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TOPIC IN FOCUS

Education and qualification for rural areas

Approaches in formal and non-formal qualification offer rural communities more development options. Access to quality basic education and training can be a way out of poverty.

Practically every development programme has components dealing with qualification at different levels. This newsletter presents various good practices with concepts, tools and instruments for rural qualification programmes. Some interesting approaches concentrate on communication (Vietnam and Nicaragua) or on gender (Cameroon) and others on participation (Kyrgyzstan). The examples from Germany, Switzerland, Austria and the Dominican Republic are examples of soft skill development approaches. You can find community-based approaches (Yemen) and approaches that show how change-management can be initiated in existing training institutions (Siberia). You can also find proven instruments for the development of key competencies, e.g. innovative methods for planning workshops (Tunisia), information management (IMARK) business management (Ecuador) and local economic development (PACA).

To adequately address the complexity of rural areas, training and education programmes need to have flexible organisation and contents. Non-formal qualification programmes in particular need to offer opportunities for life-long learning in all aspects of rural livelihoods.

The structural changes in rural areas (decentralisation, deconcentration, market economy, privatisation and others) have profound effects on people's living and working conditions. They demand from the population more initiative and participation, as well as new skills in organisation, cooperation and communication. Strategies in qualification have to enable people to become technically competent as well as self-confident and active citizens.

The key qualifications needed are technical and economic skills, but also a readiness for innovation in agricultural production – in other words entrepreneurial skills. This is necessary for agriculture to develop beyond subsistence to market-oriented production but also for creating new job opportunities in non-agricultural sectors.

The team of the sector project "Knowledge Management in Rural Areas" would like to wish you Happy Christmas and a successful New Year!

Commissioned by:





Cases and tools presented:

- Communication
- Gender
- Participation
- Soft skills
- Community-based
- Change management
- Planning workshops
- Information management
- Business management

Besides these “hard skills”, qualification programmes also need to integrate “soft skills”. These include social and psychological factors such as personal emancipation (logical thinking, analytical approaches, as well as creation, understanding and distribution of information), social competencies, village-based self organisation, collective conflict management and democratic development.

Hard skills, or at least concrete production techniques, used to be transferred to the rural population by state-owned or private extension services. Economic approaches for market orientation and value chain concepts were added more recently to technical extension programmes. Most extension programmes are still supply-side oriented with many selective intervention areas. This is partly due to the limited demand formulation by their clientele. Innovative extension approaches that allow action-oriented learning are promising positive results in sustainable changes in attitudes on individual, organisational and political levels. Action learning in this context means development of technical knowledge as well as methodological and social competencies. The present governmental and private extension service providers have enormous gaps in organisational and entrepreneurial development, support on development of the personality, process and participatory approaches. These service providers need to be trained to successfully implement qualification strategies.

We would like to thank all our colleagues for their valuable contributions and would be happy to have inspired a wide readership in this “qualification” topic.

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CASE: CAMBODIA

Non-formal qualification in the light of poverty reduction

**Evaluation
National Training Fund**

Formal vocational training has lost much of its attractiveness over the years. Today, development cooperation, while building on non-formal qualification, aims at job-related skills development. “Who is actually reached?” is a question increasingly in the center of evaluation, considering the orientation towards the global development goal of poverty reduction. An evaluation of the National Training Fund in Cambodia carried out by the author on behalf of GTZ and the Asian Development Bank shows how important this issue can be. In Cambodia, 75% of the poor live in rural areas and they are the ones targeted by the fund for non-formal qualification. However, out of the 350 trained persons questioned, only a third ranked as poor, and of these very few had been able to improve their agricultural economic activities because of the qualification - in marked contrast to the better-off persons.

**Training: high
importance for poor
people**

Training is of high importance for poor people, but often it cannot improve much. Social and psychological factors keep poor people trapped in their limitations. If training is to lead out of poverty, one has to take into account the social interdependencies of poverty while conceptualising training approaches. This requires psycho-social understanding, process-oriented approach and differentiated training objectives. This then is leading to local, flexible and more individualised approaches – a concept, which centralised government planning finds difficult to cope with. The trend to move planning of non-formal qualification to province or to community levels is a step in the right direction. It should not be forgotten, however, that even community-level committees represent positions of power in society that do not automatically guarantee an adequate consideration for the interests of the poor.

Social interdependencies of poverty while conceptualising training approaches



It remains the task of development cooperation to join hands with forces in society that are authentically close to the poor. Such forces are characterised by their detailed knowledge of the situation of the poor, by realistic estimates of time requirements and by their commitment not to make compromises in addressing the cause of the poor.

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SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

LearnNet – an approach to skills development not just for rural areas

The 'Technical and Vocational Education and Training Section' within the 'Economic Development & Employment Division' (OE4115) in GTZ is currently preparing a paper on the Learning Network (LearnNet) Approach to the challenges of effective mass skills development in developing countries. The paper is an invitation to those involved in skills development to consider an exciting option that potentially offers a sustainable solution to addressing a key element in pro-poor development.

LearnNet emphasises the importance of local level empowerment as an integral part of skills development, while linking this directly to national policy formulation, implementation and mass delivery. LearnNet is a simple, practical approach with both immediate impact and long-term consequences.

Although the LearnNet Approach is not limited to rural application, it has special relevance there. Most of the early pilot measures and experiences have been in rural areas. The reality is that almost 75% of the world's poorest people depend on agriculture, forestry or fishery for their livelihoods. Production and productivity are notoriously low in these sectors and skills development is seen as vitally important to addressing this challenge.

Skills development in rural areas (SDRA) extends from farm to off-farm activities, both in the formal and informal sectors of the economy, and should be addressing the strengthening of value chains that link to urban and export markets. Despite some innovative attempts, no comprehensive, sustainable solution to providing effective SDRA has yet been found. Against this backdrop the paper outlines why the LearnNet Approach is needed, provides practical examples of what is currently happening in the field and a step-by-step description of the building blocks that make the LearnNet Approach workable. The LearnNet Approach is a relatively new initiative but it is already showing promising results. It needs to be tested in a range of situations so we can share our understanding of how it works in practice. The paper hopes to encourage "development entrepreneurs" to work with us in making this happen.

Edda Grunwald

LearnNet – THE LEARNING NETWORK APPROACH. Its application in the context of Pro-Poor Development: Towards a solution to the challenges of effective mass skills development",. Contact. Edda.Grunwald@gtz.de.

APPROACH: LEARNNET

Challenges of effective
mass skills
development

Local level
empowerment

Not limited to rural
application

Skills development
from farm to off-farm
activities



**CASE: DOMINICAN
REPUBLIC**

**Service system for local
development
'Demand side'**

Joint learning initiative

**Competence of field
staff**

**Community groups
learning cycles**

EPAM - Building systemic competence for local development

Fostering local development means working at different levels to improve the integration of activities and instruments involving personal and organisational development issues, is the main difference to other, rather conventional participatory approaches.

EPAM is a joint learning initiative of various service provider organisations in the Dominican Republic, within the watershed management project PROCARYN that is supported by GTZ, German Development Service (DED) and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW). Based on the insights mentioned, a systemic approach to competence development at individual and collective levels was put into practice. into a functioning system of services to support communities in their own development. Many programmes mainly concentrate on the macro and meso levels - ministries and provincial structures and services.

For building a functioning service system for local development, one of the major challenges is to strengthen the 'demand side' (local communities, organisations, associations, etc.) in their analytical and organisational capacity to manage their own development process. Conventional training in technologies, marketing, administration and participatory planning, etc., have had limited impacts at a larger scale. It rarely addresses the actors' capability to organise themselves inclusively and effectively. Self-organisational capacity, however, is the key to developing bargaining power and an economy of scale that enables communities to articulate their demands and negotiate with service providers and other actors.

While in conceptual terms this is obvious, the critical question is 'HOW' to develop these capabilities in the rural communities. Competence development needs to encompass the personal level (attitudes, beliefs, values) as well as the group/team and organisational level in a systemic way, rather than focussing on training of isolated aspects. In EPAM (Extension as Mutual Learning Process) working with groups, local organisations and the entire village, involving personal and organisational development issues, is the main difference to other, rather conventional participatory approaches.

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During the first phase, the focus was on developing the competence of field staff as change agents. Extensionists act at the interface between service provider organisations and the "client" system and so are the key to success or failure of external interventions. Often they know how to instruct farmers but not to explore and develop villagers' potentials jointly with them.

In EPAM, extensionists are being trained in a multi-organisational learning group through iterating workshops and coached field-phases. Each extensionist works in one pilot village and facilitates development processes that tackle that community's self-determined challenges arising, for instance, from agriculture and natural resource management. This kind of facilitation means taking the community groups through learning cycles to make them deeply understand issues, decide what to do and act.

Exchange visits between groups and communities, innovation competitions, farmer experimentation and working in challenge groups are core elements



Local organisational development

around which adaptive capacities are being developed step by step. Local organisations, interest groups and the organisation of the community itself are the social settings for collective action. Hence local organisational development is the backbone of this approach. This new role of the extensionists as facilitators requires profound changes in their attitudes, sense of identity, values and beliefs.

During the workshops they engage in cycles of reflection, decision and action. The whole learning process focuses strongly on personal development as a foundation for becoming a successful 'change agent' - 'if you want to change others, you first need to change yourself,' as an extension agent from South Africa, who went through a similar process, stated. The response to the personal development focus has been very encouraging.

The entire process of field personnel's basic competence development takes about 18 months with 6 workshops. First community challenges have been addressed successfully, new economic initiatives are on the way and the service providers have started to coordinate their activities at field level.

The pilot phase of the EPAM initiative concludes at the end of 2004 and will be scaled up then. First community challenges have been addressed successfully, new economic initiatives are on the way and the service providers have started to coordinate their activities at field level.

For comments and questions please contact:

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APPROACHES: EUROPE

Further training of the
German Agricultural
Education Foundation:

Be a better entrepreneur

BUS: Entrepreneurs training entrepreneurs

BUS is a training programme within the initiative for further training of the German Agricultural Education Foundation ("Bildungswerk der deutschen Landwirtschaft e.V. Andreas-Hermes-Akademie, AHA"). The programme was developed originally for farmers and entrepreneurs but is now also used successfully for other target groups. BUS is the German acronym for "better initiate it yourself", "think and act like an entrepreneur" and "create your own future with competence". Or simply, "be a better entrepreneur". The key elements of the training programme are strengthening of entrepreneurial competency and of individual success factors.

Starting point: The economic situation of farmers

Many farmers in Germany feel that they are gradually becoming mere suppliers and passive adaptors of quantities, with no entrepreneurial profile and an unclear future. This situation is very demanding for individual entrepreneurial decision-making as well as for the personal situation.

BUS offers the opportunity to take control by developing your own entrepreneurial success. Contents and methods of BUS are composed systematically. The programme consists of several modules. Each is complete in itself and offers a concrete result. The trainees decide how many BUS modules to train in. BUS-BASIC is part of the further training initiative of German agriculture and supported by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour, the European



Individual entrepreneurial development

Social Fund, and the agricultural pension fund. BUS BASIC offers over 4 x 2 days a high degree in motivation for the individual entrepreneurial development:

- BUS 1: being a successful entrepreneur
- BUS 2: develop enterprises dynamically
- BUS 3: plan/design the future
- BUS 4: deciding and acting

The trainees work with the BUS Strategy over 8 x 2 days on their economic strategy and their individual concept for life.

Economic strategy and their individual concept for life

- BUS 5: plan time and carry out projects
- BUS 6: live good and clear relationships
- BUS 7: develop my enterprise market-oriented
- BUS 8: target investment and accumulate assets
- BUS 9: develop my marketing strategy
- BUS 10: successful negotiation and sales
- BUS 11: develop your quality of life comprehensively
- BUS 12: my individual concept

investment

In BUS Synergy, the trainees improve their professional management capacities for steering an enterprise and developing their individual leadership qualities

Steering an enterprise Leadership

- BUS 13: people and mission
- BUS 14: develop enterprises strategically
- BUS 15: motivate and lead employees
- BUS 16: successful cooperation
- BUS 17: strategic cooperation
- BUS 18: future-oriented controlling
- BUS 19: top performance and mental training
- BUS 20: my comprehensive development concept

All BUS trainings are done on-site in the region. The trainings use a mixture of methods and are 100% related to real life situations. This relevance plus the exchange of experience between peers contributes to the learning effects and is a source of strength for the individual entrepreneurial thinking and acting. So far, about 70 trainers from all over Germany were trained. They have different job-related backgrounds and were selected according to a profile developed by AHA. Many trainers are young farmer graduates of the AHA Top training course. A trainer receives 420 euros per day. The cost-sharing fee for trainees is 120 euros. So far, more than 5,000 persons took part in BUS courses.

(From: Bewegte Menschen. BUS - Wege zum Erfolg; by Andreas-Hermes-Akademie, Bonn-Röttgen, September 2003.)

AUSTRIA

BFU – economic success and quality of life

A further-training initiative of the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture. More than 10% of the Austrian farmers went through this training programme. Farmers learn to develop a concept for their own farm by clarifying the basic direction, conceptualising the future development and planning the next steps. BFU has four interrelated modules:

Personal and farm-economic perspectives Entrepreneurial strategy

- BFU1: the person at the centre: “success” from personal and farm-economic perspectives.
- BFU 2: Analysis of the economic base of the farm.



BFU 3: Individual strengths and visions.
BFU 4: development of an entrepreneurial strategy.

www.bfu.at and www.landwirtschaftskammer.at

SWITZERLAND

entrepreneurial thinking and action

ARC – Actif Regional Creatif – bridges into the future

A further training programme of the Swiss Farmers Union for personality-oriented training and advice to farmers.

The Swiss Farmers Union has proclaimed the further development of the strategy on “the farmer as entrepreneur” in its 2004 annual report. This strategy is a comprehensive Swiss campaign for the support of agricultural and other small enterprises in rural areas in entrepreneurial thinking and action.

The objective is for participants to learn how to develop an entrepreneurial concept that supports their individual and farming potentials.

The programme takes 10 training days, distributed over various months. In this time the participants work intensively on themselves, their family, their farm, partner and region. The learning process consists of the realisation of individual values and perspectives for the future (vision) for the entrepreneur, his/her family and the farm. The economic analysis of the farm and the development of an entrepreneurial concept conclude the course.

Information: www.bauernverband.ch and www.lbl.ch

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PARTICIPATORY EXTENSION METHODS

Non-formal rural qualification through participatory agricultural extension

Agricultural extension today has advanced in methodology and scope: common denominators are the application of adult education concepts in training and advisory service, a broad range of technical and “soft” topics, demand-orientation and pluralistic delivery systems. This has brought modern extension into the sphere of non-formal skills training and education. Common extension approaches nowadays include individual farm management advice, comprehensive technical extension and training, as well as participatory group extension. More recent discussion has centred on the knowledge system perspective and sustainable livelihoods or extension systems that allow room for pluralistic extension approaches within a country.

Agricultural extension started with simple top-down approaches for the delivery of information on modern agricultural technology, assuming (mostly with little success) that a large number of farmers would adopt new technologies and improve farm productivity. Over time it has been increasingly recognised that human capital is at the heart of economic development. Therefore, extension services nowadays invest more into differentiated advice and training for different target or client groups.

Farm management advice, often given by private service providers, focuses on tailor-made economic, technical and even administrative advisory services for

www.gtz.de/agriservice

APPROACH: EXTENSION

Common extension approaches:

- individual farm
management advice
- technical extension
and training
- participatory group
extension



single farms (example: many private extension firms in Europe). Extension by membership organisations (e.g. associations, cooperatives) often provides comprehensive technical, advisory and training services for members, usually in connection with public research and education (examples: public advisory services in Denmark and Southern Tyrolia; see examples of BUS, BFU and ARC in this newsletter for management training). This approach is also frequent in commodity or value chains. In participatory extension approaches, as provided by many NGOs and public providers in Africa and Asia, extensionists facilitate client-driven trainings with farmers around integrated production (examples: PEA, PTD&E, farmer field schools) and management topics. All these approaches recognise individual clients with their existing knowledge and skills, their interest in life-long learning along their own priorities and their ability to organise training themselves. Experience has shown that participation has to be combined with the service concept and agricultural research to make it useful for development cooperation. Refer to extension approaches on www.gtz.de/agriservice

Mainstreamed participatory extension approaches, such as the Farmer Field School model of the FAO, or Participatory Group Extension as developed by GTZ and its partners, work with trained extensionists who facilitate season-long trainings with farmer groups around crop or livestock production. Historically, the approach developed from different starting points:

- From complex technical extension topics, such as integrated pest management (e.g. Egypt, Tanzania, Ghana). Here, the topic was too complex to be dealt with in top down advice and trainings. The technical content played the role of “door opener” for further topics.
- From reform processes within general extension (e.g. South Africa, Malawi, Dominican Republic). Better demand orientation was the main motive for change.

Interestingly, these developments were leading to methodologically and structurally similar approaches. The sequence of the learning cycle in participatory group extension is regardless of the technical topic and country as follows:

1. Needs assessment by farmers with PRA (participatory rapid appraisal) tools and
2. Group formation of farmers on interest basis for social mobilisation
3. Participatory action planning of training activities (prioritising needs, searching for solutions, mandating etc.)
4. Action learning, experimenting practically on site over at least one season (tools e.g. Agro Eco Systems Analysis) and sharing experiences
5. Capacity building trainings in production and add-on topics, such as HIV/AIDS mitigation, farm management, marketing, environmental protection, group formation and others
6. Participatory self evaluation

All steps are facilitated by extensionists who serve also as resource person. Capacity development for them focuses on:

- Technical competence (crop and livestock production)
- Methodological competence (facilitation skills, adult education methods)

Sequence in participatory group extension:

-needs assessment

-group formation

-action planning

-action learning

-capacity building

-self evaluation



Extension competence:
-technical
-methodological
-range of topics
-team building

- The inclusion of more than just production topics in the extension programme
- Team building exercises and administrative adjustments (organisational development).

The dynamics of moving toward participation and client orientation in extension was accompanied by changes in policies towards more pluralism in service delivery, adoption of flexible financing models, decentralised decision making and often market liberalisation. The dynamics led as well to inclusion of a broader range of training topics as a result of the articulation of qualified demand by farmer groups. Training and skills development e.g. in agricultural marketing, quality management, farm budgeting and finance, self organisation, group strengthening and leadership as well as HIV/AIDS mitigation were introduced. These topics are trained either by specialised public extensionists or by NGOs and other trainers.

In some countries, participatory group extension has developed de facto into non-formal rural skills development. Extension there has similarities with non-formal vocational training by Rural Training Networks (RTN, or Centres des Metiers Ruraux). RTN approaches skills development from the design stage with a broad range of training topics, including agricultural production, marketing, processing, management and even alphabetisation. Still, RTN facilitated in reality mainly agricultural skills development, as agriculture is the predominant form of livelihoods in rural areas. This is the field in which non-formal vocational training and extension meet even though they come from opposite directions. Participatory group extension should therefore continue expanding its topics according to qualified demands and benefit from rural skills development programmes and vice versa. For me, it is a good sign that two very different approaches come to the same conclusions in non-formal rural qualification by facilitating demand-oriented, basically open ended skills based training for self organised groups.

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Common approach in non-formal vocational training and in participatory extension

CASE: CENTRAL ASIA

Training courses on participatory methods for project management

Demand in participatory methods in Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan)

A number of training courses on participatory methods for project management have been conducted within the scope of GTZ CCD in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The participants came from NGOs, universities and private organisations/local groups, who implement or support the implementation of projects on natural resource management and related areas. Due to the lack of local or regional trainers/facilitators FAKT (Consult for Management, Training and Technologies) has been assigned to conduct the training courses.

In contrast to their high level of education and professional competence, most of the participants had little experience with participatory planning processes. This is due to the authoritarian leadership structure in these former Soviet Union countries. In the beginning of the workshops most of the participants were sceptical towards the methods, which were completely new to them, and they reacted with reservation.



The trainers were able to arouse their interest as they encouraged them to articulate their own ideas (in small groups and plenary sessions) and to apply methods to their own projects. Most of the participants eagerly adapted to the interactive seminar style and showed great interest in learning new participatory methods. When participants of former workshops were invited to share their experiences with other (new) participants they easily accepted it and explained concepts and techniques through their own examples.

The main factors for the successful initiation of these new methods/approaches were:

Main factors:

-local/regional staff

- The involvement of local/regional staff members and participants of former workshops in the preparation and facilitation of the workshop. The close co-operation of external trainers with local staff helped not only to overcome language problems in bilingual contexts (where Russian is still a lingua franca) and to better understand the specific working conditions, it also allowed to initiate them to the role of facilitator or co-trainer. The supportive role of a facilitator was new to them since they tend to execute training courses in a top-down manner.

-visualisation

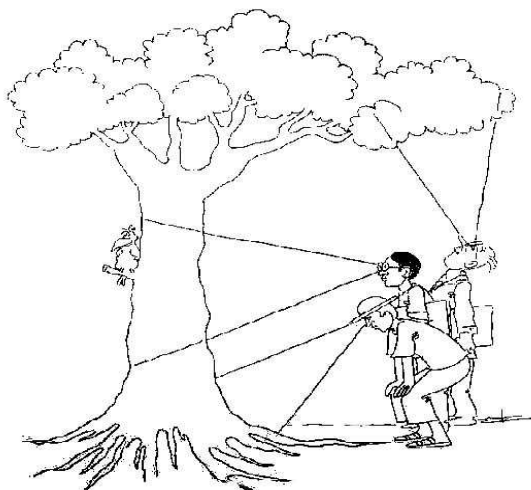
- The use of symbols and visualisation with images and cartoons. Through images concepts were easily explained and culturally adapted. This supported the learning process and reinforced the change of perspectives.

-flexibility

- The close relationship between the training courses and ongoing activities/projects, as well as experimental learning in the field. This allowed participants to test the methods and techniques and to flexibly adapt them to their own environments.

-trust and solidarity

- A climate of trust and solidarity and a sense of respect and responsibility during the training courses. This helped to encourage the admission of mistakes/weaknesses and supported mutual learning.



Dorsi Germann

Different project actors look at different aspects of the same thing.

The training courses had a mobilising and motivating effect on the participants and their organisations so that they began to use participatory techniques. However, mastering these techniques needs a long-lasting learning process, in which they must be constantly applied and experiences reflected. In Central Asia (GTZ CCD) this process is combined with regular regional conferences in which



the different project stakeholders (including representative of government structures) exchange their experiences.

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CASE: VIETNAM

Adaptation of communication and information systems in rural areas to new framework conditions: province Quang Tri, Central Vietnam

A contribution of good practices to the rural economy in Vietnam

Equitisation

The situation

“Equitisation” of state-owned farms was one of the pre-conditions for the government policy of economic opening and liberalisation, implemented from the early nineties on. It also involved the Tan Lam Pepper Company (TLPC) in the project area. Equitisation meant inter alia the transfer of land-use rights to the employees of TLPC and the removal of subsidies. The company lacked funds to modernise outdated processing machinery. Workers and leaders had only limited experience as autonomously deciding farmers. The company lacked knowledge and experience in managing an enterprise and in cost efficiency. When coffee prices were high in the early nineties, the company followed directives of the Peoples Committee and invested heavily in production, processing and marketing of Arabica coffee. When coffee prices were falling, it became clear that only quality coffee was still marketable.

Quality had to be produced in the field by farmers and also required a new coffee processing factory. The challenges that arose from that were:

Challenges:

Economic coffee production in a value chain, high quality requirements

- advising 350 farmers in a sustainable way to produce coffee successfully and economically within a value chain, under growing environmental pressure and continuously falling world market coffee prices?
- advising farmers to grow coffee in accordance with quality requirements of importers rather than national rules, while they still improve their income and secure the supply of staple food?

Extension at TPLC meant, as generally in Vietnam, top-down orders to farmers at mass meetings, on the basis of production quotas and inspections. In the beginning, TPLC still tried to order farmers. This approach was no longer compatible with the basic values of the newly autonomous farmers and the company had no experience with modern and efficient information systems. TPLC had difficulties selling its produce on the market under pressure of competitors. The official production quota was no longer reached. Closure of the company was imminent.

First steps into a new direction

Modern farmer-led extension, like the farmer field schools, were known in the area through an FAO project. Nevertheless, the methodology was not continued at the end of this project. Even though the state directives for extension were changed, these were not implemented by the agricultural offices on provincial level, since they did not really understand the principles and for fear of losing control over official production quotas. There was no confidence in the participatory methodology and in the experience of farmers.

Farmer-led extension: participatory methodology plus experience of farmers



Farmers in business

On the initiative of the GTZ partner project, all actors met. The project proposed to bring back farmer field schools and after long discussions, the official permission to work directly with farmers was given. An expert from the German Development Service (DED) worked with a few interested farmers (especially women were interested) who later organised themselves as informal extension groups.

They are now integrated into modern agricultural cooperatives (“farmers in business”) that are promoted by the project. The extension range for interested farmers includes small field trials, data collection by farmers (input/output data, production systems) and basic training courses on agricultural production. The early developments were almost without support of the government agricultural offices.

German coffee trader to advise farmers PPP

Simultaneously, we invited a German coffee trader to advise farmers and TPLC with his experience as a trader from Hamburg. He made clear the quality expectations of importing countries like Germany. This made a strong impression on all actors and was the starting point for a successful public-private-partnership-project 2 years later (which continues with financial support by the German coffee industry). It opened the world market for TPLC and the whole province.

The main result of five years of project support is that TPLC and the small farmers have direct access to the world market and achieve 20 – 30 % higher prices with better coffee quality in competition with other export companies. The costs for the development of the coffee industry were fully recovered and the industry was organised cost-consciously. However, due to the low world market prices for coffee, the net profit is still negligible.

Training of trainers

Further developments

The director of the agricultural district office decided in 2001 to introduce the TPLC extension concept in the whole district for coffee and asked GTZ to help. As first steps, the principles for “training of trainers” (unknown there until then), “farmers in business” and “farmers also have a lot of experience” needed to be adopted. In the next step, 12 extensionists were selected according to a set of criteria. They were trained for a year by experienced officers of TPLC and the PPP project, as well as by a lecturer of the faculty for agriculture of the University of Hanoi. The training was supported by a short-term consultant. The concept and training modules of the GTZ partner project “Social Forestry along the Black River” were adapted. Today 40% of the trainees are working as true field extensionists and not just as surveyors or inspectors of production quotas. Another 20 extensionists were trained between 2003 and 2004, this time even on the level of all of the province. Therefore it can be stated that the farmers-led extension system will be introduced in all the province from 2005 onwards.

Farmers also have a lot of experience

Lessons learnt:

Lessons learnt:

The following aspects were important for the sustainability of the project:

-start with actually felt needs

- We started with actually felt needs and in the case of TPLC under conditions of severe economic pressure. We did not start with organising farmer field schools, but with informal working groups in agricultural production and worked on current problems.
- The successful pilot project convinced decision makers in government offices that the new methodology and techniques were successful. They initiated the step-wise introduction of these innovations.

-step-wise introduction of innovations



-enough time

-international client

-upscaling with an investment programme

- There needs to be enough time to change old paradigms. This change was not initiated with a few highly qualified workshops and trainings on the level of decision makers, but during long discussions with all stakeholders. We talked about things that were usually not discussed so directly in Vietnam. This way, the project grew slowly.
- The PPP project as “international client” with the importer of the end product integrated the many different actors over a long time. The clear demands, economic arguments and interests with a “take it or leave it” mentality” were taken very seriously in Vietnam.
- The small, but successful coffee sector pilot project was one reason for the provincial decision to support not only coffee, but also black pepper, rubber and tropical pine resin on a broad scale. An investment programme was planned for these sub-sectors.

Today the technical aspects of production and processing are less important than an efficient and objectives-oriented regional planning.

The project published the following information:

1. Value chain “quality coffee”.
2. Development of farmers-led business cooperatives. A marketing model with a new future?
3. Integration of family farmers in world trade.
4. Transformation of former government managed services in agriculture, the pre-requisites for success.
5. Regional economic development – the example of Quang-Tri.

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DIFFERENT PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

Participation of the population in the development of education – experiences from the Republic of Yemen

The Yemeni government puts a great effort on education. Still, only 67% of all (schulpflichtig) children actually go to school and only 42% of the girls have primary education. The overall illiteracy rate is about 56%. For women particularly in rural areas it is above 70%. The government therefore emphasises better involvement and active participation of the population in the development of the society in general and in education in particular. Important policy guidelines are the “Vision 2025”, the law on decentralisation and the PRSP since 2001.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) worked between 03/2001 to 07/2002 on a national strategy for the development of primary education (BEDS). This process is to be seen in the context of the recommendations of the international Dakar Conference to ensure education for all until 2015. The highly participative process was supported technically by GTZ. The active participation of all persons and institutions involved in education and qualification was an innovative process for the ministry. The strategy document for primary education until 2015 was developed in 28 working groups, by 150 representatives of the MoE and its departments on province and district levels, NGOs, the civil society and local coun-

CASE: YEMEN

Better involvement and active participation of the population

Dakar Conference



Programme for the improvement of primary education

sellors from 10 of the 20 provinces. One of the 8 priorities is: "Community participation". The strategy was discussed and passed at the 1st National Primary Education Conference in October 2002 and accepted by the cabinet in June 2003. BEDS was a pre-condition for the acceptance of Yemen as member of the World Bank "Education for All – Fast Track Initiative" in March 2003. Since then, Yemen enjoys strongly support by the international donors community. The "Programme for the Improvement of Primary Education" was developed on the basis of BEDS, in which GTZ, KfW and DED each work on the improvement of the quality of primary education. The national sector programme works since then efficiently (zügig) in the direction of a sector wide approach, in which the bilateral development cooperation will participate.

Active participation of communities

The serious problems in primary education led to the conclusion that the high demand can not be satisfied by the state alone. The MOE started therefore to create the basic conditions for the active participation of communities in the development of education. This is intended to guarantee the active participation in the process of decision making in educational matters, in other words to base (verankern) the participation of the population structurally on different levels (from MOE to the school). GTZ contributed significantly to this process through its multi-level-approach, i.e. interventions on macro-, meso- and micro- levels, as well as through its experiences and resulting impact in the development of a concept for participation of the population in primary education.

Confidence and transparency in the cooperation

The participation of the population in education means above all the creation of confidence and transparency in the cooperation between representatives of the schools and the civil society. This is supposed to ensure that parents become partners and actors in decision making processes and take over responsibilities for a better education of their children, both qualitatively and quantitatively. The gender separation in Yemen requires special emphasis on the promotion of the needs, interests and expectations of women, mothers and girls. Participation has proven to mobilise and make use of local resources and know-how, with effects far beyond the educational sector. Stable and effective ways of communication between school, community and educational administration are decisive factors for finding own (eigenständige) solutions for conflicts and problems in the development of education.

Gender: special emphasis on the promotion of needs of women, mothers, girls

Consensus-finding processes

All these requirements call for a change in thinking and consensus finding processes that in reality often do not work smoothly. Too often, these are counteracted by bureaucratic structures and mechanisms. True participation of the community requires flexibility and turns out to be extremely time-intensive and multi-dimensional in concrete project work. Other important factors are the relevant framework conditions, such as the law on decentralisation in Yemen. The clear definition of competencies between state institutions and community administrations has important effects on the acceptance of lower levels to transfer and to take over responsibilities. This requires capacity development on all levels to foster and secure balanced participation of the population in all questions relevant to education.

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CASE: RUSSIA

Project:

- organisational - development
- determine the demand for training
- develop programmes matching the expected demand
- partnerships with similar institutions

Basis for further development:

- demand they need to want change
- they have to let go

Broader technical scope and the recognition of coherence

Making better use of the development potential of existing training institutions

State vocational training centres play a major role in adult education as part of the Interior Ministry -GTZ projects for the support of German minorities in Central Asia (especially Altai, Siberia, since 1994). They developed training offers in co-operation with government agencies (social welfare, labour administration), the emerging chambers of commerce and other organisations, requiring training services.

The competition between existing centres as well as with emerging private training suppliers in the region was demanding and productive. Germany supported organisational development of the vocational training centres (together with implementation of job-related technical trainings) with advice, training and coaching of decision makers in "training management" in the wider sense. Part of the organisational development was to determine the demand for training and to develop training programmes matching the expected demand, since the actual demand was often very different from the assumed demand. The support for training institutions was secured on a long-term basis through partnerships with similar institutions in northwestern Germany. Similar experiences were gained in e.g. Albania, Afghanistan, Papua New Guinea, Zambia and the Maghreb countries.

Some general remarks: Many existing training institutions, particularly in rural areas, have a real potential for development. Poor training equipment and the prohibitive administrative framework conditions often block the view at the chances: the ongoing training and educational programmes, the location, the technical and managerial personnel and their knowledge of the local demand can be a good basis for further development.

An example of a frequent obstacle to thinking further is: why shouldn't agricultural training institutes offer non-agricultural training courses if there is a demand in their area and if no other training institute is available?! Such courses could be e.g. on wood- or metalworking, processing of regional products as well as on nutrition and hygiene. Examples of elements of essential organisational (part-) autonomy are: commercial accounting that should be separate and income that remains with the institution for further investments.

The decision makers and managers of training institutions play a key role: they need to want change. The retarding role of state administrations is often underestimated – they have to let go. Without "wanting" and "letting go", i.e. the will to develop and the creation of an environment with the necessary tolerance, no progress is possible.

The vocational training system in the former Soviet Union and in the central and east European countries was basically of good quality and oriented to real life. But for present demands it is often too specialised and one-sided. It often lacks a broader technical scope and the recognition of coherence. These days e.g. a telephone operator needs to be retrained to an office clerk, or the milker to an animal production manager. Key qualifications and skills such as planning and controlling their own actions were traditionally hardly ever communicated nor demanded in the job environment (in sharp contrast to the private environment, by the way).



The task for external advisors (and for the management versus their employees) is to recognise and assess the potentials and willingness for change in institutions and people. The personnel can then be selected from a pool of dedicated applicants. Interested persons with potential need to be informed. Their possible (non-) application is already a first indicator of the self-assessment of change potential. The selected partners and persons are the initial capital for change and development.

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COMMUNICATION

APPROACH: COMMUNICATION

Why do the small farmers not adopt research findings?

Do we understand the consequences for communication?

Some comments on the efficiency of communication between research, extension and farmers

The insufficient efficiency of communication between research, extension and farmers is often blamed for the little progress made in farm productivity, especially of small farmers.

Why do the small farmers not adopt research findings? Why don't they follow the advice of the extension service? Don't they know that these people are better qualified and know better? Don't they want higher income through higher production? Don't they listen to the radio or in Farmers Field Schools? Maybe they can't access the Internet for the most advanced information on research results and the up-to-the-minute extension advice? Or are the good old felt board or the flip chart drawings too difficult for farmers, many of whom are illiterate, to understand?

That is probably where our analysis has to start. We know better and farmers should acknowledge this and do what they are told. We do a lot of participatory exercises with our target group to understand better what they need but even then farmers don't pick up our innovations and recommendations as they should.

So – why are they so inefficient? Or are we not communicating efficiently enough? Let's look at the some problem from another angle.

We know about the general problems of small farmers: lack of resources, lack of knowledge, vulnerability to all types of risks, little business-minded. All of these frequently observed factors are easy to understand. But are they really understood in their consequences for farmers' behaviour? Do we understand the consequences for communication? Communication means exchanging information – verbal or non-verbal – between parties.

It is considered efficient when the recipient acts on the information received in a way its sender intended. So it is not only hearing and seeing what the sender emits but also understanding what happens in the head of the recipient with the message received. What happens with messages in the head of the receiver depends of various factors. First and most important probably is the subjectively felt ranking of the receiver's own person related to the sender of the message. The second factor is the trust he has about the sender – not just as a person but also as the representative of an organisation or institution. And the third factor most



**Attitudinal change:
-partners and not
recipients**

probably will be the understanding of the intended content of the message, fourth ranking other information the receiver has already, related to the subject. We traditionally concentrate on this content and don't bother much with the other three factors. But a message from somebody who treats the receiver as lower-ranking but does not have the power to enforce compliance with the content of the message, is not taken seriously; more likely what he's trying to convey will be quickly forgotten. If the person or the institution is identified with frequent meaningless intervention from above, they are not considered trustworthy and the message will be taken into consideration less at the moment of making decisions.

Probably the key to more efficient communication lies in the attitude of researchers and extensionists in their relation to farmers. To see the farmers as partners in research and development and not as recipients of messages would be the first step. To take this partnership seriously and really discuss visions and objectives with illiterate farmers and their families is not easy. The language – in the sense of having the same understanding hearing the same words – is frequently different and a common language must be developed together. It is necessary to listen and to ask the farmers about their values and their taboos.

-gender aspects

To get an idea on the consequences of certain innovations, the gender aspects of the culture of these small farmers has to be fully understood. Division of labour, rights over assets and the power over the generated income have to be taken into consideration as well as restriction in mobility and in business matters or the communication to people not belonging to the family group or the community. The vulnerability to risk is a reality small farmers have to cope with. So the researchers and extensionists have to take into account this rational attitude and help to find solutions.

-power

-vulnerability

Farmers and rural people frequently have a good traditional understanding of ecological systems, but lack the analytical tools to understand the factors that alter the systems in recent times and the ability to come up spontaneously with alternatives that may slow down or reverse degradation and erosion of resources. However, they observe the problems, suffer the consequences and look for solutions. But these have to be solutions for the communities and for the majority of their members to become accepted and adopted. Therefore, standard participatory tools may not be enough to achieve acceptance and adoption.

**-groups enable learning
processes**

Individuals normally are too weak to change situations and there has to be group effort to garner the power to bring about the changes needed. Many factors determine how groups form – concentration on a common economic interest or based on the family group or a village community. The main point is that groups enable learning processes that are much stronger than individual learning. It is much easier as a group to make the step from putting together a shopping list of “we need” and “we want” to an action plan identifying the requirements for technologies and changes in the framework conditions. The group has a chance to reduce members' vulnerability and increase the resource base; it has stronger bargaining power and can better resist the pressure from strong political or commercial persons and groups. Group building is one of the fundamental steps to empowerment of poor farmers.

-empowerment

What has empowerment got to do with communication? A group can formulate its members' problems that need solution. A group with a good advise can actively involve itself in resolving problems and can be an active partner. As group-internal processes help to clarify concepts and questions, the demand



towards extension and research can be formulated more clearly. A group is able to try out new technologies one small farmer alone wouldn't dare to risk. A group can seriously act as a partner to research and extension and should be treated as such. That should lead to communication on the same level between partners and the questions and observations of the farmers' group should be taken really seriously as guidelines for how to tackle and solve problems. Mechanisms for listening also to the women and to the young have to be developed specifically for each cultural setting because sustainability of improvements depend largely on these subgroups.

If researchers and extensionists have developed an attitude towards the farmers, the women and the youth, seeing them as partners in development who carry the greatest risks in the innovation process, then equal-ranking face to face communication becomes possible and mutual trust can grow, based on respect for the conditions each of the partners has to cope with. Then communication as a two-way link can become effective, transmitting the research questions from the farmer to the researchers and the contributions of research and extension to resolve the farmers' problems. The means and tools of communication have to adapt to the specific conditions of the region and the cultural background of the farmers. They have to be designed to allow for an effective two-way communication and to stimulate group working.

So form doesn't have to follow only the content but also the cultural setting and the needs to foster group learning processes.

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CASE: NICARAGUA

Nicaragua: Social dialogue for training

With its wealth in natural resources, Nicaragua should not be a poor country, yet it is the second poorest in Latin America.

In Rivas, a Nicaraguan province bordering Costa Rica, the productive sector's low competitiveness and innovation capacity are a development problem. Other problems are the predominant profit rationale, based on low investment and low salaries, a 50% illiteracy rate, lack of public and private training centres and insufficient sectoral organisation and business development services suited for local needs.

When Rivas' people participated in building their provincial development plan, they listed as a priority the strengthening of human resource capacity to serve as agents of local growth. They wanted local training demand and supply to balance.

To facilitate balance between training required and training offered, GTZ's project PROCARU (Promotion for Rural Training) endorsed a social tripartite arrangement involving government, civil society and the private sector. Participation in this dialogue has empowered stakeholders who will start having a more active role in identifying and planning their sector's needs, diversifying target groups and in the search for offers.

Small and medium producers are starting to understand and practice association as a trade strategy in relation to CAFTA (Central American Free Trade

Strengthening of human resource capacity as agents of local growth

Social tripartite arrangement



Business training

Agreement), the USA and the Central America foreign trade treaty. Local universities, such as PROCARU-sponsored UPOLI (Universidad Politecnica), offer business training. Those involved recognise the importance of having a tripartite dialogue space to foster, through training, qualitative improvement in human resource capacity. When inaugurating the training promotion committee, the Nicaraguan president, Enrique Bolaños, highlighted its importance for local economic development. As well as being incorporated into the Rivas Development Council, the committee also sets a precedent in citizens' participation in Nicaragua in such important an issue as their own professional training.

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GENDER

CASE: CAMEROON

GIC Avenir Femme – women's hope in the far north of Cameroon

About 20 girls and young women aged 14 to 25 have turned up at a training centre in Cameroon, full of expectations and curiosity but timid, too, as to what to expect. On reopening day, a sewing instructress shows them the facilities at the Centre Avenir Femme.

This is the shed where we shall be having literacy lessons, that is the primary school section, here we also give lessons on dress-dyeing, this is the classroom of those who started the training last year, and this is your own classroom: dressmaking level I. We shall equally be having educative talks, lessons in French language, English language, cookery, women's empowerment, basic management and other useful subjects."

Women and girls training with a focus on income generation

In the past eight years well over 1,700 women and girls have been trained in the Centre Avenir Femme in Maroua, Northern Cameroon. Most received training with a focus on income generation. The others took part in vocational training in dressmaking (two years training and four months practical). Even though their end-of-course diploma is not officially recognised, it is proof of basic and professional training in dressmaking, especially the practical part of it.

An ex-students association has been founded by the former trainees to promote solidarity and further exchange of experiences among them. The constant follow-up by the instructresses even after the training course, retraining sessions and micro-project-funds put at their disposal by GIC Avenir Femme (GICAF) help them to operate their own small enterprises.

Common Initiative Group

GICAF is a Common Initiative Group (groupe d'interet commun – GIC)and was founded in 1995 by a group of women with different religious and ethnic backgrounds. Its objective is to improve the living conditions of women and deprived girls in the Far North (Extrême-Nord), a Sahelian province strongly characterised by a tradition that continues to treat the woman as a second class citizen. In 1996, GICAF created the Women's Centre which now has a staff of 10. In 2002 a shop was opened in the center of Maroua – the first economic project – and in March 2004 another new project, 'Bureau d'Ecoute, de Renseignement et d'Information', a counselling project on HIV-AIDS, was initiated. A new vision for the Centre aimed at diversifying vocational training is in process.



New economic projects are being conceived and studied with a view to ensuring some financial autonomy which will enable GICAF to recover part of its running budget in the long run. The members of this NGO are today considered as competent resource persons and feature, time and again, as consultants for other organisations.

Many trainees of the NGO, employees of the different projects and members of GICAF have positively experienced being able to learn and prove their competence, enabling them to face life with optimism.

Success factors:

-commitment of members without pay
-proximity to target group

-self-promotion

-networking

-phases of development

- DED support

Here are the factors, which have contributed considerably to the success of GICAF:

- The serious commitment of its members who work without pay and with dynamism, sparing no effort.
- Its proximity to its target group: the GICAF members know the different parts of the town of Maroua and the entire region. Former trainees of the centre are among the members and board members. Ongoing sensitisation in different quarters guarantees communication with the population at large (men and women).
- GICAF sees to it that its members and employees are promoted and trained when a need arises so that they can face any tasks squarely.
- The NGO does a lot of networking. The exchange and collaboration between GICAF and other development-focused partners is a constant preoccupation. It also has loyal national and international partners.
- The organisation evolved in 3 phases:
 1. The foundation period (first activities, opening of the Centre).
 2. The self-definition phase and the first attempt at organisation (organigramme, definition of roles, manual of procedures and management plan).
 3. Reorientation phase aimed at diversifying and opening up to the outside world (restructuring, further elaboration and anchorage of the organigramme and the role profiles in the daily life of the project, elaboration of new projects, networking and systematic fundraising).
- Since 1996 the German Development Service (DED) has placed at the disposal of this NGO three technical assistants and counsellors in organisational development. This partnership from the beginning played a non-negligible role from both technical and psychological points of view in the positive growth of GICAF.

All these factors have contributed and continue to contribute to making GICAF a veritable shining development example in Far North Cameroon.

Katharina Bösiger Boukar in collaboration with the members of GICAF and the staff of Centre Avenir Femme, translation by Fidelis Akat, contact: Katharinabb@gmx.de.

CASE: CAMEROON

Learning as a social process - lessons from a capacity development project in Cameroon

Capacity development project on gender and

Since 1999 the German Center for International Training and Development (InWEnt) has been engaged with its Cameroonian partners, INADES Formation



project on gender and participation:

Cameroon and SOWEDA, in a capacity development project on gender and participation in rural development. It involves around 60 participating organisations grouped in three regional clusters.

-changing training needs, flexible planning

Over the years, 12 two-phase “regional” training courses, three national reflection and planning workshops and about 100 multiplication or sensitisation events organised by participants’ networks have taken place. Almost half of the participants were men. The project will end in 2005. Here are some preliminary and subjective conclusions.

Training needs may change: I’m learning what I need to learn

In the beginning, there was no precise long-term planning. We started with basic courses on gender analysis and participatory methods. After applying these in their working contexts, participants and their organisations identified further training needs on related issues. Due to a flexible planning system these priorities could be accommodated.

-same group of people meet periodically

Action learning cycle for relevance and sustainability

The continuous sequence of events, which ensured that almost the same group of people met periodically to exchange experiences and to take a new learning step, was one of the success factors of the project. After the first part of a training course, participants knew they would meet again in a few months for a follow-up workshop and discuss application. Under these conditions, action planning was not just a paper exercise, but people felt committed to really channel their new knowledge into their organisations and to apply it in their working environments.

-personal relationships and commitment

The individual is key - if supported by a friendly network

It is encouraging to see how much creative, persistent people can change, in spite of sometimes rather hostile conditions. Some participants for instance jointly managed to bring together traditional or religious (male) power-holders on gender issues. Many of these afterwards took decisions that helped to improve the situation of women in their jurisdictions. In all three regions, networks of gender-aware organisations were strengthened or built up in the process. The personal relationships created in the training events helped a great deal to support participants in the transfer of learning and ensured a high level of commitment.

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TOOLS

TOOL: ECUADOR

New training tool: Administration of small rural enterprises

Rural enterprises

The Ecuadorian GTZ programme “Sustainable Resource Management” has developed a new tool for administration of small rural enterprises (NAMARES/ GTZ, component: Sustainable Forest Use, Buffer Zone Management and Forestry Policy Advice). Many communities and small-scale forest owners have a strong tendency to react spontaneously and to immediate needs only. Often, they are neither clear about actual costs and incomes, nor do they do financial planning or financial analysis. This leads to dependencies and ineffective



**Training modules
for “promotors”:**
-introduce
entrepreneurial thinking
-management
-accounting
-marketing
-services

**-“Business Manager of
Rural Enterprises”**

**TOOL: TRAINING &
STRATEGY
WORKSHOP**

**Sustainable
development:
-learn to think and act
coherently**

operations and contributes to over- or destructive use of resources. Which in turn prevents sustainable management practices and restricts improvement of the living standards of the poor.

This scenario is found in many regions of Latin America. But it is particularly relevant to indigenous people. Their economic behaviour hardly corresponds to national or international market requirements.

The tool is documented on a CD containing all eight training modules. They were prepared didactically for “promotors”, i.e. supporting organisations working to introduce entrepreneurial thinking and related matters in cooperation with rural communities. The modules are on skills development in calculation and assessment of incomes and expenditures in entrepreneurial activities.

The training takes about a year and comprises the following eight modules:

1. Organisation and business management
2. Basics of accounting
3. Basic mathematics
4. Expenditure accounting
5. Commercial accounting
6. Trade and marketing
7. Principles of administration
8. Service quality

Successful participants receive the title “Business Manager of Rural Enterprises” in Ecuador. The title is granted by the Institute for Entrepreneurial Training, authorised by the Ministry for School, Education and Culture.

The sub-component “Manejo Forestal Comunitario – Esmeraldas “ (MFC-E), of the GTZ NAMARES programme, tested all modules and offers training in their use on request. The tool is recognised by the government.

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Training and strategy workshop of the Pilot Project Rioplus

Sustainable development does not happen from formulas, statements or evocations. To achieve it we have to learn to think and act coherently. This learning process is supported by the pilot project “Environmental policy and promoting of strategy processes for sustainable development” (Rioplus) through the workshop, “Shaping the future – key competences for sustainable development”.

The workshop

Philosophy, didactics and modules of the workshop are taken from Dennis Meadows (“The Limits of Growth”). They were developed further by GTZ and adapted to the requirements of development cooperation. The question how we deal with complexity and its implications for sustainable development is at the core of the workshop. In this way the workshop is different from other courses: it emphasises the important process competencies that organisations, networks and individuals need to expand their ability to act in an increasingly complex



Process competencies:

- systems
- complex
- realistic
- communication, cooperation and teamwork

Methodology:

- experience-based methods
- computer-supported simulation and role-plays

TOOL: IMARK
e-learning

Digital documentation system

world:

- Systems thinking
- Decision making and acting in complex situations
- Develop realistic visions for the future and implement them through long-term strategies
- Communication, cooperation and teamwork.

Sustainable development – from guiding vision to living experience

The workshop is methodologically attractive and innovative. It offers the chance for high intensity learning from one's own experience. Action learning, i.e. experience-based methods, computer-supported simulation and role-plays make you feel complexity.

Key elements of the workshop are:

- Fishbanks Ltd. – a simulation about the sustainable development of renewable resources.
- STRATEGEM – a simulation requiring decisions to be made about a country's development over a 50-year time span.
- A series of simple but stimulating games and experiments that highlight the topic from different perspectives: systemic thinking, team building, communication, cooperation and conflict management.

Learning experiences

The exercises and simulations have a catalytic effect. They lead the trainees quickly to the critical spots: competition or cooperation, diverging interests, barriers to communication and the difficulties to assess the consequences of your own action over years or even decades. The relevance of effective co-operation becomes quickly and sometimes drastically obvious during the computer simulations.

Future activities

Rioplus is offering the workshop and the training of trainers in the Dominican Republic and in Tunisia by the end of the year. The next training workshop for GTZ personnel will be 31.01 – 02.02.2005, the training of trainers 21 - 24.02.2005.

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Experience with IMARK, an e-learning programme on information management

In our project, we collect, store and process a large variety of information: What we need is a digital documentation system to manage and present the material in a self-explanatory and convenient way, with easy access to the user and fast up-date modes for the administrator. IMARK, the e-learning programme on information management by FAO is promising to help in the complex management of information. Let me describe my personal experience in the learning process:

After having answered an electronic questionnaire on my individual learning needs, a personal learning path indicates the lessons I should go through. The lessons build on each other, but enable independent learning at the same time,



Easy learning

although it is recommended to follow the course step by step. In other words, to understand lesson 3, it may not be necessary to go first through lesson 1 and 2. In case I don't understand a procedure in a lesson, I can refer to the glossary on top of each page or go to the lessons' overview and click on the page with the explanation. The CD can thus be used as a kind of reference book. The layout of the pages really supports and produces easy learning. Studying becomes straightforward, thanks not only to the didactical but also to the graphic design of the programme. I don't have to torture myself with long texts, or confusing structures that are difficult to memorize and may not be directly relevant to my daily work. On the contrary, the material presents itself rather concrete and visually clear: At the beginning of each lesson the learning results are listed, then the lesson starts with a typical problem asking very clearly what kind of result(s) do I want to achieve. A solution is developed in the following pages, step by step. The step by step learning is supported by the design of the pages: a page contains not more than 5 or 6 straightforward sentences and includes graphics and/or photos that facilitate learning. Short and easy-to-understand descriptions of complex facts are presented in form of a dialogue with the learner and keep the attention up.

Concerning the contents and relevance: The lessons deal with indexing, transforming hardcopies into electronic format, creation and maintaining of metadata and metadata standards, relational and textual database, how to use a database to store and manage documents and creating dynamic websites. All steps in the process of developing an information system, like requirements for document retrieval (search requirements, navigation, user profile and preferences, access control rules), for using a database regarding different demands of document management, networking documents and databases etc. Besides the explanations, exercises and tests on what system could be adapted to my needs, I find in each lesson links for more in-depth information, to other learning programmes, websites and useful downloads. I have the choice to browse the programme to find out quickly where I can get information, or to follow the course slowly in the detailed way.

What I miss, however, is the possibility of an online community (not yet operational) to exchange experiences. I would be very interested to get into contact with someone who has succeeded in creating a document management system by following the IMARK CD.

Self learning:
-data base development
-software options
-orientation

Summary: *Although e-learning was completely new to me, I managed the programme on my own and what is more - learning became fun. The didactical concept for self learning is excellent to my experience. The content is organised in a way that allows me to find out easily what is relevant to me and what is not. With IMARK's help I should be able to develop a detailed structure for my data base and to define options that my software should include. Finally I have an orientation and an overview on possible solutions and I can go on searching for the software that fulfils my criteria.*

Please take a look www.fao.org/IMARK

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TOOL: TUNISIA

Strategic planning for sustainable development in Tunisia

The result looks impressive: each of the 24 governorates, the political sub-



**Strategic planning workshops:
-regional environmental strategies**

divisions in Tunisia, implemented a one-week workshop on regional environmental strategies and sustainability between March and end of April 2004. More than 1,000 key persons of the government, industry and civil society participated in the planning process. Based on the workshop outcomes, 24 regional environmental strategies were handed over to the environmental administration and passed to the respective governorates for adoption. By October 2004, 22 of the 24 governorates and “regional parliaments” had discussed the environmental strategies and adopted the recommendations to integrate them into the regional development planning.

This success story now reads as if it could be taken for granted. However, it is still worthwhile analysing the methodological challenges and innovative set-up of the planning process in the light of an active knowledge-management. What was the start and how did the environmental programme react to the challenges? The Tunisian Principal Secretary for the Environment was asking the Tunisian-German Environmental Programme to support the development of 24 regional environmental strategies in the respective governorates. His request to GTZ was very specific: he wanted to introduce ZOPP (goal oriented planning), a well known and recognised planning method in Tunisia. Why did the environmental programme propose another methodology and approach after consultation with the partners? And which questions did we ask?

Decentralised, multisectoral and participatory planning procedure

The main methodological challenge was that it was not only important to have 24 planning documents as outcome. The chance to contribute to the configuration of an important process created the demand for a decentralised, multi-sectoral and participatory planning procedure. In addition, the basic principles of German development cooperation and the GTZ task to contribute significantly to the sustainable development of partner countries needed to be satisfied. Against this background we needed both an instrument for systematic planning and for the sensitisation of all actors to comprehend the concept of sustainable development in planning. Two proven GTZ instruments were combined into a new workshop concept: selected elements of “key competencies in sustainable development”¹ and the computer-based planning instrument “think-tools®”.

**Elements:
-moderators trained, from cognitive learning, training in application to independent moderation**

Twelve Tunisian moderators were trained especially for the implementation of the workshops. The advanced training went step by step from cognitive learning, training in application to independent moderation in steps. Moderators were able to adopt the new methodological skills and knowledge in their own workshop moderations after four weeks. The regional Environmental Directors of the partner Ministry for Environment were involved in the practical part of the advanced training (test and pilot workshop). The advanced training was partly run by long-term experts of the environmental programme, a team of the GTZ Planning and Development Department and by the GTZ sector project Rioplus. The training costs were partly covered by the trained moderators themselves by moderating the first workshop without honorarium.

The approach allowed a synergistic combination of different perspectives from all main actors in the governorates. This was not without conflicts, but yielded mutual learning experiences, new ways of thinking and discussion plus the initiation of processes in a multi-sectoral cooperation in environmental planning. The cooperation partners of the Ministry for the Environment were the sector

¹ Es handelt sich hierbei um einen Schulungskurs, der in Zusammenarbeit mit Dennis Meadows in den 90er Jahren entwickelt wurde und heute noch vom Sektorvorhaben Rio plus angeboten wird



-action learning,
participatory planning
-team-building
-cooperation
-transparent procedure

-ownership of the
process

Combination of action
learning and simulation
games linked to actual
planning

ministries for agriculture, industry, tourism, land use planning, water resources, etc.). The transfer of the principle of sustainability by action learning, participatory planning with elements of team-building and cooperation together with the transparent procedure made a deep impression on the participants, since they became part of the strategic environmental planning.

Besides the strategic concept, there was another obstacle: the Ministry for Environment was not in a position to organise the decentralised workshops on their own; since its authority is limited. The Interior Ministry, responsible for other local authorities, needed to be involved as well. As a result, all important actors on national, regional and community levels could be involved in the planning process. Their roles were clarified and agreements for the distribution of tasks were made. The early involvement of the Interior Ministry and in that way of all 24 General Secretaries of the governorates was a wise and appropriate decision that contributed significantly to the success of the planning concept. The responsibility, identification and last not least the ownership of the process went from the central Ministry for the Environment to the governorates. This became clear by the active participation of the Governors and their General Secretaries in the preparation of the workshops in their regions and by their keen participation as well as through their opening and closing speeches.

What are the conclusions?

For the first time a decentralised, multi-sectoral and systemic discussion on environmental aspects, respectively environmental planning, was conducted in Tunisia. This best-practice example of an innovative approach for consultation attracted interest not only from within GTZ as a company, but also demand from other donors in Tunisia. The method on planning and transfer of the concept for sustainable development has proved to be successful. It became clear to the participants that sustainable development starts with oneself and demands cooperativeness, negotiation skills and willingness to learn and reform. Short-term interests have to be balanced with long-term objectives, sectoral thinking and a comprehensive understanding of problems. Regional interests have to be synchronised with national concerns. The concept therefore fulfils the demands of GTZ as an organisation that supports processes of sustainable development.

The method is flexible and can be transferred to other countries and working fields. The combination of both instruments is synergistic ("1 + 1 = 3"): action learning and simulation games are directly linked to problem and planning scenarios from the environments of the participants. The learning results of simulations are tested directly in reality. The strategies developed in form of ThinkTools® files are fully documented, from the situation analysis, via strategy development to the stakeholder analysis. They can be used and worked by participants and actors in a transparent way any time later– quite different to moderation cards pinned on a board. The Tunisian-German environmental programme contributes with this planning approach to the introduction of the overall concept of sustainable development into regional development planning. First steps towards a decentralised environmental policy in Tunisia have now been taken.

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TOOL: PACA

Quick, action-oriented analysis

PACA – Participatory Appraisal of Competitive Advantage

PACA is a concept, methodological framework and tool for the implementation of a quick, action-oriented analysis, the support of local or regional initiatives for economic and enterprise development. It includes cluster and value chain approaches and concentrates not only on economic potentials but also on competencies and guidelines for the actors. PACA is participatory, gives only a limited role to external advisers and searches for existing potentials or regional competitive advantages. It can be used for the initiation and implementation of local or regional economic development processes, for the evaluation of existing strategic initiatives and/or as a management tool. It combines the concepts of systemic competitiveness with competition advantage (Michael Porter), network steering and regional development.

MESOPARTNER, www.paca-online.de.

LITERATURE

LITERATURE

Finding New Things and Ways that Work

A Manual for Introducing Participatory Innovation Development (PID)

By LBL, International Department, Lindau, Switzerland, 2004.

To order by Internet: www.lbl.ch.

This manual contains a collection of training modules for initiating participatory innovation development (PID) activities.

The Extension Butterfly

A model to illustrate the functions of extension in the context of rural development.

BY LBL, International Department, Lindau, Switzerland, 2003.

To order by Internet: www.lbl.ch.

Linking local learners - Negotiating New Development Relationships between Village, District and Nation

Edited by Clive Lightfoot, Carine Alders and Frands Dolberg. CTA, 2001.

This book describes the development of a learning approach to guide the complex organisational changes associated with decentralisation and privatisation of agricultural extension. It also describes how information and communication tools (ICT's) could support learning.

Farmer Empowerment

Experiences, lessons learnt and ways forward

Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), commissioned by DANIDA. September 2004.

To order by internet: diis@dcism.dk.

Education for Rural Development: Towards New Policy Responses

A joint study conducted by FAO and UNESCO, 2003.

Available: FAO: ISDN 95-5-104983-1; UNESCO: ISDN: 92-803-1220-0.

This book makes a contribution to countering conventional wisdom and educational policies that have guided the provision of education in rural areas for several decades. It uses recent sources of information to reformulate education issues in the framework of the emerging rural development discourse. Various contributions describe current trends and innovations in improving the provision



and quality of basic education in rural areas. This book also discusses skills development challenges, and analyses emerging strategies developed by innovative higher education institutions to cope with the new educational and rural environment.

LINKS

Links

www.gtz.de/capacity-development/english

This website provides information on capacity development, which is a core task of GTZ. Originally, the focus was on developing the technical capacities of people. As time went on, the focus shifted onto helping to develop the capacities of organisations in partner countries.

www.formatika.net

Formatika has been designed by professionals (educationalists, sociologists, economists, agronomists) whose shared goal is to make non-formal education for all an essential issue in development. Here you can download also the Rural Training Network Manual edited by Formatika and GTZ.

http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=5854&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

The new website for UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre acts as an international hub for a global network of institutions active in the area of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). It concentrates on providing technical backstopping to strengthen and upgrade TVET. The Centre is located in Bonn, Germany.

http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=30233&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

This platform aims at giving more visibility to non-formal education processes through ICTs. It includes an exchange forum, documents, pilot projects and news on non-formal education with special regard to ICT's.

www.skilldevrural.net

This website provides an online debate hosted by the Swiss Development Cooperation "Employment and Income" Division. The aim of this debate is to launch a Community of Practice on Skills Development in Rural Areas (SDRA) among conventionalists and practitioners. To participate in the discussion you have to login with ID and password. Currently the topic "Gender in SDRA" is on the agenda.

http://www.fao.org/sd/erp/index_en.htm

The FAO and the UNESCO call for a collaborative action of member countries, United Nations agencies and civil society to join in the establishment of a new partnership on **Education for Rural People (ERP)**. The main topics are the overcoming of the urban-rural education gap, awareness creation on the importance of education for rural populations and the fostering of the implementation of basic education plans.

<http://www.id21.org/education/index.html>

id21 is a research reporting service, offered by DFID that aims to be part of the process of putting international development policy. At this website you find free access to research on education and development. The source materials include



peer-reviewed publications, conference and working papers and other 'grey' or pre-publication materials.

<http://www1.worldbank.org/disted/home.html>

The Global Distance Education Net (Global DistEdNet) is a knowledge guide to distance education designed to help clients of the World Bank and others interested in using distance education for human development. The Network consists of a core site located at the World Bank and regional sites in all parts of the world.

www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills

The ILO's "In Focus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability (IFP/SKILLS)" assists individuals to become employable through training, skills development and education. It serves to enhance the mobility in the labour market and offer the potential for increased career choices. Through advocacy, knowledge development and services to ILO constituents, IFP/SKILLS promotes especially training strategies that support the integration of groups that may be disadvantaged in the labour market.

www.sdsigtz.org.za

The Skills Development Strategy Initiative (SDSI) Support Programme aims at lifelong learning. It is a development programme of the South African-German Development Co-operation and executed by the GTZ and the Department of Labour. The focus in the formal economy is to assist the Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs) and education service providers in their functions and learnerships development. In the informal sector, emphasis is given to skills development for the unemployed, survivalist and entrepreneurs engaging in small and micro enterprises activities.

www.cefe.net

On this website you will find the principles and rationale of Competency based Economies Formation of Enterprises (CEFE). It is a set of training instruments using an action-oriented approach and experiential learning methods to enhance business management and personal competencies in the context of income generation. A virtual library with case studies, concept papers and other relevant information is also provided.

<http://www.inter-reseaux.org/>

Inter Réseaux is a platform for exchange of experiences in the rural development of developing countries, financed by the ministère français des Affaires étrangères (DGCID/ DCT/EPS). The latest debates on rural development as well as the bulletin *Grain de sel*, a newsletter and other documents are provided at this website.

www.vetnet.ch/

These are the vocational education and training pages of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The site is focusing on experiences and good practises of Swiss vocational education and training projects and aims to become a rich platform of fruitful exchanges between the different actors of this process.

<http://www.gtz.de/crystal/>

Crystal is a service providing need-oriented teaching materials and textbooks as well as specialist literature and consulting for formal und non-formal vocational training, work-oriented training and further education projects and other areas of

www.gtz.de/agriservice



training, work-oriented training and further education projects and other areas of development cooperation. The materials are in German, English, French and Spanish language. Some texts in Arabic and Chinese are also included. The catalogue is continually updated with new entries.

<http://www.crystal-elearning.net/>

The Crystal eLearning website supports and initiates the cooperation between widely distributed TVET experts and originates from "Crystal" (see link above).

<http://www.norrag.org/>

NORRAG (Network for Policy Review Research and Advice on Education and Training) is a network of persons and associate members based in universities, research centres, development agencies and NGOs committed to improving interactions amongst research, policy, and practice in the "North" as a means of supporting education and training in the "South". NORRAG is presently funded by SIDA, SDC and DFID and by its own members.

<http://www.norrag.org/wg/>

This is the website of the working group of bi- and multilateral donor agencies and international organisations (mainly SDC, ILO and NORRAG) involved in international assistance to vocational and technical skills development. It provides a forum to promote the exchange of new ideas and good practices, highlight key issues in the field of skills development and stimulate dialogue among its members. It places the emphasis on varied modalities of formal and non-formal type of training.

PAST EVENTS

Neuchatel Initiative

New topics:

- market oriented extension
- education and qualification

Past Events

Neuchatel Initiative Meeting, 2 – 30 November 2004, in Aarhus, Denmark.

The Neuchatel Initiative is an informal group of agricultural extension experts from major donor agencies. The members meet one a year to discuss the progress around a common topic, exchange experience and initiate new working fields. As joint product, the Initiative publishes common frameworks on various aspects of extension (participatory extension, monitoring and evaluation, financing, pro-poor) that harmonise the different views of donors and have a quasi-official character. The publications can be downloaded at <http://www.neuchatelinitiative.net/english/index.htm>

This year's topic was "the demanding villager", i.e. the organisation and characteristics of demand-driven, non-financial rural services. A number of case studies from Africa, Latin America, Asia and eastern Europe were presented and analysed. We presented cases from Ghana (participatory extension, with Anja Kuehn) and Cameroon (self-help groups for demand orientation). The synthesis in form of success factors and principles will be the basis of another common framework publication, expected to be published in late 2005. New topics of common interest were:

- extension in market-oriented agriculture and
- agricultural education and qualification.

Both topics are also focal points in our sector project, as this and the last newsletter illustrate.



**Research-Extension
Farmer Communication,
FAO/GTZ**

Effective Communication between Agricultural Research, Extension and Farmers Ora, Italy - October 18-22, 2004

The FAO and GTZ (Sector Projects Knowledge Systems and BEAF) organised a four-day technical consultation workshop on the theme "Communication in Research-Extension-Farmer Linkages" at the regional research station of Laimburg (Ora), Italy. The issues discussed related to communication for development, research, extension, farmer organisations and agricultural information management. Both organisations have gained considerable experience in these fields and are engaged in joint activities which put knowledge and information at the heart of any rural development initiative.

The workshop was conducted jointly with the Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry "Laimburg" and held at the Centre's facilities in Ora (Bolzano, Italy) from 18 to 22 October 2004. A total of 45 experts in communication and research-extension linkages representing the GTZ, FAO, the World Bank, CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) centres, CIRAD, universities and other international and national organisations participated in the presentations and discussion.

The workshop consisted of a number of presentations ("key notes") on the "state-of-the-art" and on particular cases, a series of "open space" sessions, two rounds of facilitated group work, focusing on "challenges and success factors" as well as on "strategies and recommendations" for the communication with different groups of farmers. In an excursion, participants familiarised themselves with the extension research context of South Tyrolean fruit production. In a final round ("market exercise") participants presented ideas for collaborative activities and formed first contacts for future cooperation.

The following generic success factors for effective communication were identified:

Success factors:

- policies
- participatory methods
- communication and attitude
- farmers organisations
- different media
- impact monitoring

1. Policies and markets conducive for communication (policy environment, pluralistic services, mandates, quality regulation, coherence, synchronised reform processes, lobbying, communication within "value chains").
2. Involvement of farmers through participatory methods (articulation of gender-specific demands, formulation of priorities, representativity of formulation of demands, quality, vision).
3. Communicative capacities and attitude of research/extension service (attitude of client orientation, pre-service trainings, adult education methods, autonomous and flexible structure, strengthening accountability to clients).
4. Farmers' organisations as partners in communication (representation of members, competent partner in communication and as partners in adaptive research and/or providers of extension).
5. Utilisation of different media options (the dimensions of content, context connectivity, mix and interface of different media).
6. Monitoring and impact evaluation of communication strategies (systematic monitoring and feedback, participatory impact assessments, methodology that allows plausibility statements concerning communication).



The workshop procedures will be available by the end of this year. The workshop decided to mandate a group to work out the results in more detail.

Reports are available through

Paul-Mathias.Braun@gtz.de or Riccardo.Delcastello@fao.org

FURTHER TRAINING

INFORMATION ON FURTHER TRAINING

Germany

The centre for distance learning and academic further-training at the **University of Kaiserslautern, Germany**, offers postgraduate courses in adult education, quality management in further-training and human resource development. The centre also offers courses in Total Quality Management and e-learning. “

Contact: www.zfuw.de.

Switzerland

LBL- Swiss Center for Agricultural Extension

The LBL in Lindau /Switzerland is an enterprise that offers tailor-made services for extension organisations, technical institutions and communities. The LBL has a department for International Development Cooperation with extensive experience and methodological know-how. LBL offers an extensive further training programme. Some of the present offers include operational concepts, computer applications, direct marketing, development of further training programmes, innovation management, coaching in extension and education, strategy development, team building, moderation, the future of local communities etc. For more information: www.lbl.ch

Germany

Andreas-Hermes-Akademie, Bildungswerk der deutschen Landwirtschaft e.V. (AHA)

The academy was established in 2001 as result of a merger between two rural educational bodies (Deutsche Landjugend Akademie, Verein Land-Bildung). The concept of the academy is to offer flexible and demand-oriented educational programmes for rural training. Topics include: management of farmers association, operational management, qualification for honorary offices, train the trainers, computer applications, development and personality, coaching as a training and extension method, trainee programmes for technical and managerial personnel in organic farming. The academy organises conferences on current topics, such as “soft skills decide on the success of the enterprise”. The most successful training offer is called BUS, meaning “entrepreneurs are training entrepreneurs”. BUS is a comprehensive training programme with 20 modules of 2 days each. It covers the topics of entrepreneurial competences, developing entrepreneurial success and quality of life, as well as professional management skills. The courses are partly subsidised. The cooperation partners of AHA include “aid Infoservices”, “CMA” (marketing organisation of German agriculture), the agricultural chambers of commerce, training wings of farmer unions, adult education centres and church organisations..

www.Andreas-Hermes-Akademie.de



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Going Global – Marketing and Trade of Agricultural Produce In October/November 2004

GTZ/SNRD and InWent are organising a five-days-training workshop in Pretoria, South Africa. Participants gain insight into the regulatory framework and private standards related to the marketing and trade of horticultural produce with special reference to international markets. They will have a basic knowledge on how to assess trade and competitiveness, effects of food safety requirements and how they can be pro-active with regard to products of export interest. For further information please contact Mrs. Kamie Govender admin@gtzpsdp.co.za and/or Mrs Doris Guenther doris.guenther@gtz.de

SRND: Management of Agricultural Services Delivery - A Learning Workshop

The 6-days-course for managers of agricultural services (government, programme) on district or regional level is planned for October or December 2004 in Pietersburg, South Africa and will be organised by SNRD Sub Saharan Africa in participation with the project BASED in South Africa and the sectorproject "Knowledge Systems in Rural Areas The learning workshop aims at both a better understanding of trends and related concepts and their implications, and the development of practical strategies and skills to enable participants to develop the know-how to begin to engage effectively with new approaches to the challenges faced at District or Regional level. A practical action plan will be developed by each participant and the potentials for peer-coaching and exchange will be explored. For more information please write an Email to: elmo@gtzpsdp.co.za or contact paul-mathias.braun@gtz.de

Create the Future – Key Competences for Sustainable Development

The GTZ department 44 and the Rioplus Team are organising the workshop "Zukunft gestalten – Schlüsselkompetenzen für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung" (create the future, key competencies for sustainable development") between 31.01. – 02.02.2005. The workshop follows the method of Dennis Meadows. The training of trainers course will be 21. – 24.02.2005. More information with: margret.gold@gtz.de and susanne.willner@gtz.de

New Dynamics for Rural Development in Africa

During the meeting of the members of the Sector Network for Rural Development (SNRD) Africa from February 7-11, 2005 in Dakar, Senegal, Africa a discussion forum on "New Dynamics for Rural Development in Africa" will be organised on February 8, 2005 with representatives of African institutions (English and French), of the German Ministry for Development and Cooperation (BMZ) and other donor organisations. For more information please contact Klaus.Pilgram@gtz.de, A. Engel Albert-Engel@gtz.de oder R. Kressirer Robert.Kressirer@gtz.de

Integrated Assessment of Water Resources and Global Change: A Nord-South Analysis

The Global Water System Project (GWSP) of the University of Bonn is organizing the conference from **23-25 February 2005** in Bonn, Germany. Please contact: eric.craswell@uni-bonn.de or take a look on the homepage: www.zef.de/watershed2005



EFARD 2005: International Conference on Agricultural Research for Development: European Responses to Changing Global Needs

The triannual meeting of the European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development EFARD 2005 will take place from **27-29 April 2005** at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), Zurich and will be organised by the Swiss Forum for International Agricultural Research (SFIAR). The Mission of EFARD is to strengthen the contribution of European Agricultural Research for Development to poverty alleviation, food security and sustainable development in developing countries by providing a platform for information exchange and development of joint activities to interested stakeholders in ARD, such as researchers, policy makers, NGO's, farmer organisations and others. For more information on the conference, for registration and for submission of contributions, please see also the conference website: www.EFARD2005.org

3rd World Congress on Conservation Agriculture

The congress will be organized by the Africa Conservation Tillage Network (ACT) in collaboration with the Kenya Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya Conservation Tillage Initiative (KCTI), and African Unions' New Partnerships for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and is scheduled to take place on **October 3 to 7, 2005** in Nairobi, Kenya. For more information, visit their website at www.fao.org/act-network, or email Martin Bwalya at actsecre@africaonline.co.zw.

First Diversitas: OSC1. Integrating Biodiversity Science for Human Well-Being

The open science conference is planned for **November 9-12, 2005** at the Hotel Mision de los Angeles in Oaxaca, Mexico. It aims to bring together experts from biological, ecological and social disciplines and offers a unique opportunity to explore recent advances and probe pressing issues across the breadth of biodiversity science. Abstract submission now online, online registration available in January 2005: <http://www.diversitas-osc1.org/>

IMPRESSUM:

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