

#### **SUB THEME 4: AGRICULTURAL CHALLENGES AND GRADUATE PROFILE**

##### **Do the existing curricula equip students with life skills and emerging issues?**

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A few universities may do but generally many are not able to, but there are differences

- (i) In Europe, courses prepare students to solve problems and are not specific to a career path. More general courses are being offered regardless of later places of work
- (ii) Inclusion of English language in Mexico and India to prepare students to work anywhere on the globe.
- (iii) Need to emphasise cultural activities to better prepare students for the world they will face, need for integrated approach to learning, compulsory in some universities
- (iv) Harmonise training with job market requirements.
- (v) Review of curricula to specify learning outcomes and other expectations (skills and knowledge), including consultations with stake holders.
- (vi) Graduates should be relevant in any part of the world, regional institutions(e.g., in Europe and America) involved in ensuring this-challenge for Africa
- (vii) Students not getting skills to think broadly, too much specialization e.g., on agricultural production; need to train to face challenges in work environment-innovativeness in problem solving, leadership skills, entrepreneurship etc. Need for more extra-curricula activities
- (viii) Problem in pedagogy, continued use of outdated methods, need to change and be updated on new teaching methods; done mostly in the developed countries only
- (ix) Need to focus on teaching approaches, demand in job market for soft skills, analytical skills, attitudes, emotional intelligence etc. Employers value hands-on experience thus in many cases less interest in technical skills
- (x) Alumni associations are useful in assessing the relevance of agricultural training courses to students.

##### **Do the graduates possess the knowledge and skills required for promoting sustainable development?**

- (i) Semester system results in compartmentalisation of knowledge, with students losing interest in a course after the exam, need to demand application of knowledge and skills acquired early in later semesters
- (ii) How do we balance needs of the universities and requirements of the employers?
- (iii) May reduce quantity of learning and focus on quality, allowing students to have time to learn about global issues
- (iv) How flexible are universities with regard to dynamism in the world?
- (v) Stakeholders should be involved in curriculum development from inception, involve them also in implementation of curricula e.g., teaching, supervision
- (vi) Student mobility should be encouraged, current university administration and governments need to be flexible, e.g., to allow students to gain experience in other countries/universities

- (vii) Too many students and inadequate facilities to allow proper skills development, many cases on demonstrations done. Instructor to student ratio too small as well as too many other activities and commitments for instructors.
- (viii) Too heavy workloads for both instructors and students, not allowing time for other important issues such as research and innovations
- (ix) Governments should make efforts to institute periodic training sessions for both graduates in the field and farmers.

**Are the universities effectively sensitising prospective and in-coming students to make agriculture a career of choice?**

- (i) The people who first come in contact with new students may have no knowledge of agriculture
- (ii) May need to set up marketing/publicity units to communicate with prospective students. Universities should visit schools to create interest in agric as is done in Mexico, explaining the various prospects and career choices with Agricultural education
- (iii) Interest in Agric can only improve if the sector is attractive to students, e.g., by being profitable. Agric in many countries associated with poverty and drudgery.
- (iv) Have excellent/model commercial units in the universities so that the students can see the benefit/profitability of agric activities
- (v) Involve policy-makers in visibility of prospects in agriculture.