



**Issue 13 - December 2008**

## Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of the Livelihoods Resource Centre eBulletin. This month's issue looks at the role of water interventions in rural development and the rebuilding of livelihoods following natural disasters, including Cyclone Nargis and the tsunami that hit Sri Lanka.

We continue to welcome your reports, comments, suggestions and letters on any related topics that you think will be of interest to readers. Please email [lrc@htspe.com](mailto:lrc@htspe.com) or [bernadette.hensen@htspe.com](mailto:bernadette.hensen@htspe.com) with submissions.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all of us here at the LRC.

## Papers



[Rural Livelihoods Systems](#). This briefing note is part of a series produced for [SDC](#), its partners and the wider development community that addresses issues surrounding poverty and poverty reduction. The series offers an overview of the current debates in development – an introduction to the full series can be found on [www.poverty-wellbeing.net](http://www.poverty-wellbeing.net). Briefing note 14 introduces the Rural Livelihoods Systems (RLS) approach, which is the outcome of a long term collaboration between Indian and Swiss Researchers. It was developed to provide a better understanding of people's perception of the meaning of sustainable natural resource management. The RLS approach shifts emphasis of sustainability away from a single focus, such as the provision of sustainable soil or water management, to a more holistic and complex exploration of sustainability as encompassing the entire livelihood of rural land users.

[Water and the Rural Poor: Interventions for Improving Livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa](#). Sub-Saharan Africa is failing to achieve Millennium Development Goal One regarding hunger eradication and poverty reduction. A major constraint to reducing rural poverty and increasing agricultural productivity in this region is water. For millions of smallholder farmers, fishers and herders in sub-Saharan Africa securing access to, and control and management of water is essential to livelihoods. With insecure access to water, eradicating hunger and reducing poverty becomes an even greater challenge. This report, the product of a collaborative effort between [FAO](#) and [IFAD](#), argues that the potential exists for well targeted interventions in water can contribute to rapid improvements in the livelihoods of the rural poor in sub-Saharan Africa and thus contribute to poverty reduction and hunger eradication. And there remain important opportunities for new investments in water with a focus on diversification of livelihoods in rural settings. By mapping 13 distinct 'livelihood zones' in sub-Saharan Africa, the report highlights distinct opportunities for livelihoods sustenance and development. These proposed interventions are rarely related to large scale irrigation schemes, but are designed to be maintained and operated locally and can be managed by male and female small holders. The report recognises that investment in water programmes alone will not suffice in the broader context of development. However, with variability in climate having an increasing impact on agriculture, water interventions are proving increasingly important to ensure resilience and enhanced productivity to achieve livelihoods that are sustainable in the long term.

News

[Salt farmers battling to rebuild livelihoods](#). Salt farmers of southern Myanmar are slowly returning seven months after Cyclone Nargis which left almost 140,000 people missing or dead. The multi-million dollar industry, which plays a critical role in the local economy, was left devastated by the category four storm. Warehouses storing recently harvested salt and nearly 35,000 privately owned farms were completely destroyed, which led to the loss of livelihoods for thousands of farmers. To rebuild their livelihoods, farmers are recruiting skilled labour from unaffected areas but need to offer high wages to ensure they are able to recruit sufficient staff. In addition to increased wages, farmers are facing high costs to repair damaged equipment. With the next harvest not due until next year and prices of food and other commodities still high, the continued problems faced by these farmers reflects the issues in re-establishing sustainable livelihoods in a community still reeling from the disaster.

[Sri Lanka: Community credit reduces risk for poorest](#). Following the tsunami that struck Sri Lanka in 2006, many affected families have received support to help rebuild and restore their livelihoods. However, some humanitarian programmes have failed to provide lasting support to the most marginalised and poorest families. One of the main obstacles has been securing access to loans and other financial services through commercial banks. In response to this, the [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#) and [Sri Lanka Red Cross Society](#) have stepped up to support these families through a partnership with [SANASA](#), a micro finance institution cooperative, with more than 800,000 members and 25 years of experience in Sri Lanka. The pilot project is beginning in the southern district of Matara where 750 of the poorest families in the district will be provided with access to SANASA's financial services. With support from the [Swedish Red Cross](#) and [Belgian Flanders Red Cross](#) the four year project aims to strengthen, diversify and protect sustainable livelihoods.

[Land and People](#). In the 2006 war with Israel, villages in South Lebanon were some of the hardest hit by the conflict with many left virtually destroyed in the fighting and fields littered with unexploded cluster bombs. This left many of those dependent on agriculture and farming in a desperate situation. In response to this Rami Zurayk, professor at the [American University of Beirut](#) and a member of Lebanon's environmental community, set up mobile clinics to deliver supplies and training to communities and farmers across the region. As the project took shape it was named Land and People, and partnered with [Samidoun](#), an organisation comprised of mainly former AUB students who provided services to the South throughout the war. Land and People is one of several development-driven groups, most coordinated through AUB, that are focused on promoting conservation, biodiversity and agricultural sustainability in some of Lebanon's poorest rural communities.

#### Events and Training

[Participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation](#). This is a three week course run by [Wageningen International](#) that focuses on how to design and institutionalise participatory planning and M&E systems in projects, programmes and organisations for continuous learning and enhanced performance. Components included in the course are: an introduction to the basics of participatory planning and M&E; identifying what should happen; participatory M&E processes and institutionalising participatory processes and learning. The course will be held on **March 2<sup>nd</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009** in **Wageningen, the Netherlands**. For additional information regarding cost, application procedures and to download a course brochure please visit the [website](#).

[LEAD](#) is an international non-profit organisation with a mission to to inspire leadership for a sustainable world. To achieve this they search for outstanding people, developing their leadership potential through training programmes and working with them to mobilise others. LEAD presents the [Leadership for Sustainable Development Programme](#). The programme commences in **March 2009** and includes seventeen face to face training days organised into three residential modules over nine months, supported by online events, preparation and project work.

Subscribe to the New Livelihoods Connect Email Update!

The next Livelihoods Connect update will be sent out as an Eldis Livelihoods Reporter and will highlight resources on brand new Livelihoods Dossier on Eldis due to be launched in January. Any subscriptions to the current subscribers list will automatically expire at the end of December. Therefore, to ensure you receive future monthly updates from Livelihoods Connect, please subscribe to the new Livelihoods Reporter by going to the [Eldis Reporter Subscription](#) page.

Subscribing to Eldis Reporters ensures you receive Eldis email news bulletins and allows you to sign up for one or more of the 31 Subject Bulletins. Every week you will be sent an abstract and web address of key new documents related to your choice of subjects. In addition you can receive the monthly What's New Bulletin that highlights the Editor's top ten documents from the website.

#### The LRC: The Bigger Picture

The Livelihoods Resource Centre is managed by HTSPE in association with [IDS](#), [ODG](#) and [Coffey](#). The LRC provides services in two areas: **commissioned services** available to DFID Advisers and **core services**, including resources posted on the website and the monthly eBulletin.

#### **The LRC during the Christmas Period:**

Please note that the LRC will be closed from December 24<sup>th</sup> until January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009. If you require urgent assistance during this period please contact [Matthew Roberts](#).

We hope that you have found the content of previous eBulletins informative and useful and welcome your comments and suggestions for future editions. Please contact [Matthew Roberts](#) or [Bernadette Hensen](#) with your feedback and ideas for further reading and resources.

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