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E-Discussion on : Skills Development for Rural Employment: Challenges and Solutions

Hosted on the Global Skills for Employment Knowledge Sharing Platform (Global KSP) from 6 – 22 June 2016

Supported by the Korea International Development Agency (KOICA)

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Summary of E-Discussion on Skills Development for Rural Employment Hosted on the Global Skills for Employment Knowledge Sharing Platform 6 to 22 June 2016

This E-Discussion was arranged through support provided by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

Introduction

Eight out of 10 of the world's working poor live in rural areas where the lack of adequate skills is among the primary causes of poverty and a deficit of decent work. To address this skills deficit, the Global Skills for Employment Knowledge Sharing Platform (Global KSP), with support provided by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), hosted an E-Discussion on *"Skills Development for Rural Employment: Challenges and Solutions"* from 6-22 June 2016.

The discussion brought together skills specialists, practitioners, policymakers, representatives of employers' and workers' organizations, academics and others to share their perspectives on the current situation and challenges faced by people living in rural areas, and to discuss how to help rural workers obtain the right skills and training that can improve their productivity, access local economic opportunities and increase their incomes.

To guide the discussion, participants received several ILO resource items¹ and were asked to comment on a series of questions posed by ILO moderators Ashwani Aggarwal, James Windell, and Alfredo Lazarte Hoyle. The global dialogue drew nearly 120 posts from 12 countries in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East and highlighted many solid examples of good practices and lessons learned in promoting skills for rural populations.

About the Global KSP

The Global KSP shares the approaches and experiences that international organizations, governments, employers and workers have found effective in strengthening the links between education and training to productive and decent work.

E-Discussion overview

The E-Discussion was divided into two parts: part one focused on the current situation and challenges that people living in rural areas face in accessing relevant and quality skills training; part two explored what approaches and strategies have worked in promoting and sustaining skills development in rural areas. In each part, a series of questions were raised to guide the discussion. This report provides an overview of responses to each question and the key messages that emerged.

¹ ILO resource items provided for the discussion included: Guidance Note for the E-Discussion on Skills for Rural Employment: Challenges and Solutions; ILO/G20 Training Strategy, 2010: A Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth; Youth and rural development: Evidence from 25 school-to-work transition surveys, 2015; Policy Brief, 2014: Skills for rural employment and development; Policy Brief, 2011: Policy Brief: Empowering people with disabilities for rural development; and, Recognition of prior learning: Key success factors and the building blocks of an effective system, 2015.

Key messages:

- The skill sets people living in rural areas need to increase their productivity and income depend on the context of the rural situation. The skills required in the rural economy are primarily in agriculture and allied sectors. Both technical and non-technical skills are needed: training on how to increase productivity, financial management, marketing, identifying market entry points, ability to adapt to climate change and crisis, diversification of livelihoods, and application of basic information technology, among others.
- Effective strategies to deliver skills training are those focusing on community-based approaches, for example, the ILO's Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) and the Local Economic Development Strategies (LED).
- The sustainability of skills training rests on two fundamental conditions: first, skills training should respond to labour market needs and second, service delivery (education, training, etc.) should integrate alliances, or partnerships, from among different public-private institutions.
- Although many national economic development strategies make clear references to skills development for rural areas, when it comes to implementation, urban or semi-urban areas get priority.
- The effectiveness of skills training in rural areas is enhanced if it is complemented by other interventions – *business development services, financial services, cooperatives, occupational safety and health (OSH), and entrepreneurship training*.
- Although the degree and scale of gender inequalities varies greatly between regions and contexts, the evidence indicates that on a global scale women benefit less from rural employment (whether self- or wage employment) than men and are more vulnerable to decent work deficits.
- There is a need for increased support to agriculture and diversification of rural revenues, with special emphasis on young women and men.
- Employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for youth – particularly in developing countries – remain limited, inadequately remunerated and of poor quality. Programmes providing a multi-pronged approach to empowering young people in rural areas, combining both technical and soft skills and promoting “learning by doing” with a view to gaining access to recognition of prior learning are effective in improving access by youth to productive and decent work.
- Skills to set up and run rural employers' and workers' organizations, with capacity to provide services to their affiliates, including bargaining skills and a stronger voice with local and national authorities, and with other national employer's and workers' organizations. These skills are needed to effectively shape policies that most affect women and men living in rural areas.

Highlights from the E-Discussion

Below are highlights of the contributions provided by participants of the E-Discussion divided by the questions raised in regards to the current situation and challenges in accessing skills training, and solutions on what works to promote skills and training to address the needs of people living in rural areas. For the “*Full responses*” of this dynamic discussion, please refer to **Annex A**. For the complete list of resources (international standards, good practices, publications, manuals/tools, web-based resources and videos) referred to by participants, see **Annex B**.

Part one: Current situation and challenges

Q.1 What kinds of skills do people living in rural communities need most to increase productivity, generate income and strengthen local economies?

Several participants of the discussion recognized the importance of skills development in rural areas and often presented their contributions within the context of a particular country or region where they have worked or had direct contact. They acknowledged that skills needs often vary from country to country and region to region, and agreed that a “one-size-fits-all” approach would be inefficient. Rather, they noted that strategies that meet the needs and challenges of a given context were more effective. Though many views were offered on this issue, there was a convergence on the types of skills needed by rural communities where the prevalent source of income is primarily from agricultural activities. Here are some of the responses posted:

- **Technical skills** –Sowing, livestock care, harvesting, processing of products and non-use of chemicals, marketing and commercialization of products to national and international markets. In addition, financial literacy to promote rural livelihoods and information and communication (ICT) skills, starting at a young age, to strengthen information and communication literacy.
- **Non-technical skills and soft skills** – Quality assurance in relation to non-use of child labour, environmental preservation, respect for indigenous cultures, activity planning, occupational safety and health, information management, rights at work, government policies, gender equality, skills to identify comparable advantages and potentially profitable sectors in their rural context, bargaining skills. ***Soft skills deemed important:*** bargaining, negotiation, teamwork, analytical capacity, higher-order thinking, self-control, positive self-concept, decision-making, and communication and relationship building.
- **Entrepreneurship skills** – Considered indispensable in the rural context, where jobs are primarily generated by self-employment and micro- and small enterprises.

One contributor drew from project experiences in Malawi in emphasizing the use of “value chain approaches” as a way of responding to the question:

“Using a supply value chain based approach to skill needs identification can also help determine the kind of skills needed to boost rural economies. This is because some skills requirements are driven by the end market which pulls the supply chain.” (1)²

Despite the general consensus in responses, diverse viewpoints emerged. For example, one participant stated:

“Questions such as how we can better deliver skills training to the rural population, and what types of skills are needed are important, but it seems helpful to think about skills development from the perspective of demand – how is the province planning to develop the rural economy in (the) mid-to-long term? What is the strategy? What infrastructure, business and other services need to be supported as part of the broad plan of provincial economic and employment development? Only when these questions are raised or answered we can turn to the question of skills development.” (2)

Another participant suggested:

“I would like to suggest that a typology of rural conditions might be appropriate before attempting a classification of required skills. For example: starting with agriculture, a rural farm in Germany will be in easy reach of an autobahn, but a rural farm in Africa might take days by road to reach (a) market. In this latter circumstance development might involve an airport and air transport - leading to an entirely different set of required transportation skills.” (3)

Q.2 What are the main challenges that people, especially women, living in rural areas face in accessing quality and relevant education and training?

A number of challenges were identified by the participants, largely within the context of specific projects or programmes in countries in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Europe and the Middle East. Some of these main challenges are perhaps best presented along the following key factors:

- **Geographic distances** – Education and training institutions are frequently located in urban areas that require travelling long distances to receive training.
- **Literacy** – In some cases the rural population is semi-literate or illiterate, presenting disadvantages to training when it comes to the use of reference materials.
- **Relevance of training** – TVET not adapted to the real economic opportunities of the locality and does not engage with industry, which contributes to training not being aligned with labour market requirements.
- **Lack of qualified teachers** – A major challenge is identifying and selecting appropriate trainers from the local community or who are prepared to work with rural communities and could teach in local languages.
- **Top down approaches** – Rural people are often not consulted on the type of training relevant to their needs and environment.
- **Education and training curriculum in need of reform** – Very few training institutions offer any courses related to agricultural management at the tertiary level.

² See “Endnotes” appearing at the end of this report for source for this and all other attributions.

Introducing young people to the notion that rural development encompasses a range of careers is a key to motivating them to venture into rural careers.

- **Land ownership** – Ownership and control over land and other forms of property is one of the biggest determinant of poverty in rural areas as it prevents utilization of new skills.
- **Rural stereotypes** – There is a need to break widespread stereotypes of “rural” being synonymous with “backward”, “poor”, “unproductive”, “static/passive”, “too difficult to handle”. These views lead to a more focused attention and investments in urban and peri-urban areas, only leaving “left-overs” for rural communities in terms of support measures and financial and human resources, including resources for skills development.
- **Lack of reliable high-speed internet/broadband** – The digital world can have a dramatic effect on economic development in rural areas. Yet, a lack of adequate internet connectivity stifles enterprises, generates further barriers to commerce by leaving behind rural populations.
- **Particular challenges for women** - Various challenges were highlighted as negatively impacting access to quality and relevant education and training by women in rural areas. As one of the moderators commented:

“Although the degree and scale of gender inequalities varies greatly between regions and contexts, there is evidence that, on a global scale, women benefit less from rural employment (whether self- or wage employment) than men do, and are more vulnerable to decent work deficits. This is linked to several factors: ... “traditional” division of labour, women tend to be assigned to domestic work and to be responsible for any type of care (including childcare, old-age care, etc.);... girls may be involved in domestic work instead of being sent to school, which undermines their potential and leads to lower productivity and reduces their decent work opportunities, as well as the opportunities to find skilled jobs; women are often disadvantaged in accessing productive assets and resources (including land), technologies, financial services and tools; and, women’s representation and voice in rural employers’, workers’ and farmers’ organizations are low, thus they have very limited bargaining power.” (4)

A recent Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) global consultation – “*Addressing the challenges faced by rural youth aged 15-17 in preparing for and accessing decent work*” – included a discussion on improving education and vocational training in rural areas to support rural adolescents and youth and the skills and support they need in the school-to-work transition. The full proceedings can be accessed here <http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/ac...> (5)

Q.3 What challenges have you encountered in delivering training to rural populations?

A number of participants mentioned different challenges they had encountered first-hand while delivering training. Below are examples of some of their experiences:

Top down approach:

“For example, in some remote rural areas of Zimbabwe, there are no training institutions except government agriculture and livestock extension workers who are often under resourced to carry out their work. In some instances, the rural people are either resistant to new farming technologies or new crop/livestock breeds. They prefer to continue with their old way of farming which they consider affordable.” (6)

Geographic distances:

“Distances and accessibility to knowledge, lack of trainers who could work with rural communities in the conditions they require – in terms of language accessibility and technology.” (7)

Education and training curricula in need of reform:

“...Insufficient time to undertake deep analysis before starting the actions. Due to this, training may not meet the expectations of the population, which explains their lack of motivation.” (8)

One consultant who has worked in India, observed the following challenges in delivering skills to youth in remote rural areas:

Geographic distances and lack of qualified teachers:

“The challenges include identifying the accessible yet affordable training centre locations and recruiting the right domain trainers from close by localities...The next big challenge is to mobilize the student population by going from village to village. It is difficult as most of these communities are poor & marginalised and are not aware of the value education can create for them. It requires organizing ‘community mobilization drives’ for the youth populations in remote areas and locations. Local influencers, NGOs, senior citizens and local bodies’ members are made aware of the benefits of the vocational courses. Special pamphlets and promotional literature, in local languages with prominent visuals, are prepared and distributed through the best possible local channels. (*And finally,*) It is necessary to build teams that would ensure several placement linkages with leading corporate houses and local companies in each state (province).” (9)

Another contributor representing the FAO and who has worked in rural development programmes in countries spanning the Asia-Pacific region and a few from the sub-Saharan African region, summarizes the challenges encountered as follows:

“Resisting and relying on rural stereotypes. The chronic lack of data (large scale surveys and data gathering) makes (an) evidence-based approach very difficult, especially in remote and/or marginalized areas, which are most likely to be target areas in providing education or training programmes. This leads to assumptions, sometimes erroneous ones, about a country/community context, individual characteristics, etc...); Contributing to existing patriarchal hierarchy by patronizing female participants; Mismatch between donor’s provisions and the actual needs and demands of the local (*community*); and, Mismatch between local demand and local needs.” (10)

Q. 4 To what extent are national skill development/TVET strategies addressing the needs of women and men living in rural areas? And, what are some of the challenges to financing training in these areas?

Participants to the discussion reiterated the importance of well-designed skills development/TVET strategies in addressing the needs of women and men living in rural areas and recognized that current strategies could be improved to meet these challenges in contrast to urban areas, and especially in underdeveloped and developing countries.

One participant declared that national skills development/TVET strategies are efficient to the extent that they consider sustainable economic activities viable for each rural area, and where they allow the active participation of rural women and men in the development of training plans and tools. (11) However, another participant also recognized that these conditions are rarely met and contrary to this, many rural TVET centres follow a one-size-fits-all approach in course delivery, regardless of the economic opportunities of each locality. He further added that the lack of involvement from industry is a challenge. Due to these factors, training courses do not efficiently lead to either self- nor wage employment. This may explain why the financing of training in rural areas is not always seen as something useful or valuable. (12)

Other participants also agreed on the need for improvement of skills development/TVET strategies, mentioning that these strategies are usually designed to cover the needs of urban populations, making only minor references to rural zones. (13) Supporting this assertion, another participant added, “national skills strategies may have references to rural areas, but when it comes to implementation, urban or semi-urban areas get priority”. (14) This makes it clear that in many cases rural skills development is not a priority of states and therefore, is also not (as) relevant in terms of funding as it should be. (15)

Considering the comments made by the participants, moderators added that to fashion a coherent approach to rural skills development requires that skills and training strategies be integrated into broader rural economic development policies and strategies (i.e. agricultural, private sector development and entrepreneurship policies). (16) Moderators also referred participants to the [Conclusions on promoting rural employment](#) for poverty reduction adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 97th Session (2008) and which recommend strategies to promote decent and productive employment in rural areas. (17)

Part two - Solutions: What works to promote skills and training to address the needs of people living in rural areas

Q. 5 What measures have been introduced to boost employment in rural areas in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, and what types of skills are foreseen to be in high demand as part of an integrated strategy for rural development?

Drawing from project experiences, one participant explains that an integrated rural strategy should: introduce measures such as income diversification (farm and non-farm economic activities); provide education and training opportunities to most marginalized people in rural areas that focus beyond eradication of immediate hunger and or poverty; transition from absolute no work opportunity to subsistence farming, to commercial farming (where disposable income is finally created). (18) Another measure suggested to help identify skill needs to boost rural economies was a value chain approach. The latter supports capacity building of various actors along the value chain (producers, service providers, suppliers). When successfully implemented, a value chain approach serves to forge strong relationships between owners of small enterprises and the private sector, leading to successful commercial partnerships. Moreover, it enhances communication with local microfinance institutions that could potentially provide loans to small producers. (19)

Another moderator alluded to the current technological developments mostly affecting ageing populations, and highlighted the need to promote lifelong learning to keep their skills up to date. Among the effective measures to boost employability and overcome the technological challenge he mentions are: promoting a learning culture in the workplace providing opportunities for formal training, adopting a positive attitude to acquiring new knowledge and skills, self- learning, and a stimulating job design. (20)

Finally, the type of skills deemed to be in high demand as part of an integrated rural strategy were mentioned by several participants as encompassing both technical and non-technical skills. Please refer to Question 1 (Q1), above for further details on this.

Q. 6 What works best in delivering skills development in a cost effective way to a significant number of people who live in rural areas? And what is the best way to sustain the delivery of skills development in rural areas over the long term?

One moderator recognized that once a community group is formed and empowered with new knowledge, members could become trainers/facilitators, reducing costs and increasing sustainability in the long term. (21) This reference was made after a participant mentioned the efficient efforts of the FAO at reaching a large number of people through their Farmer Field School programme, in which “a group of farmers gets together in one of their own fields to learn about their crops and things that affect them. They learn how to farm better by observing, analysing and trying out new ideas on their own fields”. (22)

In terms of cost efficiency, the importance of community-based training as well as informal apprenticeships to deliver skills in rural areas was acknowledged during the discussions. (23) Another participant also reflected on the need to use local resources. (24) Finally, one participant pointed out the advantages of mobile training units used by the ILO in Mozambique to reach a significant number of beneficiaries in a cost efficient manner. (25)

Q. 7 What are the examples of skills initiatives and programmes that have improved gender equality and social inclusion in rural areas?

A few examples highlighted during the E-discussion include:

Project	Country	Dates	Link
ILO Skills for employment and productivity in low income countries project <i>Among the aims of the project are to create green jobs for young women and men, in renewable energy, sustainable green construction, agro-business, and fish farming and bee-keeping.</i>	Mozambique	2014 - 2017	http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTEST4_170662
ILO Decent Jobs for Egypt's Young People: Tackling the Challenge Together <i>The project aims to create and access decent work opportunities for young men and women in the Egyptian Governorates of El-Minya, Port-Said and Red Sea.</i>	Egypt	2011 - 2016	http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/technical-cooperation/WCMS_329352/lang-en/index.htm

<i>The project will mainstream four approaches for sustainable development throughout all activities: green jobs; social economy; gender equality; and, community-based approaches for inclusion.</i>			
<p>ILO – UNDP project: Skills Training and Employment Promotion for Poor Women Through Strengthening of Technical Training Centres</p> <p><i>The pilot project field tested and adapted ILO's Community-Based Training (CBT) methodology for employment and empowerment in Bangladesh. It further sought to integrate a gender perspective. It operated through five Technical Training Centres of the Ministry of Labour and Employment and in collaboration with other partners such as NGOs and the private sector. The project stressed the identification of significant market opportunities before organizing flexible training encompassing gender sensitization, vocational skills and entrepreneurial skills, and providing post training support.</i></p>	Bangladesh	2002. The project has closed.	http://www.ilo.org/asia/decentwork/adwd/WCMS_098542/lang--en/index.htm

Q. 8 What are the examples of skills initiatives and programmes that have improved the outcome of training, i.e. earnings and decent work in rural areas?

Participants of the E-Discussion mentioned different experiences and a number of interventions to support effective skills development and training such as community-based training initiatives like the ILO's Training for Rural and Economic Empowerment (TREE), upgrading and promoting traditional and informal apprenticeship systems, entrepreneurship training, integrated Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives, and employment intensive approaches linked to local infrastructure development, among others. They also mentioned different partners and approaches they used in implementing the activities. The table below is a summary of the projects and programmes referred in the discussion:

Good Practices – Project based	Country	Project dates	Link containing project information
ILO Skills for employment and productivity in low income countries project	Mozambique	2014 - 2017	http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTEST4_170662
ILO Skills for Youth Employment and Rural Development in Western and Southern Africa project	Zimbabwe	2010 - 2014	http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/technical-cooperation/WCMS_240777/lang--en/index.htm
ILO – IFAD: Skills Enhancement for Employment Project (SEEP)	Nepal	2008 - 2010	http://www.ilo.org/kathmandu/whatwedo/projects/WCMS_113820/lang--en/index.htm
FAO Farmer Field School Approach			http://www.fao.org/agriculture/ippm/programme/ffs-approach/en/
SENA “Jóvenes Rurales Emprendedores” Program	Colombia		http://www.sena.edu.co/oportunidades/emprendimiento-y-

			empresarismo/Jovenes%20Rurales%20Emprendedores/Paginas/Jovenes-Rurales-Emprendedores.aspx
SNA Educa Chile, Network of rural schools covering vulnerable young people	Chile		http://www.snaeduca.cl/
ILO Project: Creating opportunities for youth employment in South Sudan	South Sudan	2007 – 2010	http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTEST4_177660
ILO Decent Jobs for Egypt's Young People: Tackling the Challenge Together	Egypt	2011 - 2016	http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/technical-cooperation/WCMS_329352/lang--en/index.htm
ILO – Japan: Promoting and building social protection and employment services for vulnerable groups (MAPS)	ASEAN countries and Mongolia	2014 - 2016	http://www.ilo.org/asia/whatwedo/projects/WCMS_342342/lang--en/index.htm
ILO – UNDP project: Skills Training and Employment Promotion for Poor Women Through Strengthening of Technical Training Centres	Bangladesh	2002 -	http://www.ilo.org/asia/decentwork/adwd/WCMS_098542/lang--en/index.htm
ILO – EU project: Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) reform	Bangladesh	2007 - 2015	http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatwedo/Projects/WCMS_106485/lang--en/index.htm
ILO – Canada: Bangladesh Skills for Employment and Productivity (B-SEP)	Bangladesh	2013 - 2018	http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatwedo/Projects/WCMS_243174/lang--en/index.htm
Organisation internationale de la francophonie: Fonds d'impulsion de l'économie locale (Fidel)	Senegal		http://www.francophonie.org/Le-Fidel-une-initiative-pour.html
Community-based tourism : A sustainable development initiative in El Salvador	El Salvador	2003 -	http://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/Exporters/Sectoral_Information/Service_Exports/Tourism/Project%20Brief%20Salvador.pdf
ILO Programme d'insertion des sortants de la formation professionnelle	Senegal	2007 - 2016	http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/countries-covered/senegal/WCMS_233340/lang--fr/index.htm

Q. 9 How do we ensure private sector participation in skills development in rural areas?

This section presents highlights of participants' observations and perspectives on this question. A contributor shared his experiences from Senegal, describing how taking a value chain development approach helps to ensure local private sector participation:

“Regarding measures to boost employment in rural areas in both agricultural and non-agricultural areas, the value chain approach has been very effective. Interventions such as capacity building of various actors along the value chain (producers, service providers such as micro-finance institutions, suppliers of inputs), has been useful in terms of value creation and jobs. Those measures helped to strengthen the capacities of rural and micro enterprises (generally non-formal ones) in terms of production and market access. By joining their efforts and building strong relationships with the local

private sector, the owners of small enterprises succeeded in producing and selling more goods and services. In fact, the connection to the market that was missing in the great majority of rural areas was a key ingredient to the success of the project.” (26)

Another contributor, also from Senegal, shares the following example of how to ensure private sector participation in skills development in rural areas:

“The first example is a community-based tourism project in the area of Saint-Louis. The project was funded by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and its objective was to develop business partnerships between local producers and local hotel managers. The private sector had to build the capacity of local suppliers in quality management, marketing and accounting in order to provide hotels with better services. Producers, in return were supposed to provide hotels with goods and services they needed. Developing the skills of local producers gave them the opportunity to work with local businesses in general and the hotels in particular.

The second example is related to the experience of the ILO in building the capacity of young students in vocational schools. The ILO signed an agreement with the chambers of crafts who were assigned the training of young students in areas such as Start Your Business and Improve Your Business. Instead of hiring expensive trainers, the ILO builds the local capacity of some members of the chambers of crafts.” (27)

Contributing from Asia, another commentator shares her thoughts on skills development in rural areas and links to the private sector:

“Private sector participation in skills development in rural areas can be enhanced where there is a strong government thrust towards local procurement. In a consultation with the Philippine Public Employment Service Office (PESO) which I once attended, one of the representatives shared his experience where the local government had asked prospective investors in an rural-based economic zone to present a list of skills that would be needed a few years before the full establishment of the zone so that workers may be better prepared. Indeed, there have been documented cases of governments that required investors to present local procurement plans consisting of skills (of local workers) and business services (from local firms). Through Public Private Partnerships (PPP), investors also have funded scholarships and training secondments. Malaysia had been quite successful in linking local food processors to major foreign retailers, such as TESCO and Carrefour, alongside targeted support, financed by government and foreign companies, to help workers and SMEs upgrade skills and quality standards.” (28)

Adding to the conversation on the role of governments in stimulating private sector involvement in skills development, one of the moderators observed:

“Governments, through appropriate policy, can also facilitate the development of a skilled workforce by the private sector. For example, in one of the countries in Southern Africa, the Government, to overcome skills shortages, made it compulsory for every school construction project to recruit apprentices. So, by the time a construction project was completed, not only a new building was erected, but also 2-3 new skilled workers were also developed.” (29)

Another commenter drawing from her experiences based in Africa, and in particular from North Africa where the ILO's TREE methodology has been applied, posts:

“By making sure the private sector is a main informant for skills initiatives. We (*also*) need to use businesses to deliver skills through workplace-based learning. Still large numbers of youth gain their skills through informal apprenticeship, learning side by side with experienced craftspersons. Where such practices exist, we need to upgrade the existing system by improving skills of master craftspersons and of apprentices, by improving working conditions and ensuring that apprentices are not exploited (or used as child labourers), always building on local traditions without distorting them. Where this practice is weak, development partners can mobilize businesses to engage in apprenticeship and train young people, while joining in a network of improving skills for the trade locally – fostering collaboration among businesses locally.” (30)

And finally, a reference to an ILO programme and how it includes the participation of the private sector to improve the outcome of training:

“The Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) is one of the ILO's vehicles to promote an integrated path to inclusive growth and employment by creating a sustainable institutional and economic environment based on a local resource-based approach. The EIIP works with a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, employers' and workers' organizations, the private sector and community associations to: (i) enhance the employment content of infrastructure investments, as well as environmental measures for the restoration and management (adaptation / mitigation) of natural resources; and (ii) encourage governments to institutionalize local resource-based employment-intensive approaches in their national investment programmes and policies.” (31)

Q. 10 How can modern information and communication technology (mobile phones, internet, interactive CDs and DVDs) be effectively harnessed to deliver skills to people in rural areas?

A few contributors mentioned the importance of equipping people living in rural areas with information and communication technology (ICT) skills, in particular, those engaged in the farming sector, to increase their productivity and information on issues such as market access. One individual posted:

“Studies have demonstrated that access to cellular technology can have a dramatic effect on economic development in deprived areas. The availability of cell phones to farmers helps them make more informed decisions about what to plant, when to harvest, and how much to sell crops for, for instance. These are all key factors for economic success in rural communities. ICT provides economic opportunities to both urban and rural populations.” (32)

The same contributor shared the success of using a “MOODLE” e-learning platform as a knowledge sharing tool for the application of the TREE project in Mozambique.

Another contributor who draws from previous experiences as a programme officer for rural development programmes in Asia-Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa offers the following:

“Mobile phones were useful to provide participants with occasions (a reminder, alarm) to review what they have learned, and to continue motivating them to learn. However, its effectiveness as the main media of long-time learning, and learning of sophisticated subjects has not been observed yet. Providing mobile phones themselves had also been a good incentive for participants to stay in course, which by its termination participants had incorporated its use not only in their learning, but also in their income earning related activities (i.e. making phone call to produce broker instead of waiting for him to come to town to pick up).

“Educational material on CDs and DVDs were most effective when used for conveying general information (i.e. not skills that require hands-on practice) to a large group of people for a short period of time. Provided that communities had communal DVD players, monitors, and speakers, these DVDs could be shared among nearby communities which maximized its target audiences and thereby its efficiency. However, its effectiveness as the main media of long-time learning, and learning of sophisticated subjects has not been observed yet.

“Another very successful case of using DVDs was when reaching out to younger targets (under 12 in many cases), with educational animations. Contents of these animated shows were often a translated version of already popular educational animations, which were provided by its copyright holders under the mutual understanding that these will not be reproduced for commercial reasons.” (33)

And, finally, there was the case of skills delivery via ICT in Rwanda where the Rwandan Rural Telecentre Network, with rural telecentres (self-sufficient but supported by the government's policy to promote ICT in rural areas), not only provides IT services but also serve as delivery hubs where individuals, companies and government can advertise, sell, buy and exchange products and services from e-training to banking, insurance, taxation, healthcare, electricity and information (For reference to case story see "Catalysts of rural transformation (ILO, 2013): <http://www.ilo.org/employment/...> (34)

Conclusion

The issues discussed and views put forth by participants of this E-Discussion acknowledged the importance of rural areas as vital to regional and national development. The majority also recognized that education, entrepreneurship, and physical and social infrastructure all play an important role in developing rural regions. Skills are central to improving employability and livelihood opportunities, reducing poverty, enhancing productivity and promoting environmentally sustainable development.

It was generally agreed that to improve the situation of women and men in rural areas a number of important measures are needed, among them: integrated policy approaches that integrate skills development into rural development policies and strategies; expanding access to quality education and vocational training; promoting diversified skills development systems; and, upgrading skills for increased agricultural productivity.

As a collaborative, web-based tool for promoting good practices, lessons learned and experiences on *what works* to link skills development to productive and decent work, the Global KSP will continue to organize E-Discussions covering a range of topics, including anticipating future skills needs, private sector participation in skills development, overcoming stereotypes in skills training, and others. By exchanging experiences and ideas, valuable lessons can be learned, shared and built upon, allowing for more effective solutions on how to provide women and men with the right skills and training that are fundamental to success and productivity, building careers and improving livelihoods.

END

Endnotes

- (1) Naomy Lintini, see page 23 of Annex A “Full responses to E-Discussion”.
- (2) Akiko Sakamoto, see page 58 of Annex A.
- (3) Sylvia Hammond , see page 46 of Annex A.
- (4) Alfredo Lazarte Hoyle, see page 63 of Annex A.
- (5) Jacqueline Demeranville, see page 42 of Annex A.
- (6) Musitaffa Mweha, see page 22 of Annex A.
- (7) Mónica G. Sladogna, see page 18 of Annex A.
- (8) Magloire, see page 32 of Annex A.
- (9) G S Sethi, see page 29 of Annex A.
- (10) Jeongha Kim , see page 50 of Annex A.
- (11) Magloire, see page 32 of Annex A.
- (12) Tapera Jeffrey Muzira, see page 62 of Annex A.
- (13) Ana Paulo, see page 21 of Annex A.
- (14) Manzoor Khaliq, see page 21 of Annex A
- (15) Magloire, see page 33 of Annex A.
- (16) Alfredo Lazarte Hoyle, see page 58 of Annex A.
- (17) Ashwani Aggarwal, see page 27 of Annex A.
- (18) Jeongha Kim, see page 52 of Annex A.
- (19) Mohamadou SY, see page 70 of Annex A.
- (20) Ashwani Aggarwal, see page 26 of Annex A.
- (21) Jim Windell, see page 37 of Annex A.
- (22) Sarr Souleymane, see page 37 of Annex A.
- (23) Gabriel Bordado, see page 59 of Annex A.
- (24) Jeongha Kim, see page 52 of Annex A.
- (25) Igor Felice, see page 63 of Annex A.
- (26) Mohamadou SY, see page 70 of Annex A.
- (27) Mohamadou SY, see page 71 of Annex A.
- (28) Sandra Yu, see page 76 of Annex A.
- (29) Ashwani Aggarwal, see page 55 of Annex A.
- (30) Christine Hofmann, see page 57 of Annex A.
- (31) Maria Teresa Gutierrez, see page 38 of Annex A.
- (32) Ana Paulo, see page 68 of Annex A.
- (33) Jeongha Kim, see pages 52-53 of Annex A.
- (34) Loretta de Luca, see page 75 of Annex A.

Annex A

Full Responses to E-Discussion on Skills for Rural Employment

Dates: 6 - 22 June 2016

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

My name is Ashwani Aggarwal, ILO Senior Skills and Employment Specialist. I welcome you to E-Discussion on Skills for Rural Employment and I will moderate the discussions during the first week. Eight out of ten of the world's working poor live in rural areas where the lack of decent work opportunities is pervasive. Therefore, the challenge of ending poverty is fundamentally one of ending rural poverty.

Lack of or inadequate skills is one of the causes for poverty and decent work deficit in rural areas. Therefore, this E-discussion focuses on the challenges and solutions to providing right skills and other interventions to people in rural areas to contribute to improving productivity, harnessing local economic opportunities, increasing income and accessing decent work.

During the next two weeks, we will discuss progressively the following issues concerning rural areas:

- the importance of skills development for harnessing local economic opportunities and increasing productivity and income,
- the kind of skills people need,
- the main challenges in accessing quality and relevant education and training, and gender equality,
- the initiatives taken by various countries in improving skills development, and
- the lessons learnt- what works and what doesn't work.

We will also discuss which other interventions along with skills development are effective in boosting productivity, income and decent employment in the rural areas.

I invite ILO constituents, colleagues, academia and other experts to actively share their experiences and also respond to the queries of others by sharing examples. So, let us start by discussing the first three issues mentioned above.

Please feel free to make as many contributions as you wish in English, French or Spanish.

Chris Chinien

Congratulations to our colleagues Ashwani Aggarwal and James Windell for initiating this discussion. As an opening comment I would like to point out that in attempting to answer these 4 questions we need to keep in mind the ecosystems, which defines the "rural" areas we are discussing. Skills development initiatives in rural areas having access to high speed internet need not be limited to agriculture. Impact sourcing and rural sourcing have the potential for creating millions of jobs in rural areas. For a more detailed discussion see: Rockefeller-Foundation. (2011a). Job Creation Through Building the Field of Impact Sourcing. Focus. Retrieved from:

<https://www.rockefellerfoundat...>

Chris Chinien, Ph.D.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Thanks, Chris for your comment and the reference to a working paper. You raise a good point in that "Skills development initiatives in rural areas having access to high speed internet need not be limited to agriculture". Please share your experiences and views on this issue.

Co-Moderator (SkillsforEmployment)

Mónica G. Sladogna comments.

¿Qué tipo de competencias necesitan las personas que viven en comunidades rurales para generar más ingresos y fortalecer economías locales? En mi opinión competencias técnicas vinculadas a la siembra, cuidados (en casos de cría de ganado o aves) cosecha o elaboración de productos que agreguen valor en términos de no utilización de productos químicos, de garantías de calidad en relación al no uso de mano de obra infantil, de seguridad en el trabajo, de cuidado del medio ambiente y de respeto a las culturas originarias como marca de calidad. No son tanto competencias técnicas sino apoyo al marketing y puesta de productos en bocas de expendio nacionales e internacionales. Desarrollar normas de calidad que den cuenta del respeto por tradiciones de cuidado de la naturaleza y producción artesanal.

¿Qué desafíos ha encontrado usted en la entrega de capacitación para las poblaciones rurales? Las distancias y la accesibilidad al conocimiento, la falta de instructores que sepan trabajar con poblaciones rurales en las condiciones que estas requieren en términos de accesibilidad a idiomas y tecnologías.

Unofficial translation:

What kinds of skills do people living in rural communities need most to increase productivity, generate income and strengthen local economies?

In my opinion, people living in rural communities need technical skills related to sowing, livestock care (in cases of breeding of livestock or poultry), harvesting or processing of products that add value to their harvest in terms of non-use of chemicals, quality assurance in relation to non-use of child labour, safety at work, environmental care and respect for indigenous cultures as a quality brand. Not only do technical skills matter, but non-technical skills could as well support marketing and commercialization of products to national and international markets. Moreover, development of quality standards that could take into consideration and respect local traditions with respect to care of nature and artisanal production.

What challenges have you encountered in delivering training to rural populations?

Distances and accessibility to knowledge, lack of trainers who could work with rural communities in the conditions they require –in terms of language accessibility and technology.
(Original comment in Spanish)

Ana Paulo

I could not agree more with you, Monica. Products that have added value and that do not use chemicals, quality guarantees and respect for the environment, respect for the original cultures, as a quality brand, are innovative aspects that should be integrated as transversal in all projects aimed at rural development.

I want also to recall the importance of green jobs for rural communities that depend mostly on natural capital such as soil, forests, fish stocks and ecosystem services for their livelihoods. They are also poor and lack adequate social protection, and thus bear the highest costs of environmental degradation and climate change. Women are more likely to be affected by environmental degradation, and climate change. It is therefore important

to develop interventions aimed at preserving, restoring and enhancing the quality of the environment across rural areas. One intention is to create green jobs – jobs that are attractive and generate good returns and income, and that reduce consumption of energy, raw materials and natural resources, reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, minimize the production of waste and pollution, protect and restore ecosystems and biodiversity, and help adapt to climate change.

Under the TREE project in Mozambique we are starting a specific intervention to create green jobs for young women and men, in renewable energy, sustainable green construction, agro-business, and fish farming and bee-keeping. The community profiling and the diagnosis of economic opportunities in the rural communities included specific questions that address these subjects and jobs areas and how the project will support young people to work in and establish businesses that create a just, green and sustainable world by encouraging them to seek opportunities and close skills gaps in green sectors such as renewable energy. In addition to providing training in solar technologies to youth, the project will also offer business skills training and facilitate networking platforms between established solar companies and the trained youth. The networking sessions will provide a platform for the companies to select trained youth who would be engaged as marketing agents for the companies in rural areas after receiving additional trainings from the companies.

Co-moderator (SkillsforEmployment)

-Traducción no oficial-

No podría estar más de acuerdo con usted, Mónica. Productos con valor añadido y que no utilizan productos químicos, las garantías de calidad y respeto al medio ambiente, el respeto de las culturas originales, como una marca de calidad, son aspectos innovadores que deben integrarse como transversal en todos los proyectos dirigidos al desarrollo rural.

Quiero recordar también la importancia de los empleos verdes para las comunidades rurales que dependen principalmente de capital natural, como el terreno, los bosques, los recursos pesqueros y servicios de los ecosistemas para su sustento. Estas zonas también son pobres y carecen de una protección social adecuada, y por lo tanto tienen los más altos costos de la degradación ambiental y cambio climático. Las mujeres son más propensas a ser afectadas por la degradación ambiental y el cambio climático. Por lo tanto, es importante desarrollar intervenciones dirigidas a preservar, restaurar y mejorar la calidad del medio ambiente en las zonas rurales. Una intervención es crear empleos verdes - empleos que sean atractivos y que generen buenos rendimientos e ingresos, y que reduzcan el consumo de energía, materias primas y recursos naturales, reducir las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero, minimizar la producción de residuos y la contaminación, proteger y restaurar los ecosistemas y la biodiversidad, y ayudar a adaptarse al cambio climático.

En el proyecto TREE en Mozambique estamos iniciando una intervención específica para crear empleos verdes para las mujeres y hombres jóvenes, en energías renovables, la construcción verde sostenible, agro-negocios, y la piscicultura y la apicultura. El perfil de la comunidad y el diagnóstico de las oportunidades económicas en las comunidades rurales incluyen preguntas específicas acerca de estos temas y áreas de trabajo y ahora el proyecto apoyará a los jóvenes para trabajar y establecer negocios que sean capaces de crear un mundo justo, verde y

sostenible, animándoles a buscar oportunidades y cerrar la brecha de competencias en sectores verdes como la energía renovable. Además de proporcionar formación a la juventud en tecnologías de energía solar, el proyecto también ofrecerá capacitación empresarial y facilitará plataformas de redes entre empresas de energía solar establecidas y jóvenes capacitados. Las sesiones de trabajo proporcionarán una plataforma para las empresas para seleccionar los jóvenes capacitados quienes serán incorporados como agentes de comercialización para las empresas en las zonas rurales después de recibir capacitación adicional de las empresas.

Co-moderator (SkillsforEmployment)

Soe Min Aung, Myanmar Seamen's Federation, asked during the ILC 2016:

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Myanmar economy. Upgrading of skills for local producers – those engaged in fishing, crop production, forestry, etc... - is important. How can we attract donations and technical know-how for improving the skills of people living in agricultural areas?

Kaviraj Appadu

This is a pertinent question. The issue of rural development should be addressed in a holistic way within the broader framework of a national economic development strategy. It is a truism that a majority of poor people lives in the rural area. Poverty has a rural and agricultural profile. In the first instance, resources should be mobilised nationally and national strategies should aim at addressing the issues of service delivery (i.e. education, health, infrastructure etc.,) to the rural population in view of enhancing their quality of life. Given that most people are involved in labour intensive type of agricultural activities, it is important that extension services and guidance are provided to farmers in view of enhancing productivity and strengthening of marketing structures at the rural level. Farmers should be encouraged to get organised through cooperatives or other types of structures which will facilitate capacity building and resource mobilisation. There are a number of international agencies which are working on supporting countries in rural/agricultural development. Agencies such as FAO and IFAD could be mentioned here. Others such as WFP, World Bank, Asian Development Bank etc., are also involved. However, most of these agencies work directly and principally with/through the central government and it is important that rural stakeholders are involved in programme design right from the start. Bilateral agencies are also involved in such support. However, much will depend on the bilateral agencies own country strategies and sectors selected for support. The Swedish International Development Agency has recently opened an office in Myanmar and it would be worth contacting them and check their development priorities. There are also some international NGOs involved in the agricultural sector (i.e. OXFAM, CONCERN etc). The NGOS are usually involved at grass roots level and can be important partners. It is important to underline here that rural development is not only agriculture. There are other non-agricultural sectors which need to be addressed too. Some countries are actually designing strategies to industrialise the rural area and these are expected to provide employment opportunities, wealth creation and enhancement of quality of life.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Thanks Monica for listing some of the challenges in delivering training to rural communities as: distance, lack of trainers, language and technology. I request other participants to share the challenges they or their countries have encountered in delivering training to rural populations.

Ana Paulo

The previous participants have identified most of the difficulties that all of us working on development projects to improve the skills of populations in rural areas have experienced. In particular, in regards to national skills strategies having references to rural areas but when it comes to implementation, urban or semi-urban areas get priority. Here in Mozambique, the training offered ensures that formal certification of skill levels integrated in the National Qualifications Framework is concentrated in urban areas, and thus prevents young people from rural areas to access to skills that could facilitate their integration in multinational companies or in competitive markets or even facilitate their school progression. The training made available is based largely on know-how, with almost immediate results, and informal learning because the majority of young Mozambicans in rural areas are largely illiterate. The issues of life skills or soft skills are also largely forgotten in developed training programs. Concluding questions: to what extent do we develop training that breaks with the dominant paradigm and allows young people from rural areas to access other socio-professional levels of development? To what extent should our project integrate necessary life skills and promote the integration of new technologies and innovation in traditional activities in rural areas?

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Integration of life skills in education and training programmes is essential. The use of new technologies is also important as it increases productivity, quality and efficiency, and thus income.

Manzoor Khaliq

Hello Ashwani. The questions asked are pretty wide that could be answered accordingly in a wide manner. Let me, however, try to answer these in a concise manner to kick start the discussion.

1. The skills needed in the rural economy are primarily in agriculture and allied sectors such as crops including fodder production, horticulture (mainly fruits and vegetables), dairy (milk and milk products), meat (chicken, fish, poultry, lamb/mutton and beef) and honey. The skills required in these areas are not very complicated/advanced in nature and can be imparted, outside the formal training institution, in the field under a tree. The beauty of skills development in the rural economy is the quick results that come forth in terms of income generation. The trainees/beneficiaries get the income within four to six months depending on the cropping/production cycle.

2. People living in rural areas seldom have access to institution-based skills development, they mostly learn these skills on-the-job over a period of time in an unstructured manner. The reasons are: institutions are mostly located in big towns or cities, rigid entry criteria requiring xxx years of education, non-flexibility especially in terms of time, affordability in terms of fees, living and other opportunity costs. Because of the overwhelming burden of family and household work on women in rural areas, they cannot participate in training; they can do so if the training is organized at a place and time convenient to them.

3. National skills strategies may have references to rural areas however when it comes to implementation, urban or semi-urban areas get priority. Training is not a cheap affair, it costs money to train people in various skills. Training systems in developing countries mostly remain under-funded and all the institutions compete for the available budget. This way, the urban or semi-urban areas get the lion's share and nothing much is left for the far away institutions.

Musitaffa Mweha

1. The people in rural areas especially those in agriculture need skills such as: planning for the type of agriculture activities, bulk procurement of inputs, growing, harvesting, post-harvest/value addition, marketing, price negotiation with buyers, record keeping, occupational safety and health. These skills also need to be adapted to the rural farmers' level of education.

2. The main challenges faced by people living in rural areas include: Top down approach where the rural people are not consulted on the type of training relevant to their needs and environment. For example, in some remote rural areas of Zimbabwe, there are no training institutions except Government Agriculture and Livestock Extension Workers who are often under resourced to carry out their work. In some instances, the rural people are either resistant to new farming technologies or new crop/livestock breeds. They prefer to continue with their old way of farming which they consider affordable.

Women are supposed to be active in both income generating activities such as agriculture and care work at home. They end up overburdened with little time to rest or socialise with their peers. Whenever they jointly generate income with their spouses, the majority of the women do not have control over the income.

3. In some cases the rural population is semi-literate. This disadvantages them when it comes to use of reference materials. Other disadvantages include: During a field based training, some people travel long distances to the training field; improper timing of the training affecting the rural people's other home/community activities; and, the lack of buy-in by the community leaders in a particular training.

4. In Zimbabwe, the agriculture sector is covered by the National Skills Development Strategies through provision of extension services.

Each ward has a ward based Agriculture Extension Worker. For example, the "Skills for Youth Employment and Rural Development Programme" which was implemented in Zimbabwe from 2010-2016 worked closely with these Extension Workers to provide skills training using the Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) methodology.

Co-moderator (SkillsforEmployment)

In the following comment, **Moderator Jim Windell** responds to Musitaffa and Kaviraj....

Many thanks to Musitaffa and Kaviraj for raising the difficulties with a top down approach to skills and local economic development in rural areas. The ILO's Training for Rural Economic Empowerment programme (TREE) tries to counter this by devolving decision making to community groups about what types of economic livelihoods are best suited for their community and what types of training programmes are needed. While this lengthens the start-up time for training because of the need for extensive consultation and team-building at the local level, we feel the end results are better. Jim

Alexis Hoyaux

Dear ILO colleagues, very happy you started this discussion. I follow it for ITCILO and bilateral donor's benefit. I would also prone towards a more bottoms up approach as Jim says. And maybe on skills development, use "counters" in the existing national or sectoral training funds at the local level to finance/support autonomous Vocational Training Centres VTC (public/private) initiatives supporting rural/agriculture training? As long as the needs are defined/owned locally. Look into the matter of public private partnerships boosting local enterprises/VTC in support with international

companies ? But in that case, national and international trade barriers/export quota etc might hamper the process. Every proposal comes with an issue...difficult. ITCILO/Skills

Co-moderator (SkillsforEmployment)

Moderator Jim Windell commented...

For information about the ILO's Training for Rural Economic Empowerment programme (TREE), methodology, and intended beneficiaries, please see: <http://www.skillsforemployment...>
For the TREE training manual: <http://www.skillsforemployment...>

Musitaffa Mweha

Dear Colleagues,

ILO CO-Harare implemented the “Skills for Youth Employment and Rural Development Programme” from 2010-2016. The experiences and lessons from the beneficiaries - the majority of whom are now self-employed in agriculture based projects - were documented in a publication contained in the following link:

<http://www.skillsforemployment...>

Naomy Lintini

Dear colleagues,

This is indeed a very interesting and important discussion. Thanks to Ashwani and James for the initiative.

In my view, it is important to look at the rural economy holistically because the skill sets required for rural economies to tick, including skills needed to boost productivity go beyond the core agriculture activities. Rural people for example require skills on how to mechanize their agricultural production processes. Beyond this, people in rural areas also require skills in application of basic information technology so that they can easily access information on such issues as market access. While this can be done through simple telephone messaging, people need to be trained on how and where to source the right kind of information.

Using a supply value chain based approach to skill needs identification can also help determine the kind of skills needed to boost rural economies. This is because some skills requirements are driven by the end market which pulls the supply chain. This has been our experience in Malawi where the end market in the vegetable value chain indicated that they need year round supply of quality high value vegetable which could not be achieved through rain fed agriculture. The Supermarkets and Hotels involved in this supply chain recommended training in green house vegetable farming for the local farmers. In response to this demand from the market, our Project working together with these companies, is supporting the design and piloting of a greenhouse cultivation skills upgrading training for young farmers.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Thanks Manzoor, Alexis, Musitaffa and Naomy.

Income from non-farm activities is becoming an important source of income in rural areas. World Employment and Social Outlook 2016 suggests improving the productivity of independent smallholder farmers and boosting development of the rural non-farm economy as key factors for reducing poverty. Accordingly, skills sets required in rural areas should be diverse and not limited to agriculture. Rather the skills requirement in a particular rural area

would depend on the nature of local economic opportunities that can be harnessed to promote employment and income. The ILO's TREE methodology provides a systemic approach to address this issue and identify skills needs and gaps.

As some participants have reflected, apart from the vocational and technical skills linked to an economic opportunity, other types of skills - ICT, entrepreneurial, literacy and numeracy, occupational safety and health, environment preservation, financial literacy, organizing and working in groups and cooperatives, and soft skills are also important. Rural people should also have knowledge about rights at work; government policies and programmes for rural development, education and enterprise promotion; market information; and value chains. They need to be sensitised about the importance of gender equality, women empowerment, and climate change.

Which other type of knowledge and skills are required?

Saurav Ram Joshi

Great initiative and a good topic for discussion.

Nepal's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Policy 2012 provides a lot of opportunities to enhance the skills of uneducated rural youth and many other disadvantaged groups of people and contribute to income generation, poverty alleviation and national development. However, there is a lack of appropriate training approaches for rural economic empowerment. As I was involved in the ILO's Skills Enhancement for Employment Project (SEEP) in 2009, I heartily appreciate ILO's Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) approach which is based on community planning and utilization of local resources. Further to this, in the Nepal context, workplace based competency training programmes or training based on the apprenticeship model in particular in agriculture, construction and tourism sectors should be emphasized and implemented. Currently, there are 14 public Employment Service Centres (ESC) located in 14 zones of Nepal and there is lack of appropriate coordination among skills/training providers and employers with the ESCs in the districts/zones. The role of ESCs could be much larger to better match the skills demand and supply side in rural employment, and also to contribute more in terms of career guidance and employment services for rural people.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Mr. Joshi, thanks for suggesting the use of TREE and workplace based learning methods for Nepal. How strong is the link and outreach of ESCs to the rural areas?

Patrick

Thank you all for this interesting discussion.

Below some quick remarks-

Rural skills for decent work - One of the biggest determinant of poverty in rural areas is land ownership, and rural daily labourers or even small farmers are often more vulnerable than others in the labour market. So while upgrading technical skills is important, it should also take place in an environment that allow the workers to benefit from the increased productivity that will result from improved skills - by integrating the skills component within a wider rural reform programme and/or including a strong organizational component (e.g.: "My Coop") in the training package.

Skills for local / export markets - Jordan is currently discussing a trade agreement with the EU, and while it is expected that most sectors can benefit from it, agriculture as well as food and beverages will not be able to, because of the stringent quality standards, and traceability requirements. While

our programmes are generally geared towards local production, we would need a stronger focus on quality standards for export oriented agriculture.

I would also be interested to hear about successful collaboration with FAO when it comes to training of farmers or extension workers.

Co-moderator SkillsforEmployment

Moderator Jim Windell offers the following response:

Many thanks to Patrick for raising the issue of cooperatives and use of ILOs MyCoop programme. Here is a major underutilized intervention in rural communities. If we can organize cooperative groups we can go a long way in addressing size issues in agricultural production.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Complementing Jim's comments with respect to the TREE project in Zimbabwe, the ILO project formed a partnership with the Ministry of SME, which conducted training for all trainees, helped them form cooperatives and then registered them.

Co-moderator (SkillsforEmployment)

From **Moderator Jim Windell**:

Very glad to see others joining the discussion, including Alexis from ITC Turin. One issue we might raise for next week is access to credit. Manzoor mentioned financial literacy as one of the skills needed to impart, and in the Skills Academies hosted by ITC Turin, access to credit, not to mention financial literacy, has always been viewed as one of the major stumbling blocks in promoting rural livelihoods. Where micro-finance institutions are weak or concentrated in urban areas, how best to support access? In Madagascar, we persuaded an institution to extend its reach by visiting rural villages to collect deposits and make payments. This was by motorbike (something they were doing already in remote districts) but was highly inefficient and dangerous to the motorbike riders as they were subject to highway robbery. Manzoor's predecessor in Zimbabwe made arrangements with local banks to provide access to credit by providing a reserve fund for rural communities (established with donor funds) but this can be problematic, with institutions poorly equipped (with few incentives) to make small loans and perhaps establishing an unhealthy relationship between projects (and donors) and beneficiaries. Financial literacy in rural communities here plays a role. Should micro-finance institutions be supported in this manner? It would be interesting to see how this has been tackled in Afghanistan where Manzoor is based, and where some time ago donor funds were readily available. There is also the issue of whether inputs (e.g. equipment, fertilizer, seed and livestock) should be freely made available, but will touch on this issue next week when I return to office. Will try to touch on Soe Min Aung's (from Myanmar) request on resource mobilization. Regards, Jim

Albert Okal

Jim, I identify very well with the topic on access to Financing and financial literacy. In Tanzania mobile banking is bringing financial inclusion to the remotest of villages. In addition, the mobile banking is sometimes (*word missing here..*) with banking agents where local communities are able to deposit cash to a mobile bank agent and withdraw. It is revolutionizing financial inclusivity. What I also see working with rural communities urban poor is the use of community savings (SACCO) which have less restrictions, no collaterals and very low interest rates. With banks rates skyrocketing and conditions for loans becoming ever stringent, the SACCO will continue to work for communities in rural areas.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Thanks Albert for sharing a good example. When the local communities are able to form and operate cooperatives and sustain them, it provides a sound foundation for savings and extending loans to the members.

Rónán Haughey

Greetings to you all, I write this morning from Ireland - although a "Developed country" we have considerable challenges and opportunity in our rural areas in respect of sustainable employment, particularly for our young people and older persons who find themselves redundant or in roles that have become obsolete.

Our society and economy is constantly evolving and with the lack of sustainable employment many of our young people have to migrate to our urban areas and/or emigrate to the UK, The US, UAE, Australia, Canada etc. This might not be the case if we equip our young people to be agile, creative, innovative and enterprising. Another area of deep concern in this context is the lack of reliable broadband. The impact of the digital world and economy can have on sustainable rural life is phenomenal. Such a lack of appropriate internet connectivity stifles enterprise, creates further barriers to commerce and gets those impacted, left behind.

I also observe that in rural areas of Ireland there is much potential from better coordination and support of community based education, Vocational Education and Training (VET) or Skills as I like to call it has tremendous potential to ignite communities be they Rural or Urban. Our urban economy is highly dependent on agriculture and food sector, knowledge, marketing and technology are major drivers for this sector and investment in these capital and human capital competences should go hand in hand as already referred to in part by previous contributors.

Con Gregg

From Con Gregg, Skills Technical Specialist.

Greetings Rónán. Good to see your post. I met one of your colleagues from the North-West Regional Skills Forum recently. You might be interested in ILO resources on rural employment available at <http://www.ilo.org/employment/...>, and on skills and employability available at: <http://www.ilo.org/skills/lang...>.

Co-moderator SkillsforEmployment

Voices from the ILO International Labour Conference 2016:

Nearly 47 per cent of the population in Ghana live in rural areas (World Bank). Within this context, representatives of a trade union organization from Ghana raised the following questions about skills:

- How does our country ensure that it creates sufficient jobs for its young women and men?
- I am to retire in five years' time and believe I have good skills. What can I do to ensure that my skills remain current?

- What options are available to people with good skills who can't find employment?

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Fast changes in the technology causes changes in the skills requirement, so the promotion of lifelong learning is essential to counter skills obsolescence. Effective measures include: promoting learning culture at the workplace, opportunities for formal training, positive attitude to acquire new knowledge and skills, self- learning, and having stimulating job design.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Thank you for raising very important issues. The conclusions on promoting rural employment for poverty reduction adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 97th Session (2008) recommends strategies to promote decent and productive employment in rural areas. Main recommendations are:

- Rural employment strategies should form an integral part of national employment strategies and should aim to eliminate poverty.
- Agriculture and rural development are key to promotion of rural employment.
- Increasing diversification and agricultural productivity through technical progress and investment is central to poverty reduction. For this to happen, agricultural support services need to be tailored to serve the needs of small-scale farms that engage the bulk of the rural population and account for most food production in developing countries.
- Innovative measures are required to ensure that small farmers have access to wider markets.
- Strategies should be developed to ensure access to adequate training and technology, land and water for the development of food production, according to national circumstances.
- The Decent Work Agenda provides a framework for addressing the multiple challenges of promoting rural employment for poverty reduction.

For more details, please download the publication from:

<http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/grou...>

The ILO TREE methodology has successfully demonstrated creation of jobs in the rural economy in many countries.

Gift Mabvumbe

In Malawi, agriculture still holds the key to reducing poverty and increasing the security of livelihoods. The diverse challenges for the rural poor continue to grow, however. These are water insecurity, and unpredictable long-term effects of climate change. Rural farmers are all grappling with these challenges at different levels.

In attempting to deal with these issues, the importance of skills training cannot be underestimated. The skills to improve productivity, increase adaptability to deal with change and crisis, and facilitate the diversification of livelihoods to manage risks are at a premium in rural areas.

In many cases, these skills are an issue of survival. Providing these skills effectively is one of the key challenges of rural development, but it has not always been well met either because reaching the rural poor might appear to be more costly and time-consuming than reaching the urban or peri-urban poor or usually because the contextual factors that prevent small farmers from accessing and applying training have not been addressed.

The majority of agricultural producers are women; yet, men still tend to receive more and better training than women's.

Vanwyk Chikasanda

While Gift has already described the Malawi situation, I would like to add that there are some initiatives which may help provide skills for rural development and growth in Malawi. There are Community Skills Development Centres (CSDC) championed by the TEVET Authority and also Community Colleges, which are under the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training. There are also efforts to provide technical and vocational education to primary and secondary

school learners so that those who fail to proceed to tertiary and higher education are able to integrate and support their own communities through skills acquired in the general education system. However, the approaches seem fragmented due to lack of a unified, coordinated and learning system. The CSDCs, situated in typical rural settings provide communities an opportunity to decide on the nature of skills required for their area and they also decide on how to mobilise resources and learning materials through community governance structures. Use of technology in the delivery of trainings may not be the focus of the communities for now due to sustainability and communication infrastructure problems. The centres were established a year ago and a comprehensive evaluation may help generate knowledge and understanding of their impact on community and rural development.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Thanks Gift for covering key issues comprehensively. You may share the key strategy of the Government of Malawi to promote access and equity in skills development for rural communities.

G S Sethi

G S Sethi, TVET Consultant, Indian

Dear Ashwani,

My comments (given below) relate to the Question:

“What challenges have you encountered in delivering training to rural populations?”

These comments are based on the experience of a leading Education and Training Company in India (to which I am a consultant), which has undertaken a large number of Government-aided projects for training of rural youth.

Launching the projects in remote and difficult areas:

Like the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, the journey of training and providing livelihoods to thousands of young people, in several parts of rural India, begins with sourcing and starting work in new and completely unknown locations. The challenges include identifying the accessible yet affordable training centre locations and recruiting the right domain trainers from close by localities. A team conducts in-depth social research locally to identify centre locations that could be common for several districts. This involves taking inputs from the local population, conducting site visits and finalising the centre locations.

Finding the right trainers:

A major challenge is to identify and select appropriate trainers from the local community. As trainers, these members are required to contribute at every stage of the project and not restrict themselves to just classroom teaching. Key responsibilities of the trainers involve:

- Conducting the mobilisation drive to enrol students
- Teaching students as per their specialized domain
- Maintaining the centre and classroom equipment/requirements
- Conducting regular parent-teacher meetings, before and after the placement
- Monitoring the student's performance on the job through monthly visits

Surveys and market research studies are conducted to understand the requirements of the teaching community in a particular region. Then, teachers from local institutes and colleges are attracted by placing recruitment ads in local newspapers and by word of mouth publicity.

Student mobilisation:

The next big challenge is to mobilize the student population by going from village to village. It is difficult as most of these communities are poor & marginalised and are not aware of the value education can create for them. It requires organizing 'community mobilization drives' for the youth populations in remote areas and locations. Local influencers, NGOs, senior citizens and local bodies' members are made aware of the benefits of the vocational courses. Special pamphlets and promotional literature, in local languages with prominent visuals, are prepared and distributed through the best possible local channels.

Experience shows that "It is always tough to start the first centre and organize the first batch. Once that's done and community starts to see the benefits extended to students, the faith and involvement level increases significantly. Even when one faces challenges, one has to continue to work tenaciously with regular meetings, follow ups and various other ways to ensure greater participation from communities."

During the mobilisation drive, students are required to come to the centre where career and skill diagnostic tests are conducted, followed by counselling sessions. Learners are then registered into their choice of training programs. Classes begin at the earliest and students are encouraged to ensure daily attendance, participate in all student activities at the training centre and immerse themselves in projects.

Building placement linkages:

It is necessary to build teams that would ensure several placement linkages with leading corporate houses and local companies in each state (province). Building employment linkages is a regular exercise and efforts are required to be directed towards widening the basket of corporate and business houses. While it is a challenge to draw companies to recruit students from such remote areas it is also not easy to convince the students and their families to leave their villages and towns and migrate to the cities and metros for accessing the job opportunities. Ensuring safe transition and transformation of these students into working professionals is a challenge for all stakeholders.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Thank you, Mr. Sethi, for an excellent post. You have not only mentioned the key challenges faced in delivering skills to youth in remote rural areas but have also illustrated examples of "What Works" in overcoming these difficulties. The approach is firmly grounded in the involvement of community at all stages and is demand driven. How the role of teachers goes beyond just teaching gives new insights.

Please also share the process used for designing the training programmes to align with labour market needs.

Mohamed Nayef A. Rahman

Dear All,

First of all, thanks to Ashwani and James for this discussion. And thanks to all of the colleagues for their valuable inputs.

I think that Rural Employment is a very good opportunity for skills Improvement. Skills are being gained through a daily and direct on-the-job practice and training, even some times this training is informal.

The nature of the jobs available in such areas encourages this methodology of training and skills development, which should be based on high level of occupational standards, or a common and previously used curricula. Since each has different economical patterns, and each pattern differs from one area to another, for example, if we take agriculture, we can find that in each area, different skills are required based on the type of craft.

Co-moderator (SkillsforEmployment)

Comments posted by Magloire:

I. De quelles compétences ont principalement besoin les habitants des collectivités rurales pour en tirer des moyens d'existence et renforcer l'économie locale?

1. Capacités d'analyses des chaines de valeur porteuse pour prendre des décisions économiques viables;
2. Gestion de la qualité;
3. Contractualisation;
4. Capacités en gestion financière;
5. Capacités d'intégration des innovations dans la production et la gestion post récolte.

II. Quelles sont les principales difficultés auxquelles sont confrontés les habitants des milieux ruraux pour avoir accès à une éducation et une formation utiles et de qualité ? Quelles sont les difficultés qui touchent particulièrement les femmes rurales dans ce domaine?

1. Les principales difficultés auxquelles les habitants des milieux ruraux sont confrontés. Elles sont à deux niveaux : les facteurs internes et externes.

Facteurs internes:

- Taux élevé d'analphabètes;
- Manque d'organisation interne efficace dans les communautés (existences des groupes fictifs,...) ;
- Manque de confiance entre les acteurs entre les chaînes.

Facteurs externes:

- Manques de formateurs qualifiés (la plupart des formateurs n'ont pas reçu de formation de formateurs);
- Les formations sont liées aux projets et non réalisées comme une activité en soi (ce qui conduit à des activités de formation peu durables);
- Les contenus des formations ne sont pas actualisés et sont faiblement orientés vers des marchés;
- Faible nombre de formateurs dans les zones rurales;
- Inexistence d'outils pédagogiques adaptés aux besoins réels des ruraux.

2. Les problèmes des femmes

- Problème d'alphabétisation;
- Difficultés pour les femmes de se libérer des occupations domestiques pour se faire former;
- La peur des maris de voir leurs femmes prendre leur autonomie financière;
- Problèmes de mise en œuvre des formations (pas de foncier pour la production, pas d'accès aux financements pour des problèmes de caution).

III. Quelles difficultés avez-vous rencontrées pour dispenser des formations aux populations rurales?

1. Faible motivation: les formations sont données dans le cadre des projets et programmes où on n'a pas suffisamment pris le temps de faire un diagnostic approfondi avant de démarrer les actions. Donc, certaines formations ne répondent pas aux attentes des populations, ce qui explique leur faible motivation.

2. Les contenus des formations sont rédigés en français, or la majorité des groupes cibles sont analphabètes ; ce qui pose un problème de traduction et d'interprétation. Dès fois, l'interprétation n'est pas juste et donc le contenu n'est pas bien reçu.

3. Les approches de formation dès fois sont mal choisies. Les gens viennent pour apprendre à développer leurs compétences mais dès fois, on les forme comme à « l'école » : au lieu de l'andragogie, on fait de la pédagogie. Ils commencent mais ne reviennent plus.

4. Les Etats ne mettent pas en place le dispositif de développement des zones rurales, donc les gens préfèrent quitter que de rester pour entreprendre dans les régions rurales. Ils sont démotivés et ne veulent pas apprendre à mieux faire et donc les formations ne sont pas prises au sérieux.

IV. Dans quelle mesure les stratégies nationales de développement des compétences et d'EFTP correspondent-elles aux besoins des femmes et des hommes des régions rurales ? Et quelles sont les difficultés rencontrées pour financer la formation dans ces régions ?

1. Dans la mesure où les stratégies sont élaborées autour des compétences nécessaires pour la promotion des activités économiquement viables (exemple de chaînes de valeur porteuse) sur les territoires ruraux et au-delà ; permettent aux hommes et femmes des milieux ruraux de participer à l'élaboration des plans de formation, et surtout que le dispositif de formation (formateurs, contenus, approche ou méthode de formation, outils pédagogiques...) facilite l'apprentissage et le transfert de compétences.

2. Les difficultés rencontrées dans le financement de la formation sont :

- Les contenus des formations ne sont pas (généralement) de qualité et donc ne sont pas pertinents pour que les populations en milieu rural acceptent payer pour cela ;
- Les formations ne sont pas la priorité des Etats et donc, ils ne trouvent pas pertinents de le financer comme cela se doit;
- Les résultats des formations ne sont pas visibles, donc les gens ne trouvent pas pertinents de continuer par financer.

Co-moderator (SkillsforEmployment)

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION OF COMMENTS POSTED BY MAGLOIRE:

I. What kinds of skills do people living in rural communities need the most to generate income and strengthen local economies?

1. Capacity of analysis of the value chains to make viable economic decisions;
2. Quality management;
3. Formal contracts;
4. Financial management capabilities;
5. Capacity to integrate innovations in the production and post-harvest management.

II. What are the main challenges faced by the people living in rural areas in accessing quality and relevant education and training? What particular challenges do women living in rural areas face in this area?

1. The main challenges that people living in rural areas face are in two levels: internal and external factors:

Internal factors:

- High illiteracy rate;
- Lack of effective internal organization in communities (existence of fictitious groups, ...);
- Lack of trusts between chain actors.

External factors:

- Lack of qualified trainers (most of the trainers have not received training of trainers);
- The training is project-related and not done as an activity in itself (this leads to unsustainable training activities);
- The content of the training is not up-to-date and lacks market orientation;
- Lack of teaching materials adapted to real rural needs.

2. Women's issues

- Literacy problems;
- Difficulties for women to break free from household activities to get training;
- The fear of husbands seeing women taking (over) their financial autonomy;
- Problems implementing training (No land for production, insufficient access to funds due to the lack of insurance on capital)

III. What challenges have you encountered in delivering training to rural populations?

1. Lack of motivation: Training is provided in the context of projects and programs where we did not have sufficient time to do a deep analysis before starting the actions. Due to this, training may not meet the expectations of the population, which explains their lack of motivation.
2. The content of the training is in French, or the majority of target groups are illiterate, creating a problem of translation and interpretation. Sometimes, the interpretation is not properly done and the content is therefore not well received.
3. Training approaches are at times incorrectly chosen. People come to learn how to develop their skills but sometimes, they are formed as to "school": for adult education, we do pedagogy. They start but do not come back.
4. States do not implement development mechanisms (*devices*) in rural areas. So people prefer to leave than to stay in rural areas. They lack motivation and do not want to learn to do better and therefore training is not taken seriously.

IV. To what extent are national skills development/TVET strategies addressing the needs of women and men living in rural areas? And, what are some of the challenges to financing training in these areas?

1. To the extent where the strategies are developed around the skills that promote economically viable activities (i.e. carrier value chains) in rural areas and beyond, allowing men and women in rural areas to participate in the development of training plans, and especially the training tools (trainers, content, approach or method of training, educational tools...) that facilitate learning and skills transfer.
2. Difficulties in financing training are:
 - The content of the training is not (usually) of high quality and therefore is not relevant for rural populations to accept paying for it.

- The courses are not the priority of states and therefore they are not relevant in terms of funding as it should be;
- The results of training are not visible, therefore people do not find it relevant to continue funding it.

Moderator (Jim Windell)

Dear All: Many thanks to all for your excellent contributions last week to the e-discussion. I will be moderating this week when we will try to focus more on practical, innovative and good practice interventions in supporting rural skills and livelihoods. The range of topics that could be discussed include many raised by Magloire in her comments, translation forthcoming. The issue of finance and financial literacy has been raised, as well as value chain analysis that might help rural communities move up the value chain. On the ILO side, we try to introduce elements in training programmes that support decent employment, for example issues in occupational safety and health. The TREE programme in Zimbabwe, for example, incorporated HIV-awareness training into occupational training. Will touch on other issues of concern as we move on with the discussion. Very interested in your views - please keep your thoughts coming! Regards, Jim

Co-moderator (SkillsforEmployment)

K. Prabakaran posted the following comment:

Rural employment all over the world is based on agriculture and allied activities. Both gender need skills to operate the modern equipment and tools which are friendly to them. Techniques need to be taught to increase the productivity and efficiency.

It is a multi-skill subject for each and every rural person. It starts from soil science to post harvesting and marketing techniques with value chain in the particular product, assembling, maintenance, repair and servicing of all components that are used in the agricultural and allied activities.

Albert Okal

I want to share some experiences on skills recognition as a pathway to decent work. In Tanzania, like many African countries, still hundreds of young people, especially in rural communities and from poor neighbourhoods in the cities acquire their skills informally. The Vocational Authority have developed a skills recognition system for skills acquired informally. Through RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning), competent persons receive formal recognition and the opportunity to attend skills upgrading programmes. Already, the certification is providing formal employment for young people who hitherto had no access to formal employment opportunities due to lack of formal evidence of their competencies and skills level. Demand is growing for people who want their skills recognized. So far, we have worked with enterprises and the vocational authority; the Government is eager to support but involving other partners especially employers and formal companies is still challenging!

Co- Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Thanks Albert, You may also consider to share more information and the results from the implementation of RPL in Tanzania.

Moderator (Jim Windell)

There was an interesting article in the Economist last August entitled "Graduating from destitution" that described a multi-country study showing potential to help the very poor in rural regions:

See: <http://www.economist.com/node/...>

It suggested that concerted, long term efforts to help the very poor through training, cash transfers as well as the provision of inputs were much more likely to provide sustainable livelihoods. I quote:

"It claims to have identified an anti-poverty strategy that works consistently, based on a seven year, six country study of more than 10,000 poor households. The secrets, the economists argue, is to hand out assets, followed by several months of cash transfers, followed by as much as two years of training and encouragement". After two years of training, food consumption was up, time at work increased and household income had risen. Costs per participant were USD 414 in India. This may sound like a lot, but benefits were estimated at between 1.33 and 4.33 times the amount spent. Any thoughts on this? Many ILO TREE programmes have provided substantial amounts of inputs combined with training, but no cash transfers to my knowledge.

Regards, Jim

Angelica

Dear Jim,

I enjoyed reading the article you shared. I believe skills development projects in general tend to follow something alike to that so-called "anti-poverty strategy" (with or without cash transfers). However, the challenge is -as pointed out by Magloire- to really take the time to learn what the needs of people living in rural areas are (in terms of their specific region and culture) and to adapt training accordingly. If the immediate needs are basic needs, from your experience, how can development workers ensure that beneficiaries do not "eat the chickens before taking the eggs"?

Celine

Developing skills for youth in the rural sector can be a true asset for the economies of developing countries. However, skills development policies for youth have often been criticized for being short sighted. They often aim at entering the labour market with little projection on lifelong learning or gaining confidence to develop a career path. The Latin American example of Programa Jovenes provides for a multi-pronged approach to empowering young people, through technical and soft skills, in rural areas: The programme concentrates on

- building networks between young people and education providers with a view to tackle isolation factors intrinsic to leaving in rural areas;
- enabling communication platforms through public meetings/fora;
- teaching basic social and IT skills to help the young gaining confidence;
- promoting "learning by doing" techniques with a view to gain access to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), recognition of competencies and competences, and access to further training such as entrepreneurship;

The formal recognition and acquisition of skills is often as important as gaining confidence in one's capabilities. These "enabling programmes" have often proven inspiring and a healthy start to inspire the most vulnerable youth to gain access to recognition and further training. It would be interesting to share further similar programmes, if you have any...

Albert Okal

Celine, you make a good point in that with RPL young people who have received training and work in the informal sector gain confidence. In the study shared by Jim, this is coming out as well in many countries. With RPL graduates report increased confidence after being declared competent by a credible national Authority. This plus the fact that they get access to training programmes has become a big incentives for their participation in the programme.

Co-moderator SkillsforEmployment

Posted on behalf of **Moderator Jim Windell**:

Many thanks to Celine for raising these points, including that of RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) which Albert from Tanzania also raised. The most recent report by SKILLS on this topic (I will send you both the study) looked at 17 country examples of RPL systems. Where formal training systems are underdeveloped, establishing such systems (for example in Afghanistan) can be extremely challenging and the systems studied in the developing world were mainly pilots involving few individuals. From the report:

This development and implementation (of recognition of prior learning systems), however, is linked to numerous challenges, namely in areas of stakeholder involvement, awareness building and impact assessment. Lack of capacity and access to data and state-of-the-art methodologies and approaches have negative impact on effectiveness and return on investment into these systems. The role of skills recognition will likely gain more importance in years to come; the focus must be placed on improving labour market impact of existing ones as well as on assistance to those that are about to develop and implement them.

Celine and others have raised the importance of entrepreneurship education, and clearly we are running out of time to fully discuss these issues. The ILO's TREE programme combines occupational and entrepreneurship training. An earlier version of the methodology had an entire section dealing with entrepreneurship, with sample business plans, etc. We realized however, that our Enterprises Department has much more developed materials and experience, and we now refer trainers to, for example, the Start and Improve Your Business programme that has operated in over 100 countries, with an estimated 4.5 million individuals trained and 2.7 million new jobs created. Other international agencies have similar programmes to foster entrepreneurship. The ILO's Know About Business programme is designed specifically for vocational education students.

See: <http://ilo.ch/empent/Publicati...>

Geerija Aggarwal

Unemployment and underemployment are critical issues that many of the countries are dealing with today. In order to create sufficient jobs for a country's youth, it is important that countries realize the true value of their resources and efficiently allocate these.

A year ago, I worked on a research project analyzing the research question: "To what extent does ILO's training and development program for young people allow for the increase in income and employment in the Mutoko district of Zimbabwe?"

The program (Skills for Youth Employment and Rural Development) specifically focused on creating jobs for the youth of Zimbabwe by putting the Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) methodology in effect. The overall impact of this program lead to many positive outcomes, some of which include:

- Already employed (underemployed) young farmers significantly increased their average income by 97%
- For every underemployed youth supported by the project, five new jobs were created
- For every unemployed youth supported by the project, more than three jobs were created. The average income was US\$ 152 monthly
- The increase in employment and income of women was higher than that of men

Some of the young farmers' agriculture business increased so much that they employed more youth to assist them. As the project helped these farmers produce a larger amount of crops and income that improved their living standards and that of many others in the longer run, the local economy

will grow, and eventually have surplus agriculture produce. If this is replicated in other regions, Zimbabwe will once again be able to export these products, creating a new platform for more jobs (whether in the production, manufacturing or marketing & retailing fields)

The success of the project which used a multi-pronged approach clearly indicates that a combination of education and skills development along with support for market linkages and value chains, new and better technology, micro-finance, cooperatives are essential.

Thus, in summary, education and skills are important and, evidently, a critical component of a comprehensive strategy through which a country can ensure to increase productivity and competitiveness and create sufficient jobs for the workforce.

Moderator (Jim Windell)

Thanks, Geerija, for pointing out the successes of the TREE project in Zimbabwe. The challenge always is to upscale pilot initiatives and have activities expanded by local actors. We have had some positive results on this, for example in Pakistan and the Philippines, where governments adopted the methodology as their own and continued training initiatives for many years after the pilot initiatives ceased. Regards, Jim

Geerija Aggarwal

Thank you so much for your remarks and, I completely agree with you, Mr Windell.

Specifically related to the TREE project initiated in Zimbabwe, it is important to realize that farming involves inherent risks, such as delayed or less rainfall and glut or lower prices in the market. Therefore, the government should take measures to mitigate such hardships. Though this ILO program is successful, it was a pilot project, thus for sustainability and up scaling, macro-level interventions supporting such micro-level interventions would be essential. The government should improve rural infrastructure: roads, power, communication, irrigation facilities, financial services, extension services and cold storages. The government may seek funding for the infrastructure projects through foreign aid as official development assistance. It may also rationalize foreign direct investment policy and improve “Ease of doing business” ranking to attract foreign investors to invest in the country.

Additionally, establishing food processing industries will also help promote employment, besides doing value addition. Some countries have crop insurance schemes and minimum support prices for farm produce. Therefore, my research study recommended a multipronged approach to promote employment and income of poor people in the rural areas, including an optimal combination of following interrelated interventions:

- information about market demand and access to markets;
- access to fertile land and water;
- access to appropriate technology;
- access to capital to get quality inputs, equipment, and labor;
- training and development of farmers to utilize the technology, manage capital and business, and work in cooperatives;
- strengthening rural infrastructure, research, and food processing industry; and

- building partnerships between government, the private sector, development partners, NGOs, community, and academia.

Co-moderator (SkillsforEmployment)

Sarr Souleymane posted the following comment (Unofficial translation to follow shortly):

Quelles méthodes donnent les meilleurs résultats lorsqu'il s'agit de dispenser des formations à un grand nombre de personnes en région rurale, à un coût abordable ? Et quel est le meilleur moyen de continuer à assurer le perfectionnement en compétences en milieu rural sur le long terme ? Sur cette question on peut bien penser que les méthodes utilisées par la FAO dans le cadre des programmes Gestion Intégrée de la Production et des Déprédateurs c'est à dire le CEP (CHAMP ECOLE PAYSAN) peuvent servir non seulement à atteindre un grand nombre mais aussi à atteindre des publics parfois exclus parce que non alphabétisés.

Moderator (Jim Windell)

Thanks to Sarr Souleymane for drawing our attention to the CEP programme of the FAO. The results achieved are impressive. In terms of training delivery, we find it is always best to rely, to the extent possible, on local knowledge within the community. When this is not possible agricultural experts, for example, can be brought in to reside and teach in remote locations for a period of time, returning periodically to review progress and update skills. Once a community group is formed and empowered with new knowledge, these individuals can themselves become trainers/facilitators, reducing costs in the long term.

Co-moderator (SkillsforEmployment)

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION:

What works best in delivering skills development to a significant number of people who live in rural areas in a cost efficient way? And what is the best way to sustain the delivery of skill development in rural areas over the long term?

With respect to these questions we can say that the methods used by the FAO as part of the integrated production and pest management programme, that is to say the FFS (Farmer Field School) can be used not only to reach a big number, but also to get at individuals sometimes excluded because of illiteracy.

(Added by co-moderator: The FFS approach is a participatory approach for strengthening community capacity to increase agricultural production and improve livelihoods in a way that is adapted to local contexts.

FFS are a forum for exchanging experiences and expertise, helping farmers to learn by doing, and providing them with the tools needed to analyse their practices and identify solutions to their problems. Further information: <http://www.fao.org/agriculture/ippm/ippm-home/en/>

Maria Teresa Gutierrez

Dear community of practice, let me join the discussion addressing one of the questions of this second week:

What are the examples of skills initiatives and programmes that have improved the outcome of training, i.e. earnings and decent work in rural areas?

The Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) is one of the ILO's vehicles to promote an integrated path to inclusive growth and employment by creating a sustainable institutional and economic environment based on a local resource-based approach. The EIIP works with a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, employers' and workers' organizations, the private sector and community associations to: (i) enhance the employment content of infrastructure investments, as well as environmental measures for the restoration and management (adaptation / mitigation) of natural resources; and (ii) encourage governments to institutionalize local resource-based employment-intensive approaches in their national investment programmes and policies.

For doing so, the EIIP has developed a technology choice and local resource-based techniques: The choice of technology has social implications and potential for economic multiplier effects. Experience shows that a local resource-based approach can produce three to five times more direct employment than conventional methods; it may have a multiplier effect of about two times the direct jobs created and increase purchase of local goods and services three times. This is a source of non-agricultural jobs creation in rural areas and a niche for policy development addressing non agriculture skills development and employability linked to local infrastructure development. During the process of implementation of the programs and projects the EIIP develops employment friendly procurement systems and contract procedures, and capacity building for local government institutions to allow access to public tenders for local enterprises and communities while promoting decent working conditions, gender equality and social inclusion, as well as increasing the utilization of local know-how and materials, and developing fiduciary management procedures for community-driven pro poor development projects.

The sustainability of this approach is based on University networks and national training institutes , mainly in Africa, that deliver training courses designed for local contractors in a number of fields, including the rural road construction and maintenance, pavement for streets, drainage, construction of schools and waste collection. In order to update knowledge and expertise, there are bi-annual Regional Seminars where Community of Practice for Labour-based practitioners met to review developments in the application of labour-based technology and associated issues. Each seminar offers an opportunity for participants to consolidate lessons learnt over the past years into a corpus of "best practice" and to identify areas for future work.

For more information on the methodologies and tools, please visit <http://www.ilo.org/global/topi...>

Moderator (Jim Windell)

Thanks to Maria Teresa for highlighting one of the ILO's flagship programmes, EIIP, with a strong focus on skills development needed for infrastructure projects, often in rural communities. In Madagascar we worked closely with the EIIP programme there. In the rural communities targeted by TREE, the EIIP programme trained the community on how to reconstruct a rural dirt road and maintain it during the rainy season. Lack of access to the provincial capital was a serious impediment to development (for example to bring community goods to sell) and this action supported them immensely. When we were trying to improve working conditions in the local gravel pit, where many women workers brought their children to the pit while they worked, with the help of the EIIP project a building was erected to house a community kindergarten, with the community offering to staff it with individuals to mind the children. Regards, Jim

Luiz Ronilson

Estimados Mr. Ashwani e Mr. Jim Windell,

Peço desculpas por somente responder as perguntas da primeira semana agora, mas estava em viagem de trabalho na semana anterior pelo norte do estado.

COMPETÊNCIAS PARA O EMPREGO RURAL

Segue uma breve síntese da nossa realidade, quanto a Formação Profissional Rural no Estado de Minas Gerais, Sudeste do Brasil.

Hoje, com a modernização, a tecnificação vem sendo implementada no setor agropecuário criando campos de trabalho com alta demanda, mas com uma carência grande de profissional qualificado. O resultado dessa situação é que as vagas que surgem para trabalhar no campo, não estão sendo preenchidas. A conclusão que o chegamos é que quanto mais tecnologia exigida, maior a carência por mão de obra. Existe um cenário de crescimento e quem se qualificar para trabalhar na zona rural terá mais facilidade de conseguir emprego.

O SENAR Minas exerce uma grande contribuição no estado de Minas Gerais em capacitar trabalhadores na zona rural. Somente ano passado-2015, aproximadamente 126 mil pessoas foram capacitadas por nós nas várias áreas de Formação Profissional Rural.

Além da criação de novos cursos que visam atender à demanda no campo, o SENAR Minas tem procurado fazer um investimento mais acentuado nos programas especiais como Jovem no Campo, Formação por Competências, Gestão de Qualidade em Campo e o Jovem Aprendiz, programas formativos baseados no desenvolvimento de competências para o hoje e para o futuro, atraindo a atenção para o aprendizado e incentivando o aprendiz a permanecer no meio rural. Este profissional deve ser polivalente: especializado em uma área, mas com uma visão global.

Procuramos trabalhar as competências básicas das pessoas (o saber ouvir, se expressar, as responsabilidades, cálculos matemáticos básicos e outras) desenvolvendo-as não só para o trabalho, mas também para a vida. A contínua preocupação com as práticas de ensino centradas no aluno e na aprendizagem não é tarefa isolada. Focamos também na formação dos nossos instrutores para que eles sejam muito mais que facilitadores da aprendizagem: sejam instigadores e despertem no aluno a necessidade de aprender sempre. Nossos instrutores/facilitadores têm recebido capacitações através de palestras, participação em oficinas e dinâmicas para debater formação por competência, legislação ambiental e trabalhista, empreendedorismo e outros assuntos relacionados ao agronegócio e à aprendizagem, desenvolvendo mais habilidades para que esses programas sejam mais efetivos.

Seguem as respostas mais direcionadas aos questionamentos feitos por vocês.

1. Que tipos de habilidades são necessárias por pessoas que vivem em comunidades rurais para gerar mais receitas e fortalecer as economias locais?

O que percebemos que as pessoas do meio rural, após passarem por programas de qualificação/capacitação ofertadas pelo Senar ou outra instituição, procuram aplicar os conhecimentos adquiridos buscando aumentar a produtividade e a qualidade dos produtos, porém eles deparam com um entrave que é o conhecimento do mercado e as técnicas de gestão da produção, para conhecer os custos e padrões de produtos exigidos pelos consumidores.

Para Sanar esta deficiência em Gestão temos buscado ofertar vários treinamentos na área para os produtores interessados.

Além destes aspectos, para fazer a comercialização direta ao consumidor, o produtor tem que cumprir uma série de exigências legais impostas pelos órgãos públicos de fiscalização, com investimentos em infraestrutura muitas vezes elevados, pela escala de produção que tem, sem nenhum apoio técnico-financeiro dos órgãos governamentais.

2. Quais são os principais desafios que as pessoas que vivem em áreas rurais enfrentam em torno do acesso e qualidade da educação e formação?

Os principais desafios são:

Disponibilidade dos eventos de formação em data e no assunto que lhes interessa;
Distância dos locais onde estes eventos são programados para serem realizados;
Falta de acesso as informações das disponibilidades ou programação dos mesmos nas suas comunidades em tempo de se programarem para participar.

Dificuldade de deixar as suas atividades de rotina para participar destes eventos por falta de pessoas que os substitua durante a realização destes cursos/treinamentos.

Falta de apoio dos órgãos públicos para viabilizar tais ações.

3. Que desafios enfrentam particularmente as mulheres que vivem em áreas rurais?

As mulheres do meio rural no país como um todo, enfrentam além da discriminação de gênero, a sobrecarga dos trabalhos domésticos que em sua grande maioria ficam inteiramente sob suas responsabilidades.

Percebemos que esta realidade vem mudando ao longo dos anos, mas há ainda muito a ser feito para que haja uma maior igualdade de gêneros no meio rural.

4. Que desafios você encontrou na entrega de formação para as populações rurais?

O maior desafio está no processo de mobilização e organização das turmas e dos locais para realização dos eventos, identificando e providenciando aqueles que tenham infraestrutura adequada e recursos instrucionais disponíveis em quantidade e qualidade para realizar um evento dentro das condições ideais.

5. Até que ponto as estratégias de desenvolvimento de competências nacionais / EFTP atendem às necessidades de homens e mulheres que vivem em áreas rurais?

Para avaliar quais são as necessidades e interesses de formação das pessoas do meio rural: Mulheres, homens e jovens, no Senar Minas, temos uma planilha de “Levantamento de demandas” que é um diagnóstico realizado no mínimo com 6 meses de antecedência do início dos eventos programados no nosso Planejamento Anual de Trabalho- PAT.

Este diagnóstico é realizado pelas entidades Cooperadas parceiras locais, que se incumbem de fazer este levantamento junto aos produtores e comunidades rurais locais.

6. Quais são alguns dos desafios para o financiamento formação nestas áreas?

Os principais desafios para desenvolver estes eventos de formação no meio rural, consistem em

promover a conscientização das empresas rurais e produtores a fazerem a arrecadação conforme definido por nossa legislação, para que as entidades do Sistema S, principalmente o SENAR, possam continuar realizando-as com a mesma eficiência e qualidade com que fazem hoje, sem interferência dos órgãos públicos que além da inoperância e imobilidade, tem uma imposição de leis inadequadas a nossa realidade, muitas vezes elaboradas sem um conhecimento da realidade do meio rural, baseadas em preceitos e parâmetros das atividades de empresas urbanas.

Estes desafios tem sido vencidos gradativamente com um intenso trabalho de conscientização destes órgãos e da população urbana em geral sobre a importância de um setor rural forte e competitivo.

Para a última semana de nossa discussão, nós gostaríamos de ouvir seus pensamentos sobre as seguintes questões:

1. Quais medidas foram introduzidas para aumentar o emprego nas zonas rurais em ambos os sectores agrícolas e não agrícolas, estando previstas que tipos de habilidades para ser em alta demanda como parte de uma estratégia rural integrado?

Resposta: As principais medidas para aumentar a empregabilidade no meio rural, em nosso estado, tem sido uma busca constante de adequar os itinerários de formação e qualificação da mão de obra rural de acordo com as tecnologias que são empregadas pelos produtores e empresas em seus sistemas de produção, como a utilização de tecnologias mais modernas e adequadas a nossa realidade. Isto inclui desde o uso de máquinas e equipamentos mais modernos até os processos e estratégias de gestão e comercialização mais adequadas ao ambiente e as exigências dos nossos clientes/consumidores.

2. O que funciona melhor no fornecimento de desenvolvimento de habilidades para um número significativo de pessoas que vivem em áreas rurais de uma forma economicamente eficiente? E qual é a melhor maneira de sustentar o fornecimento de desenvolvimento de competências em áreas rurais a longo prazo?

Em todos os estados do Brasil, a presença do SENAR, como entidade de Formação Profissional Rural e Promoção Social, tem sido marcante pela agilidade e ações sempre desenvolvidas em parcerias com entidades locais, ou seja, todas as ações são desenvolvidas por várias instituições cujo objetivo é levar a capacitação a todas as pessoas do campo.

Para isso a parceria é fundamental fazendo com que processos de atualização e inovação sejam sempre disponibilizados a estas pessoas para que tenham sustentabilidade em suas atividades rurais no longo prazo.

3. Quais são os exemplos de iniciativas e programas de habilidades que melhoraram a igualdade de gênero e inclusão social nas zonas rurais?

No Senar Minas temos dois Programas voltados para a Promoção Social que tem foco esta ação de inclusão:

- Encontro de Jovens e Mulheres Rurais;
- Família na Praça

Ambos visam acima de tudo promover o acesso de jovens e mulheres aos benefícios nas áreas de Saúde, cultura e lazer, esporte e cidadania de forma mais intensa.

Além destas ações acima, desenvolvemos ainda o Programa Jovem no Campo, que tem como principal objetivo o de Capacitar jovens do meio rural, em vários segmentos de produção: Horticultura e Fruticultura; Bovinocultura de leite; Avicultura; Apicultura; piscicultura, dentre outros visando oferecer a estes jovens conhecimentos suficientes para mantê-los no campo em atividade rentável, sustentável, evitando o êxodo destes para os centros urbanos.

Um outro programa que temos ofertado aos nossos, Gestores, Instrutores e Mobilizadores o Projeto APOENA- palavra em Tupi- Guarani que significa “Aquele que enxerga além...”

Sua proposta é preparar agentes envolvidos nos processos de Formação Profissional Rural e Promoção Social, para receber e incluir pessoas com deficiências físicas, mentais/intelectuais nos eventos do Senar, sem preconceitos ou rejeições.

4. Quais são os exemplos de iniciativas e programas de habilidades que melhoraram o resultado da formação, ou seja, lucros e do trabalho digno nas zonas rurais?

As formas que temos buscado buscar o desenvolvimento do meio é através de programas e projetos que possibilitem o acesso das pessoas da área rural, a vários cursos de Formação Profissional Rural e Promoção Social de acordo com seus interesses, vocação e infra estruturas disponíveis, visando ofertar capacitações adequadas a realidade local.

Após participar por duas vezes do Evento na OIT, (2011 e 2014), da Academy on Skills Development, implantamos no Senar Minas o Programa de Formação por Competências, que já é desenvolvido nas áreas de Bovinocultura de Leite; Equideocultura; Agricultura Orgânica e estaremos em breve formando os comitês para ofertar também este curso nas áreas de Mecanização Agrícola e Cafeicultura.

Com estes programas, ofertados em módulos, com conteúdos aplicados conforme a realidade dos participantes, podemos formar profissionais mais capazes para atender as demandas do Mercado de Trabalho Rural, com uma carga horária de 550 a 7700 horas de formação.

Ana Paulo

Caro Luiz Ronilson, muito obrigada pela sua contribuição, em nome da ILO e dos organizadores desta e-discussão. O seu contributo e a partilha de experiências concretas e vividas no SENAR são muito ricas. Particularmente interessante foi a partilha do investimento mais acentuado nos programas especiais baseados no desenvolvimento de competências para o hoje e para o futuro, atraindo a atenção para o aprendizado e incentivando o aprendiz a permanecer no meio rural, trabalhando as competências básicas das pessoas (o saber ouvir, se expressar, as responsabilidades, cálculos matemáticos básicos e outras) desenvolvendo-as não só para o trabalho, mas também para a vida, questão que considero essencial, sobretudo se falamos de populações pouco escolarizadas e que desejamos integrá-las em mercados de trabalho mais globais. Esta é uma área que no projecto da ILO que actualmente coordeno, no norte de Moçambique, me interessa particularmente, poderia partilhar de forma mais detalhada os objectivos e conteúdos destes programas?

Jacqueline Demeranville

Dear Mr Aggarwal and Mr Windell,

I would like to point your attention to the findings of a recent E-consultation “Addressing the challenges faced by rural youth aged 15 to 17 in preparing for and accessing decent work” hosted by FAO on the Global Forum for Food and Nutrition Security. The consultation included a discussion on

improving education and vocational training in rural areas to support rural adolescents and youth and the skills and support they need in the school-to-work transition. The discussion had a particular focus on rural youth and agriculture or related activities.

The full proceedings can be accessed here <http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/ac...>

The importance of education and vocational training in rural areas was highlighted again and again. A number of challenges, recommendations and case studies were shared, in particular highlighting cases related to improving agricultural education and vocational training where theory is linked with hands-on activities and students are linked with the private sector for practical experience.

With regards to education and vocational training participants consistently pointed to the need to strengthen the inclusion of agricultural curricula in the education system and to improve agriculture's reputation, both in schools and vocational training centers. Contributors stressed the importance of schools and vocational training programmes being located in rural areas and close to home, in particular for girls. A number of contributors also pointed out that the school-to-work transition is not linear and that for many youth it is important that they are also earning an income while learning. To engage youth – whether in school, training or business – contributors highlighted the social dimension, the creation of a sense of belonging and the provision of advice and support through peer groups or mentorship. Participants also shared experiences working with disabled youth and the challenges of youth education and employment in conflict areas and humanitarian crises.

Participants highlighted a number of challenges facing rural youth when it comes to education and training, including:

- Limited access to adequate (agricultural) education and skill development courses: courses are often not up-to-date and in line with the market demand and educational facilities are mostly situated in urban areas.
- Limited literacy and numeracy skills due to e.g. school drop-out, lacking school infrastructure, high opportunity costs for families to enroll their children.
- Minimal education on agriculture and schools do not encourage youth to perceive agriculture as a future career in general
- Additional challenges facing (rural) girls due to: restricted mobility (in some areas especially married girls) - families are less inclined to get them involved in education, training or a project that might require them to take a training far away from home. They also have little access to transport and it can be unsafe to travel due to the risk of being abused; child marriage or pregnancy (Girls aged between 15 and 17 living in rural areas have a relatively high chance of being or preparing to get married or getting pregnant); time-poverty due to involvement in additional (domestic) activities, which hampers them in completing their education and finding decent work; limitations in choice of training paths (Girls are more limited in pursuing training courses than boys. Men often do not allow them to choose an occupation in other fields than the ones considered to be typical for women). Greater limitations in access to resources and services like mobile phones and internet: facilities which would provide them with information on agricultural / job opportunities (Family members control girls' access); and reluctance to invest in unmarried young girls (since they might move away from the village and certainly will move away from the household). As an additional note, a contributor highlighted that the category of 'youth' is generally understood as referring to men. Girls become women as soon as they marry, independent of their age. They are thus often put in the over-18 group, where they face greater difficulties to express themselves given the presence of older women.

A number of case studies and recommendations were shared by participants to improve education and training for rural youth and the school-to-work transition, including the following suggestions:

- Improved collaboration between the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Agriculture to improve curricula by including demand-driven, agricultural-related skills
- Agricultural education and vocational skills should be integrated in primary and secondary school curricula in order to encourage youth to engage themselves in agriculture. This should be done by teaching in a motivating way, and agricultural work should not be used as punishment.
- Agricultural education needs to be more modern, participatory and socially engaging and training courses need to be adapted to the needs of the national economy and labor markets. This includes:

1) building an entrepreneurial mind set; 2) promoting green business models, with particular attention for climate change impact and adaptation 3) facilitating social learning and group collaboration to explore new ideas together and to minimize individual risk; 4) attention to the practical application of technology; 5) emphasizing life skills to promote achieving success; 6) promoting environmental restoration and resilience-building; 7) providing appropriate training opportunities in rural areas; 8) including training courses on agribusinesses and services.

- Curricula in general need an integrated approach which includes developing skills like literacy and numeracy, livelihoods training, life-skills including sex education. Attention should also be paid to building skills like higher-order thinking, self-control, positive self-concept, positive decision-making, negotiation and communication and relationship-building.
- Revising school entry requirements: e.g. unconditional admission of candidates of the 15-17 age group to selected vocational institutions should be considered.
- There should be collaboration between the private sector and schools / universities in order to 1) make children aware of the possibilities the agricultural sector offers; 2) give students studying agriculture internship opportunities; 3) make sure that graduated students are equipped with the skills required by their future employers and 4) ensure youth of technical support after their studies.
- Mentoring is a very valuable tool of professional development and empowerment. Youth can be paired with mentors during high school when they search for a job, engage in employment opportunities or start a business in agriculture.
- Role models of youth in agriculture should be promoted.
- Career guidance should be improved and should not only be directed to students but also their parents and teachers.
- Organizing youth within clubs, youth associations or in producers' organizations is beneficial. Creating a network of students can be a way to exchange opportunities, knowledge and experiences regarding agriculture. Agricultural clubs in primary and secondary schools should, for example, be actively promoted. Organization can also facilitate the school-to-work transition and successful entrepreneurship.

And in particular for girls:

- Involving parents, husbands as well as community and religious leaders is needed in order to in particular get rural adolescent girls to participate in agricultural training.
- Provide or identify training opportunities close-by, or even mobile units that go to the villages, and explain to the families from the start of the project that girls will not necessarily have to move.
- I invite you to peruse the full consultation proceedings (attached) and the many interesting case studies shared by participants who have put these suggestions into practice.

Kind regards,
 Jacqueline Demeranville
 Programme Officer
 Decent Rural Employment Team

Moderator (Jim Windell)

Thanks to Jacqueline from the FAO for her comments and linking us to the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition that adds an immense amount of information to this discussion, and addresses many of the topics we have yet to reach in this short time. In particular, we should point out the importance of core skills and life skills in rural communities where education and training systems can be weak: in many cases literacy training is needed even before occupational skills training can begin. And it is important to note the gender equality aspects: often special attention needs to be given to the education and training of young girls and women who can be disadvantaged in terms of access and opportunity. Our sincere thanks to you for bringing to our attention. Regards, Jim

Co-moderator (SkillsforEmployment)

The following comments were posted by Magloire:

1. Quelles mesures ont été introduites pour stimuler l'emploi rural dans les secteurs agricoles ou non et quels sont les types de compétences pour lesquels on prévoit une forte demande dans le cadre d'une stratégie rurale intégrée?

Les mesures introduites et les compétences recherchées

- Facilité à l'accès des ressources de production (terre, financement et équipements de production)
- Les compétences liées à la mécanisation agricole et à la transformation agro-alimentaire
- Ø Tractoriste
- Ø Conducteur de motoculteur
- Ø Mécanicien tractoriste
- Ø Manager d'entreprises agricole et rurales
- Ø Agent qualité

2. Quelles méthodes donnent les meilleurs résultats lorsqu'il s'agit de dispenser des formations à un grand nombre de personnes en région rurale, à un coût abordable ? Et quel est le meilleur moyen de continuer à assurer le perfectionnement en compétences en milieu rural sur le long terme ?

- Les méthodes qui donnent de bons résultats et à moindre coût sont celles qui favorisent l'émergence de formateurs endogènes (à renforcer, bien sûr) et adosser à un système de vulgarisation nationale (pour assurer la durabilité de l'action)
- Il faut aussi que la formation soit faite en langues avec des animateurs locaux pour l'endogeniser

3. Avez-vous des exemples d'actions et de programmes relatifs aux compétences ayant fait progresser la parité entre hommes et femmes et la participation de tous à la société en milieu rural?

- Programme ESOP (programme de promotion des entreprises de services et organisation de producteurs) : il a permis de favoriser le travail entre homme et femme (car les formations exigent la présence des femmes et des hommes)
- Programme ProDRA/GIZ (Programme de Développement Rural et Agriculture) au Togo avec la formation FBS (Farmer Business School) qui travaille sur des chaînes de valeur qui emploient plus de femmes (poulet local, soja..)

4. Avez-vous des exemples d'actions et de programmes relatifs aux compétences qui se sont traduits par des progrès liés à la formation (revenus et travail décent) en milieu rural?

(exemple de programme ESOP). Le programme ESOP est l'un des programmes au Togo qui a facilité la création des emplois décents et l'amélioration des revenus. Car le programme est construit autour des chaînes de valeur porteuses avec un focus sur la mise à marché des produits. Les contrats sont signés à plusieurs niveaux pour faciliter le respect des engagements (producteurs, et commerçants), les calculs économiques sont réalisés pour faciliter la mesure de la rentabilité de l'activité. Les microfinances sont mobilisées pour investir: il ne s'agit de l'argent de projet. Donc, tout le monde est conscient des enjeux.

5. Comment faire pour que le secteur privé participe à l'amélioration des compétences en milieu rural?

- Pour que le secteur privé participe à l'amélioration des compétences en milieu rural, il faut qu'il soit le « demandeur » des besoins en compétences. C'est-à-dire qu'il faut partir de la demande économique (quels sont les secteurs porteurs ? ou se trouvent les gaps en termes de compétences à combler pour que le marché soit satisfait ?...). une fois que cette étape est franchie, il faut que le secteur privé participe à l'élaboration des programmes de formation, et à sa certification.
- Les actions doivent être structurées autour des services demandés par le secteur privé : par exemple si une entreprise a besoin d'une certaine qualité de produit, elle peut accepter payer un technicien qui ira former les producteurs sur cette compétence donnée. Mais au cas contraire, il ne trouvera pas de raison pour financer la formation.

6. Comment peut-on utilement tirer parti des technologies informatiques et de communication (téléphones portables, internet, CD et DVD interactifs) pour renforcer les capacités des habitants des régions rurales ?

- Il faut que les technologies servent d'outils d'information et de formation pour les habitants des régions rurales: où trouver les intrants ? les prix des matières premières? les marchés?...
- Les technologies peuvent aussi servir à mettre en lien directement le formateur et l'habitant. Quand un producteur constate une anomalie dans son champ, il pourra directement recevoir l'avis du formateur à travers les mobiles.

Les DVD peuvent aussi bien aider à former. car les images sont très utiles pour les formations de masse.

Sylvia Hammond

Thank you for the chance to participate in this very informative discussion - especially the quoted documents and links.

While reading the comments I was struck by the range of countries participating. However, that raised questions for me on the relevance of generic solutions. Then I saw Chris Chinien's comments on assumptions of "rural" with agriculture, in contrast to modern advances in connectivity and a range of other solutions.

I would like to suggest that a typology of rural conditions might be appropriate before attempting a classification of required skills. For example: starting with agriculture, a rural farm in Germany will be in easy reach of an autobahn, but a rural farm in Africa might take days by road to reach market. In this latter circumstance development might involve an airport and air transport - leading to an entirely different set of required transportation skills.

Then expanding further - following Chris' observations - what is the level of connectivity - and possibly basic education levels of the rural community? The skills for implementation, and then maintenance of internet and computer infrastructure, as well as the skills to operate in a connected world then lead on to a range of different forms of work and related skills.

We have not yet fully envisioned "work" in a technological, robotic future, but one can envision that it will not be globally simultaneous, which implies that depending upon the environment the skills required may range from pre-industrial subsistence agriculture through to the fourth industrial revolution.

Moderator (Jim Windell)

Thanks Sylvie for your remark that training interventions establish a typology for what types of programmes could support skills for rural development. In TREE programmes we try to look at all the potential economic opportunities in a community, and then design training programmes around them. This could provide the basis for a typology, including many of the subjects that have been mentioned here, life skills, core skills, training delivery, gender equality, infrastructure development, entrepreneurship education, etc. Regards, Jim

Sabine de Bruijn

Dear ILO colleagues,

Thank you for taking this excellent initiative. This is just a quick message to let you know that we are currently working on policy development in Zambia, with the aim to mainstream decent work into a new rural development strategy. This work - and all other work under policy outcome 5 on Decent Work in the Rural Economy - could greatly benefit from the informative discussions and inputs below, as skills are central to improving employability and livelihood opportunities. Thanks for sharing and keep up the good work!

Best regards,

Sabine de Bruijn

Technical officer on rural development and global supply chains
Sectoral Policies Department

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Thanks for informing about the ILO support to the constituents in Zambia in mainstreaming decent work in to rural development strategy. Apart from this, the ILO is promoting rural employment, so I would request colleagues from Zambia to share examples of skills programmes that improved gender equality, social inclusion, employment and income.

Fernando Vargas Zuñiga

Hello everybody. It is really impressive to see the amount of comments and good experiences related to VT in rural areas. I would like to mention the Latin America case from the ILO/Cinterfor point of view.

LAC has a big network of VTI most of them public and financed by a payroll levy. As was pointed by our colleagues from SENAR Brazil (the biggest VTI in LAC specialized in training for rural economy), we have a group of programmes oriented to rural areas and dealing with issues like the increasing use of new technologies in some extensive plantations and the gap of skills that result.

In terms of which of these function better, we could say that the more involved communities are, the more successful the program is.

In addition to poverty and lower educational achievements, the majority of the people suffering unemployment or informal employment in rural areas are young.

This time I would like to highlight the programme "Jovenes rurales" delivered by SENA (National Apprenticeship Service) in Colombia and that combines training with entrepreneurship. Youth enrolled in the program received not only knowledge and skills development but are also afforded the opportunity to prepare a project to develop an entrepreneurial activity. The programme covered some seed capital.

You could read more about the programme via:

<http://www.sena.edu.co/oportun...>

We could learn more about other experiences in the region. I may also comment further on other comments submitted.

Congratulations to Jim and Aggarwal for this good initiative!

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Thank you, Fernando for informing the initiatives in Latin American Countries. As an ILO specialist, you may please share more examples from your region as well as consider responding to the comments posted by others.

Jeongha Kim

Hello, my input consists of responses for both week 1 and week 2 questions, so I will upload them separately for ease of reading.

Dear Mr. Hyole, Mr. Aggarwal, and Mr. Windell,

Thank you for hosting this meaningful discussion on skills development in rural communities. I am currently a Decent Rural Employment Policy Officer at the Decent Rural Employment Team at FAO. As Decent Rural Employment is at the heart of our team's mandate, this is a very important topic for our main line of efforts in rural youth employment and decent rural employment.

Below I would like to provide my inputs, drawing from my previous experiences as a programme officer for rural development programmes in countries spanning across Asia Pacific region, and a few from Sub-Saharan African region. I deliberately refrained from mentioning specific names of the sites or countries to avoid the possibility of giving generalized and impartial representation of the region, because, as you well know, one of the difficulties to overcome while implementing rural development programmes is the preoccupation we have about the rural in general, and of the sites. Week one questions for E-Discussion: Current skills situation and challenges.

1. What kinds of skills do people living in rural communities need most to increase productivity, generate income and strengthen local economies?

The skills that rural people need in order to increase productivity and income depends, obviously, on the context of the rural situation. Below are some axes to consider:

1) Current level of income

For a rural community where prevalent source of income is commercial farming, financial training and identifying market entry points outside of the town is necessary, whereas in a relatively less productive, less lucrative areas where communities lack access to basic education, sanitation, land,

food, their demands would be radically different from the former, and depending on the demand and available resources, skills development curricula will have to cater accordingly.

2) Degree of urban aspiration

If the rural community is situated and surrounded by rural areas and urban aspirations are not the 'norm' or 'hype', as a programme manager it is relatively easier to focus on providing locally-tied skills such as income-generation activities and more efficient / productive farming skills, animal husbandry, etc. However, if many programme targets aim to out-migrate from rural to urban cities, TVET courses (even if it is irrelevant in the particular rural community) are much more relevant and shows higher participation.

3) Economic composition: farming / non-farming employment ratios

Depending on the proportion of the rural community's source of income stemming from farming or non-farming employment, skills education contents need to be flexible enough to shift between farm skills and non-farm skills.

4) Gender dynamics

As will be further discussed in the queries regarding challenge, gender dynamics in the rural community has an enormous influence on its demand and format of skills education.

Rural needs are as diverse and complicated as those of urban, and the above-mentioned axes are only a few among the multitudes of factors that influence the skills development demand and delivery in the rural. It is therefore difficult and rather inefficient to assume that there are a common set of skills that all rural people can benefit from.

2. What are the main challenges faced by the people living in rural areas in accessing quality and relevant education and training? What particular challenges do women living in rural areas face in this area?

According to some, the most defining characteristics of the rural is its dispersed, low-dense population. With this in mind, some of the challenges found across different rural project sites are presented by discussing the importance of key factors:

1) Challenges in accessing quality/relevant education and training

A. Cooperative focal point, place/occasion to gather

In rural areas where community centres serve as the physical and practical focal point, skills development education and trainings can utilize this channel. Even so, it is difficult to reach households that are farther away from the centres, and those in proximity who had been previously excluded or discouraged from entering or using the facilities, or are not in good terms with the centre 'head', etc. .

In lieu of community centers, there are cases in which influential lead figures whose authority tacitly dictates whether for residents to participate to these provided programmes. In cases where the programme manager fails to convince the community lead figure, it becomes extremely difficult to proceed with the training, or to encourage residents to participate.

In areas where community centres and/or other alternative mechanisms of gathering (religious facility, parent-teacher association, local district office, etc.) do not exist or are not in use by many, it is nearly impossible to provide skills development training or education, unless done on door-to-door basis.

B. Local partnering organizations

The crucial importance of local partnering organizations cannot be emphasized enough, especially in

contexts where personal ties and trust among the key focal points in the rural area and personnel of local partnering organization can either make or break the training or education programmes. This is not to say that programme coordinators and managers must completely rely on the capability and generosity of local partnering organizations, but at the least, efforts should be made to ensure that programme beneficiaries have an accessible and communicable contact point, to provide feedback, make suggestions, file complaints, and such. This ready channel for communication (the crucial role of the local partner) also ensures that the programme beneficiaries do not perceive the training/education opportunity as a one-way, one-time event.

2) Particular challenges for women

A. Double duty: care giving and income earning

Rural women whose husbands, brothers, or fathers have left the area often are doubly endowed with care-giving responsibilities and income earning responsibilities, providing them rarely enough time and energy to attend training or education courses.

B. Skills de-coupling

What had been offered during the course as income-generating activities or useful farming skills, may not be put to practice due to lacking access to resources, especially after termination of external fund. This often leads to disappointment and sometimes even anger, because some participants make sacrifices in their household or work frontiers to actively participate in these courses, only to see that they have 'wasted their time'. It is therefore extremely important that skills development opportunities offered especially in rural areas are in line with not only the local demand, but with its immediate utilization.

C. Social Stigma

Female participation in programmes that are run by 'external' people are sometimes negatively viewed as an act of defiance, or a sign of deviance, and sometimes even as an early sign of potential runaway.

D. Female teachers/facilitators

There were cases in which some female participants of a programme later become teachers and facilitators for the successive trainings, and it not only helped in terms of increasing effectiveness of delivery, their empowerment, but also in giving inspiration to participants. However, some teachers and facilitators were exposed to more threat and scorn by those who did not approve, which led to safety concerns in some cases.

There is no uniform solution to difficulties that female teachers and facilitators face, unfortunately, because it is very much dependent on the gender dynamics of the location. It is important to keep in mind, however, that what may seem as an appropriate acknowledgement of a female teacher's efforts can actually put her in an unexpected predicament.

3. What challenges have you encountered in delivering training to rural populations?

1) Resisting and relying on rural stereotypes

The aforementioned 'dispersity of population' in the rural makes large scale surveys and data gathering more time and effort costly in the rural. Therefore, there is a chronic lack of data that makes evidence-based approach very difficult, especially in remote and/or marginalized areas, which are most likely to be target areas in providing education or training programmes. For this reason, more so during the concept drafting stages of the programme where fundamental structures are laid out, programme managers tend to rely on their own preconceptions, stereotypes, and wishful

thinking of and upon the rural. Relying on these sometimes work, and sometimes don't. Where there is indeed no data, it is difficult to suggest an alternative. (It has been emphasized many times that preceding baseline survey is crucial, but often times this is skipped). However, it is therefore very important to keep in mind that:

A. Assumptions are assumptions – with enough repetition, they are quoted as facts, but one must be wary of this dubious transformation;

B. The assumptions, which often are the *raison d'être* of the programme itself, should always be under scrutiny, fortified with new evidence or modified and/or discarded when countered;

C. Continuous efforts should be made to gather and update related evidence, data, and discourses outside of the organizational scene in which the programme manager belongs;

D. What is observed in the field may not necessarily be 'rural nature' but could be other factors, such as country / community contexts, individual characteristics, socioeconomic status related, etc.

2) Contributing to existing patriarchal hierarchy by patronizing female participants

Case 1: On a second year of a training / education programme that failed to gather participants in its initial year, local facilitators had to go house-by-house to convince the male heads of the household that the participation of the female members in the family a) will not make them deviant, b) will actually improve their domestic work skills (in this case, the course was on sanitation) c) and will make them better daughters and mothers, and better fitting to the female gender role endorsed by the prevalent religion in the community. This tactic indeed proved to be successful, as the participant numbers steeply increased. Whether this should be endorsed on a larger scale at a longer term was debatable.

Case 2: In many cases, mothers are deemed as responsible for child-rearing, and eventually their 'success', so a slogan was used to promote the 'trickle-down' benefit of educating a rural mother: her son also becomes educated, through her. The programme was designed so that mother would teach the son at home what she had learned that day, and it was cost effective. However, exclusion of daughters from this slogan, and whether it is appropriate to make it the main responsibility of mothers to educate their children remained debatable.

3) Mismatch between donor's provisions and the actual needs and demands of the local

In some cases, donors have item- or amount-specific contributions that they are willing to make, and local partnering organizations and/or focal person mostly accept them willingly, especially in resource stricken areas. However, often these 'gifts' do not reflect the needs or demands of the local residents, and end up stored at a warehouse without being used, or sold to markets. Situation becomes more difficult when what donors want to provide are not money or items, but contents of education, teachers, when there are no known demands on them at the site.

4) Mismatch between local demand and local needs

It is difficult to distinguish, on the programme beneficiaries' behalf, what they say they need and what they actually need. It can be seen as, and is, disrespectful to deny their demand and provide something else because it is thought to be 'better for them'. Not too seldom this is an issue that intermediaries face when implementing demand-based education / training in the rural; for example, a draught-struck rural town may have been designated by the requesting local authorities or government as a project site because the officials deemed that the location could benefit from climate change mitigation and adaptation farming skills. Upon arrival, programme facilitators would

could see that the locals themselves have higher demand for beautician skills education which would provide them more immediate and lucrative returns. Again, there is no single solution to these clash of priorities, but it does demonstrate that close coordination between actual local demands and local authorities' agenda must precede the implementation of the programmes.

Jeongha Kim

Week two questions for E-Discussion: Initiatives and what works

5. Which measures have been introduced to boost employment in rural areas in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, and which types of skills are foreseen to be in high demand as part of an integrated rural strategy?

On integral rural strategy. Many scholars and policy makers around the world agree on that a sustainable and effective rural strategy must incorporate 'income diversification', often times in form of simultaneous engagement of a rural household or individual in farm and non-farm rural employment.

That is, when rural training and education programmes are provided, it is much more beneficial and efficient to have two-track approach in which farming skills and non-farm skills (other income-generating activities, TVET, or even literacy/numeracy, sanitation education) are offered.

Also, it is important to note that providing education and training opportunities to most marginalized people in rural areas should focus beyond eradication of immediate hunger and or poverty; transition from absolute no work opportunity to subsistence farming, to commercial farming (where disposable income is finally created) can pick up momentum and happen relatively quickly given appropriate support, but just as quickly the survivals of hunger and poverty can relegate back to former destitute without moving on to create more stable sources of income.

6. What works best in delivering skills development to a significant number of people who live in rural areas in a cost efficient way? And what is the best way to sustain the delivery of skill development in rural areas over the long term?

1) Delivering skills development in cost efficient way

Below are some suggestions, but may not work the same across all rural areas:

- A. Partnering with local organisation with similar agenda and goals
- B. Making full use of local resources (ex. Local universities for development and delivery of educational curricula; local authorities for quality assurance, providing local-specific incentives)
- C. Cash transfer

2) Sustaining the effects over long term

An ideal virtuous cycle of a programme is for its former targets to provide positive feedback to the mechanism, so it can perpetuate on its own as time progresses. However, considerations must be given so as not to create competition among the beneficiaries for limited positions and opportunities.

10. How can modern information and communication technology (mobile phones, internet, interactive CDs and DVDs) be effectively harnessed to deliver skills to people in rural areas?

1) Mobile phones

Mobile phones were useful to provide participants with occasions (a reminder, alarm) to review

what they have learned, and to continue motivating them to learn. However, its effectiveness as the main media of long-time learning, and learning of sophisticated subjects has not been observed yet. Providing mobile phones themselves had also been a good incentive for participants to stay in course, which by its termination participants had incorporated its use not only in their learning, but also in their income earning related activities (i.e. making phone call to produce broker instead of waiting for him to come to town to pick up)

2) CDs and DVDs

Educational material on CDs and DVDs were most effective when used for conveying general information (i.e. not skills that require hands-on practice) to a large group of people for a short period of time. Provided that communities had communal DVD players, monitors, and speakers, these DVDs could be shared among nearby communities which maximized its target audiences and thereby its efficiency. However, its effectiveness as the main media of long-time learning, and learning of sophisticated subjects has not been observed yet.

Another very successful case of using DVDs was when reaching out to younger targets (under 12 in many cases), with educational animations. Contents of these animated shows were often a translated version of already popular educational animations, which were provided by its copyright holders under the mutual understanding that these will not be reproduced for commercial reasons.

Moderator (Alfredo LAZARTE HOYLE)

Dear All,

I feel very happy to join this great initiative, and as a matter of fact the level of participation confirms the growing attention provided today to the Rural Areas. This is really good news following the aftermath of a paramount challenge assumed by the international community as a whole when the Sustainable Development Goals were endorsed.

Let me remember the targets of Goal number One:

- 1.1. By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day
- 1.2. By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions
- 1.3. Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable
- 1.4. By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance
- 1.5. By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters

Eight out of ten of the world's working poor live in rural areas where the lack of decent work opportunities is pervasive. Therefore, the challenge of ending poverty is fundamentally one of ending rural poverty. As highlighted in the Conclusions on Promoting Rural Employment for Poverty Reduction adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 97th Session (2008), decent work deficits in rural areas are typically many, diverse and inter-related. Rural poverty has numerous root causes, ranging from climate change, natural resource degradation, conflict, weak institutions, poor agricultural conditions and trade-related challenges. Rural poverty is a driver of a host of social problems, including hunger and malnutrition, poor working conditions and exploitation of children. The ILO's approach to rural poverty is to increase the overall resilience of rural communities and

their capacity to address such challenges through the Decent Work Agenda. This approach is based on three main goals: increasing the voice of rural people through organization of communities and promotion of rights, standards and social dialogue; promoting an employment based rural development model through diversified livelihoods, sustainable enterprises and better integration in value chains; and providing social protection floors which guarantee minimum income and access to basic services in rural economies which are often very vulnerable to external shocks.

Skills training is fundamental to cement this strategy, the concept of building resilience can only be understood as to DEVELOP CAPACITIES, in the following links we will illustrate some outstanding initiatives from Asia-Pacific. We kindly encourage colleagues or practitioners from other regions to share your experience.

Rural diversification through skills development is a success on contributing to build bridges between divided societies like in the war torn Sri Lanka, where the most vulnerable find alternatives to recover dignity, be included and empowered and contribute to restore social cohesion and reconciliation. See two related videos in the following links:

<https://youtu.be/DH9ro3i9FVo>

<https://youtu.be/Cg-N6TMdcZI?list=PL8itJ-8CfpcxcG34F1UeMMqADgPv6Yz13>

In the Southern Philippines, farmers' lives and the weather are intimately interwoven, but something is changing, now that the rains in "Agusan del Norte" are too heavy, the sun shines too fiercely. Now there's hope for poor farmers with community-based approaches for monitoring and Weather Index-Based Insurance packages, to warn people when heavy weather is on the way. The following video illustrate this experience:

https://youtu.be/_4jGTwBefKM?list=PLFADDF890F883B211

Also there, in Davao and in the Zamboanga Peninsula, across the highlands and all the way to the remote coastal villages of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, the Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) Project of the ILO has helped a generation of poor men and women optimise their human potential, stimulating economic empowerment and sustaining peace and development, see the following video:

https://youtu.be/QRcUA_kGISQ?list=PLFADDF890F883B211

A story about farmers in My Loc Commune, Can Loc District, Ha Tinh Province, who are forced to migrate for work. The ILO Community-based Training for Economic Empowerment (CB-TREE) programme created jobs and earnings by providing trainings in the production of bamboo baskets, honey, boat, and healthier plants fence, etc. The farmers can find new opportunities in the local community with their new learned skills. One of a series of the Decent Work Stories from Viet Nam. Follow the link:

<https://youtu.be/UUCsL0A2-VU?list=PLCED9FC707262E595>

Finally, to complete the scene, we want to talk also about a joint UN initiative to build resilience in the Rural Sindh region of Pakistan, a region dramatically hit by climate change. The ILO contributed to promoting diversification through vocational and entrepreneurial training in this region. A video on this experience will be posted next week.

In this way skills development also contributes and substantively to achieving Goal 1. Have a nice weekend.

ALFREDO

Naomy Lintini

Dear Colleagues,

I am enjoying this discussion. A lot of experience sharing and good practice is emerging. I want to add that skills are a great equalizer, that gives otherwise disadvantaged young people a path way to financial independency. Skills, however, once acquired must be effectively utilized if they are to produce positive outcomes. Within this context, it is important that as we foster skills development interventions for rural areas, we should also simultaneously promote enhanced rural economic activity that can absorb the developed skills. Promoting household enterprises in agricultural communities can be one way of providing pathways for translating skills into income outcomes. On another angle, some scholars have argued that when we consider skills for rural populations, we should remind ourselves that most extractive industries are largely rural based and that these industries provide a unique opportunity for rural youth to translate skills into economic outcomes. An example of this is what the mining companies in Zambia's North Western province did. The mining companies decided to work with local chiefs to create skills training and job opportunities for rural young women (who had finished their secondary education). The mines designed a work based training programme to train selected rural young women as drivers for the mine's heavy duty mining vehicles.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Thanks Naomi, for stressing the importance of coherence between skills development interventions and promotion of rural economic activities, and for providing the example of mining companies in Zambia. I would like to add that the experience has shown that the successful development projects assess the requirement of human resources, put in place a strategy and resources to meet the skills shortages.

Governments, through appropriate policy, can also facilitate the development of skilled workforce by private sector. For example, in one of the countries in Southern Africa, the government, to overcome skills shortages, made it compulsory for every school construction project to recruit apprentices. So, by the time a construction project was completed, not only a new building was erected, but also 2-3 new skilled workers were also developed.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Celine, you have rightly mentioned that the formal recognition and acquisition of skills is often as important as gaining confidence in one's capabilities. Concerning your query to know about the programmes for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), I would like to inform that the ILO has developed / is developing the capacity of constituents in many countries to formulate RPL policy and programmes. Though it is a very challenging field, but the ILO supported RPL programmes are very successful. And the ILO has developed a resource/ global tool - Recognition or Prior Learning: Key Success Factors and Building Blocks of a successful system- to help countries in successfully establishing RPL system. You may download it from Publications listed on top right of the page.

G S Sethi

G S Sethi, TVET Consultant, India

Dear Ashwani,

I have the following comments to make with regard to skill development of rural youth in India. India is going about large scale skill development programmes. A number of schemes have been launched, but one that is specifically oriented towards skill development of rural poor youth is that by the Ministry of Rural Development. This scheme of skill training and placement programme occupies a unique position amongst other skill training programmes, due to its focus on the rural

poor youth and its emphasis on sustainable employment through the prominence and incentives given to post-placement tracking, retention and career progression.

The scheme involves six distinct steps:

- Awareness building within the community on the opportunities
- Identifying rural youth who are poor
- Mobilising rural youth who are interested
- Counselling of youth and parents
- Selection based on aptitude
- Imparting knowledge, industry linked skills and attitude that enhance employability
- Providing jobs that can be verified through methods that can stand up to independent scrutiny, and which pays above minimum wages
- Supporting the person so employed for sustainability after placement

It is unique in another way too and that is shift in emphasis – “from training to career progression – post placement tracking, counselling and facilitation for one year”.

Under this scheme skill training covers over 250 trades across a range of sectors such as Retail, Hospitality, Health, Construction, Automotive, Leather, Electrical, Plumbing, Gems and Jewellery, to name a few. The only mandate is that skill training should be demand based and lead to placement of at least 75% of trainees.

The trade specific skills are required to follow the curriculum and norms prescribed by specified national agencies: the National Council for Vocational Training and Sector Skills Councils.

In addition to the trade specific skills, training must be provided in employability and soft skills, functional English and functional Information technology literacy.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Thanks, Mr Sethi for sharing an example of how accountability of skills development providers is ensured. The Government of India by linking funding to performance- 75 percent of graduates must be employed sustainability- has not only encouraged the private sector to complement the public training provision but also ensured their accountability. Another useful feature of the programme is the integration of vocational and career counselling, skills training, and post-training support including employment counselling, which is line with the ILO recommendation.

From the evaluation of the programme, if done, please share information about the extent to which the training providers were able to meet the requirement of placing 75 percent of graduates in employment.

Hari Pada Das

Dear Mr. Ashwani and All,

Thanks for extending the time and opportunity for us to join in the discussion. Let me share our experience on the subjects of final week.

I will share one of our experience which covers many of the final week's agenda.

In Bangladesh reform initiatives in Skills Development approaches just started and we are trying to contextualize and implement some of the ILO tools for poverty reduction. "INFORMAL APPRENTICESHIP" is one which also adds value in the lives of the rural poor.

This model was piloted in five big cities in Bangladesh and the result was very exciting. In the first pilot, 500 small private businesses/enterprises were selected from those cities. Owners of those enterprises were the master craft person (MCP). Initially all the MCP's were briefed on the process and were trained to follow the log book. One thousand non formal education graduates who completed their primary education were selected by an NGO that was engaged in implementing non formal education. Each enterprise was requested to accept two trainees for a period of six months to impart on the job training in each of those selected enterprises by the specific MCP followed by the log book. It was a dual apprenticeship model, one day in a nearby TVET institute and five days in the enterprise.

More than ninety percent of those graduates were employed in the same enterprise and business expanded and grew from micro to small enterprise.

Some of those graduates were assessed and qualified through RPL under National Technical Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF).

Same model was piloted in rural areas and the result is also very exciting.

Fifteen different occupations were piloted and all those were in non - agricultural sector.

In the first batch participation of male and female was around 50:50 and in the second batch female participants are a bit more. All the enterprises were in private.

Challenge is the cost of implementation in mass scale.

Christine Hofmann

Dear all,

The discussion is indeed yielding great insights from across the globe. I would like to add a few thoughts building on ILO skills work in Africa, and in particular from North Africa on the question: How do we ensure private sector participation in skills development in rural areas?

The ILO's TREE methodology has been mentioned by a number of people. The three-staged methodology to identify skills needs and market opportunities is essential to understand what is needed locally. Consumers tell us what products they miss in the local market or are not produced at sufficient quality. Local businesses tell us what their current capabilities are and what would be needed to diversify products and services. And finally, a feasibility study tells us what will work. This was applied in Tunisia, see <http://www.ilo.org/global/about...> , or in South Sudan <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/grou...>

In Egypt, we are currently implementing TREE as part of our youth employment project <http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/...>

So Response 1: by making sure the private sector is a main informant for skills initiatives

Response 2: We need to use businesses to deliver skills through workplace-based learning. Still large numbers of youth gain their skills through informal apprenticeship, learning side by side with experienced craftspersons. Where such practices exist, we need to upgrade the existing system by improving skills of master craftspersons and of apprentices, by improving working conditions and ensuring that apprentices are not exploited (or used as child labourers), always building on local traditions without distorting them. Where this practice is weak, development partners can mobilize businesses to engage in apprenticeship and train young people, while joining in a network of improving skills for the trade locally – fostering collaboration among businesses locally. The ILO developed tools, briefs, manuals and research reports on the topic. <http://www.ilo.org/skills/proj...>
Best regards,

Christine Hofmann, ILO Skills Development Specialist for North Africa

Moderator (Alfredo LAZARTE HOYLE)

Dear Christine,

Thank you very much for your query and the responses you identify. Indeed, to develop a coherent approach to rural skills requires being integrated into rural development policies and strategies, such as agricultural policies, and private sector development and entrepreneurship policies. Towards this aim it's necessary to strengthen coordination and collaboration with the private sector in skills development both to increase the relevance of training, and to improve and facilitate its delivery. This will require the involvement particularly of employers' organizations, but also workers' organisations, NGOs and community groups, in planning and implementing programmes and should be supported in assessing labour market needs and economic opportunities, and link training to the skills requirements in the particular rural context.

TREE is a very pertinent example on aligning skills development to community market needs, also more sophisticated approaches for Local and Regional Economic Labour market development incorporate the same principles.

Akiko Sakamoto

Dear Jim, Ashwani and colleagues!

The topic is relevant to many countries in Asia-Pacific. I participated in a seminar on SMEs in Thailand during the weekend, and heard from the employers and officials from the rural provinces that the increased use of technology, at least in the farming sector, is not expected to happen anytime soon and that the sector continues to be characterized as offering "hard labour" and thus is having a difficult time attracting young people to work. Questions such as how we can better deliver skills training to the rural population, and what types of skills are needed are important, but it seems helpful to think about skills development from the perspective of demand –how is the province planning to develop the rural economy in mid-to-long term? What is the strategy? What infrastructure, business and other services need to be supported as part of the broad plan of provincial economic and employment development? Only when these questions are raised or answered we can turn to the question of skills development. That is, in order to realize the provincial development plan, what skills does the province need?, who and how can such skills training be organized, etc.? If the provincial economic plan could include the vision and plan of modernizing the agriculture sector including the increased use of technology, which raises the demand for new types of occupations with higher skills, then the image of the sector might be perceived differently by the next generation.

Akiko, ILO-Bangkok

Moderator (Alfredo LAZARTE HOYLE)

Dear Akiko,

Thanks a lot for your very relevant comments. Experiences are diverse in different parts of the world, recently we read an article on the role of innovative technologies in agriculture on reducing rural poverty on the indigenous populated areas in the highlands in Peru. Probably some colleagues from ILO Lima could help to illustrate this example. Also we recently explored, the amazing advance of technologies in rural areas in different development countries, but this advance, had a first stage on the dissemination of communication technologies, the role of youth as consumers of this technologies and

therefore becoming the most dynamic engine for rural diversification and structural transformation. As an example of this I share with you a PPP, presented recently on the E-Commerce Week organized by UNCTAD : <http://unctad.org/meetings/en/...> This also includes a very interesting experience developed by the Chinese giant e-company ALIBABA, see more references here: <http://unctad.org/meetings/en/...>

Gabriel Bordado

What works best in delivering skills development to a significant number of people who live in rural areas in a cost efficient way? And what is the best way to sustain the delivery of skill development in rural areas over the long term?

Community-based training as well as informal apprenticeships are the two best options for skills development interventions in the rural areas. The Philippines has been very successful in implementing the community-based training programs. Most of the government training centres are having extension services which requires them to deliver training programs right at the doorsteps of the target beneficiaries. Such programs are based on the government approved and industry-endorsed standards and are delivered by certified trainers. A component of entrepreneurship is embedded in the training program to encourage participants to go on self-employment. In some cases also, participants were given start up tool kits for setting up small business. The local government is supporting this initiative by allocating some funds for eventual sustainability. Informal apprenticeship was successful in Bangladesh. ILO in partnership with UNICEF has commissioned BRAC, an INGO, in piloting this mode. Core trainers were selected and trained from a pool of available master craftsperson (MCP). Then these MCPs trained a group of apprentices within their own shop. The BRAC provided hand holding support to these MCPs during the entire pilot duration. Training programs were also based on the available standards.

In both models, trainees were subjected to assessment based on the government approved qualification framework.

Moderator (Alfredo LAZARTE HOYLE)

Dear Gabriel,

I absolutely agree. Sustainability of the provision of Skills training should be axed into two fundamental conditions: first, to respond to the NEEDS OF THE MARKET; secondly, service delivery could integrate an alliance of different public-private institutions. Beyond the case of TREE, the Local Economic Development Strategies (LED), creates the foundation for sustainable networking of institutional capacities in the territory. On this effort, they include the participation of community based organizations, local and regional authorities, decentralized branches of relevant national institutions, NGOs, academia and principally organized Local Economic Actors (including different forms of employers, workers, farmers, cooperatives, etc).

Matthieu Cognac

Dear colleagues,

This is an excellent discussion, thank you. In Asia where rural employment is often synonymous with working poverty, it is no wonder young people usually try to escape rural employment rather than join it. It also does not help that very few training institutions offer any courses related to agricultural management at the tertiary level, since part of the solution relies in introducing young people to the notion that rural development encompasses a range of careers.

Yes, the nature of work is changing, in particular as it relates to automation, but there are opportunities that span beyond traditional agriculture. Careers in agro-tourism, agribusiness and ecommerce are key examples.

In October 2015 at an event on youth employment and green jobs in China, we met with Mr Yang Shushun. Mr Shushun had successfully completed the highly competitive Foreign Service Exam and while he started his career as a diplomat in Spain, to the initial disarray of his parents he gave it all up after a few years to return to Wuxi in China and open an online agriculture firm called Dekang Farms, which is now one of Taobao's (the Chinese equivalent of eBay) top online stores. His story has been broadcasted in CCTV (China Central Television) and it has also been covered by SBS, the Korean largest broadcast network, reaching out and inspiring young students. There are many more stories of young people joining ecommerce and agriculture, as explained in this article:

<http://news.xinhuanet.com/engl...>

Since this discussion is kindly sponsored by KOICA, it is encouraging to highlight best practices from Korea. For instance, the 2009 "Act on Fostering and Supporting Agricultural and Fisheries Enterprises", targets young people with an entrepreneurial spirit and a willingness to innovate. This program offers incentives to urban youth in the form of soft loans, access to skills training and also rental subsidies so that they may establish enterprises in rural areas. The case is well illustrated by Mr Suk Mo Lee who has become a success story:

<http://apyouthnet.ilo.org/podc...>

<https://youtu.be/HB55M2ZzWGw>

Mr Lee's story is reflective of the fact that with the right incentives and with the right amount of determination, young people may indeed be attracted toward opportunities in rural areas. There is a lot at stake for young people to venture into rural careers; so thank you again for initiating this conversation.

Moderator (Alfredo LAZARTE HOYLE)

Dear Matthieu,

Fully agree; this reinforces my previous response to Akiko. Your multiple experiences in Youth Employment initiatives for Rural areas in Asia Pacific are a solid evidence on this positive pattern.

Igor Felice

Dear Ashwani, Jim, Alfredo and colleagues,

Thanks for this opportunity. I would like to echo Naomy about the importance of linking skills development with the extractive industry in rural areas. In Mozambique, we experienced a boom in the coal sector in Tete province with great expectations from the local communities. Unfortunately the young people have not been able to get any advantage from the operations, both because a lack of basic technical skills and the lack of soft skills. The managers of the companies were complaining that the people from the local communities had a different culture of work and were not able to comply with simple requests. This situation created serious political problems for the Government that was blamed to create jobs for foreigners only. The Government asked ILO to work on these issues in another province where large reserves of gas were discovered in order to give opportunities to young women and men from the local communities. We started a program to support the Government vocational training provider and the development of the SMEs in value chains linked to the extractive industry operations such construction, agri-business of small scale and

hospitality. The programme is still in its early phase and the low price of the commodities delayed the implementation of the extraction mega-projects.

Moderator (Alfredo LAZARTE HOYLE)

Dear Igor,

Indeed, this is a very sensitive issue, many modern extractive industries approaches consider it very important to provide opportunities to the people from surrounding communities. This requires opportune and accurate training support to maximize seizing of opportunities. Nevertheless, it is impossible to avoid the recognition that this kind of activity creates conditions of stress with traditional activities like agriculture, fisheries and small scale forestry. It is important to identify the factors of this potential stress, between extractives industries and rural development, and to seek measures to prevent it and to address core root causes of potential conflicts.

Among the potential areas of stress we present from among them are:

- The impact of extractive industries on the environment: mainly when that impact is associated with the quality of life of the surrounded communities and of their livelihoods.
- The precarious and dangerous conditions of work: where many workers on extractive industries are exposed to high occupational risks and enacting the application of OSH rules is not enough to prevent accidents. This situation becomes seriously aggravated by informality where those rules are not even known, neither enforced and in extreme situations happens in fragile states or even isolated rural areas in developing countries where the absence of rule of the law creates dramatic conditions where beyond precarious workings conditions the worst forms of work are present, including force labour, children involved in dangerous work and sexual exploitation.
- The dispute for the control and exploitation of natural resources like water, land, forest, fishing areas and other natural resources, which attempt the development of traditional areas of works of the local communities and collide with cultural and economic rights of indigenous people.

The impact of these areas of stress become more acute associated with insufficient or ineffective regulation; conditions of informality and by the spread of illegal activities, often escalating from localized disputes to violent national and even international conflicts.

Among the preventive and resolution measures different criteria have been presented and need to be incorporated even on any skills development associated initiatives, such as:

- To establish basic standards of regulation including OSH effective monitoring, environmental impact studies and social license.
- To promote consensus building with appropriate social and cultural communication mechanisms
- To enforce the respect and implementation of appropriate OSH conditions including strict monitoring to guaranty safer conditions through better labour governance, social dialogue and community participation.
- To fight illegality but to support the transition of informality to a more efficient/secure space of work.

Special consideration needs to be given to the case of indigenous populations and minority cultural groups, highlighting the role of Convention 169, and seeking equilibrium among common welfare and the rights of indigenous peoples and minority populations. An issue to be considered is the divergences of legal frameworks on resources owned rights on surface vs. underground, resources.

Co-moderator (SkillsforEmployment)

The following contributions were provided by Tapera Jeffrey Muzira who writes from rural Chipata, Zambia:

What kinds of skills do people living in rural communities need most to increase productivity, generate income and strengthen local economies?

Technical (hard) and Business (soft) skills that unlock the economic potential of both natural and man-made local assets peculiar to the rural economy of that particular rural area. In Zimbabwe, rural Gokwe is home to the second largest natural forest area and together with private sector companies and TVET centres it made more sense to train young people in the business of the honey value chain, from production through to marketing to the final customer.

What are the main challenges faced by the people living in rural areas in accessing quality and relevant education and training? What particular challenges do women living in rural areas face in this area?

Relevance and infrastructure; access to finance and demand-driven business support services. Rural Women mainly face cultural, education and mind-set challenges which in some places can be worsened by constitutional and legal barriers to economic empowerment.

What challenges have you encountered in delivering training to rural populations?

As above. However, the inter-related and mutually supportive elements of the Training for Rural Economic Empowerment Programme of the ILO allows for innovative and tailored solutions in rural areas.

To what extent are national skill development/TVET strategies addressing the needs of women and men living in rural areas? And, what are some of the challenges to financing training in these areas? Rarely, in most cases TVET centres offer one size fits all courses for rural areas regardless of the economic opportunities in that locality. Often you will find TEVT centres offering carpentry in agricultural regions of highly fertile soil where timber is least likely to grow and be available for carpenters. You will find them offering catering course where there is no vibrant rural centre or economic activity to support the business of food and beverages. As a result, most of their skills training programmes do not lead to self-employment. The other challenges is that course are often imported without any adaptation and involvement of industry, as a result training more often than not does not lead to wage employment either. The poor are paying customers but they will only pay for training if and only if it leads to wage or self-employment and the benefits they can see for their hard earned and scarce financial resources. Even in the weakest of markets, it is often possible to embed skills training into access to finance and business development services that increase the chances of successful rural small businesses.

Tapera Jeffrey Muzira is a former Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) of the 5 year US\$16 million ILO Danish Africa Commission Skills for Youth Employment in Southern (Zimbabwe) and Western (Benin and Burkina Faso) Africa. He was the first Team Leader for the first phase of the Skills Programme in Zimbabwe. Previously, Tapera has managed rural value chain projects in dairy farming and also rural renewable energy. Tapera is currently the Chief Technical Advisor of the 5 year US\$13 million Zambia Green Jobs Programme, a UN Joint Programme on inclusive green growth and decent green jobs which is led by the ILO with participation from UN agencies UNEP, FAO, UNCTAD and ITC.

Moderator (Alfredo LAZARTE HOYLE)

Dear Tapera,

Considering I'm not specifically an expert on skills training, let me concentrate in one of your specific questions: The challenges for Rural Women. Although the degree and scale of gender inequalities varies greatly between regions and contexts, there is evidence that, on a global scale, women benefit less from rural employment (whether self- or wage employment) than men do, and are more vulnerable to decent work deficits. This is linked to several factors:

- Due to “traditional” division of labour, women tend to be assigned to domestic work and to be responsible for any type of care (including childcare, old-age care, etc.); in rural areas, underdeveloped infrastructure (transport, services, access to clean water, electricity and thus to time-saving devices such as households appliances) lengthen the time needed for household chores, which limits women’s possibility to develop income-generating activities as well as networks outside the village , while these are critical to connect to labour market opportunities.
- This division of labour often starts at a very young age, and girls may be involved in domestic work instead of being sent to school, which undermines their potential and lead to lower productivity and reduce their decent work opportunities, as well as the opportunities to find skilled jobs. These factors reduce their independence and their possibility of social and economic empowerment.
- Evidence also shows that women are often disadvantaged in accessing productive assets and resources (including land), technologies, financial services and tools; moreover, rural women face higher unemployment than women in urban areas. As a result, they often perform unpaid work (as contributing family workers), and they predominate in unstable and flexible jobs that lack social security and other benefits. In the agricultural sectors, women tend to be the main producers of food, while men are more engaged in commercial crops; women may also be involved in commercial food production, but with great asymmetries and rigid division of tasks; in rural non-agricultural sectors, women are most of the time employed as domestic workers .
- Women’s representation and voice in rural employers’, workers’ and farmers’ organizations are low, thus they have very limited bargaining power. This is due to social norms and cultural perceptions, but also to their limited access to education and heavy domestic responsibilities, which restrict their ability to speak out in front of men and undermine their possibilities of participation in organizations and decision-making. As a result, rural women’s rights at work (equal pay, decent wages, social protection, among others) are very often not recognized, which undermine their socio-economic power and contribution, as well as their well-being.

I hope other colleagues could contribute to provide appropriate responses to your very relevant questions.

Igor Felice

Dear all,

When we talk about the cost-effectiveness of the training I would like to mention the ILO experience with the mobile training units in Mozambique. Few years ago we introduced 3 mobile training units with the objective to reach rural areas and provide training at a reasonable costs. Since then, the Government training institute was able to add 5 mobile units per year and trained trainers in all the provinces. They are now able to reach remote districts with state-of-the-art equipment and provided training to thousands of local young women and men.

Co-moderator (SkillsforEmployment)

The following contribution was provided by Manzoor Khaliq:

Hello Everyone,

Thinking Out of the Box? It is heartening to read the wealth of experience that is being shared by the contributors and pertinent professional opinions expressed. I mention, in particular, the comments of Akiko on first exploring District or Provincial level development plan and making that plan the basis for skills development. This is a great idea, however, most often in poor countries, there are seldom development plans and even if these exist, financial resources are so squeezed that the plans remain plans only. Secondly, it is true that skills developed in a particular province are generally for local utility, however, there are examples where skills are developed in rural areas for particular urban-based industries. There are plenty of examples such as the sports goods manufacturing industry and in particular soccer ball manufacturing in Sialkot, Pakistan whereby the industry sub-contracts people in the rural areas to stitch footballs, so the stitching skills acquired are not used for the district/province as such. Similarly, a big fashion house in Karachi, Pakistan first provided skills to rural women almost 600 kms away and then sub-contracted the women to cut/stitch women dresses for the fashion house. In addition to numerous such examples in Pakistan, there are plenty of similar success stories in other countries such as Zimbabwe where the hospitality industry (hotels/restaurants) from urban areas sub-contract poultry supply to poor but skilled farmers in the rural areas. Also in Zimbabwe, arts and crafts, and various horticulture products are produced in rural areas for markets that are hundreds of kilometres away. So, in a nutshell, it is good to have development plans in sight while designing skills development programmes, however, it is important to think out of the box while designing and implementing skills development programmes in rural areas for vulnerable and marginalized groups. Skills could therefore be provided in jobs which do not exist in that particular area, however, it needs to be done in an informed manner. Manzoor Khaliq, ILO Kabul, Afghanistan

Moderator (Alfredo LAZARTE HOYLE)

Hello Manzur,

My best wishes for you. I suppose a real factor differentiating the relation Urban/local market should be accessibility and remoteness. Definitely diversify destination markets for rural skills labor is associated with transaction costs, where "cheap labour" many times doesn't compensate transport, opportunity and security costs. The challenge also appears in cases of "enclaves", where isolation contributes to make invisible abuses in labour conditions. Some experiences such as in Laos remote areas in the Sekong province, shows that a proper skills training for potential workers for future plantations should include education on labour rights, skills for collective contract negotiation and basic literacy on labour contracts. A complementary effort to identify complementary livelihoods also enhances contractability opportunities.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Thanks, Hari Pada Ji for sharing the experience and successful example of informal apprenticeships in Bangladesh. My experience in supporting many countries in implementing quality informal apprenticeships is that it is a very useful method, in countries with the large informal economy, to prepare youth for both wage and self-employment. Many of such youth eventually start their own micro or small enterprises.

Skills training is usually expensive than general education, but informal apprenticeships comparatively don't cost much; in many cases, it is self- sustainable.

Fernando Vargas Zuñiga

Hello,

As we announced last week, it is time to continue speaking about experiences for the rural economy in Latin America.

In addition to the worst economic indicators in labour market, such as, for example, unemployment rate, youth inactivity, informality and low productivity, the rural sector has also shown to be a dynamic space in some areas.

As was said in other posts, technology changes in agriculture are demanding new and more complex skills. Additionally, there are some experiences that are working in the field of youth and education for rural sector with the perspective of community, family and local space.

This is the case of the National Agriculture Society (SNA in Spanish) in Chile who manage SNA Educa, a network of rural schools covering vulnerable young people. SNA schools work as a network that aims to develop skills and values and to insert them into productive activities, working together with families and the community.

You could learn more of this experience at: <http://www.snaeduca.cl/>

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Hi Fernando: Thanks for sharing the useful weblink. Please consider sharing, with all participants, the main lessons from this case of SNA. Best regards.

Moderator (Alfredo LAZARTE HOYLE)

Gracias, Fernando por seguir contibuyendo. Welcome to the rich Latinamerica experience. There are so many interesting lessons learned to share from this continent. J'aimerais aussi que certain collegues de l'afrique francophone sont encourages a participer. Contibuer en Français, tambien en Español no es una limitacion, "Allez-ci les gars....."

Lkhagvademberel Amgalan

Dear all,

I would like to share some experiences drawn from a rural pilot programme implemented under the ILO/Japan project "Promoting and building income security and employment services in Mongolia (2014-2016).

The programme that aimed at improving income security and employability measures for rural youth, in particular young herders, has intended to address the challenges faced by herders in terms of gaining productive employment and sustainable income security by applying a holistic approach (by improving linkages among employment promotion, social protection, business and skills development in rural areas).

The pilot strategies focused on access to entrepreneurship training and business advisory services; herders' skills development and participation in social security scheme, cooperative development, and capacity building of public employment services and social security staff. Main activities of the pilot programme included development of training materials; training of trainers; and training of beneficiaries complemented with local authorities' support to beneficiaries in accessing employment promotion and funding support; and training of government staff for increased out reach and quality of services.

The results of this programme have suggested:

- skills development will be stronger if entrepreneurship training and business services are also

provided and available at the local level

- a special programme is needed for young herders to provide skills for primary processing of livestock produce (milk, wool, hides and meat) to support trading of value added produce; and more complete skills for product making.
- self-learning methodology should be further encouraged to address the need of young herders to learn more about traditional pastoral herding practices and know about modern-times requirements for livestock rearing.
- herders' cooperatives can play a crucial role in promoting sustainable decent work in rural areas by empowering individual herders to have stronger voices at a trading table, to have their concerns for extending employment and business heard channelled to decision makers, and to facilitate peer learning (they also can act as providers of services such as skills training and business counselling for their members).

Moderator, Ashwani Aggarwal

Dear Lkhagvademberel,

Thanks for sharing an example from Mongolia which beefs up the main conclusion coming out clearly from the experiences of many countries that the effectiveness of skills training in rural areas is enhanced if it is complemented by other interventions- business development services, financial services, cooperatives, OSH, entrepreneurship training,...

Harunur Rashid

Dear all,

An example is shared here from ILO's contribution point of view, as the ILO Technical Expert Team facilitated a major public skills development agency: Bureau of Manpower, Employment & Training (BMET) during 2002-2005 to promote skills development for rural women in Bangladesh. The ILO/UNDP project 'Skills Training for Employment Promotion of Poor Women through Strengthening of the Technical Training Centres' used the ILO TREE methodology and helped build capacity of 5 public Technical Training Centres (TTCs) covering eight rural areas (Sub-districts) to develop market responsive employable skills and entrepreneurial capacity of targeted 1200 women, who specially opted for group production. The non-traditional trades/occupations were: welding, wood works, seed processing, paper box making, soap making, cage fisheries, rickshaw repair etc. The results demonstrated economic empowerment of rural poor women, and that; it helped mainstream them in the community and market at large. The strategic approach on involvement of community and all market players followed TREE methodology and tools.

However, there were challenges and lesson learned. And a key learning was on promoting local coordination committee led by the local government representatives especially by elected women members (reserved seats) and the local business community. The process helped overcome many socio-economic and gender barriers that strongly persist in country like Bangladesh. (This may help bring all key players in promoting women employment in rural setting). The other issue was about involvement of the local trade body "Market Committee" who played greater role to sustain skills, entrepreneurships and ensure equal market access for women.

Being considered one of the successful initiatives of ILO Bangladesh to promote women's skills and economic empowerment, this experience is still an encouragement to other women skills development projects. This is evident from the inclusion of Component 5 results area: 5.1 Community-Based Training (Training for Rural Economic Empowerment) mainstreamed in the TVET in the just completed 'ILO TVET Reform Project' in Bangladesh' (2007-2015). The TVET Reform project assisted the Government of Bangladesh to prepare and approve the National Skills

Development Policy - 2011 with a section '14. Improved access of under-represented groups, and sub-section 14.5. Women: Women should have equal access to both formal and non-formal programs so they can acquire or improve their knowledge and skills for meaningful employment or upgrade existing employment opportunities'. However, the success remains on private sector participation. Thus one of the Industry Skills Councils (ISC) promoted through the reformed TVET system in Bangladesh is on Informal Sector 'ISC-Informal Sector'. Which is now activated to promote and accelerate skills development in rural areas, and for poor and people with low education levels in Bangladesh.

But there is room to explore sharing more innovative approaches globally from where Bangladesh can learn and strengthen its skills development initiatives for rural people.

Thank you all for this passionate reading.

Harunur Rashid, National Project Coordinator, ILO Dhaka

Moderator, Ashwani Aggarwal

Thank you, Mr Rashid, for sharing examples to address some of the issues listed for this E-discussion. Like many other contributors, you have also stated that the ILO programme "Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE)" has worked well in promoting employment and income of rural people, particularly for women. The central role of communities in all such examples has been emphasised.

I would request you to share more information about the functioning and performance of ISC for the informal sector, as not many countries have skills councils for the informal economy. Best, Ashwani

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Dear Participants,

Thanks for the overwhelming response to the E-discussion and high-quality of comments and experiences shared on skills for rural employment. May I request that you kindly consider sharing more examples and ideas on the last two questions of our discussion?

1. How do we ensure private sector participation in skills development in rural areas?
2. How can modern information and communication technology (mobile phones, internet, interactive CDs and DVDs) be effectively harnessed to deliver skills to people in rural areas?

Thank you,
Kind regards
Ashwani

Ana Paulo

Connectivity—whether the Internet or mobile phones—is increasingly bringing market information, financial services, health services—to remote areas, and is helping to change people's lives in unprecedented ways. New information and communications technologies (ICT), in particular high-speed internet, are changing the way companies do business, transforming public service delivery and democratizing innovation. With 10 percent increase in high speed Internet connections, economic growth increases by 1.3 percent. According to the World Bank, three quarters of people on Earth have access to a mobile phone. There are now at least 6 billion mobile phone subscriptions active, up from 1 billion in the year 2000 -- and 5 billion of those are in developing countries. Studies have demonstrated that access to cellular technology can have a dramatic effect on economic development in deprived areas. The

availability of cell phones to farmers helps them make more informed decisions about what to plant, when to harvest, and how much to sell crops for, for instance. These are all key factors for economic success in rural communities. ICT provides economic opportunities to both urban and rural populations. The fact that virtually all new mobile customers in the coming years will be in developing countries, and more specifically in rural areas, means that the ICT platform is reaching population with low levels of income and literacy. As a result, ICT is becoming the largest distribution platform of providing public and private services to millions of people in rural and poor areas. Market information, financial services, education and health services had largely been unavailable in those areas in the past due to lack of connectivity of any kind. Now the wireless platform is promoting NEW economic and social opportunities at all levels for the poor population. In the TREE project in Mozambique we are using a MOODLE e-learning platform and we intend to develop a pilot project that will allow the young beneficiaries of the rural communities to receive in their mobile phones an alert when a job offer in their activity area is made.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Moderator Ashwani Aggarwal,

Thanks Cristina, for the excellent ideas on the use of internet and mobile phones. What about alerts on mobile phones of farmers about market information related to crops and farm inputs of their interest?

Tanjel Ahsan

Dear All,

Let me share some field experience from ILO Dhaka Skills programme.

One of the IPEC projects and TVET reform project in Bangladesh designed Supervised Apprenticeship (SA) Model for the target apprentices (child labourers aged 14 years and above) who are willing to pursue decent work and skills development at their workplaces. This model was tested and fine-tuned with the support of a local NGO (Dhaka Ahsania Mission). Based on the experience of that initiative, a pilot program was implemented with funding from UNICEF and implementation support of an NGO- BRAC in 2012.

The training was delivered through a structured, supervised and time-bound manner comprising of practical/on the job training and off the job classroom training. This is most commonly known as dual apprenticeship system: two thirds of the training time devoted to practical training at the work place and the remaining one-third in classroom training. The training was based on the Competency Based Training and Assessment (CBT&A) system that promotes access of the participants to the national certification issued by the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) in line with National TVET Qualification Framework (for the skills part). After successful completion of the program, participants' used to receive certificates from the BMET (for the apprenticeship part), the agency responsible for registration and certification of the apprentices.

Practical training is delivered through an already skilled worker known as Master crafts Person (MCP) who is willing and capable of delivering training to the apprentice based on the structured format and training content and through a competency skills log book. Each MCP trains at least two apprentices under his/her close supervision and guidance. Classroom based/theoretical part/off the job training is delivered in nearby TVET institute(s). <http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatw...> The results of the pilot program were more than encouraging with virtually all graduates getting employed or self-employed by starting their own business initiatives.

Lessons that we have learned from the model is social partners (local govt./NGO/TVET institutes) should take some responsibilities to sustain this model. It may be by using their existing resource (off the job/class room training may conduct at their existing centres, using existing staff with additional tasks, link MCPs/small enterprises with supply chain using existing resources etc.). The local trade based associations should also be involved in this initiative.

A successor of ILO TVET reform project “Bangladesh Skills for Employment and Productivity” (B-SEP) project funded by the Government of Canada has a target of 6,000 informal apprentices, we are trying to adopt a realistic implementation strategy for up-scaling of the apprenticeship programme. A cost sharing based informal apprenticeship model is being implemented where local TVET based NGOs are contributing their resources. As a result, per unit cost is significantly reduced from USD 350 to 200. Beside the government (BMET) monitoring system, local trade associations and business chambers are also involved in supervision and monitoring of apprenticeships activities. The project has thus planned to gradually transfer this model to local NGOs and trade associations. We are focusing on 3 major areas for informal sector apprenticeship program, (1) Work place improvement and MCPs capacity development, (2) Training of apprentices and (3) capacity development of local partners (NGOs) to support training program.

Another ILO Dhaka project “Way of Informality project” is pursuing a model of apprenticeship program which is low cost as key stakeholders are taking initiatives to continue it, particularly the construction workers’ unions and small enterprises are partnering together to formalise skills of informal workers and helpers of the informal construction sites. The project has thus promoted the ‘Structured Informal Apprenticeship Training’ for decent job growth of construction workers. At the same time, the methodology is helping build capacity of Small Construction Enterprises/Sub-contractors, construction workers’ unions and Master Crafts Persons (MCPs) to develop and strengthen the process of skills development and recognizing informally acquired skills. This process is considered as the most effective skills development process and recognised by BMET. As a result, a sustainable skills development and formalisation process has been established promoting strong partnership between workers, employers and BMET (government) for decent job growth in the informal construction sector. <http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatw...>

Formal Apprenticeship program

TVET reform supported to establish Centre of Excellence for Leather Skill Bangladesh Limited (COEL) to increase and improve the overall skill level of the workforce of the leather sector. <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/grou...>

A structured apprenticeship programme delivered by shipyards across the Chittagong region which uses per-vocational qualifications to equip people with low levels of education for the workforce. 200 underprivileged young people equipped with both the theoretical and practical skills to qualify for a nationally recognized NTQVF* Pr-Vocational 2 and then NTVQF Level 1. <http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatw...>

TVET Reform project developed another apprenticeship program for underprivileged groups, especially for females, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and people with low levels of education The Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) and The Interfab Shirt Manufacturing Limited (ISML) under Viyellatex group jointly implemented this training program. In total 39 women participants including 19 PWDs with low levels of education completed the institutional CBT&A course and on-the-job training. At the end of the training, all trainees qualified and were employed as Sewing Machine Operators. This model is still operational and continued by other donor partners.

Finally Government training institutes is implementing this model with some RMG factories through Public Private Partnership (PPP). <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/grou...>

BSEP project is implementing formal Apprenticeship programmes aiming to train 6000 apprentices in 5 priority sectors by March 2018. <http://print.thefinancialexpre...>

The project is also supporting to certify 2500 workers through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in targeted sector. The project is partnering with BTEB-certified assessment centres, which organize orientation program on RPL and do the assessments of workers of the target sectors for ensuring increased sector-specific certifications on RPL programme within the projected time-frame.

The project also working to improve access of the underprivileged groups including women, persons with disabilities, and unemployed youth, both male and female to the skills development programs and employment opportunities.

http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Informationresources/Publicinformation/features/WCMS_462057/lang--en/index.htm, <http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Infor...>

There should be a strong mechanism to mainstream good practices so that rural youth can benefit. Experience gained and lessons learned through the ongoing initiatives may be useful for other developing countries.

Ana Paulo

I want to join this discussion to raise the importance of the Value Chain Development in the projects that aim at rural development and employment: interventions that build on development strategies that seek to strengthen rural micro and small enterprises and economic activities and goods/services, business relationships & services, market structures, and the business environment so that they channel more benefits to the poor and create more and better jobs effectively. ILO's Value Chain Development methodologies are tools for job creation and can be very useful in building strong knowledge background in developing business service markets and its tools to improve the business environment as well as drawing from best practice conceptual thinking and participatory methodologies. In the TREE project in Mozambique we are using local structures depending on the Ministry of Industry and Commerce "Centros de Serviços de Negócios" to facilitate the access to the market of the goods produced by the rural communities, define business plans and marketing strategies. In fact, it was proved that this is the connection to the market that was missing in most parts of the entrepreneurship initiatives of our rural areas.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Dear Participants:

Let us post messages related to skills for rural employment and not about all types of skills initiatives. Otherwise, we risk losing our focus. Thanks and regards.

Mohamadou SY

Thanks for the opportunity. Let me share some field experiences from Senegal.

1. Regarding measures to boost employment in rural areas in both agricultural and non-agricultural area, the value chain approach has been very effective. Interventions such as capacity building of various actors of the value chain (producers, service providers such as micro finance institutions, suppliers of inputs), providing various actors with resources have been very useful in terms of value creation and jobs. Those measures helped to strengthen the capacities of rural and micro enterprises (generally non formal ones) in terms of production and market access. By joining their

efforts and building strong relationships with the local private sector, the owners of small enterprises succeeded in producing and selling more goods and services. In fact, the connection to the market that was missing in the great majority of rural areas was a key ingredient to the success of the project. For example, in the Northern part of Senegal small producers of milk could sign contracts with a business that was willing not just to buy their milk but also to assist them in hard times.

The added value of the value development approach lies in putting in place communications mechanisms, negotiating fair prices, building strong relationships with local microfinance institutions who could give affordable loans to small producers and above all building trust among actors who used to work in isolation.

Mohamadou SY

Regarding examples of skills initiatives and programmes that have improved gender equality and social inclusion in rural areas, I would like to share another example of a project known as Fonds d'Impulsion du Développement Economique Local (FIDEL) funded by the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) in the local area of Taiba Ndiaye in Senegal. The FIDEL targeted small businesses owned and managed by women and the youth by giving them easy access to affordable loans. The FIDEL was owned by the rural community and brought a matching fund and signed a contract with a local microfinance institution that had the financial capacity to fund small income generating projects. A majority of the 120 organizations of the rural community could have access to the funds as members of the local umbrella organization. The conditions and terms of the loans were negotiated between the three entities taking into account the real needs of small producers. In less than three years, the FIDEL benefited to more than 42 rural microenterprises with a membership of 80% of women. About 99% of the credits have been paid back at an interest rate of 7%.

To a large extent, the FIDEL was based on a local public and private partnership (PPP). Funds benefitted to small producers living in the area. The FIDEL funded in priority activities generally involving rural women and the youth. All producers funded by the FIDEL received training and advice in loan management.

The success of the FIDEL was based on its capacity to feel basic needs in a flexible way. Roles and responsibilities between the various actors were clearly defined. Ownership of the FIDEL by stakeholders and its rootedness in the local communities proved to be critical factors in terms of sustainability.

Mohamadou SY

In order to ensure private sector participation in skills development in rural areas, I am happy to share two examples in Senegal. The first example is a community-based tourism project in the area of Saint-Louis. The project was funded by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and its objective was to develop business partnerships between local producers and local hotel managers. The private sector had to build the capacity of local suppliers in quality management, marketing and accounting in order to provide hotels with better services. Producers, in return were supposed to provide hotels with goods and services they needed. Developing the skills of local producers gave them the opportunity to work with local businesses in general and the hotels in particular.

The second example is related to the experience of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in building the capacity of young students in vocational schools. The ILO signed an agreement with the chambers of crafts who were assigned the training of young students in areas such as Start your Business and Improve your business. Instead of hiring expensive trainers, the ILO build the local

capacity of some members of the chambers of crafts. It was a good opportunity for the ILO to conduct an efficient and sustainable project. A great majority of stakeholders agree that the ILO's phasing out will not be harmful to the project.

Mohammad Nuruzzaman

“National Skills Development Policy 2011”, Ministry of Education, Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh has clearly stated increasing access of the under-represented groups in skills development (section 14). One of the under-represented groups is the Rural Communities. Let me share in the following paragraphs some contents of this policy in this regard. Given the large rural population in Bangladesh, efforts are to be made to improve the quality of skills development in rural communities, and where relevant, strengthen links between formal and informal skills training. To achieve this end, we need to ensure quality of Community based Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (CB-TREE).

The CB-TREE should:

- Be targeted at key rural industries such as agriculture, livestock, fisheries and handicrafts, as well as provide skills relevant to rural infrastructure and the development of a range of community services;
- Be specifically designed to increase employment opportunities for under-privileged groups in the locality;
- Be linked to a cost effective micro finance option for post-course employment opportunities;
- Provide linkages to formal skills training institutions to upgrade or gain further training;
- Include a support mechanism for trainees/participants during training and post-training that addresses future employment and training options;
- Be delivered by instructors that have received professional development in community based training;
- Link industry skill components with competencies and/or qualifications from the national technical and vocational qualifications framework (NTVQF);
- Provide trainees/participants with incentives to participate; and
- Be delivered in a gender and disability friendly environment.

In the context of skills training for rural economy in Bangladesh, we also need to consider the following issues:

People with low levels of education – many people in rural areas leave school before completing grade-8 of general education, and because of this, are not able to enroll in formal skills programs. To overcome this barrier, grade-8 prerequisite is to be removed from formal courses and replaced by course specific entry requirements; formal qualification through recognition of prior learning (RPL); courses be specifically designed to cater for needs of lowly educated people; instructors and managers receive professional development on delivering and assessing training courses for these people; assessment procedures allow for reasonable accommodation; and new pre-vocational course pathways are established for the lowly educated to enter into formal courses.

Women – women should have equal access to skills training to acquire skills for meaningful employment. Given the current low participation rates of women in rural skills training in Bangladesh, special efforts are necessary to correct this gender imbalance. Their participation in skills training programs is to be increased by offering a broader range of traditional & non-traditional skills training programs that can improve employability of women; awareness raising for women on the benefits of skills training; increase enrolment rates for females across all skills training programs; employing female instructors where possible; and ensuring instructors and managers undergo gender awareness, workplace harassment prevention and equal employment opportunities training.

Persons with disabilities – We need to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities through increasing their access and privileges and participation in the skills training programs in the rural areas. To achieve this, institutional facilities need to be upgraded to provide access to training for trainees with disabilities; managers and instructors of training institutions need to receive training on how to work with trainees with disabilities; customized curriculum and delivery methods for persons with disabilities; reasonable accommodation for them to acquire skills; access to counselling on training and employment options; and familiarization training on the employment and training of persons with disabilities to be delivered to the key staff.

Working Adolescents – Access and participation of working adolescents to skills training needs to be improved. They should have access to skills training to provide the opportunity to pursue future employment through courses specifically designed to cater for the needs of working adolescents; flexible shifts for delivery of courses; assessment and RPL procedures that allow for reasonable accommodation; a safe learning environment and a workplace free from child labour; training to instructors and managers in the special needs for training working children/adolescents; and courses for working children/ adolescents that include a support mechanism during and after training, including counselling services.

Moderator (Alfredo LAZARTE HOYLE)

The ILO Youth Employment Program in rural areas in Senegal and Vietnam has been successfully implemented to facilitate the transition from School to Vocational Training and from them to the first job in areas of intensive outbound migration in both countries. In the case of Senegal in the example alluded to by Mohamed, despite the country's respectable economic performance in recent years, its labour market is characterized by low labour demand, high urban unemployment, particularly among youth; and in rural areas, by chronic under-employment, and poverty which is still affecting 72-88 percent of its population. This leads to massive migration to cities, which deprives rural communities of their most dynamic members, puts further pressure on urban labour markets, as well as on socio-political stability, so authorities are now strongly committed to curbing this flow through rural development and rural employment. This situation calls for support to agriculture and diversification of rural revenues, with special emphasis on young men and women.

The Programme was building on the successful project PROMER II (2006-2012), financed by IFAD and implemented by ILO, which supported the development of productive rural micro- and small enterprises of 15 value chains in eight localities. One of its key characteristics was the integration of complementary decent work aspects to entrepreneurship training, such as occupational safety and health, sensitization to child labour, youth employment, gender equality, access to basic health insurance, and formalization of activities.

The Programme was supporting, consolidating and broadening the mechanisms set by the ISFP (Insertion des Sortants de la Formation Professionnelle) project (2013-16), financed by Luxembourg. This project, which supported the vocational training reform in Senegal, has established an apparatus to facilitate youth's access to decent work opportunities, namely through entrepreneurship, in the regions of Matam, Saint-Louis, Louga, Thiès (in Northern Senegal) and Kaolack, Kaffrine, Fatick and Diourbel (in Central Senegal). The project privileged: the integration of the ILO entrepreneurship support tools KAB (Know about Business) and SIYB (Start and Improve your Business) into the training curricula of vocational training centres; and the involvement of workers' and employers' organizations to support vocational training centres and youth rural entrepreneurs and workers.

However, young people's access to specific aspects of decent work needs to be reinforced, and

this too requires the involvement of key actors, particularly employers' organizations [namely, the Guild of Arts and Crafts (Chambre de Métiers et de l'Artisanat)] and workers' organizations. Also, the actions initiated by the ISFP project need to be extended to other actors to ensure a greater and broader impact in terms of productive youth employment. The Programme's work in Senegal involved other actors of the country' vocational training reform, including the ISFP project, are already working on it to reinforce youth counselling and vocational guidance.

Integrated decent work-based methodology in rural youth employment entrepreneurship work has involved mentoring and support of rural youth enterprises via the Guild of Arts and Crafts, to allow them to access quality services (such as information, training, loans, social protection, and social dialogue), set up within the framework of the ISFP project, and with a solid involvement of the MJEPVC (Ministère de la Jeunesse, de l'Emploi et de la Promotion des Valeurs Civiques), and the MFPA (Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle, de l'Apprentissage et de l'Artisanat). The Guild represents a solid relay for a smooth implementation of decent work for rural youth; and its being part of the MFPA also makes it easier to institutionalize the Programme's strategy and thus helps ensure its sustainability. The Programme is reinforcing this apparatus through technical capacity building of employers' (the guilds to which young entrepreneurs are affiliated) and workers' organizations.

Implementation of the integrated approach is realized through a reinforcement of these employers' and workers' organizations' internal human resources, namely their:

1. SIYB counsellors, via training these trainers to better equip them to mentor and support young rural entrepreneurs or workers; and training of entrepreneurs themselves so they can improve effectively, yet in simple ways and at low cost, aspects related to health and safety at work as well as to well-being within the company.
2. President, secretary-generals, file managers and accountants, via activities of sensitisation to decent work, resulting in specific action plans to be implemented.

Loretta de Luca

Sorry in advance for my lengthy contribution ... Enjoyed the contributions and variety of sources. Congrats for this initiative!

Below are ideas on (1) non-technical knowledge and skills; (2) means of skills delivery.

(1) Types of knowledge and skills for rural development and job creation

- Key decision makers (Ministers of Finance, Economy, Planning and Industry, development community, the media, etc.)' skills to view rural women and men, communities and economies, as potential engines of economic growth, development, employment-creation and social stability, to listen to rural "voices"; and to recognize the development opportunities of specific rural areas and communities. That is, capacity to break widespread stereotypes of "rural" being synonymous of "backward", "poor", "unproductive", "static/passive", "too difficult to handle", that lead to focusing attention and investments in urban end peri-urban areas, only leaving "left-overs" for rural contexts in terms of support measures and financial and human resources, including for skills development. Ex. ILO's practical media guide for Reporting on rural issues (2014) suggests practical ways to break negative stereotypes (<http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/grou...>

- Local public and private actors (authorities, entrepreneurs, women, youth, etc.)' skills to undertake (integrated) Local Economic Development; namely skills to identify comparative advantages and potentially profitable sectors in their rural context (archaeological sites, fertile land, sources of

renewable energy, trekking routes, etc.) and the necessary measures and steps to develop them (ex. specific workforce skills, economic and social infrastructure), but also local actors' skills to connect to one-another and dialogue to establish local development priorities, strategies, a sequence of actions and division of responsibilities, and to connect with relevant national public and private actors. See in particular Local Economic Development in Post - Crisis Situations: Operational guide (ILO, 2001), also valid in non-post-crisis contexts, and with various tools such as a questionnaire for employers asking them to identify skills in high demand: <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/grou...> ; and Gender mainstreaming in LED Strategies (ILO, 2010): <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/grou...>

- Entrepreneurship skills; indispensable in rural contexts, where jobs largely come from self-employment and micro- and small enterprises. They include skills to set up, improve the performance, and upscale enterprises (ex. ILO's Start and Improve your Business tools: <http://www.ilo.org/empent/area...> skills to develop rural entrepreneur organizations (that will magnify their members' voice and provide them business services); and skills to dialogue with workers, authorities, national and international companies, etc.

- Computer skills, since a young age, so rural people can access for ex. information and skills development services that may face difficulty to arrive to rural areas.

- Vocational guidance skills; to orient youth towards skills in high demand in their specific rural context, including entrepreneurship skills.

- Occupational safety and health and rights at work skills, given that many rural occupations (namely in agriculture, forestry, construction and mining) are among the most dangerous and strenuous ones, and that rural populations are often unaware of their basic rights. This may lead to accidents, illness and abuses, causing important human and economic losses, as well as discouraging youth from working in rural areas. See for ex. Ergonomic check points in agriculture (ILO, 2012) <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/grou...>

- Skills to set up and run rural employers' and workers' organisations, with capacity to provide services to their affiliates, including bargaining skills and a stronger voice with local and national authorities, and with national employer's and workers' organizations.

(2) Skills delivery in rural areas

- Practical, step-by-step, easy-to-use guidance tools, in easily understandable language and using illustrations if needed to ease their access to those with little or no schooling. Could be made available via ICT, increasingly accessible in rural contexts.

- Training trainers. Possibly trainers within the training structures of cooperatives, entrepreneurs' and workers' organizations, so they can train affiliates, or individuals who can then set up their training business; to achieve sustainability + multiplier effect.

- Dissemination (ex. via ICT) of good/winning rural development practices. Ex. Catalysts of rural transformation (ILO, 2013): <http://www.ilo.org/employment/...> See particularly the case of Benin's Songhai Centres (Chapter 8), where enterprises run activities in farming, processing, handicrafts, marketing, energy production, irrigation, repair, recycling and other services, with emphasis on holistic approaches, self-reliance, research and particularly training and training of trainers. And the case of the Rwandan Rural Telecentre Network (Chapter 5), with rural telecentres (self-sufficient but supported by government's policy to promote ICT in rural areas) that provide IT services but are also delivery hubs where individuals, companies and government can advertise, sell, buy and exchange

products and services from e-training to banking, insurance, taxation, healthcare, electricity and information.

- Involving fully representatives of national relevant institutions in local rural skills development initiatives, so they can appreciate and master these initiatives, champion them in their national institution, push for replication in other rural areas, and push to develop policies, mobilize resources, etc. to support those initiatives (and rural contexts in general). This approach was used successfully in two ILO projects in 2012-14: one in Senegal to ease rural youth's school to work transition, and another in Vietnam, to provide vocational guidance in rural schools.

Moderator (Alfredo LAZARTE HOYLE)

Dear Loretta as usual a very comprehensive and well nurtured intervention which properly highlights a series of important policy initiatives, As you probably already saw in my previous response to Mohamed I already cited some of the characteristics of the projects you mention for Senegal and Vietnam, a remarkable initiative that you initiated when you were in charge of ILO's Rural Development Programme.

Sandra Yu

Some thoughts to the matter of skills development in rural areas and links to the private sector:

- Skills development and technical changes are most immediate and durable where they are demand-based and linked to buyer purchases. In Central Kalimantan in Indonesia, an ILO project linked small holder rubber farmers to companies that showed them the quality of rubber that they would purchase. Based on agreed pilot purchases, poor farmers who are typically risk-averse perceived little risk in changing their behaviour and testing improved ways of processing. The change was immediate, including farmers halting the use of cheap, toxic coagulants, and this was reinforced through repeat purchases. Such direct market relationships have multiplied and deepened in the district way beyond the project life. (This link to the market should be done with caution and critical analysis, however, to avoid risk of exclusivity and farmer dependence – e.g. seed companies that breed soil dependence on their inputs.)

- Private sector participation in skills development in rural areas can be enhanced where there is a strong government thrust towards local procurement. In a consultation with Philippine Public Employment Service Officers (PESO) which I once attended, one of the representatives shared his experience where the local government had asked prospective investors in an rural-based economic zone to present a list of skills that would be needed a few years before the full establishment of the zone so that workers may be better prepared. Indeed, there have been documented cases of governments that required investors to present local procurement plans consisting of skills (of local workers) and business services (from local firms). Through PPP, investors also have funded scholarships and training secondments. Malaysia had been quite successful in linking local food processors to major foreign retailers, such as TESCO and Carrefour, alongside targeted support, financed by government and foreign companies, to help workers and SMEs upgrade skills and quality standards. ILO is applying similar thrusts in a forthcoming project in Myanmar, led by our senior skills specialist, where foreign investors and local SMEs in one of the rural States will be involved in determining skills needs with given timelines, identifying priority occupations for development in TVET institutions, designing, funding and delivering training, while linking these with the national skills standards through pilot State-level certification.

Moderator (Ashwani Aggarwal)

Thank you, all those participated in the E-discussions for their overwhelming response and high-quality comments. The examples and lessons shared from various countries and projects were precious and promoted knowledge sharing.

The ILO team will summarise and circulate the feedback and inputs received during the global dialogue with the aim of providing useful insights on promoting and expanding training and employment opportunities in rural areas.

Thank you once again.

Best regards,

The ILO Team - Girma, Jeanette, Ashwani, James, Alfredo, Angelica

Rowena

Dear Ashwani,

I'm coming late to this discussion but here at Youth Business International (www.youthbusiness.org) we aim to be a global voice in youth entrepreneurship and after an extensive literature review we noticed a particular lack of research surrounding the kinds of strategies that work to create economic opportunities for young people living in rural and remote circumstances; moreover, evidence relating specifically to 'what works' to promote rural youth entrepreneurship is extremely scarce. With BG Group's (a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell) assistance, we welcomed the opportunity to undertake research in an area that is particularly under-researched. Together with assistance from research firm Ecorys, we conducted a rural and remote entrepreneurship research study. The study has been completed and we are now finalizing the report.

We explored the challenges, as reported by young entrepreneurs and YBI members that operate in rural and remote areas which highlighted a difference in the perceived importance of different challenges: whereas practitioners see the main challenge as a lack of knowledge and skills, young people rank this cluster of challenges in third place. For young people, access to finance is the main barrier (which was ranked as the fourth most significant challenge by YBI members). Economic challenges feature among the top three clusters of both groups (although different specific challenges were raised by YBI members and young entrepreneurs in rural). Finally, YBI members attached great importance to the lack of a lack of entrepreneurial culture, whereas this was perceived as less important by young entrepreneurs.

I'd be happy to share this research with you - my email address is Rowena.Humphreys@youthbusiness.org - feel free to get in touch.
Best wishes, Rowena

Co-moderator (SkillsforEmployment)

Thank you all for your excellent contributions and participation in this E-discussion on Skills for Rural Employment. The discussion has now concluded. If you have any questions or comments concerning this or future E-discussions we welcome your thoughts at: knowledge@skillsforemployment.org

Annex B

Resource list from E-Discussion on Skills for Rural Employment

Contributor (<i>log-in name used for discussion</i>)	Resource
Good practices on skills for rural employment	
Ana Paulo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO Mozambique: Skills for employment and productivity in low income countries. http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTES T4_170662
Musitaffa Mweha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO Skills for Youth Employment and Rural Development Programme: Zimbabwe 2010-2016
Saurav Ram Joshi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skills Enhancement for Employment Project (SEEP): Nepal 2008-2010
Sarr Souleymane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAO Farmer field school approach (FFS). More information: http://www.fao.org/agriculture/ippm/programme/ffs-approach/en/
Maria Teresa Gutierrez	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO's Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP). More information: http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-intensive-investment/lang--en/index.htm
Fernando Vargas Zuniga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program "Jóvenes Rurales Emprendedores" SENA: http://www.sena.edu.co/oportunidades/emprendimiento-y-empresarismo/Jovenes%20Rurales%20Emprendedores/Paginas/Jovenes-Rurales-Emprendedores.aspx SNA Educa Chile, Network of rural schools covering vulnerable young people: http://www.snaeduc.cl/
Christine Hofmann	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breaking the cycle of poverty in Tunisia projects: http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/features/tunisia/lang--en/index.htm Creating opportunities for youth employment in South Sudan Programme: http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTES T4_177660 Project: Decent Jobs for Egypt's Young People: Tackling the Challenge together: Egypt 2011-2016: http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/technical-cooperation/WCMS_329352/lang--en/index.htm
Lkhagvademberel Amgalan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO/Japan project "Promoting and Building Social Protection and Employment Services for Vulnerable Groups (MAPS)", (2014-2016): http://www.ilo.org/asia/whatwedo/projects/WCMS_342342/lang--en/index.htm
Harunur Rashid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO/UNDP project 'Skills Training for Employment Promotion of Poor Women through Strengthening of the Technical Training Centres': http://www.ilo.org/asia/decentwork/adwd/WCMS_098542/lang--en/index.htm Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Reform in Bangladesh: http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatwedo/Projects/WCMS_106485/lang--en/index.htm
Tanjel Ahsan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO "Bangladesh Skills for Employment and Productivity" (B-

	<p>SEP) project: http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatwedo/Projects/WCMS_243174/lang-en/index.htm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO Dhaka project “Way out of informality: Facilitating Formalisation of Informal Economy in South Asia”: http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatwedo/Projects/WCMS_215714/lang-en/index.htm
Mohamadou SY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisation Internationale de la francophonie. Fonds d’Impulsion du Développement Economique Local (FIDEL) : http://www.francophonie.org/Le-Fidel-une-initiative-pour.html International Trade Centre. Community-based tourism: A sustainable development initiative in El Salvador: http://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/Exporters/Sectoral Information/Service Exports/Tourism/Project%20Brief%20Salvador.pdf
Alfredo Lazarte Hoyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO-IFAD PROMER II Project ILO Programme d’insertion des sortants de la formation professionnelle (ISFP): http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/countries-covered/senegal/WCMS_233340/lang-fr/index.htm
Loretta de Luca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO Start and Improve Your Business Programme: http://www.ilo.org/empent/areas/start-and-improve-your-business/lang-en/index.htm
Manual/Tools	
Ashwani Aggarwal Jim Windell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural skills training – A generic manual on training for rural economic empowerment (TREE): http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTEST4_174257
Loretta de Luca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting on Rural Issues: A media guide: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@emp_policy/documents/publication/wcms_248851.pdf Local Economic Development in Post-Crises Situations: Operational Guide: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---led/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_112267.pdf Gender Mainstreaming in Local Economic Development Strategies Guide: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---led/documents/publication/wcms_141223.pdf
Web-based resources	
Ashwani Aggarwal Jim Windell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO TREE Methodology. More information: http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatwedo/Publications/WCMS_122121/lang-en/index.htm
Jim Windell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduating from destitution, The Economist (2015): http://www.economist.com/node/21660133
Con Gregg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO Rural and local employment: http://www.ilo.org/employment/units/rural-development/lang-en/index.htm ILO Skills and Employability Branch (SKILLS): http://www.ilo.org/skills/lang-en/index.htm
Alfredo Lazarte Hoyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation: Making Youth the Engine for Rural Diversification and Structural Transformation: Promoting Youth Employment in fighting Rural Poverty:

	<p>http://unctad.org/meetings/en/Presentation/dtl_eweek2016_ALazar teHoyle_en.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNCTAD E-Commerce Strategies for Rural Development UNCTAD E-commerce week. Tentative programme: http://unctad.org/meetings/en/Programme/dtl_ict4d2016_rural_e-com_prog_en.pdf ILO Local Economic Development (LED) strategies: http://www.ilo.org/empent/areas/local-economic-development-led/lang--en/index.htm
Ana Paulo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO Value Chain Development (VCD): http://www.ilo.org/empent/areas/value-chain-development-vcd/lang--en/index.htm
Jacqueline Demeranville (FAO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-consultation “Addressing the challenges faced by rural youth aged 15 to 17 in preparing for and accessing decent work”: http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/discussions/rural-youth-employment-15to17
Matthieu Cognac	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> XinHua Net. China Focus : China’s agriculture changed by Internet-savvy youngsters (2016): http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-09/16/c_134630604.htm ILO. Agriculture and Youth Employment: The missing link: http://apyouthnet.ilo.org/podcast/Suk%20Moo%20Lee/news/agriculture-and-youth-employment-the-missing-link
Tanjel Ahsan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Financial Express: Earn while you learn! (2016): http://print.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/2016/06/14/143997 Mushrooms mean opportunities for disabled persons in Bangladesh: http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Informationresources/Publicinformation/features/WCMS_451901/lang--en/index.htm
Publications	
Ashwani Aggarwal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Employment and Social Outlook 2016: Transforming jobs to end poverty (2016). Retrieved from: http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTEST4_175255 Recognition of prior learning: Key success factors and the building blocks of an effective system (2015). Retrieved from: http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTEST4_142654 Report IV of the International Labour Conference 97th Session: Promotion of rural employment for poverty reduction (2008). Retrieved from: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_091721.pdf
Jim Windell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILO Rural Relevant Tools: Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) (2012). Retrieved from: http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTEST4_174859 Rural Skills training – A generic manual on training for rural economic empowerment (TREE) (2009). Retrieved from: http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTEST4_174257 Supporting entrepreneurship education: A report on the global outreach of the ILO’s Know About Business Programme (2009).

	<p>Retrieved from: http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTES T4_177665</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
Chris Chinien	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rockefeller-Foundation (2011a) Job creation through building the field of impact sourcing. Retrieved from: https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/app/uploads/Job-Creation-Through-Building-the-Field-of-Impact-Sourcing.pdf
Jim Windell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ILO Rural Relevant Tools: Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) (2012). Retrieved from: http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTES T4_174859 ▪ Rural Skills training – A generic manual on training for rural economic empowerment (TREE) (2009). Retrieved from: http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTES T4_174257
Musitaffa Mweha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skills for youth employment and rural development programme in Zimbabwe: An assessment of firms in economic subsectors (2015). Retrieved from: http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTES T4_176073
Christine Hofmann	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Upgrading informal apprenticeship: A resource guide for Africa (2012). Retrieved from: http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=FM11G_0_21833
Tanjel Ahsan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Centres of Excellence (COEs) in Bangladesh: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-dhaka/documents/publication/wcms_226504.pdf ▪ My Story: Mohammad Yunus: Give people like me a chance, we'll build Bangladesh: http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatwedo/Projects/WCMS_226508/lang-en/index.htm ▪ TVET reform: Designing an inclusive skills development program: http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=FM11G_0_09612
Mohammad Nuruzzaman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bangladesh - National Skills Development policy 2011: http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=FM11G_0_21629
Loretta de Luca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ergonomic Checkpoints in Agriculture (2012): http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_168042.pdf ▪ Learning from catalysts of rural transformation (2014): http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTES T4_174857
Videos	
Alfredo Lazarte Hoyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peace, prosperity and papayas: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DH9ro3i9FVo&feature=youtu.be ▪ Sri Lankans rebuild livelihoods with new skills: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cg-

	<p>N6TMdcZI&feature=youtu.be&list=PL8itJ-8CfpcxcG34F1UeMMqADgPv6Yz13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taking on the risks, adapting to climate change: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 4jGTwBefKM&feature=youtu.be&list=PLFADDF890F883B211 ▪ Breaking Through Poverty: The TREE Project in the Philippines: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRcUA_kGISQ&feature=youtu.be&list=PLFADDF890F883B211 ▪ The Bamboo Weavers of Ha Tinh: Skills Bring Decent Work: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUCsL0A2-VU&feature=youtu.be&list=PLCED9FC707262E595
Matthieu Cognac	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ APYouthNet Talk Show #28 - Suk Moo Lee: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HB55M2ZzWGw&feature=youtu.be
International Conventions and Recommendations	
Jim Windell	<p>R195 - Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195) http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=FM11G_002014</p>
Alfredo Lazarte Hoyle	<p>C169 - Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169</p>