

# MALAWI NATIONAL LEARNING ALIANCE

## Co-Learning for a Functional District Agricultural Extension Services System in Malawi

F. Tchuwa, D. Kambewa, M. Kakwera, C. Masangano, H. Chiwasa, M. Chimombo, J. Kampanje

### 1. Background

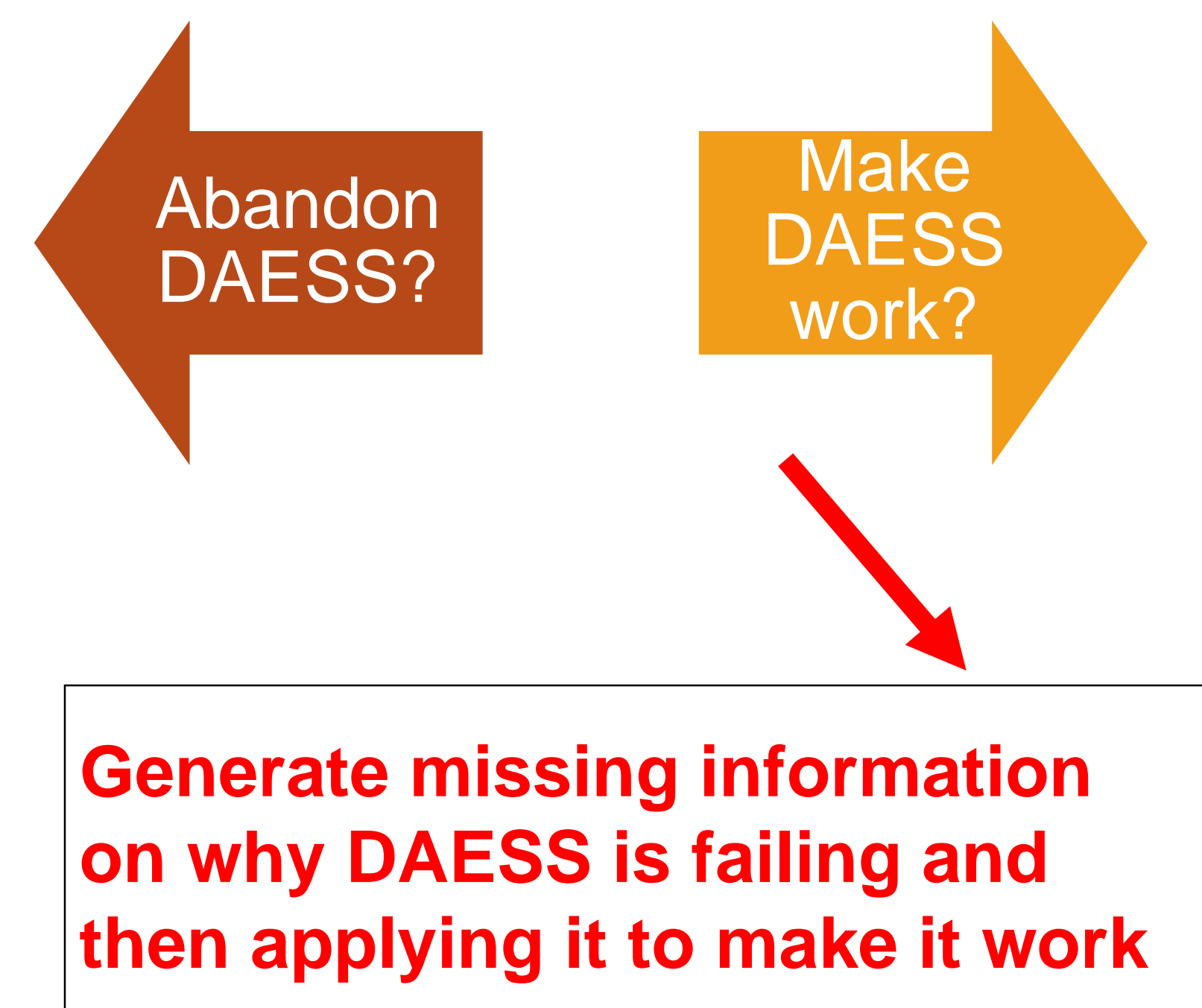
In its Agricultural Extension Policy (2000), Malawi envisions and wishes that “All farmers are able to **demand** and **access high quality** extension services” through a **pluralistic** and **decentralized** extension system. This entails the delivery of extension services is not only a responsibility of public agencies but also other relevant stakeholders including NGOs, private, academic, and farmer organisations. It is anticipated that these multiple extension services providers shall be **accountable** to farmers demanding the services, and in the long-term contribute to improved livelihoods and reduced poverty.

In order to operationalize this dream of a pluralistic-demand driven extension services, the Ministry of Agriculture designed and has been promoting the District Agricultural Extension Services System (DAESS) since 2006. However, many stakeholders have been disappointed with the system for being a “white elephant” and failing to help farmers demand for and access quality extension services. The system has not be able to enhance farmer’s capacity to deal with complex farming constraints e.g., climate change. It is against this background that the Malawi National Learning Alliance is planning to conduct an action research-based study aimed at generating evidence of processes influencing effectiveness of DAESS while also developing the capacity of district level stakeholders to vision, strategize, and make DAESS work.

### 2. Study Approach

- Participatory Action Research
  - Review of documents, reports, and journals
  - Rapid Appraisal of Agricultural Knowledge Systems-RAAKS)
  - Village and district level dialogue workshops to capture multiple Narratives
- Sites
  - 1-Rumphi in Northern Malawi
    - Source of information on success factors
  - 2-Kasungu in Central Malawi
    - Replication of success factors from Rumphi

#### The DAESS Dilemma



### 3. Expected Outcomes

- Increased awareness and changed perceptions about DAESS among stakeholders in agricultural system of Malawi
- Evidence to inform operationalisation of DAESS
- Capacity of district level actors to formulate a shared vision of extension
  - How it should be implemented and what it should achieve in the district
- Adapted district extension system informed
- Documentation of process making DAESS functional
- Inform processes for improving agricultural policy, extension strategy, extension system guidelines at national level

#### Stakeholders discussing DAESS



### 4. Acknowledgement

- DFID
- Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Water Development
- Farmers and DAESS stakeholder panels



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