

February 2003



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



Education pour tous



Launching a new flagship on education for rural people

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Background

The Sustainable Development Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are inviting member countries, United Nations agencies and civil society to join in the establishment of a new partnership on *Education for Rural People*.

The initiative seeks to address rural-urban disparities, which are a serious concern to governments and the international community as a whole. About 70 per cent of the poor live in rural areas. Despite the fact that education is a basic right in itself and an essential prerequisite for reducing poverty, improving the living conditions of rural people and building a food-secure world, children's access to education in rural areas is still much lower than in urban areas, adult illiteracy is much higher and the quality of education is poorer.

In this regard, FAO and UNESCO are joining efforts in the establishment of a new flagship within the *Education for All* (EFA) initiative with a focus on *Education for rural people*. The flagship is a call for collaborative action to increase the coordination of efforts targeting the educational needs of rural people. The partnership is open to members committed to working separately and together to promote and facilitate quality basic *Education for rural people*.

Objectives

The flagship's objectives are to:

- Build awareness on the importance of *Education for rural people* as a crucial step to achieve the Millennium goals of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and achieving universal primary education (www.un.org/millenniumgoals/)
- Overcome the urban/rural education gap
- Increase access to basic *Education for rural people*
- Improve the quality of basic education in rural areas
- Foster the national capacity to plan and implement basic education plans to address the learning needs of rural people

For more information, the concept paper *Targeting the rural poor: the role of education and training* (March 2002, http://www.fao.org/sd/2002/kn0301a_en.htm) can be consulted.

Activities

At the national level

- Technical support to countries willing to address the basic educational needs of the rural people by formulating specific plans of action as part of the national plans on *Education for all*.

At the international level

- Advocate and mobilize partnerships for *Education for rural people* by concentrating on strategic global, regional and international events, and encouraging the same within countries.
- Identify the capacity for different substantive components on *Education for rural people* within partner institutions
- Support the exchange of good practices and knowledge on *Education for rural people*.

Meetings

The new FAO/UNESCO flagship was officially launched at a side event during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, 3 September 2002.

The following are some examples of other international events presenting the flagship:

- Regional workshop on *Education for Rural Development* organized in partnership with FAO, UNESCO and UNESCO-International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), Bangkok, Thailand, 5 -7 November 2002)
- Aid Agencies workshop on *Education for Rural people*, organized by FAO with the technical collaboration of UNESCO and UNESCO-IIEP, Rome, Italy, 12-13 December 2002)
- Youth employment summit 2002, Alexandria, Egypt, 7 - 11 September 2002)
- International symposium on rural education organized by UNESCO Office in Beijing, China, together with the International Research and Training Center for Rural Education (INRULED, China) the Chinese Ministry of Education and the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, 20 - 23 January 2003).

Members of the flagship programme

International Organizations and Governments

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10. DGCS - Italian Directorate General for Cooperation
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Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), foundations and others

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42. ESE - Escola Superior de Educação, Portugal (contact Júlio Gonçalves dos Santos)
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43. PRWSWO - Secretary General. Pakistan Rural Workers Social Welfare Organization (contact SABIR FARHAT)
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- CCID - Community Colleges for International Development, Inc, USA (contact: Mr. John Halder)
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Focal Points

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