

## Food and Agricultural Contribution

### 1. Which action areas did the activity focus on, and to what extent did it combine them?

Main action areas were:

**a) The launch of the Education for Rural People (ERP) flagship partnership** in 2002, during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. The partnership is led by FAO in collaboration with UNESCO (see: [www.fao.org/sd/erp/](http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/)). The ERP initiative seeks to empower the rural poor to become fully integrated actors of the development process and, consequently, also less available to be involved in conflicts and more resilient to recover from them. In a globalized world in which our daily news are about war and terrorism, inequalities feed social unrest, delinquency and crime which in turn exacerbate world inequalities. One of the major inequalities affecting the rural poor is their unequal access to quality education, a basic right and an important factor for social and economic development. The FAO-led ERP partnership is about fostering an efficient, inclusive and widespread education system which includes rural people and addresses their learning needs. Without basic education rural people cannot comprehend simple texts, like the instructions on a bag of fertilizers, or medicine labels. They can't read the warning on a box of pesticide, adopt enhanced technologies, or fully benefit from their right as citizens. They are deprived of the possibility of taking informed decisions, manage successful negotiations and conflicts and contribute creatively to sustainable development and peace. FAO accepted to lead the ERP partnership because of its conviction that in order to reduce poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals - and specifically the first two goals which focus on eradication extreme poverty and hunger and achieving universal primary education - there is a need to change the traditional working modalities of the international community and address the needs of the world's biggest neglected majority: rural people. This is particularly true for education since the majority of the more than one billion world illiterates live in rural areas, and many of them live in areas of conflicts.

**b) The set up of a knowledge base and a conceptual framework for the ERP initiative.** An assessment study was conducted on the state of public policies on education for rural people and the concepts that inspired them. Interaction between specialized institutions was promoted, relevant data were collected, analyzed, and synthesized. The findings were co-published by FAO and UNESCO/IIEP in the book titled "Education for Rural Development: Toward New Policy Responses".

**c) The start up of the policy dialogue and field projects on ERP** with member countries. The objective was to find out whether countries are addressing the educational needs of rural populations in national plans of action, for example the Education for All National Action Plans and the Rural Development Plans, and to support them in doing so.

**d) The reinforcement of national capacities** to plan Education for Rural People and helping Governments to promote projects at country and regional level.

**e) The promotion of new partnerships** among stakeholders that traditionally had little or no collaboration in addressing the education needs of rural people, such as ministries of Education and Ministries of Agriculture, donors and civil society.

All of previous activities were closely combined.

## 2. Which were the activity's key results? Can they be measured?

Key results (and related indicators ) were:

- The growing number of ERP members. Two years after the official launching, ERP has about 190 members from the agriculture, rural development and education sectors, including governments, international organizations, civil society, media, private sector and academic and research institutions. The list of members is available at [http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPmembersList\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPmembersList_en.htm)
- Evidence on the importance of educating rural people to achieve poverty reduction, food security, rural development, Education for All and gender equity (MDGs 1,2,3) was assembled from the research, and the findings published under the title: "Education for Rural Development: Towards New Policy Responses" in 2003.
- Increased interest on ERP at national and international levels. About 500 policy makers from Ministries of Education and Ministries of Agriculture in Asia and Latin America participated in four regional workshops (Bangkok 2002 and 2004; Santiago 2003 and 2004) organized in order to strengthen the capacity of these policy makers and planners to plan and implement ERP in a participatory cross-sectoral way. International partners who joined in the implementation of the workshops include: UNESCO-IIEP and UNESCO Regional Offices, the Directorate General for Development Cooperation of Italy (DGCS), the Global Development Learning Network (GDLN) of the World Bank and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA). The impact on public awareness of such activities is testified by the number of features of the events in the press [http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERParticlesPress1\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERParticlesPress1_en.htm))
- Awareness rising in Aid Development Agencies. Representatives from Aid Agencies from the education and agriculture sectors were brought together, probably for the first time, at a workshop (Rome, December 2002) to advocate on the importance to address ERP to achieve the MDGs and strengthen interagency and interdisciplinary collaboration. [http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/erpevents3\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/erpevents3_en.htm) . Workshop was organized in collaboration with IIEP.
- Application of ERP principles at the field level. A medium-term Strategy for Education for Rural People was developed in Kosovo with FAO technical support through a Technical Cooperation Project /KOS/2901. The final plan was co-published by both Ministries - Education and Agriculture. The strategy which was prepared through a participatory process involving civil society, producer organizations and local governments, was officially launched and presented to the donors' community on 17 June 2004 in Pristina. The strategy and background study were published in English, Albanian and Serbian in a book available virtually at [http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPevents12\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPevents12_en.htm). The press release is available at [www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERParticlespress3\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERParticlespress3_en.htm)

- Case studies to assess the status of education for rural people and identify possible projects to develop national ERP strategies were conducted in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro. ([http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPactivities5\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPactivities5_en.htm))
- A web site <http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/> was launched in 2003 to facilitate the dissemination of findings and lessons learnt on ERP. Information in the website is available in English, French and Spanish and as of 2005 it will be also available in Arabic and Chinese.
- A European Commission Funded Project on ERP was launched by a network of NGOs from 3 European, 3 African and 3 Latin American countries together with FAO and UNESCO/IIEP. ([http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPactivitieslast\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPactivitieslast_en.htm)).
- Education for Rural people was the key topic of several conferences hosted by ERP members such as the USA Community Colleges for Development Annual Conference and others. ([http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPevents6\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPevents6_en.htm) )
- A series of co-publications FAO/UNESCO- IIEP were produced including eight titles on ERP key issues on : [http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPpublications\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPpublications_en.htm) .
- Case studies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro were prepared ([http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPactivities5\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPactivities5_en.htm)) .
- Consultations with civil society led to several workshops and to a joint project funded by the European Commission which started in 2004. ([http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPevents14\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPevents14_en.htm))
- Several publications on ERP and its relation with food security issued ( website <http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/> and books, articles, news reported in [http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPpublications\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPpublications_en.htm))

### 3. Which where the lessons learned in implementing the ERP initiative?

We learned that the magnitude of the endeavour of achieving the MDGs can not be addressed by one single Organization or institution. The success of the fight against hunger, poverty, and for universal primary education are closely connected and are key requisites for peace but they are also directly linked to ensuring universal education to rural people. The success of the ERP flagship initiative, which advocates for increased commitment to addressing rural people learning needs, depends on ensuring a strong and forward-looking partnership between FAO and UNESCO, as well as between Ministries of Agriculture and Education and all of such entities and civil society and NGOs.. Research institutions and researchers in developing countries from both fields of expertise are also crucial in this process. The ERP partnership is matching the comparative advantage of its members; by doing so it generates a multiplier effect and produces results that no single partner could ever achieve alone.

More over, the holistic approach linking normative and pilot field work and the strategic choice to focus the program on upstream policy and capacity building work ensures the cost-effectiveness of the activities as well as a permanent monitoring of the validity of our commitment.

During our meeting of 23 February at 10 at UNESCO we can develop the above mentioned items..

Regards