

# RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS



*Resilient livelihoods are among the most significant ways of addressing rural poverty, leading the poor to a productive life of dignity, self-worth and transformation.*

## Highlights

- 125 poor farmers in the Philippines received livestock (goats, pigs, ducks and chicken). 26 of them gave one of the offspring to a deserving neighbor making a total beneficiaries 151. As such the benefits keep multiplying as each farmer passes on an offspring to the next farmer.
- Life for 450 farmers organized in 18 Farmer Field School Groups (25-30 in each group) are graduating from poverty. They are engaged in farming for business where they grow high value crops for market, do group learning and marketing and purchase high seeds. With a better income, they can better feed their families, send their children to school and afford better health.

## Food Security and Livelihood Resilience

Our Food Security and Resilient Livelihoods program aims to end poverty for millions of poor and marginalized rural households in Asia and Africa by addressing the many challenges of food, nutrition, and livelihood insecurities. IIRR works to ensure that communities and individuals have equitable access to resources and opportunities, are able to accumulate assets, and can withstand adversity. Selected outcomes of our work in 2015 are illustrated in the following stories and pictures.



Department of Education officials learning about school crop museum.

## Climate Smart Agriculture

In 2015, IIRR, in partnership with CCAFS, started a four-year research project to better understand how to scale-up climate-smart agricultural practices. The project had two research sites: one in Guinayangan, Philippines, managed by IIRR, and the other in HaTinh Province, Vietnam, managed by the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF).

In Guinayangan, IIRR selected 12 villages and organized 214 families into 23 farming groups. These groups were taught nine new farming skills, including low-cost pig



Farmers learn about vaccination of young pigs.

production, caged goat farming, intensive cassava production, and improved upland rice production technologies. Early results from this project in the Philippines are promising.

- Farmers learned techniques to increase productivity. Cassava production was considered for household consumption only, but with education, farmers were encouraged to increase production and grow some to sell at the market. Previously, only 19 farmers in three villages grew cassava, but after intervention, 40 farmers in eight villages began to grow the crop. A women's cassava flour producers group was also formed.
- An improved pig feed formulation was introduced and gained popularity among female farmers. Because the feed was more cost-effective, and women could make more money raising pigs, there was an increased interest in pig production. Sixty farmers in eight villages now raise pigs, up from four farmers in one village.
- Farmers are rediscovering traditional agricultural practices, which are innately climate smart. A traditional upland rice variety known as "kamoros" is slowly regaining popularity, as it has been shown to outperform newly introduced varieties. Similarly, the traditional practice of planting mung beans as post-rice cover, which provides an additional source of income, is again gaining acceptance. Native pigs were not in fashion, but thanks to the introduction of improved breeds from research centers, low-cost medicines and feed, along with consumer-education, they are once again in high demand.
- The local agricultural office has improved and incorporated CSA practices in its regular services to farmers. For example, in order to receive a goat, farmers must practice caged goat farming and the growing of forage. Similarly, as part of the pig dispersal program, alternative pig feed formulation is promoted. And finally, the practice of cassava and legumes intercropping is now integrated into the corn and high-value crops production system.

## Better livelihoods through livestock

In the Philippines, pigs and poultry are integral to household consumption and play a critical role in nutrition, but poor households often can't afford to own their own livestock nor pay for expensive feed. Raising pigs, poultry, and goats help with a family's food security and decrease their risk when other forms of income, like crops, fail.

In 2015, IIRR dispersed 296 heads of livestock (pigs, poultry, and goats) to 125 poor households to help them become more self-reliant and resilient. IIRR provides free-range, native livestock that is easier to maintain without medication or expensive feed. This reduces the expenses required to raise livestock and maintain healthy animals.



After passing his first-born goat to one of his neighbors, he said, ***"The more we help each other in the barangay (village), no one will be left behind, and the better it will be for everyone."***

**Ruperto celebrates the arrival of his twin goats.**



Every farmer who receives livestock is required to pass one of their first-born animals to another farmer. This strategy maximizes the benefit of the program. For example, 26 farmers have already passed one head of livestock to 26 new households, increasing the number of beneficiaries to 151.

Farmers raising native pigs are able to sell each piglet at Php 2,000 (US\$42.46). Fredesminda Valsote, a mother of nine, received one female pig that gave birth to 11 piglets. She sold one of them for Php 2,500 (US\$53.20), passed one on to another farmer, and has nine remaining. Farmers like Fredesminda see livestock as an asset they can sell in case of a family emergency or if they need cash to pay for school fees or supplies. After a year, the total direct beneficiaries have reached 170 farmers who received livestock.

Farmers have also being innovative, and are using the livestock to make even more money. For example, one native pig raiser is selling lechon (roasted pig) and increasing his profits that way.

Ruperto, 42, from Capiz Province in the Philippines, is one of the farmers who received goats: ***"It was not as hard as I thought in the beginning. I am actually having fun because I am learning new things...as long as there is ample space where the goats can graze freely, and enough forage crops around them for food, they will survive and grow healthy."*** After passing his first-born goat to one of his neighbors, he said, ***"The more we help each other in the barangay (village), no one will be left behind, and the better it will be for everyone."***

## Empowering Women Through Farming

Apiyo Labareta is a 50-year-old groundnut (peanut) and bean farmer from Northern Uganda. During the Lords' Resistance Army Rebel War from 1996-2006, Apiyo and her family were forced to flee their home and settle in an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp.

In the camp they relied fully on emergency aid, as there was no land on which to farm. She and her husband along with their six children lived in a one-room, grass-thatched, mud house with no windows. Poor sanitation caused serious health problem, and diseases like cholera, typhoid, and malaria were a common occurrence. Her husband began abusing alcohol.



Apiyo's husband and son join her in farming.

Apiyo says: ***"Things have changed for the better. My husband also has stopped drinking alcohol and now supports me in running the family farm. We are a family now!"***

In 2007, Apiyo's family was resettled back to their ancestral home along with other community members. They had to start from scratch, and life became very hard. Apiyo was given 5 acres of land, but since she had limited knowledge of crop production, she had poor harvests and faced constant food insecurity. In order to support her family, she looked for alternate means of employment and became a casual farm laborer.

IIRR, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) worked with Farmer Field and Life School (FFLS) to create capacity groups. FFLS members were trained on better farming methods, such as planting and weeding early, proper spacing of plants, pest and disease management, planting drought-resistant and early maturing crops, postharvest handling, and marketing. They also learned basic financial literacy skills to better understand their profits and keep more accurate records.

Apiyo is one of many farmers who joined a FFLS group and received training. Using the skills she learned from IIRR, during the first year of her farming, she planted 1 acre each of groundnuts, beans, and rice. In one harvest season Apiyo earned 1,475,000 shillings (\$447) for all her crops, which is 30 times more than what she earned when farming her 5 acres the old way.

Now Apiyo could send three of her six children to school. She also bought two oxen and an ox plough to help expand her farm. She is able to make an additional 200,000 shillings (\$60) per month by renting her oxen to other farmers. During the first season of 2016, Apiyo aims to make a net profit of 2,670,000 shillings (\$809) from her expanded and better managed farm.

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## From Subsistence to Successful

Gaetano Okwera, 52 years old, is a sunflower farmer from Gulu District in Northern Uganda. He was a subsistence farmer, mainly growing crops like sorghum, cassava, beans, and groundnuts for his family to eat. Once a year he would grow cotton and tobacco, both very labor-intensive and requiring the use of expensive chemicals and fertilizers.

Gaetano never thought of using his farming skills to make more money until he attended IIRR's Farmer Field School Platform (FFSP). In 2015, IIRR trained 18 farmer groups, including Gaetano's 25-member group from Gulu District.

They were trained on better agricultural practices, entrepreneurship, Farming as a Business (FaaB), enterprise selection, and how to analyze profitability. Gaetano was also able to join an oil crop production group where he learned from more experienced farmers.

IIRR promotes growing sunflower and soybean as cash crops because they are less demanding to grow than other crops and have a higher potential for profit (e.g. sunflower and soybean take approximately 90-120 days from planting to harvesting for sale, in contrast with cotton and tobacco, which takes 150-180 days). Sunflower and soybean can be planted three times a year, are drought tolerant, and have a limited weeding requirement. An oil production industry is being established in the region as well, so there is an active market for these crops once grown. And additionally, they can be used for soymilk, soy meat, and animal cakes.



**Gaetano shows his motorbike to Pamela, IIRR's Uganda Director.**

***“The right skills and association has lifted me from poverty and even given me stature in the community!”***

Although Gaetano had grown sunflowers before, he was less knowledgeable about alternative varieties with a higher yield and different strategies to maximize profit. In order to turn his farming into a business, Gaetano took part in a loan scheme that provides members with small loans at low interest rates. He borrowed 200,000 Uganda Shillings (Ush) (\$61) from the group, and because of his training, decided to focus on sunflower and soybeans. The money was used to buy seeds, expand his gardens, and pay for labor and other farming costs.

***"I harvested sunflower worth 2,760,000 Ush (\$836), and groundnuts worth 1,560,000 Ush (\$472)," Gaetano explained proudly. "I expanded my sunflower production from two acres to ten, which yielded 7,856kg valued at 7,920,000 Ush (\$2,400)."***

Gaetano's family is no longer poor. With his earnings he has bought two motorbikes to transport his farm products to the market, two oxen to help till the soil, and well as a small shop. His farm is now used as a learning and demonstration farm in the community and he plans to buy more land in the future.

## From Animal Guide to Farm Consultant

Nyeko Francis, from Northern Uganda, dropped out of high school eight years ago when he could no longer afford his school fees. He is now a married man and a subsistence farmer. He joined a local farmers' group that grew sunflowers, but since it was mainly local varieties and they recycled seeds from their farms, production was low and his crops fetched a low price.

In partnership with Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF) and funding from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), IIRR is entering the second phase of its Vegetable Oil Development Project in five districts of Northern Uganda. IIRR is working with 175 farmer groups, comprised of 5,000 farmers, to provide technical agricultural and agribusiness services. These include introducing better quality seeds, improved postharvest handling, and instruction on farming as a business.

Nyeko Francis is one of the many farmers who participated in this program and transformed his life from a subsistence farmer to a semi-commercial farmer.

***"I used to work as an animal traction guide, but now I own my own pair of oxen purchased with the money I earned from my first season harvesting soybeans and sunflower. People now pay me to use my oxen for plowing! So far, I have earned 1,070,000 Uganda shillings (\$324) from renting out my oxen. My plan is to become a commercial farmer for vegetable oil crops and stop growing tobacco completely. I also hope to build a permanent home for my family. My neighbors see my success and are now interested in joining [IIRR's farmers'] groups themselves."***

Nyeko currently grows over five acres of oil crops on a commercial basis each season. He has increased his production output from 1 ton to 7 tons per season earning him roughly 8,400,000 Uganda shillings (\$2,545). He has also integrated piggery into his farm which generates a regular income of 1,200,000 Uganda shillings (\$364). Because of his rich knowledge of oil crop production, Nyeko now serves as local consultant, training and helping other farmers become successful like him.





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