



Value-chain Capacity Building Network



The Value Chain Capacity Building Network (VCB-N) is the biggest regional Network on value chain and market system development in the Asia-Pacific Region, providing professional advisory services and capacity building support to a variety of clients. The VCB-N pools expertise of 'Centres of Excellence' from 7 countries allowing for tailored service delivery that complements cutting edge international marketing concepts with local insights and experiences.

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**VCBN- WEBINAR 3: “The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on agricultural value chains - What we can do to mitigate the impact! – *the impact on service delivery to different actors along the value chain*”**



# VCBN- WEBINAR 3: “The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on agricultural value chains - What we can do to mitigate the impact! – *the impact on service delivery to different actors along the value chain*”



## Resource Persons:

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Dr. Rasheed Sulaiman V., Director of the Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy, India



Ms. Marie Aude Even, Senior Regional Technical Specialist, Agronomy, IFAD, Asia Pacific



Mr. Augustus Shemphang Suting, General Manager, Meghalaya Basin Management Agency (MBMA), OSD SCSTE and BRDC



Mr. Phouthasinh Phimmachanh, Manager of CLICK KM4Dev and the Secretariat of Lao Farmer Network



Mr. STUART MORRIS, Director, East-West Seed Knowledge Transfer



Carl Larsen, Executive Secretary of GFRAS



Mr. Md. Rubaiyath Sarwar, Managing Director Innovision Consulting Private Limited and Chairperson VCB-N



QUESTION 1: How does the COVID pandemic influenced **the need for services** (quantity, content) and what are the consequences of limited access to / availability of services to respond to those needs?

- ▶ Stuart: changing needs for inputs, services and perhaps conditions for delivery as noticed by EWS
- ▶ Phouththasinh: challenges and needs among Lao farmers / requests for advisory or info support
- ▶ Rasheed: challenges and needs among Indian farmers



## How does COVID influence the need for services and what are the consequences of limited services - Stuart Morris

- Urgent need for nutritious fresh vegetables
- More than ever farmers need access to knowledge and farm inputs to ensure good yields
- Most farmers able to access inputs - with limitations
- Exemptions for extension teams in many countries - but outreach is limited
- Markets are badly shaken - prices of fresh vegetables are generally low
- Restrictions on movement impacting post harvest loss
- Farmers face difficulties affording inputs for next season
- Uncertain markets may lead to less production next season
- If farmers suffer, food supply and nutrition will suffer (especially in poorer areas)



Kitchen gardens; refugee settlements in N Uganda

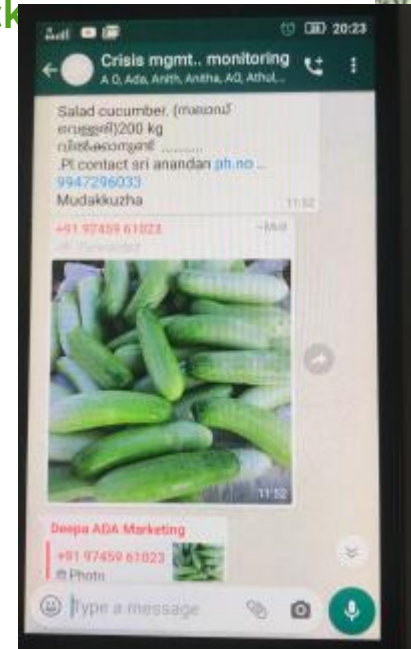
## QUESTION 1: How does COVID influence the need for services and what are the consequences of limited services: Phouthasinh Phimmachanh: Lao Farmers Network

- Value chain linkages are heavily disrupted at immediate level: Less transportation means or higher transport cost to go to the market. Overall demand in the market is down for many products especially from business sectors due to closure of restaurants and fear among households so lower expenses levels: For example in Paksong district, South of Laos a cabbage production group with 33 members lost over 800 Tons of cabbage in April which equivalent to about 100,000 USD.
- Farmers need service in short, middle and long term. This is not something new, but it reaffirm due to the pandemic. There are many farmers that need emergency supports in term of food pack; many farmers don't have any money to invest in the upcoming production cycle; and some are indebted because they can't sell any of the produce from last production cycle.
- Immediate needs are basic needs for survival: food but also encouragement and hope that the situation will improve. Middle term needs are insights in market developments for the next growing season, concrete information and contacts to buyers, transporters etc. as all previous chain linkages have disappeared. Longer term is about development of farming system for small holder farmers that more resistant to similar impact in the future.



# Challenges and needs among Indian farmers

- ▶ **REDUCED MARKET ACCESS:** Leading to Crop Loss and Reduced Prices: Lack of adequate cash in hand to buy inputs for next season
  - ▶ Closure of markets
  - ▶ Lack of trucks to transport produce
  - ▶ Reduced availability of labour/machinery for harvest
  - ▶ Lack of information on markets (Demand: Quantity/location)
- ▶ **REDUCED ACCESS TO SERVICES**
  - ▶ Veterinary Services
  - ▶ Inputs
  - ▶ Advisory Services
- ▶ **MORE RELAXATIONS ON LOCKDOWN TO AGRICULTURE:** Benefitted mostly
  - ▶ Farmers organised effectively as groups/companies
  - ▶ Have access to Social Media
  - ▶ Where Government Extension and Marketing agencies acted quickly
  - ▶ Linking producers to consumers/traders and used ICTs to address information challenges



*EAS reached those with registered mobile numbers initially with health/crop advisories but later with other information, but in general the EAS could have done more*

QUESTION 2: What **digital / remote service delivery models** are evolving as coping mechanism to current restrictions and what are early lessons in terms of success factors and/or challenges?

- ▶ Stuart: digital service delivery (existing, plans) EWS
- ▶ Marie-Aude: quick overview from IFAD portfolio and specific example from Lamp project in India by Augustus Suting
- ▶ Rasheed: challenges and needs among Indian farmers

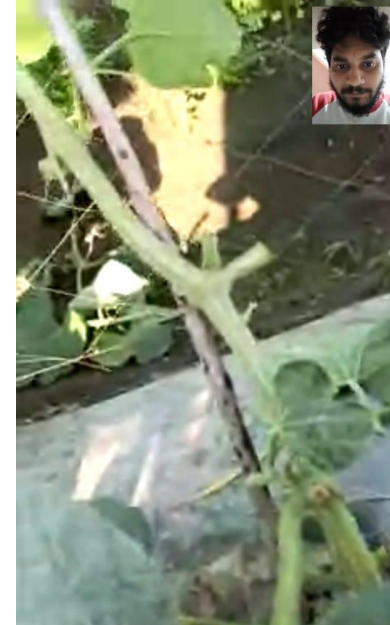


## What service delivery models are evolving as coping mechanism? - Stuart Morris

- Direct extension with social distance (family focused)
- Support key farmers to maintain demo's as hubs of good practice through WhatsApp
- Farmer to farmer extension; through key farmers and village extension agents
- Radio and Podcasts
- Facebook
  - Platforms and Groups
  - Members doubled in Nigeria and India over April
  - Reality farming
  - Short practical webinars
- Training through mobiles (data free) piloted in Nigeria with Funzi
- Printed technical guides



Technical guides through village agents



Live advice on WhatsApp



Radio in Nigeria



Field advice through village agents



Technical guides and advice through agri-input dealers



- **Diversify mandate**

- Live update issues & needs
- Logistics & info gaps
- Covid-safety measures & responding to social, finance, & health crisis
- Adapting farming to crisis (local, nutrition, PHL etc.)

- **Increasing use of digital tools**

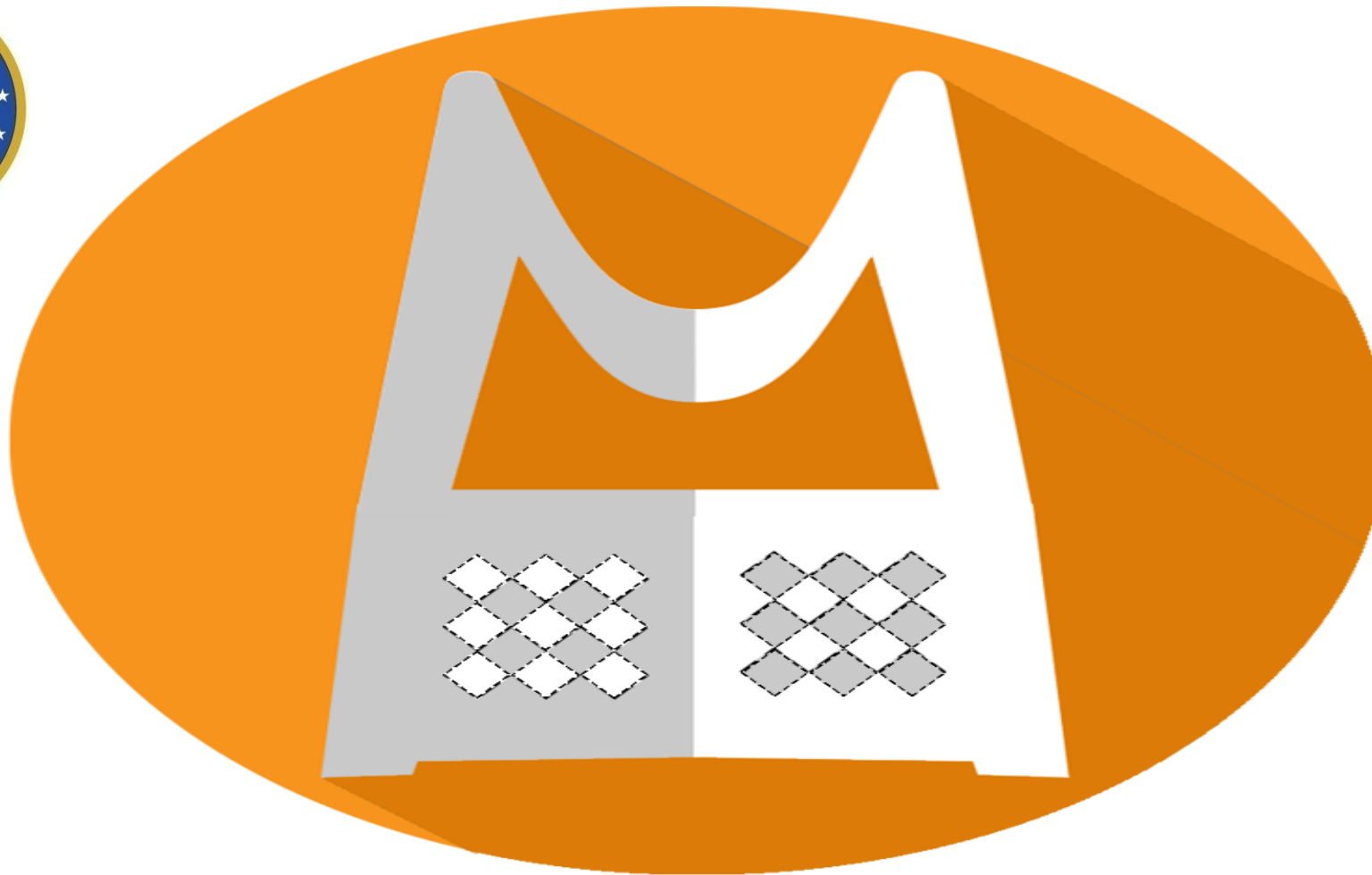
- WhatsApp & Facebook & survey for com & exchange
- Video-message-sms advisory & hotlines
- Geo-mapping, tracing & alert systems
- App & ICT platform incl e-commerce
- ICT4D s & expanding partnership

- **BUT LIMITS OF ACCESS & USE**

- Radio, TV and mobile van
- Farmers learn better from their peers
- Farmers need to get organized locally to innovate and respond

**Success depend on capacity to engage and support decentralized outreach system, strong local organizations & partnership :**

- Lead farmer, youth, village & PO, info centres, volunteers
- Existing partnership & coordination capacities
- networks



**Inclusive Supply Chain & Enterprise Development  
Meghalaya Basin Management Agency**

# **Meghalaya Livelihoods and Access to Markets Project Response to COVID 19 crisis**



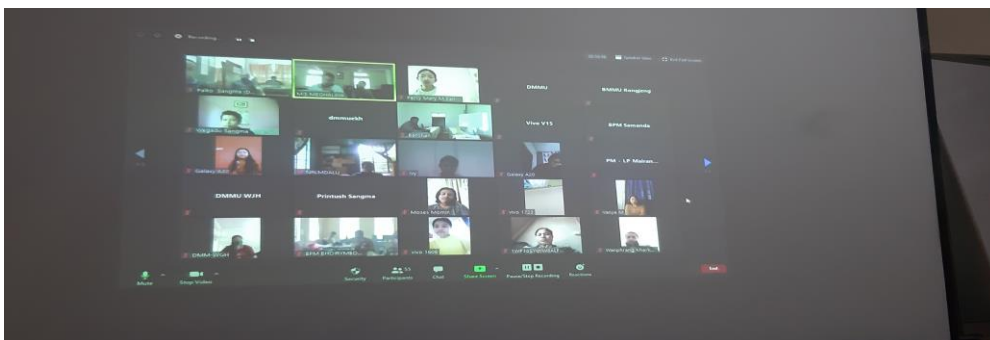


## Q2: Use of digital / remote service delivery models (LAMP):

### 1) Restoring remote communication & work



- Whats app group to quickly identify farmers needs/issues, connect to suppliers, value chain actors, service providers etc..
- Usage of various ICT tools but also how they are further supporting and empowering their very decentralized outreach extension system;



Video Conference Coordination with NRLM Team





## Q2: Use of digital / remote service delivery models (LAMP)

### 2) Benefits of integrated i-team platform

- 1917 INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY ENABLED AGRICULTURE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM ( ITEAMS)-
- Level 1 – ICO- using ICT for Empowering agriculture via the Agri Response Centre ( ARC) - agro-advisory services, market intelligence and transport of Agri-Response Vehicles ( ARVs)
- Level 2 – Subject Matter Specialist from Deptt. R&D Institutions.

**Agri-Response Vehicles**



**iTEAMS Call Centre**





## Q2: Use of digital / remote service delivery models (LAMP)

### 3) crucial role of CRP

- **Community Resource Person**
- Paravet who played a key role to quickly expand training on silage, ensuring feed security and resolve local forage issues; and will be crucial as well as the swine flue is emerging
- Crucial role of agro-CRP who also have been able to train farmers on composting, seed use and adapt practices, depend less on external inputs which were difficult to come and showing stronger resilience of such system to the crisis
- The Project is now developing further video and pictorial training material to empower further CRP to still deliver training to the last miles in each community



QUESTION 3: How do the interruptions in current service delivery models foster **new collaboration models or partnerships** for efficient service delivery for example through local farmer organisations as service hubs?

- ▶ Phouththasinh: role FOS in delivery of advisory services in Laos, role AFA, LFN
- ▶ Stuart: collaboration / partnership EWS
- ▶ Marie-Aude : quick overview and example LAMP case in India by Augustus Suting



### QUESTION 3: How do the interruptions in current service delivery models foster new collaboration models or partnerships? Phouthasinh Phimmachanh: Lao Farmers Network

- Farmer organisations have competitive advantages in terms of service delivery as they are located close to the clients and have high levels of trust. Moreover, they know the need for services and can tailor the available service supply towards the actual demands and needs of clients / members. For example: Coffee Cooperative in Paksong (CPC) in Laos delivered training services to members/ buying coffee from members at a fair price, and are able to share profit from collective business to their members.
- FOs can deliver services quickly as was demonstrated during the pandemic when through CLICK and LFN information about the pandemic and protection and prevention of infection was distributed quickly to network members and from their to households.
- As FOs are close to their member base they also are ideal partners for service providers as they offer easy access to large numbers and through social control and reputation building are more suited to engage in long term and sustainable (business) relations.

# How do the interruptions in current service delivery models foster new collaboration models or partnerships? - Stuart Morris

- Recognizing unique part in bigger picture
- Supporting grouping of farmers to improves access to services and create further opportunity for their business
- Advocacy on the benefits of vegetables (to drive increased consumption)
- Need for scaling benefits of field activities - especially if social distancing remains in place
- Leveraging field based resources and extension material to a wider audience through digital means







## Q 3: collaboration models and partnership (LAMP- India)

**The importance of such coordination mechanisms and grassroot organizations in inclusive covid response in Meghalaya:**

- High Level Coordination at State Level with COVID 19 Task Force.
- DPMU – DPM assigned at District COVID Task Force Control Room
- ERPs Assist BDOs at Block Level for Movement.
- At Community Level with Local Traditional Community Institution (issue of initial fears & blockage and need support)



- The coordination mechanisms enabled as well to engage various service supplier. for instance, while agricultural problems appear, the Lamp Team could engage the services of I TEAMS and other government agency such as SCSTE, private input supplier and solve concrete issues (meeting veg needs, seeds, dry ration etc..)
- Integrated Village Cooperative Societies ( IVCS) and the SHGs –Delivery of Food and Civil Supplies and Produce.





## Required future changes (LAMP -India)

- Importance to review and reinforce our local food system model and be more resilient to such external shocks and restrictions on inputs etc.
- We need to renew our service delivery model and rely even further on our CRP,
- Need to innovate for a more inclusive instruments to ensure we can reach the last mile farmers

THANK YOU  
URL:

[www.mbda.gov.in](http://www.mbda.gov.in)



**Farmers to Farmers Direct Marketing: Rapleng Village**



## QUESTION 4: What has the crisis thought us about weaknesses in service delivery and **required future changes, what success models are evolving globally?**

Marie-Aude, Carl

- Concluding remarks: put cases in context of major lessons learned and future pathways regarding rural advisory services.

Topics: Bridging last mile, digitalization, partnerships & collaboration, inclusive & demand driven services delivery

- **Identify & anticipate issues & solutions** from the ground (data & farmers' voice)
- **Interactive & customized ICT4D tools** to help extension support **community outreach** (FtF, CRP, youth etc.) & PO & link partners
- Strong **leadership & coordination** to collate evidence & ensure collective actions
  - Key role of gvt leadership, extension institutions & coordination sys
  - Development agency collaborations: one UN, Ifi etc.
  - VC, PO, SHG and their federations: services & advocacy
  - Emerging private partnership for VC, ICT4D, logistics etc.
  - KM platform, networks & social capital
  - But also consumer/society engagement,
- **Great CD efforts & investments** required to further strengthened & sustain agile & inclusive capacities to respond :
  - Institutional framework, institutions development
  - Community and PO organizations
  - 4P business model & platforms to sustain access to services to last miles
  - Human / social capital & KM are key

=> such investments also strengthen **CC & crisis adaption & resilience**



## WEBINARS:

**VCB-N WEBINAR 4:**  
**28<sup>TH</sup> of May 2020 –**  
“The impact of the Covid  
19 pandemic on Agro-  
commodities and the  
role of large international  
agro-corporates”

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## E-LEARNING MODULES:

“Business Model Canvas  
E- learning – *reinventing  
business models to  
conquer COVID19  
hurdles and be relevant  
for small holders*”

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