



Village Knowledge Centres (VKCs)

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Objective: To bring knowledge revolution among the rural community that would, in turn, pave way for enhanced knowledge and farmer connectivity, increased income and reduced risks

What is Village Knowledge Center?

Village Knowledge Centre is an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) digital platform-based system linking farmers through smart phones and social media as a conduit for faster and effective information and knowledge exchange to the rural communities. The VKC concept was developed and implemented in India by M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) in 1980. Since then, the Foundation has set up several VKCs in India (for example, the one below).



FIG 1. One of the Village Knowledge Center at Onangudi Village, Pudukottai District, Tamil Nadu, India

VKCs

- Empower community with timely and right knowledge
- Ensure connectivity and capacity building
- Bridge the knowledge gaps
- Improve gender balance in extension services

Why and where to establish Village Knowledge Center?

VKC brings knowledge revolution among the rural community that would in turn, pave way for better farmer connectivity, increased income and reduced risks. Experience from ClimaAdapt project (www.climaadapt.org) in India was used to establish two pilot VKCs in InnovAfrica project in Kenya and Tanzania.

How and when to establish Village Knowledge Center?

Phase I	Year 1	Year 2
Get the first-hand experience or training of the VKC establishment	X	
Select location, preferably a village or government building for VKCs	X	
Organize meetings with local officials and stakeholders	X	
Identify 2-3 youths as Village Knowledge Workers (VKWs) from local area	X	
Set up 5-6 members VKC Management Committee (MC)	X	
Establish the VKC and test the working of the unit	X	
Train the VKWs and recruit farmer members	X	
Organize awareness meeting and conduct 2-3 knowledge needs assessment		X
Establish base line indicators		X
Develop & disseminate knowledge material, link farmers with mobile phones		X
Conduct Open Days and exchange visits within the village		X
Conduct a mid-term assessment of VKCs performance		X



FIG 2. InnovAfrica team interacting with a Brachiaria farmer in Kenya (Photo: ILRI/KALRO/KENAFF)



FIG 3. Farmers in sorghum and soybean plot in Malawi (Photo: University of Malawi)

Phase II	Year 3	Year 4
Link VKCs MC with Strategic Partners for continuity	X	
Exchange visits from neighbouring villages and authorities	X	
Enhance involvement of local extension services	X	
First set-up and draft of the VKC Manual	X	
Conduct Open Days and exchange visits within in the village	X	
Assess upscaling of VKCs based on the set criteria	X	
Hand over Phase II with technical support		X
Final assessment of the VKCs approach and impacts		X
Final validation and preparing the VKCs Manual		X

REFERENCES

www.innovafrika.eu; www.climaadapt.org; <http://www.mssrf.org/>



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