

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations





World Food Programme

Country Experiences in South-South and Triangular Cooperation Enabled by the United Nations Rome-based Agencies

2019 RBA Celebration of the UN Day for South-South Cooperation



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The successful Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (or BAPA+40), which took place in March this year in Buenos Aires, confirmed the great contribution that South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) is making to strengthen country capacities for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One of the key messages highlighted during this Conference by the UN Secretary-General was the need to strive towards more inclusive and equitable development.

Additionally, in line with the theme of this year's High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, held in July in New York, there is a need to employ all means possible, including SSTC, to ensure that the 820+million food insecure and malnourished people, are not left behind in benefitting from development and humanitarian initiatives.

The Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), namely the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), are addressing this need through their work at different levels, building on their respective mandates and strengths. Examples include efforts to jointly promote SSTC in supporting family farming, creating opportunities for the rural youth, and empowering rural women for better access to markets.

This brochure has been jointly developed to showcase concrete examples of how the RBAs promote South-South initiatives at the country level. Focusing on the theme of the joint celebration of the 2019 UN Day for South-South Cooperation, leaving no one behind in achieving SDG 2, the cases highlight opportunities to enhance collaboration in the fight against hunger and malnutrition to realize zero hunger by 2030.



Mesoamerica Hunger Free Programme: institutional frameworks for eradicating hunger and promoting development opportunities in vulnerable rural areas

Partners:







Quick facts

Eradicating hunger in Mesoamerica is an achievable goal that requires strong political commitment, sound institutional frameworks and effective public policies based on validated development solutions. The SSTC initiative, led by FAO and the Mexican Agency of International Cooperation for Development (AMEXCID), targets Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic.

Support is provided in designing, implementing and scaling up policies and legal frameworks on zero hunger, poverty reduction and rural development, especially in areas vulnerable to weather events and with high rate of migration.

Challenge

Food insecurity and poverty in Mesoamerica are mainly rural phenomena and socioeconomic indicators of rural territories are lagging behind national averages. This is due to the lack of economic growth and productive investments, deterioration of natural resources and natural disasters, such as droughts and floods. Consequently, these territories are also often points of origin of migrants.

Rural areas face institutional deficiencies and a limited coverage of public policies and programmes designed to meet their needs. Smallholder farmers, often indigenous people and Afro-descendants, have no access to markets, technology, infrastructure, financing and technical assistance.

Approach

The Programme focuses on:

- Ensuring political commitment in the fight against hunger and rural poverty as well as raising public awareness.
- Strengthening institutional capacities to formulate, implement and monitor effective and adequately funded public policies and legal frameworks, in specific vulnerable rural areas.
- Designing and validating technological solutions and methodologies to be scaled up and integrated in public policies and legal frameworks.
- Facilitating dialogue, technical assistance, study tours and peer learning among Mesoamerican officials and farmers, through short-term projects focused on addressing technical gaps.

The Programme also pays attention to the establishment of alliances and collaborative frameworks in order to find synergies. Strategic partners include: Latin American and Caribbean Parliament, Parliamentary Front against Hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean, Central American Integration System, Hunger Free Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative, and Mesoamerica Integration and Development Project.

Opportunities and results

Mexico and the beneficiary countries share cultural roots and common challenges, providing an opportunity to exchange knowledge, not only at institutional level but also among family farmers (e.g. Mexican lobster harvesters shared their fishing techniques with Nicaragua, leading to a decrease in injuries and deaths).

Collaboration with decision-makers has demonstrated to be the key to strengthening political commitment and to elaborating more effective policies and regulatory frameworks focused on the needs of vulnerable populations (e.g. School Feeding Law in Guatemala, with public purchases from family farmers).

Additionally, increased awareness has encouraged higher investments on food security and family farming at local level (as in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala).

Reaching the most vulnerable to leave no one behind

Clean water is indispensable for the health and well-being of rural populations as well as for efficient agricultural production. The Central American Dry Corridor is suffering from prolonged droughts, which jeopardize local farmers' food security. However, when rain arrives, water is often wasted due to inefficient water management.

The Rainwater Harvesting System allows remote communities to collect wasted water to be used for human consumption and agricultural production, benefitting children and adults' health. Moreover, women, who are usually responsible for collecting water from wells and rivers, have more time to engage in income-generating activities.

Thanks to the Mesoamerica Hunger Free Programme, 20 Rainwater Harvesting Systems were constructed in schools and community centres in six beneficiary countries. The experience has been very successful and is currently being replicated through SSTC with different actors and communities.



+Cotton Project: working for the sustainable development of Caribbean and Latin American cotton

Partners:



Quick facts

SSTC represents an opportunity for the exchange of knowledge and experiences, generating innovation in terms of technology and management of the cotton sector in the counties involved in the +Cotton Project. Through the +Cotton Project, a regional network of more than 70 public and private sector actors is mobilized in the partner countries, joining efforts to turn the cotton value chain competitive.

More than USD 14 million invested to expand Government's technical and management capacities towards a sustainable cotton sector in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, Paraguay and Peru where 80 percent of cotton production is in the hands of family farming or small-scale agriculture.

Challenge

Foreseen challenges in establishing a diverse cotton sector in a regional network include:

 Positioning cotton as a strategic crop in partner Government's political agenda, contributing to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, fighting against hunger, enhancing food security, and overcoming poverty in rural territories.

- Promoting the adoption of innovations by cotton farming families, research and extension institutions for the implementation of sustainable and diversified cotton production systems.
- Articulating the cotton value chain from production to marketing, in a competitive and inclusive manner, strengthening producer organizations, incorporating industry, financing entities, research, and technical assistance institutions.

Demonstrating that cotton contributes to the sustainable development of rural territories, as an income generating option for farmers and their families.

Approach

The cooperation in the +Cotton Project takes place through the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC/MRE) and its Brazilian cooperating institutions (Embrapa, Abrapa, Empaer-PB, Asbraer, Solidarity Economy Organizations and universities) in conjunction with FAO and the Governments of seven partner countries. The +Cotton cooperation aims at consolidating production systems in cotton territories, adapting them to different types of producers as well as agroclimatic and technological contexts. The project is based on four conceptual axes: Sustainable technologies; Strategic Alliances; Social innovation; Inclusive Markets, while crosscutting issues include Gender, Rural youth and Indigenous peoples, and Climate change.

Opportunities and results

- Income generation: Cotton as an integrated crop in a diversified production system plays an important role in income generation, with potential by-products and new uses in the value chain. There are 36 demonstration and validation best practices in cotton production.
- Capacity development: Provide more than 70 public institutions in partner countries with new capacities, knowledge and levels of public and public/private coordination to support the development and organization of the cotton value chain.
- Agricultural techniques: Under the perspective of good agricultural practices, efficient use of inputs and mechanization as well as development of the first prototype of a one-line cotton-harvesting machine for small areas, in collaboration with EMBRAPA.
- Strengthen biodiversity: Rescue the ancestral identity of countries, their indigenous, rural and artisan communities, through the recovery of cotton varieties, training in production and processing, value addition, management and sale.
- Access to market: Connecting production to the market by expanding certification alternatives for fibre and its processed products, taking advantage of the diversity of cotton in the region.

Reaching the most vulnerable to leave no one behind

In the last 20 years, the project partner countries have faced a decrease in the cotton production, affecting the potential of thousands of farming families to generate income. In this sense, recovering cotton production systems on sustainable bases has a social connotation that adds to the economic and environmental perspective. As a crop resistant to climatic adversities, it can be planted in dry and arid zones, reducing the vulnerability of families to climate change, turning it into an alternative for communities that inhabit indigenous territories, communities displaced by conflicts, and where there is a high level of rural poverty.

Through the SSTC mechanism, the +Cotton Project promotes sustainable and inclusive production systems with greater participation of rural women, with decentralized governance and adaptive management of local food systems, contributing to poverty reduction, social development and environmental sustainability as well as creating opportunities for new generations.



Boosting food security through multi-national innovation 'corridors'

Partners:



Quick Facts

Through collaborative 'exchange corridors,' countries with similar environmental and social profiles could exchange innovative resource-management solutions, build food security, and improve opportunities for women and youth. The project created a boost in resilience and self-organization among women and young people and provided concrete scalable technical innovations to be adopted across the target countries.

National-level decision makers and direct beneficiaries have improved awareness of the advantages and practical means through which SSTC initiatives can address food and water shortages and rural poverty.

Challenge

Sustainable natural resource management is vitally important in dry areas where water is both scarce and precious. This is particularly true for Arab countries, which have the lowest per capita water availability in the world. Other countries in the Near East, North Africa and Europe (NEN) region are facing similar issues. At the same time, world hunger is on the rise again after a prolonged decline, driven by the greater number of conflicts that are often exacerbated by climate-related shocks.

About 70 percent of the fresh water consumed in the world goes to agriculture. As growing populations require increased food production; and tackling climate change necessitates dedicating more resources to water management, the need for an integrated approach to secure water and boost agricultural productivity is becoming increasingly evident.

Approach

Through this project, implemented by IFAD in partnership with the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), agricultural solutions and technologies are transferred along eight cross-regional South-South 'corridors', led by locally-based institutions. The solutions promote, among other objectives, improved water efficiency, natural resource management, and household food security.

The main objective of the exchanges is to effectively increase food and water security and alleviate rural poverty among youth and women in selected communities in Algeria, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

The strategy of using corridors (technical exchanges between a number of countries) is based on the idea that solutions successfully implemented in one country are likely to succeed in other countries with similar agricultural and demographic characteristics. More specifically, each target country designated a focal point for identification of best practices to share through experts' exchanges, bilateral projects and policy-level dialogue and institutionalization of cooperation between countries.

Opportunities and results

The local groups involved in the project now enjoy increased economic independence and self-sufficiency. The participating communities were identified in consultation with national governments' counterparts and civil society groups. A key output of the project is the mobile app 'Harvest-It' which has enabled more than 2,000 farmers across Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Sudan and Turkey to access personalized recommendations about soil management, irrigation, forage and milk production.

The promising initial results of the project were disseminated across various UNOSSC networks. More and more countries expressed interest in joining the partnership and sharing their best practices through the 'corridors'. In February 2016, three more countries joined the project thanks to the financial support from the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB). Further avenues for cooperation are being explored to broaden the partnership to smart agricultural technologies through additional financing mobilised by the World Green Economy Organisation. This example of knowledge sharing through innovative "corridors" is a model that could be applied in future joint RBAs project implementation.

Reaching the most vulnerable to leave no one behind

The 'corridors' have contributed to the successful transfer of home-grown agricultural development solutions across the Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia. These demand-driven exchanges were designed to support governments, institutions and experts to provide poor young people and women in remote areas with access to financial services, to innovative sustainable practices like conservation agriculture, as well as to food policy-related recommendations.

The thematic 'corridors' are proven effective tools for cooperation and can be scaled up into other national and regional projects and programmes that foster SSTC. Through simplified though widespread access to relevant knowledge, expertise, solutions, and methodologies, this model can be easily adopted in other regions to benefit rural women and youth and their communities.



Strengthening Knowledge-sharing on Innovative Solutions using the Learning Routes Methodology in Asia and the Pacific

Partners:



Quick Facts

The Learning Routes methodology contributes intensively and practically to furthering SSTC exchanges. Most importantly, they help stimulate the scaling up of successful activities for replication in similar geographic contexts. The programme organized 16 learning routes with different thematics for 249 participants. The programme trained and mobilized 380 local champions. LRs are a powerful IFAD tool for the establishment of public/private partnerships (PPPs) and policy dialogue.

Challenge

A learning route (LR) is a continuous process of in-the-field training that seeks to broaden and diversify the markets of rural technical services, placing special value on the best experiences and knowledge institutions, associations, communities and rural families. Within the Asia and the Pacific Region (APR), the IFAD-funded ROUTASIA programme implemented by PROCASUR Asia-Pacific, aimed at enhancing learning and the sharing of knowledge as well as the scaling up of practical solutions that have been field-tested and validated. Through the LR methodology, the programme sought to mainstream the adoption of best practices and the scaling-up of innovations for poverty reduction.

Approach

The LRs methodology was organized in two main stages. First, three to five main thematic areas of interest were identified through the preparation of a thematic-maps online survey, interviews with project staff and field visits. During this initial phase, all concerned stakeholders were consulted to identify their learning priorities. A match was sought with relevant best practice in different regions, and a total of 22 experiences were identified, systematized and disseminated. After that, a comprehensive inventory of successful interventions was prepared, including the identification of local champions. These local champions were then trained and enabled to facilitate and lead development activities in their communities.

The second stage of the programme was focused on the design and implementation of the 16 LRs in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kenya, Nepal, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam on various themes, including: natural resource management and climate change, agricultural cooperatives, social inclusion, rural finance, and public-privateproducers partnerships (4Ps).

During the LRs, participants prepared an innovation plan (IP) to be validated and implemented once they returned to their communities, in order to put into practice what they had learned. Consequently, 86 more IPs were designed around the thematic areas of the LRs, 14 were cofinanced, and 65 percent mobilized additional resources. Up to 80 percent of these IPs are now fully or almost fully implemented, benefiting over 47,000 people.

Opportunities and results

Following the identification and documentation of good practices, the programme trained and mobilized 380 local champions (50 percent women, 54 percent indigenous peoples and 55 percent youth) through the systematization of successful experiences and good practices. All knowledge champions were "hosts" of learning experiences during several of the LRs; providing them with first-hand, mutually beneficial opportunities for knowledge sharing and learning.

The implementation of LRs ensures that knowledge which has been generated and documented during the systematization exercise, is transmitted by these qualified knowledge champions. The peer-to-peer transfer of knowledge has been recognized as facilitating the incorporation of new concept and methods in the rural context. In this sense, the mixed composition of the working team (programme staff and farmers) was considered a priority for all systematization processes undertaken. In addition, 50 innovative ideas were applied, documented and transformed into knowledge products. The LR methodology has also been implemented in the RBAs "Joint Programme on Accelerating progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women" in seven countries covering all five regions of work of the three Agencies.

Reaching the most vulnerable to leave no one behind

It is obvious that the LRs methodology contributed intensively and practically to further SSTC exchanges. They helped stimulate the scaling-up of successful activities employed in similar geographic contexts and stimulated the exchange of the experiences of the participants, helping them identify small, but practical solutions for specific problems. Participants were empowered to start activities immediately on return to their home countries and communities and to see a gradual improvement in their economic and social condition.

More active in-country services and organization of peer-to-peer training supported the anchoring of LRs on a longterm basis. To this end, it was crucial to promote an enhanced understanding of LRs as a powerful tool for IFAD in the establishment of public/private (PPPs) and policy dialogue. It was also crucial to ensure that sustainability and scaling up are followed-up after the LR for long-term success and impact.



Strengthening the role of rural women in smallholder farming in Ecuador by facilitating peer learning and advocacy support

Partners:





GOBIERNO DE LA REPÚBLICA DEL ECUADOR



Quick facts

Empowering rural women to access markets is key to making sure no one is left behind in achieving zero hunger. The Government of Ecuador is taking a step to revise its policies for rural development with a vision to empower rural smallholder women and create new market opportunities.

There are opportunities to equip smallholder farmers with knowledge, skills and technology to improve productivity, increase their market access and enhance their livelihoods. In order to tap into these opportunities, WFP and FAO are facilitating SSTC with China and Latin America and Caribbean partners to strengthen the capacity of the Government of Ecuador to support vulnerable rural women and enhance their access to markets. Thanks to Brazil, and through the +Cotton programme, the capacities of different stakeholders are strengthened in order to increase the access to technology and knowledge for rural women.

Challenge

Female smallholder farmers in Ecuador often face a triple condition of exclusion - as women, as agricultural workers with limited resources, and as indigenous people. Their livelihood is threatened by low productive capacity, high dependence on rice cultivation, which is forming an unsustainable and shock-sensitive monoculture, as well as restricted access to market and credit opportunities. Furthermore, the dependence on rice is limiting the access of female farmers to a diversified and nutritious diet. The Government needs to strengthen capacity to provide effective and gender-sensitive rural services to female farmers taking into consideration the multiple challenges they face.

Approach

Upon the demand of the Government of Ecuador, WFP and FAO in Ecuador, in collaboration with the WFP China Centre of Excellence, have joined efforts to build the technical capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAGA) to support vulnerable smallholder farmers. Twenty-five technicians from MAGA, with participation of at least 30 percent women, are being trained this year with the support of Chinese experts, through workshops and field demonstrations, in order to deliver more effective extension services to smallholders.

Through South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC), WFP and FAO are also supporting the Ecuador Government to develop an evidence base to strengthen the role of rural women in public policies and increase their access to market opportunities. Peer learning sessions have been facilitated with Latin America and Caribbean countries (Peru and Guatemala) by engaging strong female lead farmers that have influenced public policies in order to overcome inequalities and promote the role of women in rural development. The findings from the peer learning discussions feed into knowledge products and recommendations for the formulation of Ecuador's upcoming public policies in order to strengthen the role of female smallholders.

Opportunities and results

Some of the key deliverables of this project in 2019 are:

- WFP and FAO are supporting the Ministry of Agriculture to organize a series of roundtables and create space for peer learning among Ecuador, Peru, and Guatemala. In August and early September 2019, two workshops took place with the participation of female leaders from Guatemala and Peru.
- Two Farmers Organizations' leaders and two technicians from the Ministry of Agriculture of Ecuador are going to participate in a farm stay in China by October 2019 to learn new management skills and techniques on how to diversify crops and improve access to markets.
- Findings from the SSTC experience and key recommendations for Ecuador's rural policy are going to be presented by female lead farmers and the Ministry of Agriculture at the "Day of the Rural Woman" (October/2019) in Quito to raise awareness and advocacy for policy actions to support women smallholder farmers in Ecuador.

Reaching the most vulnerable to leave no one behind

Facilitating peer learning and advocacy support from strong female lead farmers from Peru and Guatemala as part of WFP/FAO/MAGA workshops in Ecuador's Sierra, Amazonia and coastal regions ("women's roundtables"), can further target those who are already at risk of being left behind. Seed funding provided by China has been key to enable this peer exchange.

This project could set a new reference example in the region of how SSTC facilitated by the RBAs can help to address gender inequalities and reach the most vulnerable.



Strengthening the resilience and livelihoods of vulnerable smallholder farmers to climate-related shocks in Sri Lanka

Partners:









Quick facts

Sri Lanka is the second most affected country by extreme weather events. Recurrent droughts and sudden rains result in major losses for smallholder farmers. Harvest and post-harvest losses for the two main crops, rice and maize, are significantly high with an average of 10-15% of the total production. China's expertise in rural development can offer innovative solutions to Sri Lanka in order to strengthen the resilience of smallholder farmers and contribute to achieving SDG2.

Challenge

Smallholder farmers in Sri Lanka face challenges from production to post-harvest management which put their food security and livelihoods at risk. Among those challenges are lack of resilience against climate-related shocks, access to water, low productivity, inadequate technology and techniques for production and value addition, limited access to markets and low prices, lack of aggregation systems, which results in a vicious cycle of debt and poverty.

Approach

Driven by country's demand and building on their comparative advantages, FAO and WFP are working together to address these gaps through a strategic South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC) pilot in Sri Lanka to ensure that no one is left behind in hunger. This pilot, supported by China, aims at improving agricultural services, enhancing access to markets and equipping smallholder farmers with innovative tools and technology in post-harvest management.

Activities under the pilot target two farmers' organizations in the Monaragala district and focus on farmers' leaders and smallholder farmers (approx. 1000 smallholder farmers'/households). A special emphasis is given on the engagement of female smallholders, youth and lead farmers.

Opportunities and results

This pilot project is a unique opportunity to equip smallholder farmers with Chinese expertise and technology through RBAs facilitated SSTC in the field to enhance their resilience and livelihoods.

The first key deliverables of the SSTC pilot include:

- Joint FAO and WFP scoping mission to Sri Lanka, in the district of Monaragala, carried out in July 2019. FAO and WFP facilitated discussions with farmers' leaders and organizations as well as government officials, at district and national levels, to identify main challenges as well as the cooperation modality and responsibilities of each party.
- 2. Ongoing rapid assessment to identify in-depth learning needs and capacity gaps from production to postharvest management to inform a demand-driven SSTC approach. The assessment is to be finalized by the end of September 2019.
- 3. Informed by the findings from the assessment, a study tour is to be held by the last quarter of 2019 to expose farmers and government's officials to models and innovations by China. The visit includes institutes, grains processing plants, mills, agricultural machinery and more.
- 4. After the study tour, in-field demonstrations and trainings are to be delivered by Chinese experts, as well as peer learning sessions, drawing on technology and expertise from China to build the skills of smallholder farmers.

Opportunities to scale-up FAO-WFP collaboration through innovative modalities and working mechanisms in SSTC will be explored through this pilot. It is also an opportunity to capture lessons learned and generate evidence to develop a joint FAO-WFP approach to brokering SSTC in the field, which may be applied to other countries and become a model for future SSTC collaboration on the ground.

Reaching the most vulnerable to leave no one behind

This joint pilot project contributes to FAO's TCPs on Institutional Strengthening for Improved Agricultural Extension Service and In-Season Yield Forecasts for Spice Crops in Sri Lanka. It also complements the existing activities under WFP's "R5n project" by generating benefits for the most vulnerable smallholder farmers (approximately 1000 smallholder families).

The pilot focuses on female smallholder farmers who are at risk of being left behind. It does so by targeting farmers' organizations that have strong female engagement and encouraging active participation of at least 50% female smallholder farmers in the training and other SSTC activities.

Seed funding provided by China has been key to explore how SSTC can help to reach the most vulnerable in Sri Lanka. The project forms part of a long-term strategic collaboration between China and Sri Lanka enabled by FAO-WFP collaboration which will be rolled out in 2020-2021.



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