

CUSTOMIZED TRAINING FOR ORGANIZATIONS.

International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) has been a training and research institution since its inception. Our courses focus on participatory methodologies and draw content from the field-tested experiences of our practitioners. IIRR packages experiences from its learning communities into learning modules. These learning modules feature written case studies and field practicum activities where participants learn with communities about the practical application of participatory tools and methodologies. The courses are 'demand-led' in that they aim to build the capacity of partners by actively involving them in the design of these customized training courses and study programs.

COURSES OFFERED



All IIRR courses draw heavily from the rich experiences of the participants as well as IIRR's own fieldwork where participants learn by doing. The course participants and learning communities systematically learn from each other, developing a shared understanding of the interlocking issues that affect the community and the ways and means to address them.

Participants are encouraged to report their findings back to their communities. Towards the end, course participants craft their individual and group action plans to guide them in applying what they learned from the course and from the field exposures. All course alumni are encouraged to contribute to the community of practice to enhance learning by networking and exchange to support local and global development efforts.

IIRR works with institutions based on their training needs. Our expanding partnership and collaborative network is powered by our drive as a practical knowledge institution. These courses are offered from several countries where IIRR operates as well as those where IIRR does not have physical presence.

The customized courses are flexible to the organizations schedule in terms of days, time, venue, and number of participants.

For more information and courses booking please contact us on training@iirr.org

About Us: IIRR's Capacity Statement

We have over 95 years of experience in empowering communities to overcome poverty. Guided by the philosophy of our founder Dr. Y.C. James Yen, since early 1920s, our predecessor the Chinese Mass Education Movement was responsible for changing, for better, the lives of over 200 million Chinese peasants through the power of functional literacy. Since IIRR was formally organized as an international development, training, and research organization in 1960, we have continued to empower the rural poor to end poverty in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

We use innovative approaches that are integrated, people-centered and sustainable; the process we pioneered since the 1920's when these concepts were little known to the development community. This philosophy of development guides all our work; we do not offer handouts. We offer education and capacity building so that community members and their local organizations can enact changes relevant to them. Our core tenet at IIRR is to develop sustainable and effective solutions to poverty reduction by working with and learning from local communities. We believe in **“outsiders can help, but insiders must do the job”** motto.

We have strong anti-poverty programs in eight (8) countries in Southeast Asia (Philippines, Cambodia and Myanmar) and Eastern and Southern Africa (Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, South Sudan and Zimbabwe). In these countries and regions, we work in collaboration with more than 125 local development partners, and all our 140 staff members are nationals of these countries.

We are a United States-based 501(c) (3) private voluntary organization with a small office in New York City, but we operate our headquarters from the global south, the Philippines. These are the deliberate choices we made to be closer to the people we work with and which make our work relevant and cost effective.

We know poverty is interlocking and no single solution can be prescribed for it. That is the reason we implement integrated and holistic programs. Our areas of impact are: Education for Marginalized Communities; Food Security and Resilient Livelihoods; Community Led and Managed Disaster Risk Reduction and; Building Community of Practice through Collaborative Leadership. Our two flagship programs for strategy period 2016-2020 are *Education for Pastoralists & Other Marginalized Communities* and *Food Security and Resilient Livelihoods (FSLR)*, which integrate all other components.

Unleashing the potential of women and youth

“Time is pressing – the old ones are too old and the little ones are too little. The middle group, the youth group, is most strategic. They will be the leaders of the country, for good or for ill.” - Dr. James Yen.”

For youth (boys and girls), IIRR seeks strategic interventions that tie education and economic development and link youths to technology, markets and job opportunities. Youth skills development to make them employable and independent is a key part of our new strategy for entrepreneurship development and wealth creation. Both our education and Food Security and Livelihood Resilience (FSLR) programs are youth and women focused. The FSLR program makes use of the value chain approach and market-driven principles as a means of promoting more inclusive economic growth that ensures enhanced economic opportunities and food security for poor households, with special focus on youth and women. Earn and learn are integral components of our education program. The following are selected examples.

Empowering and Linking Youth and Women to Markets

IIRR has facilitated smallholder groups, mainly youth and women, in East Africa to identify market opportunities and sustainably increase production and marketing of indigenous chicken, rice, vegetables and maize, among others. These interventions involve identifying viable commercial enterprises, improving product quality and quantity, strengthening the organizational capacity of youth and women groups, improving linkages with service providers, traders and relaying information on outputs and inputs markets. As a result:

- 120 farmer field schools (farmer groups) in Uganda and 40 Farmer Field Schools in South Sudan have been organized and strengthened.
- In western Kenya, IIRR has organized and helped improve livelihoods of 13 small enterprise groups of youth and women in milk processing, fish farming, oil seeds production processing and marketing.
- In Ethiopia, IIRR works with 5 multi-purpose cooperatives engaged in small trade and value addition by fattening animals.
- In Kenya, IIRR is currently supporting over 150 farmers (mainly youth and women) and their families to generate income by participating in indigenous chicken value chain.
- IIRR has trained over 450 youth and women in value chain development from countries across Africa.

Facilitating participatory value chain research

In line with our building a community of practice through collaborative leadership, IIRR is engaged in research and learning. The following are among the most recent examples of our engagements:

- In 2014 Undertook analysis of goat value chains and programme designed for Heifer International – Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa.
- In 2015 Analysis of banana and tomato value chains in Kandara and Murang'a counties of Kenya for VSO Jitolee Kenya.
- Analysis of Indigenous Chicken, Macadamia nuts, Fish and Pig Value Chains in Zimbabwe World Education inc – Zimbabwe.
- Analysis of indigenous chicken value chain in Kenya for Technoserve.
- Analysis of Pro-poor Agricultural Value Chains in Seven States of Southern Sudan World Vision, Oxfam and CARE - Fortifying Equality and Economic Diversification (FEED) project Consortium.

Knowledge Management, Documentation and Dissemination

One of IIRR's strengths lies in documenting, packaging, publishing and dissemination of knowledge about development in a way that is easy to understand for a range of readers, including farmers, extension workers, teachers, NGO staff, schoolchildren, government officials, youth and others.

IIRR has invented a participatory 'writeshop' method for generating and packaging information. Using this unique method, IIRR has produced over 100 written products – manuals, tool kits, children's story books, practical guides, academic text books, field guides, information kits, posters, flyers, brochures and technical papers – for a wide array of clients in Africa and Asia.

The writeshop process brings together development actors (extension officers, scientists, researchers, youth and community leaders) together with publication experts (authors, editors, artists, and desktop publishing specialists) under one roof to generate written materials needed for a specific publication. This is accomplished in a remarkably short period of time. The process is flexible and participatory.

These publications are written in simple, non-technical language, well-illustrated, and attractively laid out. In recent years the process has been adapted to developing proposals; evaluating projects; writing case studies, position papers, academic textbooks, children's storybooks, curricula, field and practical guides, website design and so on. Among its many advantages, the writeshop process "democratizes" knowledge by giving credit to all who contribute and ensures that the resulting publication is freely available without copyright restrictions, which contributes to its widespread dissemination and use.

Some of the selected recent publications with special relevance to Value Chains work are: *Chain Empowerment: Supporting African Farmers to Develop Markets*, *Trading Up: Building Cooperation Between Farmers and Traders in Africa*, *Value Chain Finance: Beyond Microfinance for Rural Entrepreneurs*, *Challenging Chains to Change (Gender in value chains)*, *Moving Herds Moving Markets (Making Markets Work For Pastoralists)* and a *Training curriculum on Making Markets Work for African Pastoralists' (MM4P)*.

Among the organizations who we have supported and those that have adapted the process include: FAO, UNICEF, KIT, Cordaid, SNV, AGRA, CRS, ICCO, LWR, ILRI, UNHABITAT, Save the Children, VSO, GIZ, Oxfam, and many more.

Facilitating Learning and Building Community of Practice

Through regional and international trainings, technical services and study program that facilitate south-south learning, IIRR builds a community of practice and collaborative leadership. In the past 5 years, we have facilitated learning and documentation for a significant number of local and international organizations. The following are selected examples:

- Between 2012 and 2015, IIRR facilitated a global learning for over 60 livelihood grantees of The Ford Foundation from Africa and Asia which resulted in forming a Global Learning Alliance (GLA). IIRR conceptualized the program, organized exchange visits within and across the two continents, documented, packaged and disseminated lessons and established platform whose aim is to enhance impact of value chain development and other livelihood activities to ultimately reach millions of small producers where majority are women and youth.
- Since 2011, with a grant from the Ford Foundation, IIRR has been facilitating the Virtue Livelihood School of Africa (VLSA). The aim of VLSA is to improve the economic well-being of resource-constrained communities and small holder producers by innovating and disseminating best practices to influence livelihoods policies and practices in Sothern and Eastern Africa countries
- In Ethiopia, IIRR in partnership with KIT, SNV and ICCO facilitated learning which has transformed into a learning alliance of 16 serial bank associations to access market and financial services.
- In 2013/2014 IIRR facilitated learning and research in soil health for AGRA in 13 African countries which resulted in publishing of case studies of lessons and innovative practices.
- Since 2013, IIRR partnered with Global Land Tool Network of UNHABITAT where IIRR facilitated documentation and development of land tools and policy guide which included women and youth access to land globally.
- Currently IIRR is facilitating learning and documentation for Rockefeller Foundation for YieldWise initiative aimed to reduce post harvest loss of four value chains (Tomato, Cassava, Mango and Corn) in Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania.