



Workshop on Education for Rural People in Africa FAO, Rome, Italy, 28-29 November 2007

Co-organized by FAO and ADEA

with support from the Italian Development Cooperation (DGCS)
in collaboration with the Ministries of Agriculture and Foreign Affairs, France, UNESCO, the
International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and the World Bank Institute, France

Information Note

1. Context

From 7 to 9 September 2005, the Ministers of Agriculture, Fishery, Rural Development and of Education of eleven sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries convened in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting drew lessons from concrete experience, reviewed policy options and set priorities for Education for Rural People (ERP), so as to create the political conditions favorable for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The documents related to this 2005 Ministerial Seminar – which was organized in the context of the FAO – UNESCO flagship program *Education for Rural People*, launched in 2002 during the World Summit on Sustainable Development – can be found online, at http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/ERPevents37_en.htm and http://www.adeanet.org/meetings/en_MinSem-sep-2005.htm.

They considered that:

- ERP is a strategic priority for SSA in the fight to reduce extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition, and illiteracy. Presently, rural people represent 71 percent of the total population of SSA. The numbers will remain important over the next three decades as it is projected that rural people will represent 58 percent in 2030. For every 100 children who have access to primary education in urban areas, only 68 do so in rural areas. For every 100 children in urban areas who complete primary school, only 46 children in rural areas do so. The gender gap is usually more pronounced in rural areas since the ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education is much lower in rural than in urban areas. The same is true for the ratio of literate women to men in rural compared to urban areas. These inequities in education directly threaten the sustainable development of the region.
- Although significant progress and impact have been made in ERP, much is yet to be done to address the gross inequities that marginalize rural people, and in particular to provide access to quality education by girls and women, working children, people in inaccessible and remote areas, nomadic and pastoral communities, ethnic minorities, the disabled, refugees and displaced people.
- Food security and poverty reduction strategies are directly dependent on the capacity to foster rural children's access to quality primary education, and to provide relevant literacy and basic skill training to communities of farmers, fishermen, and livestock producers, as well as the population living in forests and deserts. The Ministers stated that the educational needs of rural people – children, youth and adults – should be addressed holistically since today's children are the farmers and the citizens of tomorrow. Post primary education and skills development (pre-)vocational training and higher education reform need to be addressed within this holistic framework.

- Although the direct impact of education on human and economic development is widely acknowledged, much has to be done to enhance the quality and relevance of ERP. The Seminar acknowledged that relevant learning materials must be accessible and available to rural people; training and appropriate incentives for rural teachers need to be enhanced; curricula need to become more relevant by addressing cross-cutting issues important for rural livelihoods such as HIV/AIDS and other health issues, local knowledge, basic agriculture skills and human nutrition. To these ends, community ownership of school plans needs to be strengthened and infrastructure for basic social and economic services for rural people needs to be improved.
- The challenge of financing ERP is giving rise to a diverse range of innovations and incentives involving public support, civil society participation and external donors' involvement.
- The ERP challenge can be addressed through effective partnerships among those engaged in policy making in education and those in agriculture and rural development. Close collaboration is required among the Ministries of Education and Agriculture, Fisheries and rural development, the civil society, the media, and the private sector as ERP is crucial to the attainment of the Education for All (EFA) Goals (Jomtien, 1990 and Dakar, 2000) as well as the Food Security Goals (Rome, 1996 and 2002)
- To establish effective policies and management strategies and to optimize impact, national Rural Development and EFA plans need to consolidate monitoring and evaluation systems, particularly at the sub-national levels, with respect to defining concrete objectives, objectively measurable indicators, and data collection and analysis systems for ERP

Starting from these considerations, the Seminar formulated a number of recommendations for different stakeholders (See Communiqué 2005).

2. Goals and Objectives

This follow-up workshop aims at reviewing the progress made by participant countries and development agencies (technical and donor agencies) towards:

- Implementing 2005 recommendations.
- Fostering the partnerships between and within countries and agencies that are necessary for strengthening ERP.
- Creating a shared understanding (among these partners) of the existing educational/rural development, agriculture and food security challenges, so that their action can be coordinated and more effective.

The outcomes of the workshop will feed into the 2008 ADEA Biennale which addresses the thematic of post-primary education and where special attention will be paid to education in rural environments. Though insights from the workshop need not be restricted to this topic, articulation with the Biennale is sought in order to promote political coherence beyond the workshop.

Specifically, the workshop will:

- Share successful policies and practices as well as bottlenecks.
- Focus on the contribution of training and skills development for poverty reduction, food security, sustainable agriculture and rural development
- Strengthen intersectoral alliances and partnerships and identify follow-up actions at national and regional levels
- Issue a joint statement on progress made and priority areas for further collaboration.

3. Participants

The countries invited to participate are Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. From each country, one senior official from the Ministry of Education and one from the Ministry of Agriculture / Fishery / Rural Development are expected to participate.

The participating agencies are FAO, ADEA, UNESCO, the French Ministries of Agriculture and of Foreign Affairs, and the Italian Development Cooperation (DGCS).

Other invitees will be from the main strategic partners in ERP from or operating in SSA. This may include representatives from relevant international organizations, the donor community, civil society, the media and researchers.

4. Agenda

The 2005 recommendations express a commitment to a number of interrelated priority areas of action: policy advocacy, policy formulation, funding, data / statistics, equity & quality and collaboration (See Communiqué 2005).

These will be addressed through discussions held in plenary and focus groups. (See Draft Program).

5. Working Modalities

The core of the meeting will be dedicated to the country reports jointly prepared by the Ministries involved, as well as reports from the relevant agencies and to the exchange of experiences and knowledge among participants. Outlines will be sent to the participants to provide guidance in the preparation of the reports.

On November 28, from 11h15 until 13h(30), the participants in Rome will be in communication with ten others sites in Africa, this with the help of a videoconference organized with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France and the World Bank Institute in Paris.

Invitees will be asked to make available background documents, which will be used to feed the discussions. FAO, ADEA and UNESCO staff as well as other invited experts will participate as resource persons.

A poster exhibition and display of publications are also foreseen.

The workshop will be conducted in English and French.

6. Mediatization

The co-organizers will ensure media coverage of the workshop and dissemination of its messages and outputs, in collaboration with the participating countries. Participants are invited to draw the attention of the media of their respective countries to the importance of the event and to encourage them to cover it, to disseminate its outputs and to promote its impact on the achievement of the MDGs, the World Food Summit and EFA goals.

7. Date and Place

The workshop will take place at FAO Headquarters, Via delle Terme di Caracalla 1, Rome, Italy on 28-29 November 2007