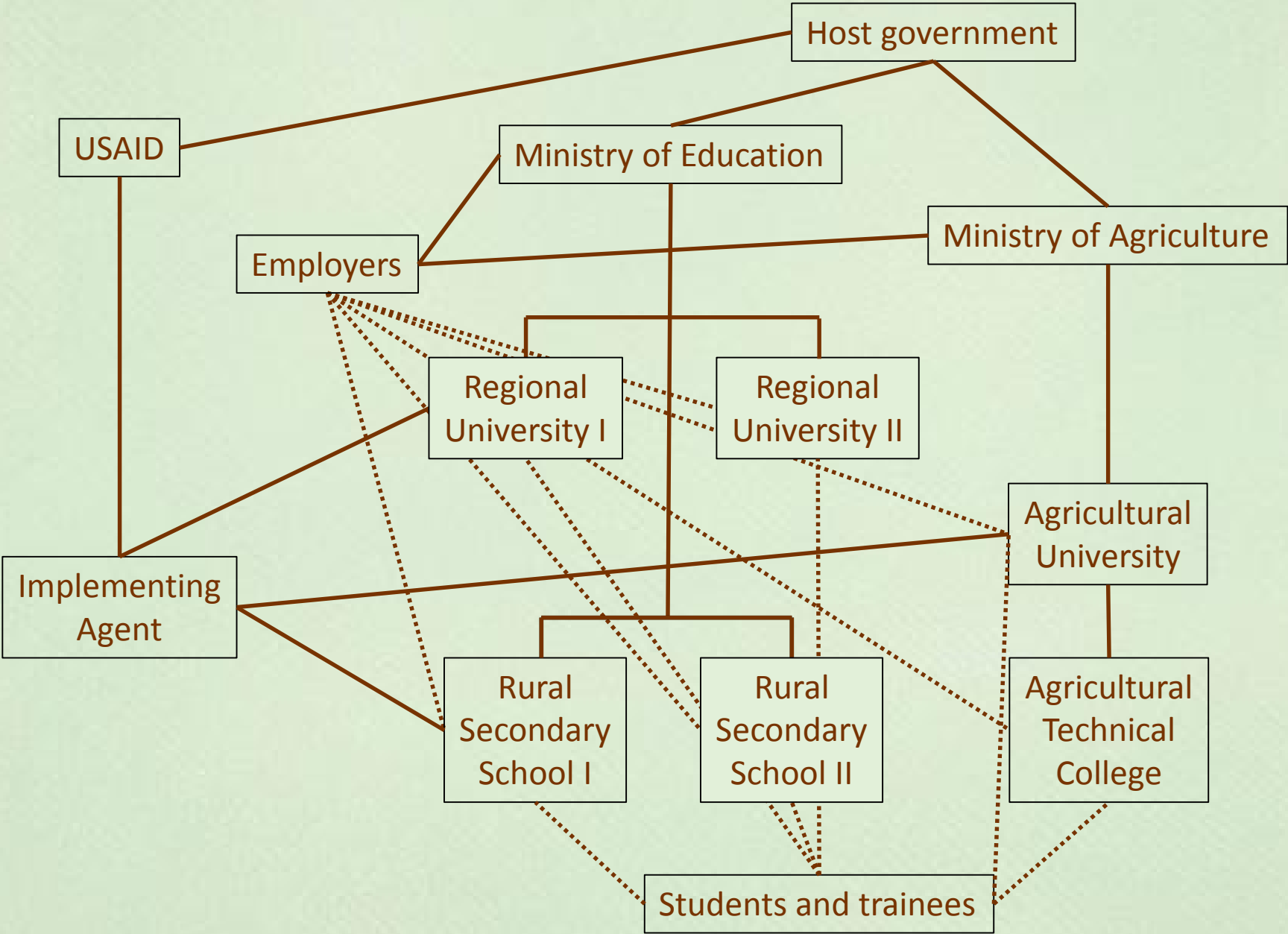
Successful negotiation requires building mutual **respect** and **trust** across boundaries

Cash, et al. (2002)

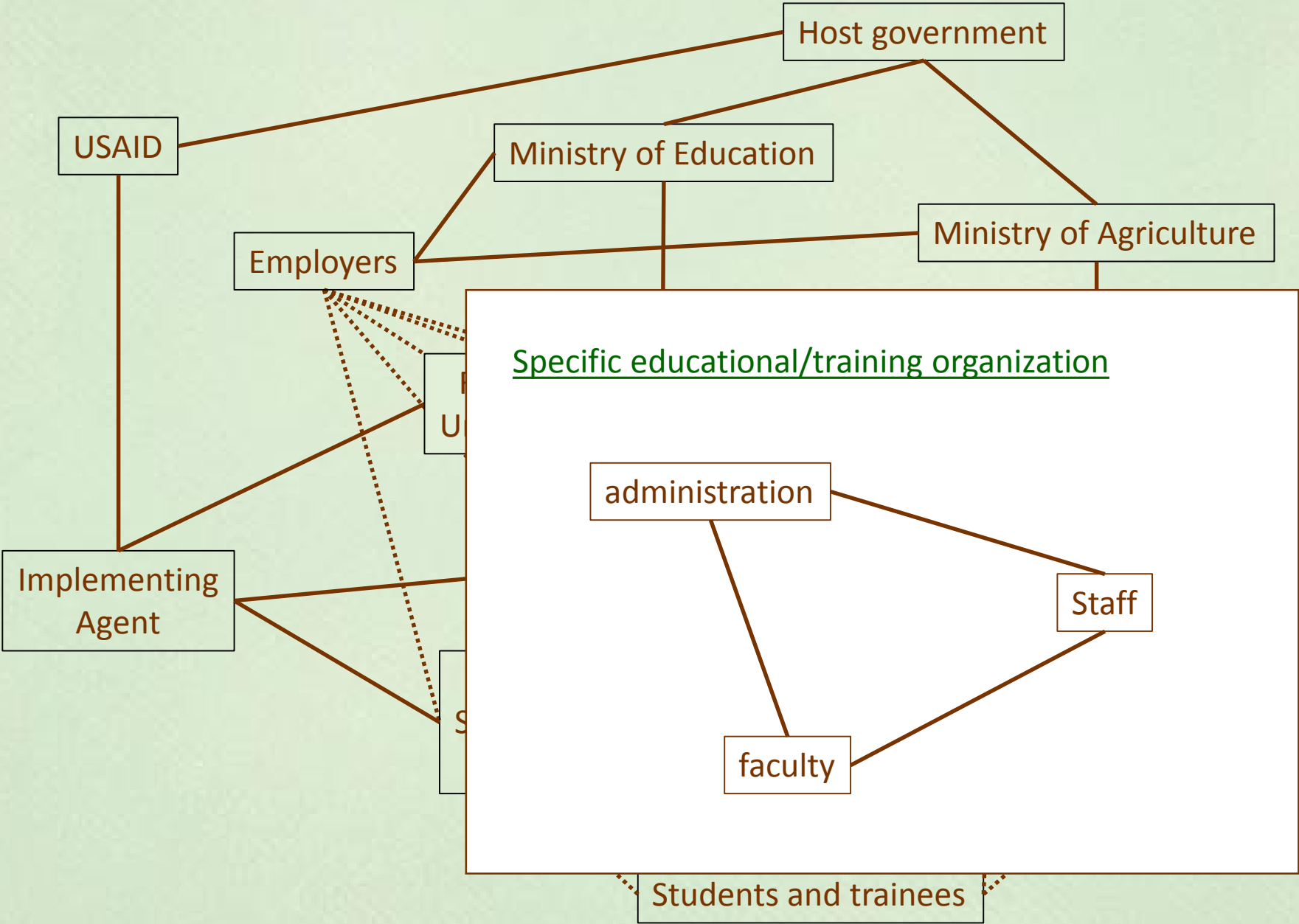
To influence stakeholders a message needs to be:

- **Credible:** scientific adequacy for technical evidence & arguments
- **Salient:** relevant to decision-maker assessment of needs
- **Legitimate:** perception that information has been respectful of stakeholders' divergent values & beliefs

Relationship Building: the AET Stakeholder Network



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Recognition of the need for long-term institutional change

A Dutch government study of projects to foster capacity development of tertiary agricultural education organisations found that “*as they are currently carried out* [projects] are not able to successfully achieve the sustained changes required.”

Four concrete necessary conditions for institutional change were identified, which need to be recognized by the project frameworks. Namely that:

1. **Team building** based on trust and good communication is essential to change processes.
2. **Continuity** is necessary to keep up the momentum for change.
3. **Flexible** administrative procedures are crucial for changes to take root.
4. Institutional change is a process that **takes a long time**.

Recognition of the need for long-term institutional change

With respect to institutional strengthening, the 2015 HICD Strategy Review notes that:

“the nature of the demands in USAID result in compromising [the principles of institutional strengthening].”

They concluded that:

the chief challenge is the “**pressure for results**”

Improved tweaking of institutional development techniques will do (and has done) little in the long run to promote sustained institutional transformation and development.

If we don't change the way we structure the delivery of such programs we won't achieve sustainable results.

Accountability and attribution

“Understanding iterative feedback appears essential to understanding today’s innovation of complex technology and thus our complex society.”

“In complex incremental innovation it is often difficult to identify where ideas come from.”

Rycroft and Kash 1994

Nine lessons on management of a capacity strengthening programme

1. Project design is much more than a technical process; it is essentially one of negotiation.
2. In capacity-building projects, design activities cannot end when implementation begins.
3. Capacity-building efforts should prepare managers to deal with complexity, uncertainty and change.
4. In capacity-building efforts, it is essential to collaborate rather than patronize.
5. Organizational assessment is a complex social process, intertwined with organizational politics.
6. In designing capacity-building projects, it is essential to involve managers and staff members in assessing needs and opportunities.
7. Action-learning strategies offer great potential for capacity building.
8. In the context of strategic management and organizational learning, PM&E take on new meanings.
9. Training is most effective when it is designed to serve a purpose within an organizational change process.

Horton (1999)

How?

Design review –

Project design is composed of two elements:

- The design of the **end-product** itself (the desired outcome)
- The design of the ***process*** by which a valued product is achieved

Brown and Martin, 2015

Project design tends to focus on the end-product, shaping its characteristics.

In this workshop,

we will focus on **the processes through which a valued product emerges.**

We will need to develop theory-based approaches that account for context.

Design thinking

The pragmatist philosopher Dewey called it the art of experimental thinking.

The fundamental issue that lies behind design practice is the relationship between determinacy and ***indeterminacy***.

Indeterminacy implies that there are no definitive conditions or limits to design problems. *<wicked problems>*

Consequently, viable solutions are achieved through:

Iterative interaction with decision-makers –

“Intervention is a multi-step process consisting of many small steps, not a few big ones.”

Buchanan (1992)

Interaction with users

weeds out bad designs; building confidence in good ones.

Questions to be pursued

Critical challenges faced and ways to overcome them

Theories of change appropriate to AET institutional transformation

Accountability in institutional transformation

Recurrent themes encountered

Relationship management: trust, time, transparency, and flexibility

Context specific understanding and adaptation

Budgeting and contracting relationships: power and accountability

Governance and leadership: champions and change management

Outcomes Sought

Identifying the **Next Steps** for

- Creating space(s) for organizational innovation/experiments
- Improved mechanisms to assure contextual accountability

Workshop Conversations

You are here because **you have expertise** on AET institutional transformation processes. We seek to elicit and document that **tacit knowledge** you've been keeping to yourself and to collaborate in reflective thinking about potential **next steps** for designing interventions.

The workshop will be very **open** and **participatory**. To facilitate this, we have:

Moderators and Conversation Co-Leaders to animate our discussions.

Essentially informal, a couple of **rules** will need to be followed:

- Respectful listening
- Structured conversations
- All interventions will be brief and to the point
- Turn off your cell phones

The process:

1. The Moderator will introduce each conversation session
2. Conversation Co-leaders will provide focus for the conversation
3. The Moderator will facilitate everyone's participation
4. The World Café will provide opportunities for design brainstorming

The Agenda

Introductions

- Moderators
- Project Leaders
- Host Institution Counterparts

Thematic Conversations

- Trust and Partnerships
- National AET System Transformation
- Curriculum Development and Pedagogical Reform
- Budgeting and Contracting Relationships
- Governance and Leadership

Daily Wrap Up Sessions

World Café

- Conversations for Future Design

Next Steps – where do we go from here?