

Launching a New Flagship on Education for Rural People: An Initiative Agricultural and Extension Educators Can Get Behind

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Abstract

Rural people have often been referred to as a “neglected majority” in development processes. Over 70 percent of the world’s poor live in rural areas where illiteracy is 2 – 3 times higher than in urban areas and where rural people have relatively poorer access to schools and other educational services. Sustainable development cannot be achieved unless rural people are part of the solution and education is key to preparing them for active participation in this process. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the U.N. Educational, Social and Cultural Organization recently introduced an important new rural education initiative entitled Education for Rural People. Education for Rural People goes beyond education about agriculture. It is based on the assumption that educational programs in rural areas need to include a variety of life skills appropriate for success in rural areas. This commentary introduces this new initiative to the journal’s readership.

Keywords: Rural Education, Life Skills, Poor, Rural Development, Millennium Development Goals

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