

FOUNDATIONS

EGX FIELD NOTES, JANUARY 2022



As most who are reading this probably know, I'm in the midst of a doctoral program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. It's been five years and I'm exhausted. It's been rewarding, fulfilling, and necessary, but in many ways, it has felt like the thing keeping me from really pushing the work of EGX forward. Yet through it all, there has been a quiet confidence that the foundations were being laid. I try to pause and remind myself of the big picture; without the doctorate, the work of EGX likely may not have the impact it would otherwise. So while it often feels like painfully slow progress, I've been forced to have faith that this foundation would enable future work to go deeper and further.

One other foundational aspect of my doctoral program has been required internships (2). Honestly? I was NOT thrilled at the idea of being an 'intern' at this stage in life. But I was able to pursue internships that would benefit EGX, and thanks to COVID, I was able to do them remotely in the summers of 2020 and 2021. Both were with academic institutions focused on agricultural development. They were great opportunities to get a behind-the-scenes perspective of how agricultural development projects are designed and managed by development institutions and researchers. It was also rewarding that scientists at these institutions, being continually faced with their own limitations in reaching poor farmers with new ideas and technologies, immediately recognized and valued EGX's mission: to pair ministries and community organizations with technical expertise, helping to close the productivity and poverty gap for smallholder farmers.

I am currently in the process of writing my thesis for my doctorate. Not a task I relish exactly, but thankfully my graduate committee has given me the latitude to use the process to dig deeper into the gaps and issues that EGX is trying to address. If everything goes according to plan, I should graduate in May (with a new lease on life!). There are a few projects currently in the early discussion stages and I'm anxious to see those move forward AND be able to devote real time to them. More on these next time. If you're reading this at the time of writing (Jan/Feb 2022), please know that you have been an encouragement to me, and have absolutely been a part of pushing EGX forward. It has been a major exercise in patience and faith, but the purpose of EGX continues to be increasingly evident.

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