



Workshop 5

Educating for food security: the contribution of ESD

Time: 31 March: 15.00 - 18.00h (first part), 1 April: 11.00 - 13.00h (second part)

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The objective of the workshop is to highlight that Education is an essential prerequisite for reducing poverty, improving agriculture and living condition of rural people and building a sustainable and food secure world and to address the challenges and good practices and example to promote education and food security.

Another 40 million people have been pushed into hunger this year primarily due to higher food prices, according to preliminary estimates published by FAO today. This brings the overall number of undernourished people in the world to 963 million, compared to 923 million in 2007 and the ongoing financial and economic crisis could tip even more people into hunger and poverty. The structural problems of hunger, like the lack of access to land, credit and employment, combined with high food prices remain a dire reality. The 1996 World Food Summit target, to reduce the number of hungry by half by 2015, requires a strong political commitment and investment in poor countries of at least \$30 billion per year for agriculture and social protection of the poor. The vast majority of the world's undernourished people - 907 million - live in developing countries, according to the 2007 data reported by the State of Food Insecurity in the World. The world hunger situation may further deteriorate as the financial crisis hits the real economies of more and more countries (FAO 9/9/2008). It is therefore urgent to address the education needs of the poor and food insecure, most of whom live and work in rural areas, where increased production needs to take place and foster rural people's capacities and resilience to deal with today's challenges.

The workshop is part of the international actions aiming at contributing to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and promoting sustainable development by increasing access to quality education.

It focuses especially on the impact of education on food security.

The vision that inspires this workshop is that people – not institutions or technology- are the driving force of development, as the United Nations Millennium Declaration indicates. Research on the role and impact of education in development has led to the conclusion that universal basic education, and specifically Education for Rural People, is (Burchi De Muro 2007) the neglected key to food security. A recent study conducted by FAO and The University of Rome 3 found that the correlation between food security and primary education is very high although it decreases at other educational levels. More over, research addressing the link between education and agriculture income and productivity has a long tradition.

The workshop will address Universal Primary Education and Education for Rural People as key efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Rural people, who are the majority of the world poor, need to be included in the education systems and in socio-economic development. The workshop will address the main challenges, lessons and good practices to promote ERP at all levels of the education system. ERP is as crucial to building open, democratic and modern societies, contrary to societies reproducing urban elites that control economic and social power and foster exclusion and segregation of rural people and producers. In a knowledge-based society segregation and exclusion of rural people from education is directly related to their exclusion from food and wealth, knowledge and work, health,

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citizenship, political participation and representation, thus undermining a democratic society and fostering social strife and violence. The workshop will focus on the crucial role of ERP and School Feeding in developing the capacities needed to address the challenges of globalization and specifically the crisis of high food prices and of climate change.

Higher food prices impound further the progress made so far. As a matter of fact, on current trends, the 2015 goal of Universal Primary Education will be missed: in 2006 some 75 million children of primary school age were not in school. This is 12% of the developing world's primary-school-age population. In sub-Saharan Africa, nearly one-third of that age group is out of school. Girls still account for the majority of the world's out-of-school children (55%). Using a partial projection covering countries that account for just two-thirds of the 75 million primary school age children out of school today, 29 million children will still be out of school in 2015.

Since the majority of the 75 million out-of-school children come from rural areas of poor, food deficit countries, these are affected disproportionately by the crisis in their attainment of the Education For All Goals. Vulnerable households with low purchasing power resort to negative coping strategies, which include sale of scarce assets, extensive borrowing which lead to getting heavily into debt, reducing quantity and quality of daily meals, and compromising nutritional status by consuming less nutritious foods. Poor households are obliged to choose between sending their children to school or to the fields, to work for food. The family meal of today takes priority over the children's potential for tomorrow. The price crunch means that, across the developing world, poor families which may have had money to pay school fees for their children, to go to clinics when they are sick, or take much-needed nourishing food together with anti-retroviral drugs, will suffer as they cut back in these areas. They are cutting meals and substituting less nutritious foods.

While it maybe too early to estimate with certainty the fallout from the unprecedented high food prices crisis on Education For All Goals, the consequences are certain. Global inequalities in education mirror inequalities in income. The association is not coincidental. While the relationship between education

and wealth creation is complex, knowledge is an important driver for sustainable development and food security. In the short run, protecting the most vulnerable require direct food distribution, targeted food subsidies and cash transfers, and nutritional programmes including school feeding. The precise choice will depend on the extent to which some form of safety net or social protection mechanisms are already in place and can be mobilized.

Well organized and targeted social protection systems are potentially capable of providing direct support to the neediest at a cost that is substantially lower than more broad-based actions which, in turn, makes them more sustainable. Systems such as WFP's VAM – Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping can support UN Agencies, Governments and NGOs in making informed targeting choices of a wide range of food security, poverty reduction and education programmes. Wide and in-depth analysis, supported by the latest geospatial and mapping systems helps prioritize scarce overseas development assistance resources to where they are most needed.

New partnerships are also needed to raise farmer productivity and income through improved farming systems, supply of farm inputs, training of farmers and increased availability of markets. Innovative initiatives such as the NEPAD "Home Grown School Feeding" which aims at providing school children (adequately targeted) with locally produced food are taking should be expanded. The Home Grown School Feeding approach is holistic and integrated as it aims - on the one side - to: (i) provide incentives for education (both enrolment and retention of girls and boys) and responses to nutritional gaps and "short term" hunger and, on the other side; (ii) create opportunities for stimulating and improving local farmers' production, expanding local demand and increase local market value.

Working with national governments and alongside bilateral partners, United Nations agencies, NGOs, farmers, traders, processors and research institutions, initiatives such as WFP's the "Purchase For Progress" will help create a platform of demand for food staples grown by small farmers. The aim is to help reduce the risks farmers face and boost incentives to invest in technologies and practices to increase and improve production.



The Purchase For Progress (“P4P”) initiative aims to:

- identify and share best practices for WFP, NGOs, governments and agricultural market stakeholders to increase profitable engagement in markets;
- increase farmers’ capacities in order to raise their income from agricultural markets;
- identify and implement best practices for increasing sales by low-income farmers to WFP;

The following table serves as a general outline to guide the working group discussion.

Challenges, Lessons and Examples in Education for Rural People

Challenges	Lessons	Examples
<i>Effective pro-rural policies</i>	Urban and rural EMIS disaggregated data. Policies recognize the diversity of needs of rural people, their agro-ecological and geographical circumstances and their socio-economic and cultural characteristics.	A strategy for Education for Rural People in Kosovo: 2004-2009 prepared by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Agriculture
<i>Organizational Efficiency</i>	Government ownership of education programmes. Co-ordination among ministries of education and agriculture, extension, schools, NGOs and the private sector is essential for optimal efficiency.	Rural teachers, trained in technical subjects ensure curriculum relevance and support extension programmes. Extension officers provide presentations in schools, conduct adult education classes, and organize farmer field schools.
<i>Flexibility and local autonomy</i>	Systems can combine national and local curriculum planning through community participation. Flexibility in the academic calendar to accommodate weather, cropping patterns nomadic movements.	In Thailand, 40% of the curriculum can be based on community and local needs. In Mozambique 20% of the curriculum is decentralized.
<i>Access and quality</i>	School Feeding programmes to improve access to universal primary education. School attendance benefits from fee removal or reduction; free access to learning materials; and new school construction. Some countries promote teacher training, for context specific learning and develop training materials designed to address real rural life problems and for life skills. Quality of education, provision of a safe and adequate learning environment.	Double-shift classes and after-hours adult education; targeting of specific rural groups; satellite schools for the youngest children in remote areas; application of ICT and farmer participation in curriculum planning and managing education and training events
<i>Parent and community involvement</i>	Participatory, community-based approaches help to increase educational access and quality and community ownership of schools. Rural families want to see that the education of their children is relevant to rural livelihoods.	Parent-teacher bodies have impact on school resources; improved monitoring of quality and relevance and for school lunch programmes.
<i>Skills training for rural people</i>	Formal and non-formal life skills training for adults and school drop-outs help rural people diversify their skills and provide literacy and numeracy for more secure livelihoods and greater resilience during times of stress and disaster.	Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools in Mozambique that deal with agricultural as well as life skills development among young rural citizens.
<i>Redefining agricultural education</i>	EARTH University in Costa Rica has four pillars to its programmes: Social Commitment; Environmental Awareness; Entrepreneurial Mentality; and Development of Human Values	Agricultural education that reflects changes in technology; global supply chains; health challenges; on and off farm employment; environmental changes and enterprise development.
<i>Recruitment and retention of teachers and extension staff</i>	Attract teachers and extension workers from rural areas. Develop attractive deployment policies including: bonuses and higher salaries, provision of subsidized housing, posting newly qualified staff in pairs and creating career progression options	Malaysia: incentives that include a piece of land and training in agriculture to encourage teachers to stay in rural areas. Lao PDR: profit sharing in school-based income-generating activities for students and teachers.
<i>Gender responsive environments</i>	Flexible timetables to accommodate peak labour demand for girls and adult women. Well-supervised boarding facilities safeguard female children. School meals for all children. Take-home rations for girls an incentive for families to send girls to school.	Half-day long farmer training short courses geared toward women that have responsibilities at home.

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The regulatory role of the state will also be addressed in ensuring equitable access to education as a key public good. “School Reform” through devolution from the centre to periphery, from state to private, to communities and to civil society through cost-sharing will be discussed given that privatization might increase exclusion and inequality and abdicate the role of the state to provide quality life-long education to all. Transformation of education (including extension) from a public good into merchandise is more and more pervasive and is a challenge that jeopardizes rural people inclusion in the global community and wealth and their contribution to sustainable development therefore, increasing the risk of global food crises.