



Issue: January-February 2011

Creating opportunities for rural youth

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In this issue

Today, the world is home to over one billion young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years. Some 61.5 per cent of these youth live in the Asia and the Pacific Region, with a significant proportion living in rural areas.

Youth is an important phase of life when human capital can be built to enable young people to lead more fulfilling lives in the future and to contribute to their country's economic development.

IFAD's Asia and the Pacific Division recognizes the important role youth play in the development of the agriculture and non-agriculture sectors. According to the IFAD Asia-Pacific Report on Rural Poverty 2011, in the agriculture sector, educated farmers are more likely to adopt new technologies. Studies of agricultural productivity show that better-educated farmers get higher returns on their land. For the non-agriculture sector, evidence shows that with increasing demand for skilled workers, the earnings are higher for those who have completed secondary or tertiary education.

Despite their significant role in rural development, young people are unable to reach their full potential because of poverty, hunger and poor health and education, all of which have worsened with the global economic crisis. As a result, they lack adequate skills that limit their chances of gaining decent rural employment. Many migrate to cities in search of employment, but often find themselves worse off for the same reason.

With this in mind, the Asia and the Pacific Division is organizing a side event during IFAD's Governing Council (19-20 February 2011) to discuss how young people are coping during times of global economic crisis, and the opportunities and challenges they face as they engage in rural development.

This newsletter, which is the second issue focused on youth in Asia and the Pacific, includes interesting examples from IFAD-supported projects and programmes in the region to support the discussion on 20 February.

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Rural Poverty Report 2011

New realities, new challenges: new opportunities for tomorrow's generation

The Rural Poverty Report 2011 provides a coherent and comprehensive look at rural poverty, its global consequences and the prospects for eradicating it.

In **Cambodia**, children and youth from the poorest families often engage in dangerous activities such as drug trafficking and prostitution. To partly address this problem, **Duong Kim Chhean** shares how an IFAD-supported project in Cambodia supports young farmer clubs by providing technical training in agricultural production to students or jobless youth so that they are able to help their families.

People aged 15-35 represent 40 per cent of the population living in the areas of an IFAD-supported programme in Orissa state of **India**. **Pravanjan Mahapatra**, **Susanta Nanda** and **Vincent Darlong** describe the strategies the programme implements to help these young people, most of whom are indigenous, to become socially respected and economically active members of society. Some of these strategies include promoting youth as village volunteers, including youth in village development committees, building vocational skills and promoting youth leadership in community services.

Rural-urban migration is a huge problem in **Pakistan**. Often, low agricultural productivity, land degradation, inequitable land distribution and poor employment prospects push young people to look for work outside their rural homes. **Abdul Qayyum Abbasi** tells a story of a young farmer who stayed in his rural area because he was able to earn a living thanks to credit that a local community organization provided him.

Vikash Kumar shares some interesting youth-related initiatives in **the Pacific islands**, where the Programme for Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovations is helping unemployed rural youth to participate in their community decision making and to design and implement their own projects. The story of Weresova, a young boy from Fiji, gives an example of how the support in business skill development can lead young people to run successful private businesses.

According to the World Bank, in **Viet Nam** the poverty rate declined from 58 to 20 per cent between 1993 and 2004, primarily due to a disciplined, hard-working and fast-learning young population. Our examples from two projects support these statistics. First, **Ha Van Hoa** shows how young farmers can benefit from vocational training that positively influences their production practices, links production with marketing and brings about economic benefits for their families and whole villages. **Nguyen Trung Chuong** describes 'job connection' activities that bring together enterprises and young people to help them find jobs.

There is much more in this newsletter. I hope you find this issue inspiring and share it with others who might be able to implement some of these ideas in support of young rural people in their own contexts.

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Supporting young farmer clubs in Cambodia

The IFAD-supported Rural Livelihoods Improvement Project in Kratie, Preah Vihear and Ratanakiri in Cambodia (2007-2014) has been establishing young farmer clubs (YFCs) since 1998 in the communes where villages being supported by the project are located. The objective is to support technical training on production, vegetable growing, chicken raising and other basic agriculture to young farmers, who are either students or jobless youth, so that they can assist their families.

The idea of YFCs emerged during the project appraisal mission in 2006, when it was determined that young jobless farmers could be mobilized to work as a group to promote income generation and that agricultural learning could be provided to young students in schools.

Initially, the project formed 16 YFCs with 408 club members, of whom 149 were women. Each club received approximately US\$100 from the project to start its activities, as well as a three-day management training for the club leaders on leadership, association management, coordination and bookkeeping. Technical training has also been provided to the club members – for example, on chicken and pig raising and vegetable growing. If



Scarf weaving at a YFC in Kratie province

Released on 6 December 2010, the report contains updated estimates by IFAD regarding how many rural poor people there are in the developing world, poverty rates in rural areas, and the percentage of poor people residing in rural areas.

Since the last *Rural Poverty Report* was published by IFAD in 2001, more than 350 million rural people have lifted themselves out of extreme poverty. But the new report notes that global poverty remains a massive and predominantly rural phenomenon – with 70 per cent of the developing world's 1.4 billion extremely poor people living in rural areas. Key areas of concern are Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Increasingly volatile food prices, the uncertainties and effects of climate change, and a range of natural resource constraints will complicate further efforts to reduce rural poverty, the report says.

But the report also emphasizes that profound changes in agricultural markets are giving rise to new and promising opportunities for the developing world's smallholder farmers to significantly boost their productivity, which will be necessary to ensure enough food for an increasingly urbanized global population estimated to reach at least 9 billion by 2050.

Accordingly, "there remains an urgent need...to invest more and better in agriculture and rural areas" based on "a new approach to smallholder agriculture that is both market-oriented and sustainable," the report says.

"The report makes clear that it is time to look at poor smallholder farmers and rural entrepreneurs in a completely new way – not as charity cases but as people whose innovation, dynamism and hard work will bring prosperity to their communities and greater food security to the world in the decades ahead," said Kanayo F. Nwanze, IFAD's President.

the clubs were active after six months, the project started promoting sustainability by providing additional funds of up to US\$150 which could be used for income-generating projects.

Despite the popularity of the clubs, membership declined from 408 to 323 in 2009. Nevertheless, the membership of young women increased from 149 to 186 during this period. One reason for decreased club membership is that some members married and became more involved with their family; some non-active members resigned from the clubs.

The project reviewed the status of the clubs and determined that 50 per cent of them were successful. Additional support was considered in order to meet the needs of the members and build their capacity in agricultural production and other vocational skills. Following the assessment, some YFCs have been provided with vocational training, such as in food processing (banana and taro chip) and handicrafts (for example weaving). Through the clubs, many member have learned to more efficiently carry out their on farm-business such as vegetable growing, and chicken and pig raising, and off-farm business such as handicrafts, and food processing.

Clubs that are still active and successful after two years will receive an additional US\$50 towards their operations. Additional forms of support through a commune investment fund will be discussed with commune councils.

Duong Kim Chhean (chhean1@gmail.com), *Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Project Support Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries*

From poverty to a respectable life: the story of a young worker from Pakistan

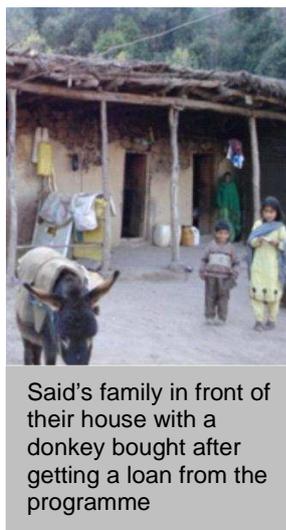
Low agricultural productivity, land degradation, inequitable land distribution and lack of employment opportunities in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in Pakistan have forced many of the men to migrate in search of work. The IFAD-supported Community Development Programme in Pakistan (2004-2011) works to address these issues. Here is a story of Mr Said Hussain, a 30-year-old farmer from Ghambir, a 400-household village situated in the mountains of Poonch district.

Said Hussain used to be landless field labourer on a daily wage basis, earning PKR 150 (US\$1.70). He could find work only 15 to 20 days a month and was the only breadwinner of his family. He was hard-working but unskilled. Hussain was not able to earn enough to feed his family three meals a day. He could not leave his village to seek employment because his family would not be able to survive without him. Said's two children were school-age but their poverty prevented them from studying in school – they could not afford the fees for books, uniforms and other requirements.

In May 2009, the IFAD-funded AJK Community Development Programme (CDP) reactivated a community organization (CO) that had been formed in 2007, and which had become inactive when its leadership left the village. Said became member of his village CO. In December 2009, his CO passed a resolution for matching funds system, with CDP providing funds at a ratio of 1:2. At the time, the CO savings amounted to PKR 61 000 (US\$710), and in January 2010 the CO received PKR 120 000 (US\$1,340) against its savings.

Upon the recommendation of CO members, Said received a loan of PKR 20 000 (US\$233). He invested the money by buying two donkeys to transport goods between his village and the local market, which was connected by a 5 km bridle path. Said usually transports about 80 kg of goods from the local market to households, charging about PKR 150 (US\$1.70). With his new job, he now earns about PKR 600 (US\$7) per day.

Said's life changed thanks to the programme. He is able to pay re-pay the loan and at the same time send his children to school. He feels that he can now live a respectable life.



Said's family in front of their house with a donkey bought after getting a loan from the programme

"We need to focus on creating an enabling environment for rural women and men to overcome the risks and challenges they face as they work to make their farms and other businesses successful," he said.

Download the report here:
www.ifad.org/tpr2011/report/erpr2011.pdf

Upcoming events and missions

IFAD Governing Council,
19-20 February 2011, IFAD
Headquarters, Rome

**Annual retreat of the Asia
and the Pacific Division**,
21-23 February 2011, Rome

**IFAD President's visit to
Australia and New Zealand**,
3–9 April 2011

**Launch of the Rural Poverty
Report**, Australia National
University, Canberra, Australia,
5 April 2011

Afghanistan

Supervision mission – Rural
Microfinance and Livestock
Support Project, March 2011

Bhutan

Start-up workshop – Market
Access and Growth
Infrastructure Project, January-
February 2011, Thimphu,
Bhutan

Cambodia

Design completion mission –
Community-Based Agricultural
Productivity Project,
February 2011

India

Joint review mission – North
Eastern Region Community
Resource Management Project
for Upland Areas, 29 January –
11 February 2011

Gender focal point workshop
the Legal Empowerment of
Women Programme (LEWI)
grant, Nagpur, Maharashtra,
6-9 February 2011

The CO is now sustainable, and many of its members have received training in credit management skills. The CO is also a member of a local support organization, the Heli Rural Support Programme.

The CDP has more stories like this one. The programme targets smallholders, landless people and families headed by women in a mountainous area where settlements are remote and scattered, and employment opportunities are very limited.

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Young people help design, implement and monitor and evaluate their own projects in Vanua Levu

The remote rural districts of Wailevu and Kubulau in Vanua Levu, the second biggest island in Fiji, are hives of activity for their youth. Young people who dropped out of school have taken agriculture and their future to another level. Their journey began in 2006 when the IFAD-funded Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovations (MORDI) programme visited the two districts to work with the communities in their development efforts.

Young people and women living in Wailevu and Kubulau used to be the “back benchers” when it came to discussions on topics related to development. The traditional village structures and systems discouraged women and young people from voicing their ideas and suggestions, as they were not seen as important in promoting development. Being left out from decision making processes, most youths did not bother or saw no need to attend meetings for the mere sake of being passive participants.

This changed with the MORDI programme, which reaches the most vulnerable people in the community – women and youth. MORDI strongly encouraged them to play an active role at all stages of community development.

Recognizing that young people will not be able to fully express many of their opinions on issues that affect them in the presence of their elders, the participatory Learning and Planning consultation was conducted in three segregated groups of men, women and youth. In their own group, the youths were able to express themselves fully. Their needs and issues were discussed and documented, to be used as the basis for preparing the village development plans. Their ideas were written on a piece of paper and displayed on the walls of the community hall. Having their thoughts and ideas put together as a document helped eliminate the traditional taboos of disrespect in front of the community elders and leaders. The perspective shifted from individuals whose ideas are not considered important to a group of youths whose collective ideas are important. What was most valuable was not the individual but the ideas stuck on the wall.



Training of youth in sea safety and fish handling in Kubulau district

Burotu village youth water taxi project, Namosi, Viti Levu

A group of youths from Burotu village attended the MORDI business training workshop in a nearby community. After the training, they produced and submitted to MORDI their business plan and project proposals for a water taxi boat as an income-generating project. The project was approved and a boat purchased. Following the business plan, the boat makes at least one return trip from the interior of Viti Levu, where Burotu is located, down the river to Navua town. The trip is over two hours and is one of the main links for these remote communities to the nearest town. The service is highly praised by the people who have used it. On average, the group makes a profit of US\$200 per week, which is deposited into two bank accounts – one for maintenance and repair and the other for their five-year development plan. Some funds from the development plan account are used towards scholarships for students. Other plans include increasing cattle stock for the cattle farm, and buying another boat to run in parallel with the first boat since the demand of tourists and villagers traveling to and from the community has been steadily increasing. The cost of funding the boat, equipment and outboard motor was US\$10,000.

Workshop on Understanding IFAD's gender framework – Convergence of Agricultural Interventions in Maharashtra's Distressed Districts Programme, Amravati, Maharashtra, 10-11 February 2011

Gender focal point workshop under the Legal Empowerment of Women Programme (LEWI) grant, Shillong, Meghalaya, 31 March – 2 April 2011

Indonesia

Inception mission – Coastal Community Development Project, March 2011

Loan negotiations – Smallholder Livelihood Development Programme in Maluku and North Maluku, March 2011, Rome

Kyrgyzstan

Mid-term review mission – Agricultural Investment and Services Project, May 2011

Mongolia

Loan negotiations – Project for Market and Pasture Management Development, February 2011

Project completion mission – Rural Poverty Reduction Programme, May 2011

Workshop on Livestock and Rural Microfinance in Western Asia, Ulaanbaatar, 23–28 May 2011

Pakistan

Mid-term review mission – Programme for Increasing Sustainability and Outreach in Microfinance, March 2011

Start-up workshop – Southern Punjab Poverty Alleviation Project, March – April 2011

Loan negotiations – Gwadar-Lasbella Livelihoods Support Project, April 2011

For the first time, leaders and elders could see very important and useful ideas that could be incorporated within the larger village development plans. The outcome of this innovative exercise was the inclusion of the voices and aspirations of youth within an important village development document that guides the village in its development efforts for a number of years.

Having their plans and priorities listed and incorporated in the village development plan was the first step and a strong encouragement for the youth. Next came numerous training programmes to build their skills. The trainings included topics that they had identified through their development priorities.

Two main streams of training were provided:

- community empowerment, with topics including work planning, time management, leadership skills and conflict management
- economic empowerment, with topics including proposal writing, project management, financial literacy, business skills, small engine repair, plumbing, carpentry, farming and animal husbandry.

These sets of trainings equipped the youths with a holistic approach to developing their livelihood opportunities. Not only were they provided with funding and equipment and other hardware, but they also were taught the “soft” skills – business skills, customer service, safety, conflict resolution, and the like – required to successfully promote their development.

Various youth groups have used their skills in proposal writing to submit project proposals and have their projects funded under the MORDI community support fund grant. The youths were involved in designing and preparing all necessary business plans. They also raised their 25 per cent financial contribution towards their projects. The projects were implemented solely by the youths, although they had to consult the elders and leaders during the process. They also recognized the importance of building partnerships with relevant government departments and other stakeholders.

The youth group of Nakorovou village, for example, is successfully operating a cattle farm. Although the project is in its early stages, the group is carefully monitoring the project to ensure its sustainability, with the help of the Ministry of Agriculture and seasoned cattle farmers in the area. During project implementation, the valuable inputs of all participants were taken into consideration. All aspects of the farm are recorded to take stock of progress. Enthusiasm runs high among the youths and their communities for being able to achieve one of their many goals.

Another example are the youth groups of Vunibuabua and Keka villages, which have been successfully operating a commercial cash crop farm. Through consultations with community leaders and facilitators and the Ministry of Agriculture, using their planning skills, the youths have joined forces to move away from subsistence-based farming. They applied for funding for farm tools and planting materials, then organized working parties using their time management skills. Four working parties were formed, with each party having targets to meet. A party is overseen by a group leader chosen from within the group. All inputs and outputs of the farm are recorded so that the farm is operated like a business. At the end of the harvesting season the books are balanced and funds distributed as pre-planned for village development activities, scholarships for students, and planting materials, fertilizers and farm implements for the new planting season.

The youths have also adopted very simple monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to ensure that they continue to learn from and improve their activities. Various methodologies promote simple tracking and assessment of their projects:



Training of youth in bee keeping

Youth bee keeping project in Fiji

Forty-two youths attended a one-week training organized by the Northern Development Programme (NDP) – a government programme to stimulate economic growth in northern districts of Fiji where MORDI sites are located. It was conducted at Nadivakarua village, part of a MORDI site. Following the training, youths are harvesting their honey product and supplying honey buyers. The youths requested the training through a letter of expression of interest to the provincial government, which provided funds, equipment, trainers and resources through the NDP funds. The costs covered over FJ\$10 000 (US\$ 5,500).

Philippines

Field monitoring and validation mission – Rapid Seed Supply Financing Project of the Rapid Food Production Enhancement Programme, 24-31 January 2011

Financial management and procurement enhancement training, 2-4 February 2011

Supervision mission – Second Cordillera Agricultural and Resource Management Project, 7-27 March 2011

Gender network assembly – 22-24 March 2011

Tajikistan

Supervision mission – Khatlon Livelihoods Support Project, March 2011

Loan negotiations – Livestock and Pasture Development Project, March 2011

Viet Nam

Country Programme Evaluation, Ha Noi and provinces, 2–13 March 2011

Supervision mission – Decentralized Programme for Rural Poverty Reduction in Quang Binh Provinces, 21–31 March 2011

Supervision mission – Decentralized Programme for Rural Poverty Reduction to Ha Giang, 4–14 April 2011

Start-up workshop – Tam Nong Support Project in Tuyen Quang, Ninh Thuan and Gia Lau, 25–27 April 2011

Mid-term review mission – Programme for Developing Business with the Rural Poor (Cao Bang), 8–20 May 2011

- The villages have agreed to incorporate the youth group leaders as part of the village development committee. They are required to meet every month and update the committee on their activities, including any projects that they undertake. This meeting is usually held in the village hall and all community members attend. Everyone is allowed to ask questions and provide suggestions. In fact, at times the representatives are critiqued, which provides valuable input into their activities.
- The youths keep a very good record of their projects, including financial records. Record keeping enables them to prepare budgets, track progress and make decisions based on the data kept. At the end of each year, the group members come together to take stock of what they have achieved; based on the lessons learned, they design plans for the following year's work. They also provide inputs into the revision of the village development plan and incorporate their lessons into the activities for the coming year.
- The provincial government, local-level government departments and external review teams organized by MORDI also provide valuable independent input. The groups view this as a second count to what they might have missed. Even though external inputs are valued, the groups are aware that it is their development, and their responsibility to take charge and not depend too much on external support, since such support could be removed in the future.



A group of young farmers on their farm in Keka village

The involvement of youths at all stages of a project is important. It promotes ownership and is a great source of learning as they grow to take up development responsibilities and contribute towards their community's survival. It is also important that communities, leaders and other stakeholders provide active guidance and support throughout the process.

The youths themselves need to play a pro-active part in inviting helping hands so that they can learn and grow from their experiences. This broad and holistic approach to youth involvement in development will have a far-reaching impact on the longer-term development of any community, and will produce a new generation of men and women who are pro-active, inclusive and open-minded change makers.

Vikash Kumar (v.kumar@ifad.org), MORDI Learning Unit Coordinator, Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPI)

Developing financial and business skills of young people in rural Fiji – the journey of a simple farm boy into the business world

Weresova Vasukalo is a 28-year-old man from Nadivakarua village, Kubulau district in Bua, Fiji. While working on his father's farm, he dreamed about being a businessman. But without skills and know-how about running a business, the dream was difficult to realize. When the IFAD-supported Mainstreaming of Rural Development Innovations (MORDI) programme arrived in his village in 2006, Weresova took the opportunity to get the right training to run a private business.

Unlike most young people in his village, Weresova had a vision of one day running his own business in the form of a village shop. "Farming was all right, but I wanted to do business and starting a shop was the most viable option," he said. Weresova believed that the opportunity existed, as there were no shops within a 10 km radius of his village. But lack of education, confidence and the know-how for running a business kept him away from starting the village shop for many years. He feared being laughed at if the shop failed.



Weresova in his vegetable garden

Training courses in knowledge-sharing skills – APPLY HERE

IFAD's Asia and the Pacific Division, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is now preparing the next round of training courses under the Programme for the Development of Knowledge-Sharing Skills. The courses will take place in late March and early April 2011. Three types of workshops are being offered. Each aims to enable project staff and other IFAD stakeholders and partners to capture and share project knowledge more often and more effectively. The three workshops are:

- Knowledge Sharing for Your Work: Techniques and Tools
- Writing to Share Knowledge Effectively
- Participatory Techniques in the Field

Please see the programme brochure and application form here: <http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/regions/pi/grants/km.htm>

All IFAD project staff and partners working directly with an IFAD-financed activity are welcome to apply to take the courses. For more details about the programme and each workshop, you may also write to: ks-asia@fao.org.

The deadline for submitting applications is 15 February.

IFAD useful links

- Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/ifad/107399332627995?ref=ts>
- Twitter: <http://twitter.com/ifadnews>
- IFAD social reporting blog: <http://ifad-un.blogspot.com/>
- YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/IFADTV>
- Blip.Tv: <http://ifad.blip.tv/>
- Slideshare: <http://www.slideshare.net/ifad>

A glimpse of hope emerged when MORDI arrived in his village in 2006. He participated in the Financial Literacy Education Training (FLET), a training workshop that teaches the participants skills and knowledge on household financial management. The FLET workshop has three modules:

- awareness of financial well-being and household financial status
- calculation of income and expenses through a matrix
- financial goal setting, prioritization and savings.

For the first time in his life, Wereseva was able to understand money management. He became aware of what his financial position was, how much he earned on average in a year, what his expenses were and the fact that he needed to prioritize his expenses so that they would be under control. He realized the importance of savings. This led him to open a bank account with the rural banking programme of ANZ Bank – an Australian financial institution. Slowly and steadily he started to deposit part of his income from his farm into his bank account.



A typical canteen in one of the MORDI sites

Wereseva's savings goal was to accumulate seed funding to start his shop. After two years of savings he had enough money to buy the items he wanted to stock in his shop. However, he still lacked confidence in starting his business, recognizing that he had no business skills. He did not know bookkeeping, costing and pricing, or how to deal with credit and recovery, and negotiate with wholesalers.

His big break in learning these important skills came in late 2008 when MORDI, in partnership with the Centre of Appropriate Technology and Development (CATD) – a Fiji government-funded training institute that specializes in training rural and non-formal sectors – organized a one-week training on business skills in his village. Wereseva attended and the trainers saw him as an outstanding participant.

The trainers recommended that Wereseva and a few other outstanding participants take up a more comprehensive three-month training at their campus at Suva, the capital of Fiji. He agreed to put down his farming tools and take up schooling for the next three months. He made arrangements with some of the youths in the village, whom he paid to look after his farm in his absence. Having gained interest in schooling again, he was determined to complete the training programme and obtain the skills to be able to run a successful business.

MORDI contributed part of his schooling costs. Wereseva paid the balance out of his own savings. "The three months of schooling and learning at CATD were the best time of my entire schooling life," said Wereseva. "While I was in secondary school, nothing made sense to me because I couldn't see how the things that I was learning were relevant," he explained. "This training was very practical and easy to follow. There were also other participants who were available if you didn't understand something. This was different from secondary school, where everyone was busy doing their own work and didn't want to help when you needed it," he added.

At the end of his three-month training, Wereseva graduated with a certificate in business skills. During the training, he had discussed with his tutors his plans to open a shop. With their help he was able to develop a business and action plan, which he would follow after returning to his village. Upon his return he turned a part of his house into his shop, which the local carpenters helped him furnish. He approached government authorities to obtain business licenses and started negotiating with major supermarkets and wholesalers in the nearest town 95 km away. He used his negotiating skills to strike a good deal with a wholesaler. Soon enough, his permits were approved and the stocks arrived. The shop was opened for business amidst celebrations in the village to mark a milestone not only for Wereseva but also the village.

"I feel mighty proud that I am running a business against all odds. I was a school dropout and I never thought that I could do something like this," he said from behind the counter of his shop while serving a customer. "The business is running well and I am making good money. I have not given up the habit of savings, though. Saving was what got me here," he emphasized. Wereseva is now planning to save enough money to expand his shop. He wants to include frozen goods so that his customers have the full range of items to choose from and so that he can increase his profits.

The communities in his area are very happy to have a shop. They do not need to travel to town to buy their groceries. Wereseva is still an avid farmer. He tends to his farm when there are no customers to serve. As a member of his village youth group he has also started a honey production business with the group, which values his business skills. Wereseva says, "It was very important to have the continuous support and mentoring of the experts." He continues to ask for advice and help from his tutors if he is unsure of something. "The support mechanism is very important even well beyond the training. It helps young businessmen like me to have peace of mind knowing that help is nearby if something is not going right."

He encourages other youths to make use of the opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in business and start a business that they are passionate about, be it a commercial farm, a simple home vegetable garden for incoming generation, a small engine repair shop, a grass-mowing business, handicraft making, sewing, or any other businesses that can be ventured into.

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Supporting vocational training for rural youth in Viet Nam

In January 2011, a team of local consultants visited the IFAD-supported Rural Income Diversification Project (RIDP) in Tuyen Quang Province in Viet Nam. They also visited the Provincial Economics and Technical School of Tuyen Quang to better understand the project's contribution to the school's achievements in providing vocational training.

The teachers and the Principal of the Provincial Economics and Technical School of Tuyen Quang warmly received the mission members during the first days of 2011. "All communes in the province, even non-project communes, knew about the RIDP," Mr Binh, the Principal, said. "Although it ended about a year ago, what it has done for the local people, especially in terms of provision of vocational training to the rural youth, has been really significant and thus greatly appreciated," he pointed out.

Thanks to the project's support over the past eight years, the school has provided technical and vocational training to 9,724 rural people, most of whom are young and unemployed. The training has enabled them to find suitable employment opportunities in their home villages and communes.

The school has also guided the graduated trainees on how to obtain bank loans to initiate their own production or businesses, or to participate in domestic and overseas labour markets.

The project has financed the construction and equipping of three district vocational training schools in three upland districts of Chiem Hoa, Ham Yen, and Na and Hang. These schools created excellent opportunities for young ethnic minorities, who cannot attend training courses conducted by the provincial school because of the distance, to join vocational training courses right in their home districts. The project also awarded scholarships to poor young students who were classified by the commune as coming from extremely difficult communes – those that are very remote, have less infrastructure and tend to have high levels of poverty.

Between 2002 and September 2009, the school enrolled 5,553 rural trainees (52 per cent of them female) from the project target communes and provided them with scholarships. The school offered training courses based on the actual needs and demands of the local youth. Topics included agro-forestry, accounting, agricultural machinery repair, civil electricity, motorbike repair, welding and tailoring.

The teachers consulted with the farmers in the project area to prepare training curricula that would meet the farmers' demands. The teachers reviewed and updated existing curricula, combined theories and practical work, and applied the 'learning by doing' methodology. As a result, vocational training has been very effective in helping farmers in general, and young farmers in particular, to positively change their production practices, link production with marketing, and slowly bringing about economic benefits. Livelihoods of local people have improved, and more employment has been created for young people and farmers in the province.

A survey conducted by the school in 66 project communes in 2001 showed that 72.9 per cent of the total 2,301 graduated trainees found stable employment, with an average monthly income of about VND 600 000 (US\$31).

Ha Van Hoa (ridptq@hn.vnn.vn), Project Director, Rural Income Diversification Project



A hands-on session in an agricultural machinery repair training course



A hands-on session in an animal health training course

DỰ ÁN RIDP VÀ CÔNG TÁC DẠY NGHỀ CHO THANH NIÊN NÔNG THÔN

Đến thăm trường Trung học kinh tế kỹ thuật tỉnh Tuyên Quang vào ngày đầu xuân năm 2011, chúng tôi cảm nhận được không khí ấm áp, thân tình trong từng nụ cười của các thầy cô giáo. Đón tiếp chúng tôi là thầy hiệu trưởng Hà Lê Bình cùng tập thể cán bộ, thầy cô giáo trong trường.

Được biết chúng tôi đến thăm trường và muốn tìm hiểu về công tác đào tạo, đặc biệt là những tác động của Dự án RIDP đến công tác đào tạo của trường, thầy Bình vui vẻ chia sẻ: "Nói đến Dự án RIDP, không có xã nào trong tỉnh không biết, kể cả những xã không có Dự án hỗ trợ. Đến nay Dự án đã kết thúc hơn một năm, nhưng những gì mà dự án đem lại cho nhân dân trong tỉnh, đặc biệt là công tác dạy nghề cho thanh niên nông thôn, thực sự rất đáng trân trọng".

Với sự hỗ trợ của Dự án RIDP, trong 8 năm gần đây nhà trường đã đào tạo và dạy nghề cho 9.724 người với trình độ Trung cấp chuyên nghiệp, Trung cấp và Sơ cấp nghề, trong đó đại đa số là thanh niên nông thôn chưa có việc làm, giúp cho họ có điều kiện và cơ hội tìm được việc làm tại địa phương. Ngoài ra, nhà trường còn hướng dẫn cho học sinh sau khi tốt nghiệp tại trường có khả năng vay được vốn ngân hàng để phát triển sản xuất, kinh doanh hoặc tham gia vào thị trường lao động trong và ngoài nước.

Dự án RIDP đã đầu tư để trường xây dựng 3 phân hiệu dạy nghề tại 3 huyện vùng cao Nà Hang, Chiêm Hoá và Hàm Yên, tạo điều kiện cho con em đồng bào dân tộc trong huyện không có điều kiện đến học tại tỉnh được học nghề ngay tại quê hương mình. Ngoài ra, dự án còn hỗ trợ trang thiết bị phục vụ giảng dạy, đào tạo giáo viên và hỗ trợ học bổng cho con em các xã đặc biệt khó khăn theo học tại trường.

Từ năm 2002 đến tháng 9 năm 2009 nhà trường đã tuyển sinh đào tạo 5.553 học sinh thuộc đối tượng Dự án RIDP hỗ trợ học bổng bao gồm các hệ đào tạo Trung cấp, Sơ cấp nghề, cán bộ xã và nông dân trong đó tỉ lệ nữ chiếm 52%. Các ngành nghề chính mà nhà trường đào tạo đều dựa vào nhu cầu thực tế của thanh niên nông thôn, thí dụ: trung cấp nông lâm, kế toán, sửa chữa nông cụ, điện dân dụng, sửa chữa ô tô xe máy, hàn, may mặc .

Để làm tốt được công tác giảng dạy, đội ngũ giáo viên của nhà trường đã gắn liền với nông dân vùng dự án để có thể xây dựng được chương trình giảng dạy phù hợp với nhu cầu của nông dân, đồng thời cập nhật những kiến thức khoa học kỹ thuật mới; gắn lý thuyết với thực hành; đào tạo theo hình thức cầm tay chỉ việc. Vì vậy công tác đào tạo đã mang lại hiệu quả thiết thực, giúp nông dân mà đi đầu là thanh niên nông thôn đổi mới tập quán sản xuất, bước đầu gắn sản xuất với thị trường, từng bước đem lại hiệu quả kinh tế. Đời sống nông dân trong vùng dự án từng bước được nâng lên, tạo được nhiều việc làm mới cho thanh niên và nông dân trong tỉnh.

Theo một điều tra năm 2010 của trường tại 66 xã thực thi dự án RIDP, trong tổng số 2.301 học sinh được đào tạo có 72,89% có việc làm và thu nhập ổn định với mức bình quân khoảng 600.000đ/tháng.

Với sự nỗ lực của nhà trường và sự giúp đỡ của Dự án RIDP trong những năm qua, trường Trung học Kinh tế - Kỹ thuật Tuyên Quang đã đạt được những kết quả đáng khích lệ trong công tác dạy nghề cho thanh niên, nông dân trong tỉnh nói chung, đặc biệt là thanh niên nông thôn, góp phần thúc đẩy kinh tế nông thôn của tỉnh phát triển bền vững.

Lương Ngọc Hương

Creating jobs for rural youth contributes to sustainable poverty alleviation in Viet Nam

In rural areas, young people represent an abundant source of labour, but most of them have limited professional skills. Ben Tre province is no exception. Finding them a good job in line with their capabilities and bringing them a stable income is the goal of the IFAD-supported Programme for Developing Business with the Rural Poor.

The Programme for Developing Business with the Rural Poor in Ben Tre Province (DBRP Ben Tre) has helped rural youth meet up with enterprises in order to create close linkages between employers and labour. In the past few years, coordination with local enterprises and investors through a 'job connection programme' for rural youth has been a regular activity of DBRP Ben Tre.

To date, the programme has organized 12 seminars that connect jobs with rural youth. Through introductory and employee connection presentations, enterprises have also given feedback to DBRP on the over 500 workers who have been recruited.

According to Ms Vo Bich Thuy, representative of Pungkook Saigon II Company, who participated in the recruitment at the job connection seminars organized, "At present, we are lacking labour due to the expansion of production scale and production increase... while the workforce in rural areas is huge." She added, "Through the workshop coordinated by DBRP with local organizations, we went to the countryside to recruit labour. This workshop is really useful, allowing rural youth to be exposed to, understand and seize job opportunities."

During the organization of workshops on connecting jobs to rural youth, programme staff became concerned when they met poor working-age youth who need jobs to support their families but do not have enough opportunities. For example, Le Thi Nhung, a young woman at Tan Phu commune, Chau Thanh district, Ben Tre province, is being supported by the project in her search for employment. Her four-member family is very poor and have no agricultural land. Her parents work irregularly for households in the neighborhood. She is the eldest daughter and left school to help her parents maintain their home. She explained, "To see my family in such a bad condition, I really wished there was something stable for me to do without having to live away from home. Instead, I was hanging around home helping with the housework like this.... How could I get out of poverty? I needed money to care for their lives!"



Lễ trao giấy chứng nhận tốt nghiệp



Một buổi thực hành lớp Chăn nuôi thú y của trường



Workshop for youth on employment and enterprises in Ben Tre province

Through guidance by the DBRP staff, she is now employed by a Thai apparel company in the Giao Long industrial park and is very happy. Having lived in a rural area from a very early age, with no exposure to outside conditions, Le Thi Nhung is quite shy. The staff of DBRP found her accommodation and met with different enterprises in the industrial park to help her find a job. At the apparel company, she has a stable income, with a monthly salary of over VND 2 million (US\$103).

After deducting the cost of food and lodging, she sends her parents up to VND 1 million (US\$51) per month. Although she has much work, and the work is difficult, she still likes the job because it is stable and long term. She hopes that through the support of the programme, the youths from poor rural families like hers will have more career opportunities and stable jobs in the province without having to live away from home.

The role of the youth force is very important in the family and in society. Creating the conditions for young people to find jobs and a steady income, combined with effective employment counseling, makes a major contribution to local poverty alleviation.

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Engaging rural youth in India to become agents of change in their communities

About 40 per cent of people living in the programme areas of the IFAD-supported Orissa Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme (OTELP) in India are youth. It is therefore crucial for the programme to have strategies to make young people socially relevant and locally useful. The programme has demonstrated that with appropriate guidance and support, young women and men can gain the confidence to nurture their talents and harness their energy for community development and future employment.

The Orissa Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme (OTELP), supported by IFAD and the Government of Orissa in India, works in 1,034 villages in seven districts of south-western Orissa. Predominantly inhabited by tribal people, the majority of these villages are located inside the forest and are often without access to mainstream society and development. Forty per cent of the population in the project area are youth between 15 and 35 years old.

Illiteracy limits the capability of the tribal communities to develop their livelihoods. The youth lack adequate skills for gainful employment and market access for their forest products. As a result, there is high rate of migration outside the state in search of manual labour. Furthermore, depleting forest resources, particularly the non-timber forest products, and increasing incidence of low agricultural productivity due to climatic variability are making these communities prone to stress.

Subsistence income from agriculture and forests, supplemented by occasional wages, remains the only means of earning a living for most of these families. Moreover, 28 per cent of the families are landless and nearly 80 per cent own less than one acre of productive agricultural land.

During the initial period of implementation in 2004, the programme identified the possibility of working with youth groups that are either employed in seasonal agriculture or perform casual labour in the local informal sector. Although many of these youths have primary education from local or nearby schools, lack of adequate employable skills led this productive youth group to remain unemployed or underemployed.

In order to provide space for the youth in community development processes, the programme adopted a number of strategies.

Including youth in Village Development Committees

The tribal societies in programme areas have defined social institutions in which elders occupy the positions for village governance. As part of the programme intervention, communities held discussions and decided to select young men and women to be part of the Village Development Committees set up to drive programme implementation. These youth, sitting side by side with their village elders, started participating in decision-making processes, which also nurtured their leadership abilities and talents. They also actively participate in presenting programme progress at village meetings, and monitoring programme implementation. In some of the conflict areas, many young members are also participating in peace-building and conflict resolution processes.



Padmavati Naik, about 24 years old, a young entrepreneur, with her rice mill



A trained young woman preparing bio-fertilizers with local bio waste and materials

Promoting youth as village volunteers

The second strategy of the programme was to equip villagers with skills to ensure timely delivery of community services, including collective input supply to farmers, animal health care, record keeping of self-help groups, ensuring timely visits of the health workers, and working with banks. Villagers were also trained to introduce critical interventions to reduce risk of crop failure, loss of an enterprise or loss of income related to farm or non-farm livelihoods options. In consultation with the communities, five key areas of skills were identified:

- Agriculture
- Livestock care
- Self-help group bookkeeping
- Health
- Community mobilization



Tribal youth from the programme villages attending the National Youth Festival 2010 in Bhubaneswar, India

Five young men and women were selected from each village to be trained in these five skill areas. As para-professionals, these village volunteers are trained in regular intervals. These young volunteers are learning improved practices in agriculture, horticulture, livestock rearing, accounting, management, improved health care practices, good governance and other relevant topics. The training includes methods of facilitation and mobilization to support the communities in their respective areas.

These young talents have become the link between the communities and other support organizations for the development of villages. The independent Impact Evaluation Report published in 2010 mentions that *“At present, almost 94 per cent of the households engaged in agriculture have utilized the services of Agriculture Volunteers. Agriculture Volunteers and other village-level volunteers primarily engaged in marketing activities have gained considerable popularity among the population for their role in collective marketing and service delivery, i.e. supply of good-quality seeds. Almost 59 per cent of households have utilized the services of para-veterinarian.”*

At present, more than 1,700 trained young village volunteers are working to support their communities to overcome risk and vulnerability. Many of the community members have started paying for the services received from these youth volunteers.

Building vocational skills

The third strategy under the programme is to develop the vocational skills of the village youth in order to increase their opportunities for gainful local employment. The programme has an inbuilt sub-component to improve the skills of its primary stakeholders. In particular, it targets young members to develop extensive human resources for the future. This strategy also extends to youth from landless families and provides them with skills development training in various areas such as stone masonry, bamboo craft making, plumbing, welding, carpentry, candle making and tailoring. A total of 7,945 men and 7,764 women members were trained during the implementation period to meet the skill demand of the local employment market. These youths are now self-employed, in most cases in or near their villages.

Sobha Singh, about 25 year old, is quite happy when he teaches other farmers in his village how to cultivate paddy through the System of Rice Intensification (SRI). With less than 0.5 acres of land in his backyard and about 2 acres of land for agriculture, his family of five has adequate food to eat and manageable savings to live a better life from the SRI and home garden vegetables. The SRI training was provided by the programme.

Promoting youth leadership for community services

Apart from improved livelihoods, the programme's interventions also resulted in grooming the youth to position themselves as community leaders. A total of 27 young men and women from the programme areas were elected as representatives of their Gram Panchayat (the lowest level of the three-tier governance system in India) during the 2009 Panchayat election in Orissa. With greater awareness of government programmes, tribal rights and laws, and increased management and leaderships skills generated through the programme interventions, many of these young people are showing leadership qualities for community services. In addition, the contribution of young leaders is being recognized and rewarded by academic institutions. For example, Krushna Ch. Malik from Kandhamal and Peter Gamango from Gajapti were awarded with fellowships from Jamsetji Tata National Virtual Academy University of Mumbai for their contribution to community development.

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Occasional papers – Issue 11: Interrelationships between labour outmigration, livelihoods, rice productivity and gender roles

The Asia and the Pacific Division of IFAD has just released Occasional Paper No.11: “*Interrelationships between labour outmigration, livelihoods, rice productivity and gender roles*”. This paper summarizes the main results and implications of a research study analysing interrelationships among outmigration, livelihoods, rice productivity and gender roles in rice-growing villages in the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

Despite the many studies on patterns of and reasons for migrating within and outside a country, empirical studies on the effects of labour outmigration on the livelihoods of rice farmers and the welfare of family members who stay behind are few. Reduction in the supply of men’s family labour because of participation in non-farm work and migration will have repercussions on the management of farming systems, rice production and household welfare, particularly on women’s roles and responsibilities.

The goal of this research study was to guide rice researchers and agricultural extension workers in the design, evaluation and dissemination of appropriate technologies in areas of high labour outmigration. To pursue this major objective, the study:

- assessed the incidence and patterns of labour outmigration in major rice production systems
- examined the roles of rice, non-farm activities and remittances in livelihoods
- assessed the effects of migration on the gender division of labour and on rice productivity
- identified key constraints on the women who stayed behind to manage farms
- recommended strategies (research and extension) and government policy options in response to the constraints and problems encountered by farming households, especially women farmers, due to labour outmigration.

The paper is divided into four sections. Section one discusses the methodology used in achieving the objectives. Section two presents the research findings, and section three offers a summary and conclusions. Section four provides recommendations for gender-responsive technology interventions, extension strategies and policy options.

The research was carried out by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), the Philippines; Curtin University of Technology, Australia; Cuu Long Delta Rice Research Institute, Viet Nam; and Khon Kaen University, Thailand – with financial support from the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR).

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The paper can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.ifad.org/operations/projects/regions/pi/paper/11.pdf>

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New country assignments in the Asia and the Pacific Division

IFAD’s Asia and the Pacific Division is pleased to announce new Country Programme Managers (CPMs) for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Democratic People’s Republic (DPR) of Korea, India, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic (PDR), Maldives, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

The details of new country assignments are shown in orange in the table below.

These new assignments have been effective from 1 February 2011. The Asia and the Pacific Division wishes the CPMs all the best in their new country assignments!

Afghanistan	Mr Qaim Shah / Mr Matteo Marchisio
Bangladesh	Mr Thomas Rath
Bhutan	Ms Maria Donnat
Cambodia	Mr Youqiong Wang
China	Mr Sana Jatta
DPR Korea	Mr Yinhong Sun / Mr Sana Jatta
India	Mr Nigel Brett
Indonesia	Mr Ron Hartman
Kazakhstan	Mr Frits Jepsen
Lao PDR	Ms Stefania Dina
Malaysia	Mr Ganesh Thapa
Maldives	Mr Anura Herath / Mr Ya Tian
Mongolia	Mr Frits Jepsen
Myanmar	Mr Youqiong Wang
Nepal	Mr Ron Hartman
Pakistan	Mr Matteo Marchisio
Pacific Islands	Mr Ron Hartman
Papua New Guinea	Mr Ron Hartman
Philippines	Mr Youqiong Wang
Republic of Korea	Mr Ganesh Thapa
Solomon Islands	Mr Ron Hartman
Sri Lanka	Mr Ya Tian
Tajikistan	Mr Frits Jepsen
Thailand	Mr Youqiong Wang
Timor-Leste	Mr Ron Hartman
Viet Nam	Ms Atsuko Toda