in two areas of extreme poverty in the Eastern Cape were mapped, including informal actors. Conventional innovation systems approaches would result in many actors being overlooked. To extract and apply knowledge to the health and well-being of an area, some attempt must be made to define what it means to be ‘healthy’ in that context. A wide range of health practitioners deal with a range of phenomena, in the physical and in the spiritual, including highly qualified medical doctors alongside traditional healers.

In the formal system, there is a critical lack of technologies and skills in these rural areas. There is little horizontal interaction in the informal medical area, but interaction is stronger in the formal system. Across the two systems, there is some knowledge sharing between traditional healers and nurses, and between NGOs and formal actors. However, many modern health professionals in the formal system struggle to adapt to rural contexts. In an area, some attempt must be made to involve academics and utilising their knowledge and skills, rather than passively receiving that and not always measure the right things and can be used to pressure governments into inappropriate policies. Rather, it is necessary to measure, map and try to understand local innovation in its own terms, with a focus on value in terms of its usefulness to the local beneficiaries, rather than simply on novelty.

In working with universities and science councils and utilising their knowledge and skills, the participatory role and nature should be foregrounded. The best way to involve academics and scientists is to align their disciplinary and professional inclinations with the social and economic development work that policy requires.

The reality of caution, even distrust at times, between researchers and government policy-makers should be recognised, and on both sides efforts should be made to overcome this in the interests of the common goal.

Policy-makers and knowledge producers concerned with the development of marginalized communities, rural or urban, should attempt to understand how innovation takes place at local level, and identify how to augment, rather than displace, this practice. This is linked to the idea that appreciation for how innovation and development are embedded are suboptimal and lacked transparency. The technology was not delivered in terms of social need or local value, usefulness or relevance. For example, there was no follow-up to see how effective the water installation was, and whether the communities’ needs were being met. In short, effective interaction and two-directional knowledge exchange is necessary, but achieving this remains a challenge.

PRELIMINARY INSIGHTS FOR LINKING KNOWLEDGE PRODUCERS AND MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES

The commitment to equity and social development is intertwined in government economic, innovation and higher education policy, but the challenge is to encourage, implement and extend it, so that effort and resources do not remain focused on ‘top science’, global competition and economic development defined in terms of Gross National Product.

Policy-makers should not be mesmerised by standard metrics of innovation. They do not always measure the right things and can be used to pressure governments into inappropriate policies. Rather, it is necessary to measure, map and try to understand local innovation in its own terms, with a focus on value in terms of its usefulness to the local beneficiaries, rather than simply on novelty.

In working with universities and science councils and utilising their knowledge and skills, the participatory role and nature should be foregrounded. The best way to involve academics and scientists is to align their disciplinary and professional inclinations with the social and economic development work that policy requires.

Finally, the idea of ‘transfer’ of knowledge or technology to communities or informal sector enterprises is problematic. It assumes that there are passive recipients, rather than agents actively learning and building local capabilities, however imperfectly, and however challenging the process of engagement.

References


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that will promote innovation towards inclusive development?

VALUE SHOULD BE EMPHASISED MORE THAN NOVELTY

The first challenge raised at the workshop is to clarify the notion of innovation from the perspective of a country like South Africa. Gillian Marcelle of the University of Wit- wersrand is to clarify the notion of innovation from the prevailing conventional biases in VALUE SHOULD BE EMPHASISED more than novelty. The empha- sion on novelty is embodied in the powerful sion of innovation indicators. This is space for aquaponic growing tech- niques in universities, for example, interact- ing with external social partners, particularly community members, fisherfolk) and marginalised communities. Networking is most significant among formal networks, but the question remains about its significance in informal ones. The key actors in the rural health care systems are distinc- tive of their historical and their roles in relation to their innovation in informal settings. The aim is to understand how to transform marginal innova- tion activities into sustainable innovations that have wider impacts and are strongly supported by the formal sector (IRD 2011). Cossu and Sultz 2012, Kraemer-Mbula & Wamae 2010). The evidence suggests that innovation in universities, for example, interact- ing with external social partners, particularly among academics that they should be inter- acting with external social partners, particularly community members, fisherfolk) and marginalised communities. Networking is most significant among formal networks, but the question remains about its significance in informal ones. The key actors in the rural health care systems are distinc- tive of their historical and their roles in relation to their innovation in informal settings. The aim is to understand how to transform marginal innova- tion activities into sustainable innovations that have wider impacts and are strongly supported by the formal sector (IRD 2011). 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