



DEVELOPING THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND TALENT OF YOUTH TO FURTHER FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

The following case study was received as a result of a call issued by the Committee on World Food Security for case studies highlighting examples of initiatives aimed at 'Developing the knowledge, skills and talent of youth to further food security and nutrition'. The cases received provide the background for a discussion of lessons learned and potential policy implications at a special event on October 15th, 2015 during CFS 42. Find out more at www.fao.org/cfs/youth.

KERALA HORTICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Background

Created in 1992, the Kerala Horticultural Development Programme aimed to improve the lives of Kerala's fruit and vegetable farmers by increasing and stabilising their incomes, reducing production costs, and improving their marketing systems.

Challenges

The complex interconnections between the many causes of poverty and food insecurity require integrated solutions. The positive impacts of knowledge transfer can be limited if farmers do not have access to markets.

Approach Used

The Programme worked with fruit and vegetable farmers to promote self-help groups. It trained three farmers from each group to become master farmers who were competent in crop production, credit, and marketing. It promoted the concept of credit to farmers who leased land, promoted group marketing, and established modern seed processing and fruit processing plants.

To generate and access locally relevant technical knowledge, the Programme began research with a local agricultural university, which strengthened the skills of farmers in participatory technology development.

Group marketing was promoted by establishing markets where farmers could bulk their produce for sale to traders, and improve their bargaining position by obtaining information on market prices inside and outside Kerala.

Outcome and Impact Achieved

In 2012 there were about 6,800 self-help groups (of which 405 are run by women), reaching more than 132,000 farmers. An external evaluation and impact study of the project reported a significant increase in the area under fruit and vegetables in 86% of the self-help groups, and increased incomes in 75% of the groups. The same study also reported that the number of farmers receiving credit



increased from 21% in the pre-programme period to 41% by 1999, with an increase in the efficiency of loan disbursement and an increase in the size of the loans.

Lessons Learned/Opportunities for Scaling-Up

Farmers' organisations can provide knowledge and learning for farmers, while also providing add-on services for marketing. These multiply the positive impacts of education and help ensure farmers have an outlet for their improved production.

Policy Implications

Infrastructure to allow farmers to access markets and financial information is essential in addressing rural poverty.