

Accelerating Rural Development in Africa: ‘Sharing Korea’s Community Modernization Experience With Africa

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Date : 2015.05.18

2.7 The Role of Institutional Policy, Leadership and Educational Reforms in Modernization Campaign

Institutions and educational reforms are critical aspects of successful modernization campaign. They must be complimented with effective and committed leadership, both at the national, as well as decentralized levels. Korea’s community modernization campaign reveals an in-depth institutionalization, policy support, education and leadership orientation. This institutionalization of the campaign distinguishes Korea’s modernization path further, and shows that modernization campaign requires policy coordination and support. In Korea this started with the presidential decree number 6458 of 1973 in which the president called for restructuring of the government departments to safeguard the position of modernization campaign in the country. This made the campaign to gain a significant place in Korean society and enabled it to get direct support from related government ministries, such as the ministry of Home affairs, government owned National agricultural and fisheries and cooperatives and local affairs bureau in Korea/ ‘division of housing modernization’ campaign(SMU, 2014). The role of the lead ministry should be to ensure that the execution of the projects is comprehensive and consistent. Besides applying institutional policies to it, the campaign should be formed and coordinated with an institutional framework, complete with hierarchies of leadership, functional departments and its affiliated institutions and libraries. This gives the campaign a nationwide network and makes it felt across the levels of the society.

As a non-governmental institution in Korea, it also had head office, regional ones and local village branches. This possessed a high level of integration and organization. This kind of decentralization of the campaign, with the president as the honorary patron, increased participation across all levels of society.

The government must also make conscious efforts to attract young people to farming. It can be noted that one of the monumental challenges that face agricultural communities in Africa is that it is left to the old and women. This has been partly responsible for lowering agricultural productivity. The problem is harbored by a trend in which young and educated graduates migrate to towns and cities in

search of better jobs. To reverse this phenomenon, there is need to design policies to support agricultural sector and young high school graduates who accepted to remain in rural villages. Part of the effort is to undertake other complimentary construction projects that offer temporary jobs to the youth. For example, Korea's reforestation project and construction of expressways concurrent with rural projects were sort of 'cash for work' project that employed rural population and increased household income (Choi, 2012, SMU, 2014).

Similarly, it is not an overemphasis that education and training are important in modernization campaign. There should be three focus areas: to enlighten the entire society and open their consciousness, to produce competent manpower, including skilled farmers and modernization leaders and finally mentor young people to become modernization pioneers. In Korea, while villages were the implementation units in the modernization campaign from the initial stages, village leaders had direct responsibility over village projects. To elevate their skills, they are given modularized trainings. It is also necessary mentor future leaders for rural modernization (Choi, 2012). This enlists young people to espouse the spiritual values of self help, diligence and cooperation. They are expected to be the vision bearers and the missionaries for the modernization campaign.

These tasks were accomplished in Korea by setting up training institutes with the express mandate to teach the community modernization as a special course. The goals of modernization's training institutes in Korea as; mentorship training in community camps where trainees lived with their trainers; impressing modernization ideology to young pioneers of the campaign; friendly sharing of the modernization's success stories (SMU, 2014). These efforts should backed by the government's policy. In Korea, the government policy on education and curriculum were also reviewed to emphasize community modernization education. Besides training institutes, it is important that the entire population acquires universal and higher education that enlightens them and imparts expertise knowledge and civic orientation.

Since it was clear that the campaign was beyond just rural modernization initiative, Korea's modernization education targeted people across different segments of society; political leaders, public officers, religious leaders, men leaders, youth leaders, women leaders, factory and company executives, urban dwellers, university students, scholars and Koreans living abroad through correspondence (Jeongho, 2012). These actions demonstrate earnest commitment to modernization.

The overall objective of education is to indoctrinate the trainees in the belief of the modernization philosophy; the education is taught like a creed and should be practice oriented, by encouraging 'trying out' and self discovery. Afterwards, the trainees and the leaders are able to naturally live out these principles, to promote the social well being. Trainers must equally be a cadre of people who have the required expertise and spiritual formation of the campaign (Choi, 2012). Furthermore, it is salient that the trainees are given incentives to encourage their participation in modernization education. This includes helping them to find jobs with the community projects, and follow up to

monitor their progress.

Regarding local leadership, an important note is that modernization leaders should be democratically elected by the community members. In Korea, these leaders included male leaders, youth leaders as well as women leaders. This further strengthens democratization, confidence and self determination in the rural communities. The leader should be one who has the trust and respect of the local community, embraced the spirit of the campaign, is charismatic, frontier person with creative mindset, ready to sacrifice personal ambitions at the expense of common goals and finally, democratic in managing the affairs of the community (Sang, 1985). On the other hand, the government should also maintain its representatives at all levels of the projects, at the initial stages (ADB, 2012, Chung, 2012).

Another key policy support area in modernization campaign should be in the area of financing. In Korea's case, as the campaign grew from creating a better rural living environment, which was mainly supported by the government, to increasing the income of agricultural households, it was apparent that more financing was required. As a result the government instructed the government institutions to make loans available to the farmers. It also strengthened cooperatives to accomplish this task. Hence, increasing access to loans and developing cooperatives should be part of the modernization process.

2.7.1 Policy considerations for Africa

There is a glaring difference between Africa and Korea in the way the government approaches its education, especially policy issue and education curriculum emphasizing on agricultural education to young people and its practicality.

In Africa, there is no bridge between education and the productive sector. Africa's problem emanates from poor policy and under-investment. Its education is more oriented to producing white collar job seekers, than modern agricultural graduates. Their education curriculum is also exam oriented rather than action centered. 'Agricultural schools do not specifically train agricultural students to work in farms in the same way medical schools train students to work in hospitals (Juma, 2012).' However, the aim of community modernization education should be to elicit commitment and practice through demonstrations on the site (Choi, 2012). In some cases, like in Kenya, agricultural education is only introduced in later stages of learning. Similarly, investment in agriculture is generally on the decline in the SSA. Thus, just a few agricultural training institutes exist, but they are underfunded. In this regard, Africa must solemnly invest in modern farming technology and dissemination of best farming practices, to achieve agricultural modernization.

Based on Korea's experience, Africa must upgrade its existing agricultural research institutes, broaden their educational mandate, emphasize entrepreneurial traits and improve quality of extension services. They must also education leaders responsible for policy-making on agriculture and rural development. But Africa will not succeed in the current environment where the young and energetic

population resent agriculture. It means SSA must provide education to redirect the mindset of its young population to view agriculture as a profitable enterprising activity. Juma (2012) has also recommended building training institutes close to demonstration farms and focusing on the entire value chain. Another strategy would involve awarding scholarships to young school leavers to that is aimed specifically at helping them to acquire agricultural technical skills and qualifications. In addition, technical experts who have shown interest in working with local communities in modernization projects can be given incentives to encourage them.

Korea also invested heavily in reforestation for soil conservation. Africa soil has continued to lose its fertility due to increased land degradation. Therefore, Africa will need heightened soil conservation measures and more punitive policies that secure forests and encourage reforestation. Another challenge in Africa is the existence of less developed cooperative movements that can provide input at affordable prices and market agricultural produce. Since they are integral part of the agricultural modernization, the continent must reinvigorate them at the same time.

Finally, Korea-type modernization projects can only be sustainable when they are adapted to local contexts. Thus, the role of local governments and community leaders are important. As a result, regional or local governments must reform their policies to support community modernization projects.

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