



Issue 29: November-December 2009

Working with youth

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In this issue

“Young people have proven themselves to be key partners in sustainable development,” said Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General, in his message to celebrate International Youth Day on 12 August this year. But despite their important role in development, youth are facing many challenges, especially those related to access to education, employment and financial services.

The global economic downturn has worsened the already unfavourable situation. The lack of employment opportunities in rural areas means that young people are either unemployed or forced into informal, insecure and low-wage employment. Alternatively, in their search for work, they move to cities or outside their countries, where they often find themselves worse off than in their rural homes.

IFAD-supported projects provide some interesting examples of helping to create jobs and engage young people in rural areas.

Chen Xi, Programme Officer in China, describes how IFAD is helping the Rural Commercial Bank in Chongqing Municipality to provide microcredit services to young migrant workers, who are returning to their rural homes after losing employment in cities.

Vikash Kumar, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, presents a story of Manasa – a young man from Fiji – who was ready to move to a city to look for a job until the Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovations Programme in the Pacific (MORDI) started to operate in his area.

In Jharkhand State of India, young people are used to migrating to the nearby state of Orissa to find work as daily labourers during lean seasons. This is no longer necessary. **Akay Minz**, Community Development Programme Officer, **P. C. Oraon**, Project Director and **Vincent Darlong** from the India Country Office describe how an IFAD-supported programme trains tribal youth to become trainers in fisheries in their villages.

Saurav R. Joshi, National Project Coordinator, presents the use of the Training for Economic Empowerment (TREE) methodology of the International Labour Organization to train Nepali youth in enterprise development.



Contact

ifad@ifad.org
www.ifad.org

Martina Spisiakova
Newsletter Coordinator
IFAD
Asia and the Pacific Division
Via Paolo di Dono 44
00142 Rome, Italy
m.spisiakova@ifad.org
Tel: 3906-54592295

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Useful links:

Knowledge Networking for Rural
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Region (ENRAP): www.enrap.org

Rural Poverty Portal
www.ruralpovertyportal.org

Chase Palmeri, Knowledge Management Facilitator, shares the story of the 15-year-old Aruni Pradeepika from Sri Lanka, who created her own blog. Through the blog she helped save her father, who was kidnapped from his paddy fields. As more young people in rural areas use the Internet, they can take the opportunity to help their parents – farmers – use YouTube videos to learn new farming techniques.

Gloria Ochoa from PROCASUR, a regional development organization based in Chile, contributes as a special guest to present a new initiative – the Rural Youth Talents Programme – that will gather and disseminate the experiences of working with young rural people in Latin America.

On International Youth Day, Ban Ki-moon called for more support to young people in their development. They are the ones who will lead the way towards sustainability.

Martina Spisiakova, Newsletter Coordinator, IFAD, m.spisiakova@ifad.org

Microfinance helps young migrants explore development opportunities as they return to their rural homes in Chongqing, China

For young farmers living in the rural areas of Chongqing Municipality in China, migration to urban areas for off-farm employment has been one of the very few opportunities to earn additional income. As the economic crisis grows worse, migrants are losing their jobs and having to return to their rural homes. The IFAD-financed Rural Finance Sector Programme supports the Rural Commercial Bank in Chongqing in addressing increasing unemployment by providing microcredit services tailored to young migrant workers.



A young woman applying for a loan from the Rural Commercial Bank in Chongqing

Migrating to cities

Poor rural people, especially those living in remote villages where land and agriculture can be inadequate to sustain livelihoods, often migrate to cities in search of work. Migration takes place mainly during the off-seasons, when crops have been harvested or the land replanted and there is little work available.

Many of the rural migrants are young labourers between the ages of 20 and 40. They have to leave their elderly parents and young children behind as they move to cities searching for work. It was estimated by the Chongqing Labour and Social Security Bureau that, on average, 44 per cent of rural household income in Chongqing is derived from off-farm employment, while for many of the poorer rural areas the share could go above even 60 per cent.

Growing unemployment

With the worsening economic crisis, many migrant farmers have lost their job in cities and have had to return to their rural homes. A survey conducted by the China Economic Monitoring and Analysis Center estimated that up to 26 million (or 15.3 per cent) of the total of about 130 million rural workers employed outside their hometowns have returned home without jobs. Most of them are young.

The government predicted that unemployment would be the biggest challenge for China's economy this year, and the situation could deteriorate further since no clear signs of economic recovery are visible.

As a result of the economic fluctuation, by end of February 2009 about 3.6 million (out of a total of 7.8 million by 2008) rural migrants returned home in Chongqing. This has created unexpected difficulties and challenges for both local governments and IFAD in reducing rural poverty in Chongqing, where the Rural Finance Sector Programme is being implemented.

Working since 2006, the programme aims to improve the access of poor rural people to financial services from official financial institutions, in particular the Chongqing Rural Credit

Upcoming events and missions

Regional Agro-Industry Forum – 3-6 November 2009, Yangling, China

Knowledge Management Workshop – 5-6 November, Bangkok, Thailand

IFAD Executive Board – 16-17 December, Rome, Italy

Afghanistan

Start-up workshop – Rural Microfinance and Livestock Support Project, 14-17 November 2009, Dubai, the United Arab Emirates

Bangladesh

Loan negotiations – Participatory Small-scale Water Resources Sector Project, 6 November 2009

Supervision mission – Finance for Enterprise Development and Employment Creation (FEDEC) Project, November 2009

Design completion and quality assurance mission – Char Development and Settlement Project, November-December 2009

Joint IFAD/World Bank supervision mission – National Agricultural Technology Programme, 5-12 December 2009

Writershop for project staff – 7-10 December 2009

Cambodia

Design mission – Community Agricultural Productivity Project, November 2009

Supervision mission – Community-Based Rural Development Project in Kampong Thom and Kampot, Rural Poverty Reduction Project in Prey Veng and Svay Rieng, and Rural Livelihoods Improvement Project in Kratie and Ratanakiri, November 2009

Cooperatives (subsequently converted to the Rural Commercial Bank - RCB), which is the dominant service provider for rural areas. The programme aims to:

- enhance business efficiency and tailor products to poor rural people to improve their access to rural financial services
- demonstrate the potential of institutional performance and sustainability by adopting policy reforms that serve rural clients in a durable way.

Given the increasing challenges related to the economic crisis, the programme now supports the RCB in addressing the increasing unemployment by providing microcredit services tailored to young migrant workers.

The new business product

Limited access of relatively poor farmers to rural financial services has commonly been recognized as one of the constraints to poverty reduction and rural development. Microcredit for returned migrant workers is a new business product developed by the RCB to address the emerging situation of increasing unemployment of migrant workers.

For this purpose, the RCB issued “Measures for Microcredit Lending to Returned Migrant Workers”, which laid out simplified procedures and eased the threshold for lending. At the same time, the government is providing additional subsidies to encourage migrant workers to explore opportunities at their home base and start up businesses to generate income.

In collaboration with the Youth League of Chongqing, the RCB also developed a special microcredit product for young migrant workers who have returned home. The RCB is providing microcredit while the Youth League provides skills training to the young workers and facilitates their access to credit services. The Youth League has planned to train 20,000 young workers every year in various skills and in operating small businesses to enable them to earn additional income.

The case of Zhou Kui

Mr Zhou Kui – a 34-year-old farmer from Wulong Village in Baitu Township, Wanzhou County – lost his employment in the city in 2008. However, his struggle did not last long. He found that the local RCB was offering credit services to those who returned home after losing their jobs in cities.

Zhou Kui decided to use his savings from the city to grow tobacco. As his funds were inadequate, he applied for and received 100,000 CNY (USD 14,650) from Wanzhou RCB. He rented 16 hectares of farm land to grow tobacco, and hired eight fixed-term farmers and 25 seasonal labourers. In one year when tobacco leaves were harvested and sold, he earned 150,000 CNY (USD 21,975) net income.

The hired labourers also brought home about 7,000 CNY (USD 1,026) each. This is significantly high in comparison to the average of 3,300 CNY (USD 484) annual income per capita at the locality.

There have been many examples like the story of Zhou Kui. By June 2009, about 100,000 returned migrant workers, mostly young people, had received microcredit from the RCB, with total lending at 720 million CNY (USD 105,408).

With the credit support, many of the returned migrant workers started self-employment activities by engaging in agricultural production and small and medium business. Some of them started their own small agro-business, such as chicken and pig raising, agro-processing and trading; and some opened businesses for textile manufacturing, home furnishings and household appliances.

For more information, contact:

Chen Xi, Programme Officer, Programme Management Office, Rural Finance Sector Programme, Chongqing, China, cqrcgs@163.com

China

Wrap-up meeting of the evaluation mission – West Guangxi Poverty-Alleviation Project, 16-19 November 2009

Preparatory mission the Country Programme Evaluation – 16-19 November 2009

Design mission – new project, 22-28 November 2009

Follow-up mission – Environment Conservation and Poverty-Reduction Programme in Ningxia and Shanxi, 1-13 December 2009

Follow-up mission – Rural Finance Sector Programme (Shaanxi and Chongqing), 1-13 December 2009

India

President’s visit to India – 22 November – 4 December 2009

Country programme evaluation – 7-11 December 2009

Joint review mission – Tejaswini Rural Women's Empowerment Programme, 6-18 November 2009

Joint review mission – Orissa Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme, 2-17 November 2009

Indonesia

Supervision mission – Rural Empowerment and Agricultural Development Programme in Central Sulawesi, November-December 2009

Supervision mission – National Programme for Community Empowerment, November-December 2009

Detailed design mission – Smallholder Livelihood Development Programme, November-December 2009

Rural youth help reverse rural-urban drift in a remote district in Fiji

Most remote rural communities in the Pacific have been crippled by the effects of massive rural-urban drift as young people leave to seek employment and a better life in towns and cities. Manasa Levaci, 27, was among this group of people a few years ago.

After dropping out of school because his parents could not pay his education expenses, Manasa met with the daily struggle of earning a meagre income by cutting copra on the village communal farm. A few years later the global price of copra fell dramatically. This caused a collapse of the local coconut industry, pulling most farmers, including Manasa, into deeper poverty.

“At this time of my life, I was on the verge of packing my knapsack and moving to town to find a job to support my family,” he said. “I love the life in my village with my family and friends, but without a good source of income life was turning into a struggle for survival,” he added.

Around this time, the Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovations Programme in the Pacific (MORDI), funded by IFAD, was just starting its operations in Fiji. The MORDI team visited the communities in Manasa’s area to introduce the programme to them. Manasa heard from friends about a group coming to give a presentation on rural development and sustainable livelihoods. He decided to remain to hear them before moving to town.

The MORDI programme excited him. He saw a glimpse of hope through MORDI that opportunities could be created right there in his village. “I made up my mind not to leave the village but to work with the programme to improve my and my fellow villagers’ lives right here in the village,” he said proudly.

Manasa started attending meetings and workshops organized by MORDI. Soon enough he became enthusiastic about MORDI’s work in bringing about sustainable development to the area. He started helping Rev. Samuela Qoliqoro, the MORDI Community Facilitator for the area.

When the MORDI team visited to conduct community planning workshop at the district centre, Manasa attended as the sole representative of his village, and at his own expense (i.e. transportation and accommodations). “Most people in my village discouraged me, saying that it was a waste of time. They said they had seen many organizations come and ‘do their thing’ and then leave, never to be seen again,” he said. Contrary to their advice, Manasa decided to attend the workshop.

It was in this workshop that Manasa caught the attention of the MORDI staff as someone who was quiet but intelligent and who had a genuine desire to bring development to his people and himself. The team noted him as a potential village focal point for the future.

After the workshop, Manasa returned to his village and ran many small group workshops with the Community Facilitator on village development planning processes. His knowledge and skills in explaining the processes in grassroots terms soon caught the attention of the village chiefs and elders, who started to take him more seriously. They began attending the evening workshops he organized on various topics that he had learned through MORDI’s ongoing training programme. The topics included preparing community development plans, conducting and documenting village meetings, understanding village and community governance structures, keeping records of village development, financial literacy and savings, conflict management and writing proposals.



Manasa Levaci (middle row, 4th from left) after being inducted as a MORDI community facilitator, February 2009



Manasa sketching a resource map of his village during a planning workshop in Natuvu, July 2006

Kyrgyzstan

Loan negotiations – Forestry and Carbon Trading Project, 9-10 November 2009

Nepal

Mid-term review – Western Uplands Poverty-Alleviation Project, November 2009

Training in participatory mapping – 4-7 November 2009

Training in financial management and audit – November 2009

Implementation support mission – Leasehold Forestry and Livestock Programme, November 2009

Loan negotiations – High Value Agriculture Project, November 2009

Country programme management team meeting – 10-11 December 2009

Government portfolio review (IFAD Country Strategic Opportunities Programme review) – December 2009

Pakistan

Financial management review mission – Southern Federally Administered Tribal Areas Development Project, October-November 2009

Design mission – Punjab project, late October to December 2009

Loan signing – Crop Maximization Support Project, 11 November 2009, Rome

Project completion review mission – Northern Areas Development Project, November 2009

Design mission – Balochistan/Sindh Coastal Project, November-December 2009

Semi-annual country portfolio review – November-December 2009

Through the workshop on writing proposals, Manasa helped his Village Development Committee write and submit a water project for the village, which, since the 1950s, had been using unsafe well water for daily needs. These wells were very unreliable and dried up easily, forcing villagers to walk for miles every day to fetch water from streams.

The proposal was accepted and MORDI engaged a water expert to help the village build its new water supply system from a safe water source. In December 2008, water started running in every home in the village, to the great joy of everyone. Manasa was hailed as their hero, and the elders showed him deep gratitude in a special church service in the village.

It was no surprise that when MORDI decided two months later to expand and engage one Community Facilitator per village, Manasa was chosen by his village. Manasa continues to serve his village as its facilitator. He attends all village and even district meetings with local leaders, chiefs and elders, where he is able to confidently articulate his village's needs and present his ideas at decision-making fora.

As a dedicated farmer he continues to cut copra, as the price has slightly improved. He supplements his income with the allowance he collects as a Community Facilitator and is constantly looking for new alternatives to diversify his village's income in order to cope with the fluctuating prices of traditional commodities such as copra.

Manasa is working hard with the youth in the village to start up a fishing business which he says "will help the youth earn a decent income and remain in the village." This has created a positive wave among other youth in the area, who are following in the footsteps of Manasa to make the most of the opportunities that they are creating by using the land and sea resources they have around them without the need to leave their village.

For more information, contact:

Vikash Kumar, Regional Training, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, MORDI Programme, Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPI), vikash.kumar@fsp.org.fj

IFAD brings a smile to the faces of tribal youth of Jharkhand in India

This year, Karmu Soy and his friends from Jharkhand State of India join their village hockey team again. But this time, the spirit of the team is different than in the past. Anyone can see a smile and confidence on their faces. This is because they know that it is no longer necessary to leave their team as in the past and migrate to the nearby state of Orissa to find work as daily labourers during lean seasons. The IFAD-supported Jharkhand Tribal Development Programme is helping young people to earn wages without having to leave their village.

Karmu Soy is a 20-year-old man from the Munda tribe who belongs to the Ulidih hamlet of 16 households in the upper ridge of Kochang village of Khunti District in Jharkhand. In the past, young men and women migrated seasonally to find work elsewhere. But today they are settled in their own village, as the IFAD-supported programme was able to change the situation for many tribal youths of Jharkhand. Today Karmu is an active member of the Gram Sabha (village assembly). He earns his wages through land and water management activities and is also proud to own a pond (water-harvesting structure) in his own village.



A new water supply system being installed in Natuva village, December 2008



Gurujan Sarder, from Bhumij Tribe (Tangring village, East Singhbhum district, Jharkhand State), who was trained in vegetable cultivation, is proudly showing his vegetable nursery

Follow-up mission – Community Development Programme, December 2009

Follow-up mission – Programme for Increasing Sustainability and Outreach in Microfinance, December 2009

Start-up mission – Crop Maximization Support Project, December 2009 (tentative)

Sri Lanka

Post supervision mission visit – Smallholder Plantations Entrepreneurship Development Programme and Post-Tsunami Coastal Rehabilitation and Resource Management Programme, early November 2009

Loan negotiations – National Agribusiness Development Programme, mid-November 2009

Country Strategic Opportunities Programme (COSOP) stakeholder workshop – late November 2009

Grant supervision mission – Anuradhapura Participatory Development Foundation, early December 2009

Viet Nam

Follow-up to supervision – Programme for Developing Business with the Rural Poor (Ben Tre Province), 2-6 November 2009

Follow-up to supervision – Programme for Improving Market Participation of the Poor in Ha Tinh Province, 16-20 November 2009

Follow-up to supervision – Decentralized Programme for Rural Poverty Reduction in Quang Binh Province, 23-27 November 2009

Follow-up to supervision – Programme for Developing Business with the Rural Poor (Cao Bang Province), 7-11 December 2009

Country Programme Management Team meeting – Bac Kan Province, 14-18 December 2009

Although the state of Jharkhand is rich in natural resources, it is poorly developed. The state accounts for 40 per cent of the mineral resources of the nation, and 29 per cent of the land is covered by forest. However, about 46 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. Employment is the lowest in the country, with 63.8 per cent of the main working population unemployed.

Over one quarter of the youth in the state belong to tribal communities. These young people are disillusioned because of the lack of basic amenities.

It is in this scenario that the Jharkhand Tribal Development Society (JTDS), a society promoted by the Government of Jharkhand, implemented the IFAD-supported Jharkhand Tribal Development Programme (JTDP) in five districts of the state. It focuses on 330 villages where more than 50 per cent of tribal people live below the poverty line.

The programme, which started in 2003 and will be closed in 2011, has the following objectives:

- Strengthen the human and social capital of the programme communities for planning, implementing and monitoring their own development agenda with inclusive participatory and decision-making processes that correspond to their own aspirations, needs and perceptions.
- Make the communities more responsible for managing their development packages, to generate a greater sense of ownership of development intervention processes and results.
- Build on the traditional and indigenous wisdom, knowledge, capacities and values of the community.

The JTDP is guided by the principle that adults are the foundation and youth are the pillars of any community. The programme sensitizes the youths as partners for development rather than as target participants. The programme is taking up the following activities for youth:

- rural community health (RCH) awareness camps for adolescents, both women and men, to address issues such as personal hygiene, sexually transmitted diseases, drugs and alcoholism, and HIV/AIDS
- RCH awareness training for young members of self-help groups (SHG), particularly on issues of household health and hygiene, safe drinking water, sanitation, balanced diet, preventive measures for unwanted pregnancy, and child care for young mothers
- orientation training for young people between 15 and 30 years old to strengthen their sense of ownership with respect to village community development and common assets created
- skills enhancement training for livelihood improvement and income-generating activities, both farm- and non-farm-based. Farm-based trainings include agriculture production, vegetable and fruit tree cultivation, and fishery and livestock management; non-farm-based trainings include carpentry, rope making, candle making, masonry, handicrafts and tailoring.

In addition to developing their skills for improved livelihoods and income generation, the trainings also help make youth agents of social transformation through productive engagement and prevention of distress migration.

JTDP also provided intensive capacity enhancement trainings to selected young men and women between the ages of 20 and 25 to enable them to perform as 'community service providers' in various livelihood improvement activities. These included trainings as animators or master trainers for SHGs, land and water management, forestry, fisheries, agriculture and business.

Before the JTDP interventions, fish culture in the ponds was virtually non-existent. When the JTDP started, it was difficult to mobilize the adults for this relatively unknown activity. Even those who had ponds used them for bathing and irrigation, as they never had fingerlings to cultivate fish in them.

When JTDP promoted the construction of water-harvesting structures such as

Anita Devi, a young tribal farmer from Labga village, Ranchi district, cultivated groundnuts for the first time in her life. Through the programme's technology support, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) provided her with two kg of seed (variety ICGV – 91114) from which she cultivated 40 kg of groundnuts. Out of this, she gave 10 kg to the Village Seed Bank in her village for seed multiplication and extension. She kept 10 kg as seeds for the next season. She sold the remaining 25 kg of groundnuts in the local market for INR 60 (USD 1.3) per kg. Anita earned a net profit of INR 1,500 (USD 31) and also served as an agent of change by giving seed to the seed bank for others to use.



A demonstration on making smokeless *chulhas* (fuel-efficient cooking areas) for young people from Munda Tribe (Longa village, Khunti district, Jharkhand State)



Meghnath Birhor, from Paharsingh village (Ranchi district, Jharkhand State), demonstrates his skill in traditional rope making after he received training from the programme

ponds and wells in the programme villages under its land and water management component, it was all but natural that pisciculture would be introduced.

The programme mobilized the tribal youths of the villages and taught them the benefits of fish culture both as source of nutrition and as an income-generating activity, since demand for fish is high in the local market. Some of the more skillful and enthusiastic youths were provided technical training on fisheries to make them 'master trainers' in fishery activities. This was done with the assistance from the Government Fishery Department and local agricultural university.

To date, 50 'fishery master trainers' have been trained, and they have started earning income by training others and providing technical services in fishery management in their communities.

Wherever JTDP has promoted water-harvesting structures in the form of ponds and other water reservoirs, these master trainers became the motivators to promote fishery activities among the communities. They also play an active role in linking the communities with the Government Fishery Department for accessing the Government's various schemes for fishery development.

The JTDP has brought about many positive changes among the tribal and rural communities of Jharkhand. A good number of the village youth have become master trainers for different activities such as agriculture, fishery and livestock management. Their active participation in the Gram Sabha, or village assembly, has increased up to 80 per cent from earlier almost non-participation.

Youth also started assuming responsibility for their community natural resources such as community forests, community water reservoir and ponds.

However, the tribal youths need to continue to be empowered and trained in areas such as natural resource management, health in regards to RCH and HIV/AIDS, literacy (women's literacy rate is less than 10 per cent) and more technical skills in areas such as carpentry, masonry and tailoring.

The Jharkhand Youth Policy was formulated by the Government of Jharkhand in 2007. The policy aims to address education, health and capacity-building issues that will ensure holistic development of youth, particularly those from the disadvantaged communities including the adivasi/tribal communities. The policy also seeks to address the need to reduce vulnerability among youth – through skills enhancement for improved livelihoods and gainful employment – in order to prevent distress migration.

The Government envisages achieving the strategic objectives of the policy with the participation of various agencies, including the tribal development agencies. As a tribal development agency, the JTDS is in a uniquely advantageous position to partner with the Government of Jharkhand to advance the cause of rural youth in Jharkhand.

For more information, contact:

**Ms Akay Minz, Community Development Programme Officer,
Jharkhand Tribal Development Programme, Ranchi, India, akay.minz@gmail.com**

Dr P.C. Oraon, Project Director, Jharkhand Tribal Development Programme, Ranchi, India JTDP, Ranchi, India, spd.jtds@rediffmail.com

Mr Vincent Darlong, IFAD India Country Office, New Delhi, India, v.darlong@ifad.org

Docha Oreya, another young farmer helped by the JTDP, lives in the tribal village Tuyugutu in Khunti District. Tuyugutu is situated in dense forest and is 35 kilometres away from the nearest government administrative office providing development assistance (locally known as Block Development Office). He lives in a mud house with seven family members. Rainfed mono-crop agriculture and agriculture wage earnings are the only sources of livelihood for the family.

Docha proudly describes his life as having changed after the intervention of the JTDP in the village. Along with 44 other households, Docha actively participated in the programme's activities such as trainings in improved agriculture, livestock management, and fishery and aquaculture development. Docha showed special enthusiasm about aquaculture as an opportunity to improve his family's livelihood. In 2008, he cultivated fish in his own perennial pond for the first time.

For the area of 743,224 square metres, he bought 6,000 fingerlings for INR 180 (USD 3.7) with subsidized support from the programme. To prepare the pond, he used 40 kg of cow dung, 10 kg of rice husk and 10 kg of lime, which cost about INR 200 (USD 4.2). The family started cultivating fish in July 2008.

In November, the total production of fish reached 52 kg. The family consumed about 10 kg and the rest was sold at the village market for INR 80 (USD 1.7) per kg, leaving Docha with earnings of INR 4,160 (USD 87). Through this practice the family made a profit of INR 3,000 (USD 63) in only three months.

After achieving this positive result, Docha decided to expand the fishery activity by renovating his pond. As there is no problem of marketing fish locally, he is also thinking of excavating more small ponds in his field in the upcoming season.

Enhancing the skills of young people in Far Western Region of Nepal

The Skills Enhancement for Employment Project (2008-2010) is an ongoing initiative in Nepal funded by IFAD and implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO). It aims to increase the employment of youth living in Far Western Region of Nepal through training for enterprise development. To achieve its ambitious goal of 70 per cent employment within six months after training, the project uses the tools, strategies and principles of the ILO "TRaining for Economic Empowerment" (TREE) methodology.



A typical hilly landscape in Baitadi district of Far Western Region

The Skills Enhancement for Employment Project covers five districts of Far Western Region – Baitadi, Bajhang, Dadelhura, Darchula and Kanchanpur. It aims to:

- train 1,200 youth (50 per cent of whom are women) between 16 and 35 years old who belong to the category of *socio-economically disadvantaged, conflict-affected or scheduled caste (dalit or janjati)*
- provide training based on market demand, leading to more than 70 per cent employment among the project participants six months after the training
- support one cooperative formed in each project district to become operational
- enhance capacity of training providers and partner organizations in community and business planning and organizing
- strengthen the collaboration among stakeholders (service providers, employment agencies, microfinance institutions, project beneficiaries, etc.) that is vital to achieving the 70 per cent employment rate.

The project has focused on Far Western Region due to its low level of economic development. The people in this region have limited resources and lack access to new technologies and production. Poverty levels are highest and access to services lowest. The Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS)-I of 1995/96 reported poverty incidence as high as 72 per cent in the Hill and Mountain regions of Far Western Region. The NLSS-I (1995/96) and NLSS-II (2003/04) report the incidence of poverty in Far Western Region as a whole to be 63.9 per cent and 41 per cent, respectively.

Training methodology

To achieve its ambitious goal of 70 per cent employment within six months after training, the project is emphasizing informal community-based skills training for enterprise development. The training makes use of applicable and adaptable tools, strategies and principles of the ILO TREE Methodology.

TREE stands for "**TR**aining for **E**conomic **E**mpowerment". It is a convergent, comprehensive and practical methodology that works with all stakeholders in planning and delivering training programmes. It also has a strategy for developing support mechanisms for sustainable employment, self-employment and local economic development for disadvantaged groups in communities. It has a set of practical tools or guidelines that help implement training and development policies that will lead to employment of the participants.

The TREE methodology is comprised of the following steps:

- participatory community planning and needs assessment leading to the preparation of standard training proposals
- designing the training curriculum in accordance with the findings in the community planning
- delivering the training, which is product- or service-oriented coupled with a special enterprise training module that focuses on short-term transitions and business forecasting
- providing tools and equipment needed for the training which are subsequently turned over to the trainees so that they can start their short-term transition enterprise plan
- implementing the enterprise plans prepared during the training, providing business advisories, evaluating the enterprise projects and providing further training in business management for those who exhibit entrepreneurial aptitude and interest
- organizing the rest of the community, with the trainees as the core group, and training them in community enterprise systems, operating common service and market facilities, partnership enterprises, and community revolving funds so that they will have their own microcredit facility to finance their unique capital needs
- linking the community with local support mechanisms and structures to assist them in expanding and sustaining their enterprise projects
- organizing trading and business exchanges with other communities and nearby urban areas
- linking the communities with local development programmes and the formal economic and market sectors.

Types of training

With the tools that were already available (such as Rapid Community Appraisal, Rapid Assessment Meeting, and New Enterprise Project Idea) the project concepts and proposals from the villages were transformed into simple standard formats. There was no need for technical narration that poor people are unable to prepare because of their limited educational preparation. Nevertheless, these concepts and proposals had complete information for assessment and approval of donors and assistance providers.

In view of the kind and level of needs, the project provides priority assistance to the following sectors:

- farm sector
- non-farm sector
- service and community development sector

The types of training proposals are as follows:

- Type 01 - training in skills combined with enterprise development to implement the new enterprise project ideas
- Type 02 - training of new workers and/or skills upgrading of current workers of the existing enterprises
- Type 03 - training programmes for groups of people to be engaged in a group enterprise to develop an economic sector
- Type 04 - training of existing informal or micro-enterprise operators in business management subjects or "Improve Your Business"
- Type 05 - training in transition enterprise project planning to organize and start group enterprises for unemployed youth graduates with skills.



A training workshop on community planning for facilitators and programme coordinators of partner organizations in Baitadi and Dadeldhura districts

"7+1" philosophies of the ILO TREE methodology

The TREE methodology focuses on the following philosophies:

1. **Don't plan for the people** - teach and give them the tools needed to plan their own development.
2. **Don't just give resources** - be sure that they need them, and teach them how to maintain and sustain their utilization.
3. **Don't just conduct training** - train on combined skills and enterprise development; provide start-up tools to implement their projects using their newly found skills and knowledge.
4. **Don't just organize** - organize so that they can manage their community's economic development affairs.
5. **Don't tell them to always go to banks for capital** - train and provide them with a system on how to mobilize resources and how to manage their own microfinance system.
6. **Don't force villagers to go 'big time'** - give them time to develop their individual and communal capacities and capabilities before giving them a choice to join or not join the formal sector.
7. **Don't provide assistance forever** - give time frames and target objectives that everybody understands and can achieve.

The "+1 philosophy is: Don't just talk about these philosophies – provide the guidelines and teach people how to make them work

There are differences between the traditional training approach and the TREE approach. The traditional training approach is divergent and the implementation mode is top-down. However, the TREE methodology is community-centred, community-driven and people-oriented. The tools and format for the implementation of activities have been made simple and localized.

Community people are heavily involved in the community planning process, including community needs assessment, preparing training proposals, and assessing the viability for job creation, enterprise development and sustainability of the project developed by them. Thus, with the TREE approach, improvements in the livelihoods of the youth and other members of the community in the Far Western Region of Nepal are eagerly expected.

For more information, contact:

Saurav R. Joshi, National Project Coordinator, Skills Enhancement for Employment Project,
joshisaurav@gmail.com

Young indigenous professionals in Northern Mindanao, Philippines, work for coalition building for the future of their tribe

The Higaunon/Banwaon tribe places its hopes on the young indigenous peoples (IPs) to express the tribe's voice, play a role in decision making, and govern and shape the future of the tribe based on its own customary laws, traditions and indigenous knowledge systems and practices (IKSP). With the assistance of the IFAD-funded Northern Mindanao Community Initiatives and Resource Management Project, young IP professionals are helping their tribe reclaim self-governance.

Many young IPs in Northern Mindanao in the Philippines have been alienated from their community and culture by the educational system of the settlers, which lured away from the tribe. Those left behind are divided by the armed movement. Some have been recruited to join the rebel movement, while others have joined the military forces. While the customary law holders and IKSP experts are losing their youth, young IPs are determined to organize and serve their own tribe.

The Higaunon/Banuwaon is one of the 18 indigenous tribal groups in Mindanao that are widely distributed in the provinces of Agusan del Norte and Agusan del Sur, Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental. They were once a united, self-governed, self-sufficient and self-sustaining tribe with clearly defined laws, regulations and systems, and territorial boundaries. Today, the tribe members can be categorized into three types:

- Type A - those who still adhere to customary laws, traditions and IKSP
- Type B - those who know their culture, laws and sacred traditions but no longer practice them
- Type C - those who only recognize their IP identity when they want to take advantage of benefits from the government.

The Higaunon/Banuwaon tribe decided to take action to consolidate their youth. The first step was to unify their customary laws, traditions and IKSP.

With the assistance of the IFAD-funded Northern Mindanao Community Initiatives and Resource Management Project (NMCIREMP), the tribe conducted an ambitious initiative on coalition building of customary law holders and IKSP experts. The coalition building led to the identification, clarification, revitalization and documentation of customary laws and traditions on self-governance, political structures, leadership systems, justice systems, conflict resolution and peace building; and the formulation of guidelines for IP mandatory representations as mandated in the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act.

The young professionals played a major role in this coalition building. In working with their communities and the NMCIREMP, their tribe:

- received ten Certificates of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADTs) covering about 240,106 hectares of land with a total of 18,313 individuals (4,575 women, 5,323 men and 8,415 children)
- registered nine indigenous people's organizations with different areas of expertise and experiences
- completed six Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plans (ADSDPPs)
- established 12 fully operational Schools for Indigenous Knowledge Arts and Traditions with Higaunon/Banuwaon para-teachers (indigenous people who do not have education degrees but are trained to teach indigenous children) and some Higaunon/Banuwaon regular teachers from the Department of Education
- facilitated IP representations to special local government bodies: 73 to the Sangguniang Barangay (the legislative body at the barangay – village – level, the lowest political unit in Philippine governance), 40 to the Sangguniang Bayan (the legislative body at the municipal level) and 35 to Local Special Bodies.

Young IP professionals are seeking their niche in genuine IP governance and are now engaging in economic activities to ensure that the resources of their ancestral domain are properly managed. Together with their tribe, they continue their struggle in the journey for self-governance.

For more information, contact:

Dominador M. Gomez, IP Specialist, Northern Mindanao Community Initiatives and Resource Management Project, eagle_manghak@yahoo.com



A tribal girl from Northern Mindanao attending the Awarding of Certificates of Ancestral Domain Titles in October 2008

Young enough to know better: learning from Mahavilachchiya in Sri Lanka

Have you ever been told that you are old enough to know better? The assumption is that the older you are the more you know. But by now everybody understands that when it comes to information technology, the internet and new applications referred to as Web 2.0, it's the other way around. The younger you are, the more you tend to know. Grandparents worldwide are turning to grandchildren for advice on how to use mobile phones or search the internet. This kind of knowledge sharing, which is challenging our traditional views about experience, wisdom and age, is happening even in remote rural areas where agriculture is the main source of livelihood.



A recent study undertaken by Harsha D'Silva for the ICT4Livelihoods component of the IFAD-funded Knowledge Networking for Rural Asia and the Pacific (ENRAP III) Programme describes the case of Mahavilachchiya in Sri Lanka. D'Silva calls Mahavilachchiya the most talked-about remote village in Sri Lanka, in the Northwestern dry zone. Thanks to collaboration between the Sri Lankan government and several development assistance agencies, low-cost wireless high-speed internet access was provided to households and schools in the village.

Through this collaboration, 15-year-old Aruni Pradeepika, daughter of a rice farmer, learned English and how to use the internet. By creating her own blog, she helped save her father, who was kidnapped while protecting his paddy fields from elephant attack at night.

Consider Aruni's internet skills and the fact that not long ago the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Los Banos, the Philippines, moved its video collection to YouTube. The most popular video of the IRRI collection is "Establishing a Modified Mat Nursery for Rice". The video shows how to use an interesting technology developed by IRRI in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. Another such video from IRRI shows rice seed preservation techniques in Bangla.

Consider also that according to Kansas State University Professor of Anthropology Michael Wesch, more than 50 per cent of all YouTube content features people ages 16 to 24. The IRRI videos don't feature anyone age 16-24. But maybe they should. In any case, as the story of Aruni shows, more and more 15-year-olds are not just featured on the web. They – like IRRI - are using it. If Aruni used it to blog for the release of her father from kidnappers, she could certainly help him use YouTube to learn new rice-farming techniques.

Are you young enough to know how to use the web for improving agriculture in remote areas? If you are, please reach out to the older, but not necessarily wiser people you are working with. If - like this author – you are not 'young enough to know', consider asking a young person you know to help you to use information technology to find the agricultural technology you need or to share the agricultural technology you have.

For more information, contact:

Chase Palmeri, Knowledge Management Facilitator, IFAD, c.palmeri@ifad.org

Looking to the future: the role of young talent in the rural world

There are an estimated 1.5 billion young people in the world. Of these, 50 per cent live in developing countries. In Latin America and the Caribbean there are 140 million youth, of whom 35 million live in rural areas, representing 30 per cent of the rural population. Today, it is essential to develop new ways of working with young people living in rural areas, considering their energy, vitality and future vision. But how to turn rural youth into a strategic partner in development initiatives? The IFAD-funded Rural Youth Talents Programme for Latin America addresses this challenge.

The Rural Youth Talents Programme, which started in March 2008, is an initiative implemented by PROCASUR (a regional development organization based in Chile) and IFAD's Innovation Mainstreaming Initiative (IMI). Its strategy is to make visible and to systematize the experiences and lessons learned from working with young men and women. How to incorporate rural young men and women into development initiatives? **By learning from them and circulating the achieved learning outcomes.**



Young rural entrepreneurs in Latin America are sharing their experiences with others

The programme organized a competition called "Innovative strategies and initiatives of young rural entrepreneurs". About 117 proposals from Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela

were submitted to the competition. The objective was to identify successful initiatives and actions, implemented by young rural men and women, that contribute to their incomes and assets increase, as well as improve their access to employment. Award would then be given to outstanding initiatives that were already being implemented and/or in an advanced stage of development. The competition made it clear that:

- When young men and women are executors and/or promoters of innovative initiatives, they can become an active social subject, managing their own development and being concerned about their community's welfare. For instance, business initiatives implemented by young rural people enabled them to generate their own income. In addition, they could become a service supply for others in their community. This is the case of the Productos El Encanto entrepreneurship, of Antioquia, Colombia, in which the young entrepreneurs process and commercialize stuffed and frozen trout for local restaurants and tourist centres, entering the market with a totally innovative product.
- Young people can serve as a guide and focus of attention for the community.
- Young rural people can develop alternatives that stimulate and dynamize their social environment. They need to have specific support at the beginning of their entrepreneurial activities, but then they need to have autonomy to develop their innovations.
- At present, any development initiative that incorporates rural youth into its activities will be betting on a sustainable strategy for their actions, because these young people will probably improve their current and future living conditions.

The field work experience and lessons of every competition winner will be disseminated to a broad group of stakeholders through another activity of the programme: a Learning Route called "Innovative experiences of access to land, financial services and rural youth entrepreneurship in Latin America and the Caribbean". The objective of this Learning Route is precisely to share experiences with other stakeholders interested in including rural youth as strategic allies in rural development initiatives.

Through these activities, the Rural Youth Talents Programme seeks to highlight and promote the important role that youth can play in development. This will be of great use to national and international development agencies, such as IFAD, for establishing new ways of working with rural youth.

For more information, contact:

Gloria Ochoa, President, PROCASUR, Gloria.ochoa@procasur.org

Occasional papers: Issue 9: Institutions and rural services – Lessons from IFAD-supported projects in Asia

This paper summarizes the findings of a study supported by IFAD's Asia and the Pacific Division. The study reviewed the changing roles and responsibilities of the diverse players in the provision of rural services for sustainable agricultural growth, and offered recommendations for IFAD's future institutional development support to countries in the region. The study included desk reviews of completed and ongoing agricultural/rural development projects in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Viet Nam, which were supplemented by a field visit to Cambodia and Viet Nam. The study assessed the successes and shortcomings of IFAD-supported projects in providing rural services to smallholders in these countries and recommended measures for future interventions.

An important conclusion of the study was that the building of lasting grassroots institutions would require enhanced support to strengthen the managerial, organizational and financial skills of the informal groups formed under various projects. Only in this way will it be possible to develop democratic and independent, demand-led rural producer organizations. The study calls for a continuing and important role for donor-funded projects in supporting reform of the institutions involved in development and dissemination of agricultural technologies. In this context, such projects should also support collaboration among key stakeholders, including community organizations, public institutions, non-governmental organizations, agribusiness and information and communications technology enterprises.

In the area of seed production, the study highlighted the need for a relaxation of policies on the pricing of varietal seed, to enhance supply from private sources and community-based seed production initiatives. For marketing, it recommended further support to strengthening producer groups, providing information services, and developing equitable contract arrangements and guidelines for their enforcement. The study also identified the need to support analysis of the social and sustainability dimensions of contract farming – for example the implications on land-use changes, local employment, food security, poverty reduction and the environment – which so far have not received much attention.

Although the study was based on a review of selected IFAD-supported projects in three Asian countries, we believe that its findings and recommendations will be of interest to a wider audience of policymakers, development practitioners, donors, academics and civil society in developing countries.

Dr Ashok Seth, Agriculture and Rural Development Specialist, akseth@talktalk.net, aksth1@aol.com

Read the paper at: www.ifad.org/operations/projects/regions/pi/paper/9.pdf