

News Stories

FAO Partners with YES 2002 to Support Rural Youth Employment

Alexandria, Egypt-- The Mission of YES was to stimulate and inspire the development of programs and policies worldwide in order to ensure that youth have access to the education and training programs, skills-development opportunities, resources, and credit that they need to build productive and sustainable livelihoods. The goal is, through the Decade Campaign of Action, for an additional 500 million young adults, especially youth facing poverty, to have productive and sustainable livelihoods by the year 2012.

FAO's involvement with YES and the Decade Campaign of Action for Youth Employment is to ensure that the special needs, conditions and aspirations of rural young people are taken into consideration when strategies are considered and action plans development; to share relevant knowledge and experiences related to employment and rural youth; and to explore possibilities of collaboration for concrete action.

FAO's Two Fronts of Action in Support of Rural Youth Employment-- FAO is working on two fronts to help rural young people meet the challenges of finding meaningful and economically rewarding employment. One is a new FAO-UNESCO global initiative, to mobilize worldwide commitment and generate the necessary resources to strengthening basic education in support of agriculture and rural development. Through this effort, other UN agencies, member countries and civil society are being invited to join in the establishment of a new partnership on *Education for the Rural People*.

The second area is FAO's rural youth programming which has been in existence for more than 40 years. Today, its focus is on rural youth development, helping young people gain the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences they need to become productive and contributing citizens. As it works mostly through education and training, it is also a partner of the new FAO-UNESCO initiative *Education for the Rural People*.

Leadership for both *Education for Agriculture and Rural Development* and *Rural Youth Development* is provided by the Extension, Education and Communication Service of the Sustainable Development Department of FAO.

New UNESCO-FAO Education for All Flagship-FAO and UNESCO, together, have established a new Flagship within the global *Education for All (EFA)* initiative with a focus on Education for Rural People. The Flagship Programme has been established by UNESCO to build inter-agency collaboration around critically important themes. Examples of other EFA

Flagships include *Girls Education Initiative*; *Focusing Resources on Effective School Health*; and *Literacy and Adult Education*.

Lack of education and training prevents many young people from finding jobs and adequately feeding their families. For many developing countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are still too few schools and not enough qualified teachers. Twenty-three percent of all boys and young men and 38 percent of all girls and young women don't go or have never attended a primary school. It has been estimated that worldwide there are between 130 to 150 million young people out-of-school, mostly in rural areas of Sub-Saharan Africa. There are either no schools to go to, only a few years of schooling provided in the village, or young people have to drop out from school for one reason or another.

About 70 per cent of the poor live in rural areas. Thus the Flagship calls for a collaborative effort to increase the coordination of efforts by international, regional and national organizations in targeting the educational needs of people living in rural areas. The initiative seeks to address education and rural-urban disparities in support of education.

Despite the fact that education is a basic right in itself and an essential prerequisite for reducing poverty, improving the living conditions of the rural people and building a food-secure world, children's access to education in rural areas is still much lower than in urban areas, adult illiteracy is much higher and quality of education is poorer.

The flagship objectives are to (1) build awareness worldwide among key stakeholders on the importance of education for rural people as a crucial step to achieve the Millennium Goals of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and achieving universal primary education; (2) increase access to basic education and the improvement of the quality of basic education for rural people; and (3) foster national capacity to plan and implement basic educational strategies to address the special learning needs of rural people.

The new *Education for Rural People Flagship* was recently launched at the 3 September 2002 side-event ceremony at the *World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD)* held in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Within an individual country, technical support will be provided for addressing the basic educational needs of the rural people by formulating specific plans of action as part of the national plans on EFA. At the international level, advocacy and the mobilization of partnerships for *Education for Rural People* concentrating on strategic global, regional and international events, and encouraging the same within countries. There will also be an effort to identify the capacity for different substantive components on education for rural people within partner institutions who support the exchange of good practices and knowledge on education for rural people.

FAO's involvement in the area of *Education for Rural People* will go a long way to giving rural youth the basic knowledge and skills they need to find meaningful employment.

Rural Youth Development in FAO-- As a part of its on-going work, FAO has been involved in rural youth programming for more than 40 years. FAO uses a youth development approach to empowering rural young people around the world by supporting the organizations which serve them.

Youth development is a purposeful process of providing young people with the skills, knowledge, attitudes and experiences that will help prepare them to successfully face the future in the many varied living and work situations they may find themselves as adolescents and subsequently as adults. It is attempt to focus education and training on the broad developmental issues of young people. It includes the many different life skills which directly and/or indirectly contribute to helping young people successfully find employment.

The ultimate goal of FAO work with rural youth programming is to enable girls and boys and young women and young men to gain basic knowledge and skills in agriculture and nutrition through practical experiences and activity-based learning, thus contributing to their ability to make an economically rewarding and satisfying life for themselves and their families. Although not considered a youth employment programme per se, FAO's rural youth development work, by helping young people gain relevant skills, knowledge and experiences, contribute directly to their ultimate success in finding meaningful and rewarding employment and is one of the primary intended outcomes of the programme.

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FAO field projects in support of youth employment-- In Namibia, the project *Training Youth for Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural Namibia (TCP/NAM/0066)* is designed to help the Youth Development Directorate of the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation establish an outreach component to their new rural youth development programme. The major components of the programme are curriculum development, training, volunteer leadership development, village youth club organization and small enterprise development. At least twenty small enterprise modules have been developed and will soon be tested with groups of rural youth in Oshana Region of Northern Namibia.

In Mali, the project *National Strategy for Training and the Inclusion of Youth in the Rural and Agriculture Sector of Mali (Stratégie nationale de formation et d'insertion des jeunes dans le secteur agricole et rural) TCP/MLI/8923* helped develop a national strategy to provide young people in rural areas with education and training to support youth employment.

In Burkina Faso, the project *Support for the Incorporation of Youth into Agriculture (Apui a la fixation des jeunes dans leurs terroirs) BKF/98/006*, funded by UNDP with technical support from FAO, is involved in helping establish a national system, in pilot regions of Burkina Faso, to facilitate the access of land, water and credit to groups of youth for the implementation of agricultural production and non-farm rural-based business activities.

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