



UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

**IIRR **  
**2022 IMPACT  
REPORT**

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# Credo

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Go to the people,  
Live among them,  
Learn from them,  
Plan with them,  
Work with them.

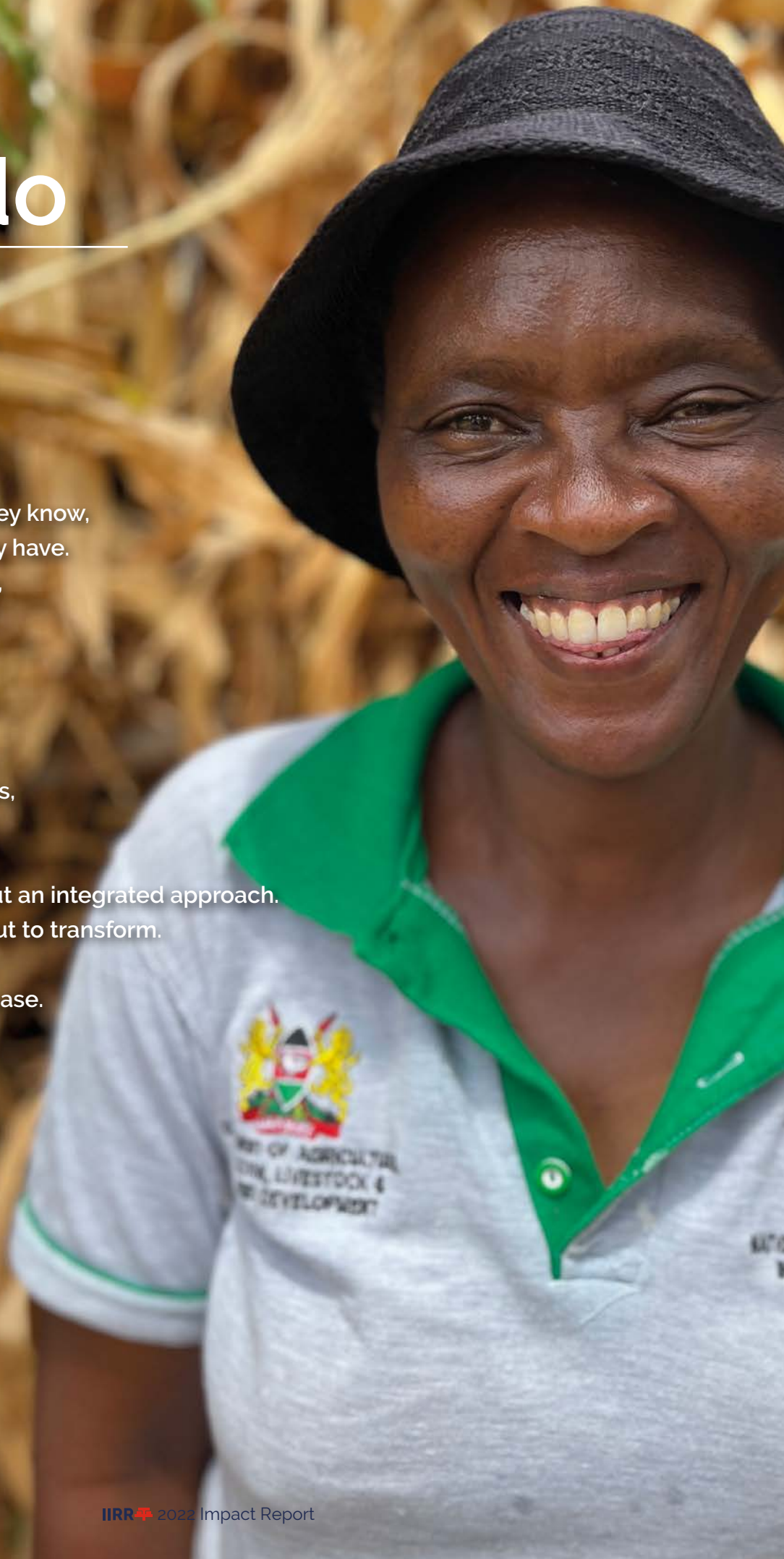
Start with what they know,  
Build on what they have.  
Teach by showing,  
Learn by doing.

Not a showcase,  
But a pattern.

Not odds and ends,  
But a system.

Not piecemeal, but an integrated approach.  
Not to conform, but to transform.

Not relief, but release.





# Our Mission

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To empower rural people to build resilient communities and attain socioeconomic equity through creative and community-led action.

# Our Vision

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IIRR envisions an equitable world in which rural people achieve their full potential, living a life of dignity and self-reliance in harmony with the environment.



## *Dear valued stakeholder,*

It is with great pleasure that I present our annual report for the year 2022. Despite the lingering impacts of COVID, political uncertainty in Europe, rising costs of living, and deepening inequality in many parts of the world, we continued to deliver on our strategic plan and objectives. Thanks to the unwavering commitment of our staff, partners, and supporters, we made significant strides in our mission to promote sustainable rural development across economic empowerment, education, environment, food systems, and health.

One of the key highlights of the past year was our work toward improving educational outcomes for young and old in rural communities. For example, the ***Enhancing Students Learning Performance in the midst of COVID 19 Pandemic*** project – funded by the Banyan Tree Foundation – closed in December after providing quality education and learning resources to more than 4,000 students and more than 7,000 community members in Ethiopia alone.

Environmental conservation focusing on sustainable agriculture and natural resource management remains a top priority. We successfully implemented several programs that focused on promoting sustainable practices while also reducing carbon footprints. One of our most notable initiatives was rehabilitating degraded mangrove areas and preserving existing mangroves in the Philippines in partnership with Archer Daniels Midlands. We also trained community farmers, fisherfolk leaders, and local government representatives in mangrove and beach forest rehabilitation and conservation.

Our commitment to empowering local communities to take leadership and ownership of development processes continues with our Learning Our Way Out (LOWO) initiative. This project aims to contribute to poverty reduction through a "self-propelled community movement".

Our programs on economic empowerment have also seen notable successes. Two contracts addressing Rural Financial Inclusion - funded by IFAD and the Ministry of Finance of Uganda - were completed in 2022, with a combined reach of over 25,000 persons impacted.

After two long years of pandemic travel restrictions, I was grateful for the opportunity to meet in person with our regional and country heads in Africa to problem-solve around our current challenges and motivate new commitments from our UN, government, and private sector partners in the region. The combination of our dedicated staff, targeted expertise, and ambitious vision allows IIRR to serve and have a genuine continued impact leading global efforts in rural development. Recalling one senior UN official noting that our team is, "delivering best in class services" - a comment that further validated the investments we have made in our people over the past few years.

Reflecting on the past year, we view 2022 as a testament to our commitment to creating sustainable and positive change in the lives of people living in rural communities. As we move forward, we will expand our efforts to explore new and innovative ways to tackle the challenges facing rural communities and strive to create a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to all the partners, supporters, and stakeholders who have made our work possible. We look forward to continuing to work together towards a shared vision of sustainable rural development.

Sincerely,

**Peter Williams**, President



## *Dear Readers,*

2022 has been a hugely exciting year for IIRR, and we are proud to share the details of our progress in this Annual Impact Report. We have continued to expand our presence in new spaces and make partnerships with governments, private corporations, other like-minded NGOs, and most importantly with the rural communities where we work.

The exciting appointment of three new board members in 2022 – all of whom are all leaders in their respective fields – is integral to our strategic vision, providing expert perspectives that will ensure that IIRR stays ahead of the curve in these times of constant change and innovation. We warmly welcome our new members and look forward to working with them!

Our cross-sector collaboration with leading organizations such as Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has proved fundamental to our success. The ADM Cares marine conservation project, which includes the planting of mangroves, has an overall benefit to 11,000 people in Ivisan, Philippines. In Ethiopia, our Biodiversity and Community Resilience (BIOM) project in the Omo Valley works with many indigenous communities who benefit from new projects such as our adult functional literacy program. The enthusiasm for this project was shared by the community members, who demonstrated their support by constructing meeting centers. Five Peace Building Committees were also initiated to combat alcoholism and promote peaceful living by helping to resolve conflicts. Unlike previous models in which male elders dominated, these committees are maintained by women and youth.

We continue to make strides towards global food security, climate change adaptation, and improved health with educational programs and economic empowerment of rural communities through our sustainable models. IIRR's founder, Dr. Y.C. James Yen, promoted the importance of equal education and opportunity in order to correct injustice, believing "Where there is equity and justice, there will be peace." We are proud to honor Dr. Yen's legacy by working alongside rural people to build resilient communities and the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Thank you to our kind donors and supporters for being a big part of helping us! We could not do this without your generous contributions and interest.

**Emily Cheng**  
Interim Chair

# Africa Regional Perspective



**Pamela B. Nyamutoka  
Katooro**  
*Africa Regional  
Director/ Country  
Director Uganda*

The year 2022 was a year of accelerated activity for the Africa region. As economies began emerging from the COVID era and re-asserting their development footprint, IIRR implemented several projects in east Africa, including projects to improve agricultural productivity and reduce deforestation. Food systems and the environment face a number of challenges as a result of the region experiencing rapid population growth, rapid urbanization, and increasing industrialization. To address these challenges, various countries have engaged in environmental protection measures that are essential for the region's sustainable development. In Kenya, for example, we saw the uptake of regenerative agriculture using the innovative village-based advisor model. In Uganda, partnerships were strengthened with the Ministry of Water and Environment to preserve the region's biodiversity and mitigate the impacts of climate change. In Ethiopia, we started the Biodiversity and Community Resilience project supported by USAID to develop Community Conservation Areas, support community peacebuilding, expand ecotourism, and increase livestock production. Partnerships with several private sector entities were initiated specifically to promote sustainable carbon financing.

In 2022, IIRR increased advocacy efforts to proactively change local, national, and global structural inefficiencies that affect food systems. The multi-region (Africa, US, and Asia) People-Centered Food Systems project is one example of a worldwide initiative using local knowledge to address global challenges. Implementing strategies to support agricultural commercialization led to a 50-70% increase in the adoption rate of production and postharvest handling technologies by smallholder farmers.

Financial inclusion continued to be a significant focus, with over 10,000 micro savings and credit groups' capacity enhanced and more financial products such as insurance improved. Recent years have seen innovations and digitalization increasing and being fully exploited in Africa; we have integrated technology into our livelihood projects, enabling more rural people to access information, services, and products. In Uganda, for example, Village Savings and credit groups have been digitized, creating new opportunities for businesses, entrepreneurs, and smallholder farmers while providing a platform for greater collaboration and innovation.

It is worth noting that gender equality has improved, but there is still a long way to go. According to the World Bank, the gender gap in East Africa is still significant, with women facing higher levels of poverty, lower educational attainment, and higher levels of violence. We used women's economic empowerment to propel us to enable more women and girls to access formal financial services. In 2018, only 28% of girls in East Africa had completed secondary education, compared to 43% of boys. In 2022, Ethiopia continued implementing its education project to support the delivery of quality primary education in agro-pastoral communities. Zimbabwe also completed a project to integrate disaster risk reduction in schools in recognition of the intersectionality of climate change and education.

In conclusion, I am proud that the Africa Region made significant progress in our mission to improve the lives of those living in rural communities and promote sustainable development in Africa. We work in close collaboration with local partners, the private sector, and governments to create lasting change and have seen the impact of our efforts in the communities we serve.



# Asia Regional Perspective



**Emily Monville Oro**  
Acting Director for  
Asia/Country Director,  
Philippines

In recent years, the communities where IIRR works in the Philippines, Cambodia and Myanmar faced unprecedented challenges with mobility restrictions, health protocols and disrupted supply chains. During these challenging times, the IIRR teams in Asia and Africa pulled together and overcame the odds following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The IIRR teams worked from home, remaining committed to the communities with whom they worked. In 2022, when a sense of normalcy prevailed again, staff returned to work with the communities. Despite the pandemic, rural communities in the Philippines did not go hungry! Local communities, including those in IIRR's climate smart villages, relied on their family farms and local food systems. During these restrictions, IIRR teams working on peatlands, drylands, mangroves, family farms and in schools spent more time documenting, publishing, and sharing their work, building an evidence base for future advocacy and action.

Taking advantage of the new opportunities presented by virtual platforms, IIRR teams stayed connected with field offices, strengthened their capacities and shared updates with their peers. Project proposal submission was primarily completed online. Hybrid work models with flexible schedules and locations brought the best of IIRR teams with increased accountability and better productivity.

During this past year, IIRR has connected prominently with the Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Network (SUN CSN) global movement by organizing an international training course tailored to the learning needs of the country alliances. IIRR continues its advocacy with the Philippines' Department of Education for better school-based nutrition and healthy schools. Through flexible funding from

AVPN, IIRR was able to conduct work on Health in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) within the context of Covid. Our work on strengthening local health systems has now expanded to respond to mothers' and young children's health and nutrition needs through continuing support of AVPN and G2A.

In 2022, IIRR joined hands with Rikolto and the John Hopkins University, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the Alliance Bioversity International-CIAT in advocating for People-Centered Food System approaches with a rights-oriented perspective. This consortium effort links IIRR units in Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Uganda to that of Rikolto's in Honduras.

IIRR also brought to a closure five years of work supported by the Asian Development Bank in Cambodia's Biodiversity Corridors in Koh Kong and Mondulkiri. With the successful end of five years of work with the CCAFs /CGIAR work on climate-resilient agriculture, IIRR was able to forge new partners with the ONE CGIAR initiatives (such as ClimBeR and FRESH). IIRR worked to restore degraded coastal ecosystems in Quezon Philippines with the support of the UK Darwin Initiative.

IIRR's advocacy for action on the front lines continues to grow: nearly half of IIRR Philippine teams are located in the communities where they work. IIRR's presence and footprint in rural communities is growing. For as long as there is a need, IIRR teams will GO TO THE PEOPLE and LIVE AMONG THEM. Despite the challenges posed by Climate Change, growing inequities and widening economic gaps, IIRR teams remain optimistic about the opportunities to foster resilience, reduced poverty, better nutrition and social equity in its rural communities.

# Thematic Pillars

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## **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Our Economic Empowerment pillar aims to create opportunities that improve inclusive and sustainable economic growth.



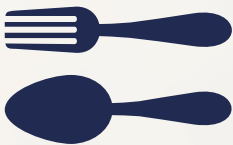
## **EDUCATION**

Our Education programs aim to provide access to and improve the quality of education, especially for girls and other historically overlooked groups.



## **ENVIRONMENT**

Our Environment programs aim to build resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.



## **FOOD SYSTEMS**

Our Food Systems pillar aims to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.



## **HEALTH**

Our Health programs aim to provide access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene and to advocate for health rights.

# Priority Populations



## FARMERS

A significant portion of the population in rural areas relies on agriculture for their livelihoods, making the well-being of farmers essential for overall growth and poverty alleviation. Supporting farmers through improved access to resources, technology, and training can enhance food security, reduce hunger, and ensure the long-term health of communities and the environment. Empowering farmers also mitigates the risk of rural-to-urban migration and builds resilience in the face of climate change.

## CHILDREN & YOUTH

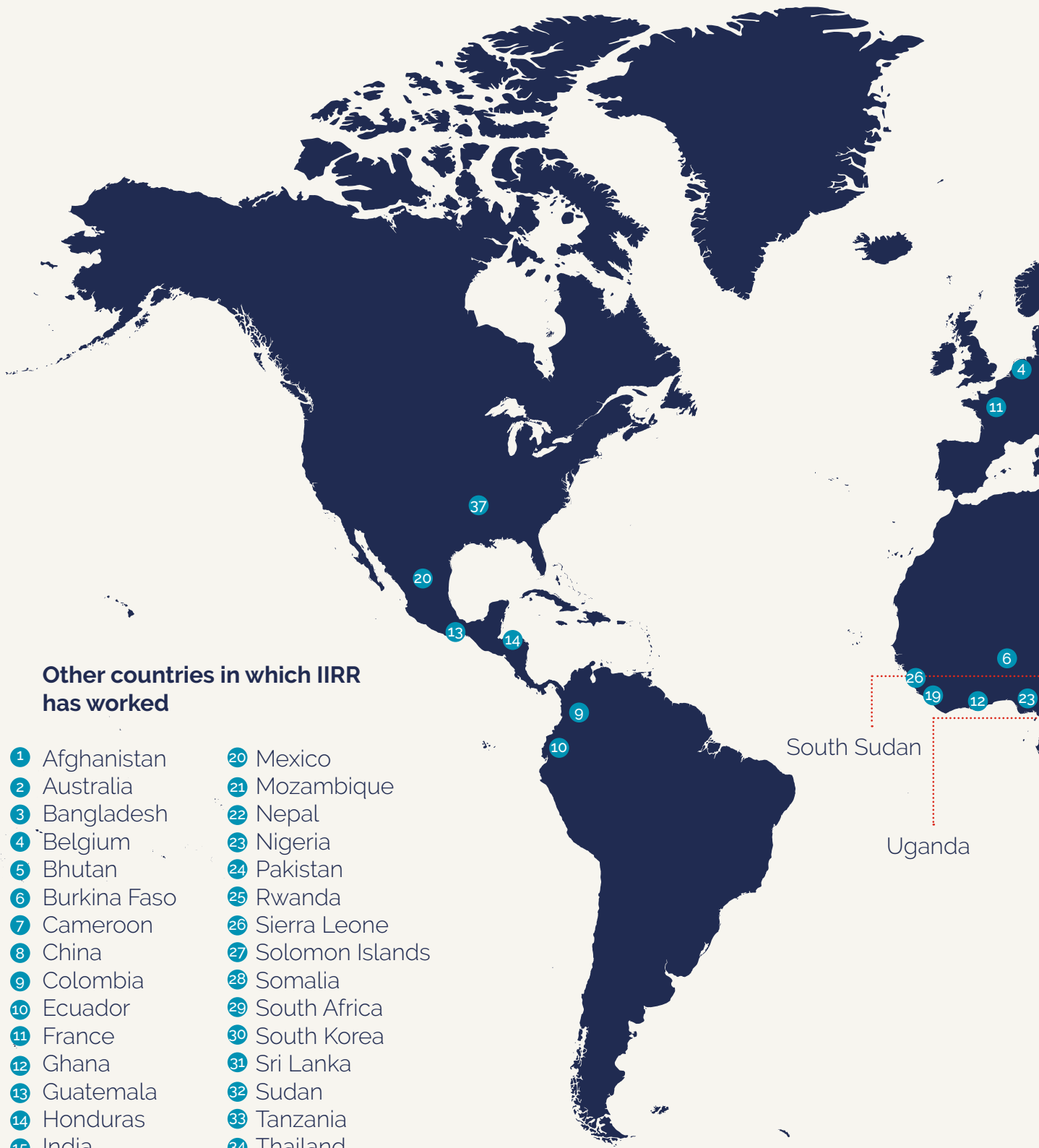
Children and youth represent the future of rural communities. Investing in their education, healthcare, and overall well-being can break the cycle of poverty, empower communities, and foster sustainable development. By empowering children and youth in rural areas, we can unlock their potential, foster innovation, promote social equity, and create opportunities for the entire community to thrive.



## WOMEN

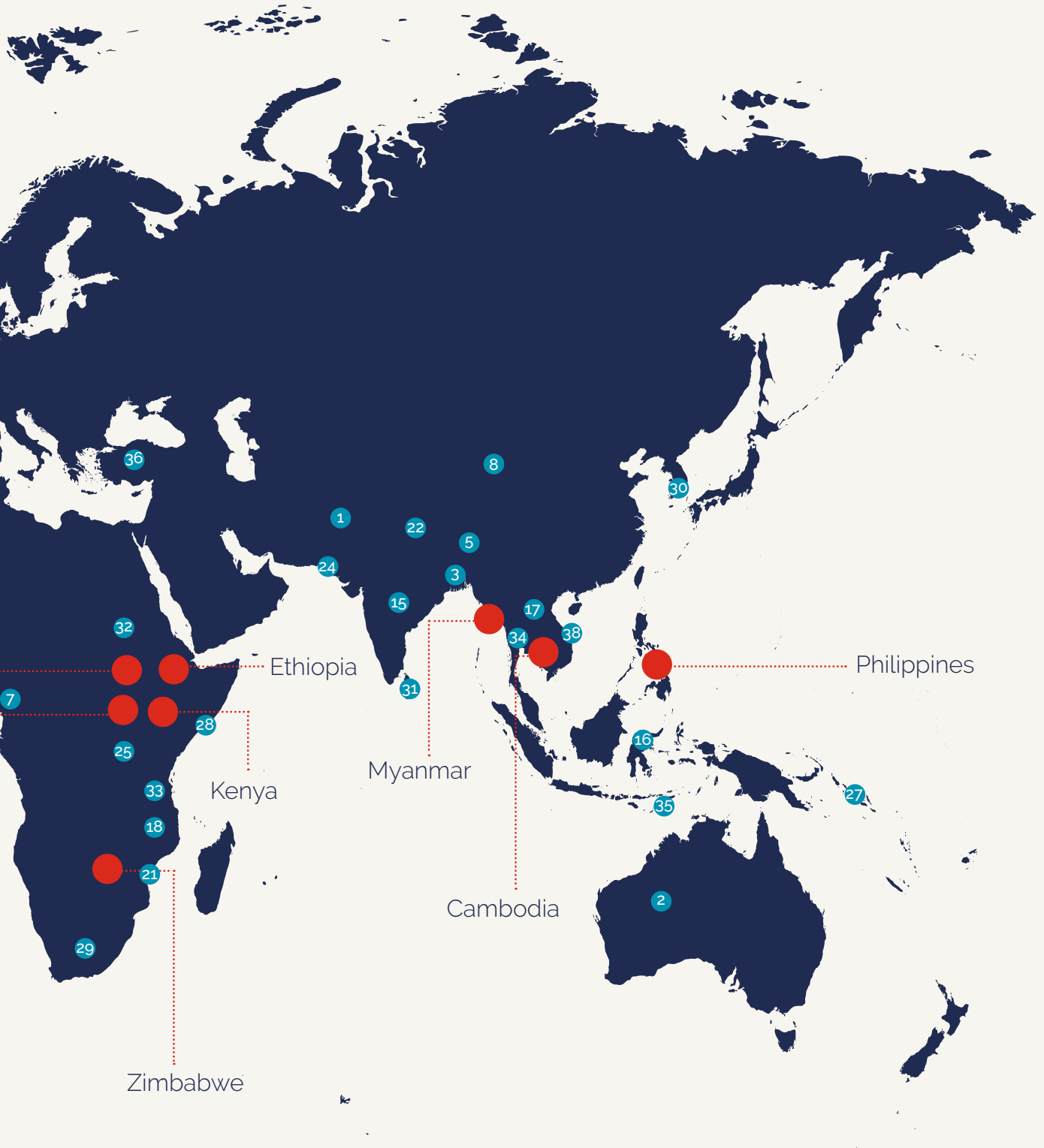
Women in rural communities often face multiple barriers, including limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Despite these barriers and traditional gender inequality, women play a crucial role in agricultural production and food security. Empowering rural women can lead to increased productivity and income generation, benefiting both their households and the broader community. Involving women in decision-making processes and providing them with skills and resources fosters more inclusive and sustainable societies.

# Global Reach



## Other countries in which IIR has worked

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 Afghanistan  | 20 Mexico          |
| 2 Australia    | 21 Mozambique      |
| 3 Bangladesh   | 22 Nepal           |
| 4 Belgium      | 23 Nigeria         |
| 5 Bhutan       | 24 Pakistan        |
| 6 Burkina Faso | 25 Rwanda          |
| 7 Cameroon     | 26 Sierra Leone    |
| 8 China        | 27 Solomon Islands |
| 9 Colombia     | 28 Somalia         |
| 10 Ecuador     | 29 South Africa    |
| 11 France      | 30 South Korea     |
| 12 Ghana       | 31 Sri Lanka       |
| 13 Guatemala   | 32 Sudan           |
| 14 Honduras    | 33 Tanzania        |
| 15 India       | 34 Thailand        |
| 16 Indonesia   | 35 Timor Leste     |
| 17 Laos        | 36 Turkey          |
| 18 Liberia     | 37 USA             |
| 19 Malawi      | 38 Vietnam         |



# 2022 Impact Highlights

Total Projects:

**56**

Total Impact:

**25.9  
million  
lives**



## Primary Project Themes:

Economic  
Empowerment:

**16%**



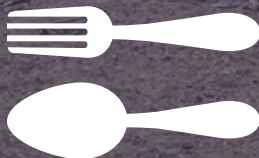
Environment:

**30%**



Food Systems:

**35%**



Education:

**14%**



Health:

**5%**



**639**

schools participated in nutrition, WASH, climate change, and education programs

**7,033**

households received direct livelihood support to expand home gardens and animal production



**25,746**

community members trained in disaster risk reduction

**376,264**

female farmers received training in agricultural practices, natural resource management, and agriculture enterprise development

**1.5 million**

acres dedicated to agriculture and sustainable land management



**\$7.3 million**

saved by farmers in local development and fund savings groups





# Impact of Native Pig Raising

**M**r. Phoem Hol, aged 32, and Ms. Seng Net, aged 33, have two sons. Their first son is studying in grade 6, and the younger son is in grade 3. The family resides in Chhouk Village, Koh Kong Province. The majority of the villagers in this region are farmers who collect non-timber products from the forest. Their family falls under the category of low-income family level 2 and requires support from the government.

The family relies on two hectares of land for rice cultivation in the rainy season and another crop during the dry season. However, due to poor soil fertility and a lack of agricultural knowledge or experience, they cannot profit from their farming activities. Mr. Hol and his wife are forced to do extra work to earn a livelihood and sell labor to supplement their farming activities.

In 2020, Mr. Hol's life took a turn for the better when he participated in a training course

on Native Pig Raising, conducted by IIRR Cambodia with the support of IDRC. With a willingness to learn and a desire to improve his agricultural knowledge, Mr. Hol volunteered to implement pig raising demonstrations in the village. As a result, he received two pig bloodstock from the project and received additional technical assistance in this task. To ensure the successful raising of pigs, Mr. Hol had to comply with several principles, including maintaining a clean cage, clean water, well-prepared animal feed, vaccination, and daily management.

Mr. Hol utilized green leaves and vegetables from his home compound and mixed them with kitchen waste and other ingredients to feed the breeders. To maintain hygiene and keep the breeders healthy, he cooperated with project staff to monitor and provide feedback frequently. With the new knowledge and technical support he received, Mr. Hol's pig raising endeavor has been successful,



providing him with an additional source of income to support his family.

Mr. Phoem Hol's experience with native pig raising has been a game-changer for his family's financial situation. After four years of engagement in native pig raising, Mr. Hol has been able to sell nine cohorts and 72 piglets, with an average of eight piglets per litter. He sells a 1-month-old vaccinated piglet for about \$70 per head, which has earned him a gross income of \$5,000 so far. In addition to the financial benefits, Mr. Hol appreciates the low cost and simple methods of native pig raising. He spends only \$6 for a small bag of commercial feed for breeders per month. The income from selling piglets has allowed Mr. Hol to build a new kitchen and toilet for his family, and they no longer experience food shortages or debt. His children can attend school, and many villagers trust his piglets and seek advice on pig raising and piglet production. Mr. Y Keo, a farmer in the same village, has also been successful in piglet production, inspired by Mr. Hol's success. Overall, native pig raising has had a significant impact on Mr. Hol's family and the community, providing a sustainable source of income and improving their standard of living.

The success story of Mr. Hol in native pig raising highlights the positive impact of this sustainable livelihood option on the lives of farmers and their communities. By transforming two pig bloodstock into a significant source of income, Mr. Hol and his family have improved their living standards and achieved financial stability. Pig raising has also ensured food security and nutrition for the family and allowed them to enhance soil fertility through integrated farming.

The benefits of native pig raising are not limited to individual families but also extend to the wider community. Increasing animal production has introduced a vital source of protein and nutrition for the local population. Additionally, it enables farmers to build resilience to climate change and food insecurity while reducing farming inputs.

The success of Mr. Hol in piglet production has inspired other villagers, such as Mr. Y Keo, to adopt this sustainable livelihood and increase their income. This has led to a ripple effect in the community, empowering families to support their children's education and invest in basic necessities to improve their livelihoods and quality of life.





# Improved Maize Production Practices and Technologies

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Valeriu Valeriu is a participating farmer in the Agricultural Value Chain Project (AVCP I) in Kahokya Subcounty Kasese District, Western Uganda. A member of the Nyaruzigati Community Women Farmers Association, Valeria is currently cultivating four acres of maize, cotton, and beans.

Valeria explains that this district and subcounty are among the most difficult to reach areas in Uganda. Services are difficult to access in this "last mile community" – mobile phone network services are largely unavailable, and the primary means of transport in the area is the boda-boda (bicycle and motorcycle taxis). Farmers must contend with additional challenges, including high costs of agricultural inputs and land rent, a lack of storage facilities, unpredictable market prices, limited access to land, and unreliable rainfall due to shifting weather patterns. Challenges in communications and transportation have limited the ability of local farmers to access advisory services and make strategic farming decisions to navigate these difficult circumstances. Without opportunities for innovation, farmers maintained traditional subsistence methods of farming and did not consider farming to be a revenue-generating activity.

The AVCP I project has helped local farmers like Valeria realize that farming can be managed like any other business with an aim of earning a profit. Through the project, Valeria developed her skills in calculating inputs to her farm and evaluating all operating activities across her diversified crops. Valeria says that the hands-on training on basic agronomic practices like line planting and weed and pest control have helped increase her scale of production. By optimizing her new skills and

resources, Valeria has increased her farming land from one acre to four acres. She is able to manage the spread of striga weed by practicing early weeding and early planting and prevent damage from army worms that are a threat to many farms in the area. Despite drought factors, she predicts that her farm production will triple this season. She is proud of the healthy appearance of her gardens after the implementation of her learnings from the AVCP I project.

Valeria credits the project for helping herself and other farmers "realize that farming is not just for the poor and rural people" and for expanding their viewpoints on the potential of improved farming practices. The success of the intervention has changed the views not only of participants but the community as a whole. Many community members have come to recognize that farming can be a profitable business and are considering beginning their own farming activities as a way to generate additional income.

Valeria is planning to further increase her production level through continued refinement of farming activities and ongoing learning. She hopes to practice the marketing and collective bargaining skills she learned through the AVCP I project to gain additional financial resources that will allow her to secure storage facilities so that she is able to wait for optimal market conditions to sell her future crops. Valeria says that her participation in the project has brought her a sense of empowerment as a woman, and she hopes that she will be able to educate her children in best farming practices to help them be successful in their endeavors.

# What's in a name?

**A**s an international NGO committed to making a positive impact in rural communities around the world, we believe it is essential to adapt and remain relevant in an ever-changing global landscape. In this spirit, we are excited to announce that our organization's name has evolved from the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction to IIRR.

By changing our name, we aim to enhance our visibility, relevance, and impact, allowing us to reach new audiences and forge stronger partnerships with individuals, communities, organizations, and governments that share our commitment to rural development, social change, and innovation.

As we continue to expand our reach and engage with a broader audience, it is important to have a name that resonates with various cultures and languages. The simplicity of our new name will allow us to be more inclusive and visible, enabling us to more effectively communicate our mission across borders and connect with diverse communities and stakeholders worldwide.

While this name change reflects our desire to modernize our brand, it is important to note that our fundamental mission remains unchanged. Our commitment to improving rural lives, promoting socioeconomic equity, and addressing pressing environmental challenges remains as strong as ever. The new name allows us to stay connected to the principles upon which the organization was founded more than 60 years ago as we look ahead to the future and how we may continue to evolve to amplify our impact in rural communities.



# Economic Empowerment

**R**ural communities face significant economic disparities due to limited access to basic infrastructure (such as reliable transportation, electricity, and clean water), which hinders economic development. Agricultural-based economies prevalent in many rural areas are vulnerable to unpredictable weather patterns, leading to food insecurity and income instability. Lack of access to credit and financial services limits entrepreneurship and investment opportunities. Limited educational and healthcare facilities further impede human capital development. Additionally, rural areas often experience a lack of connectivity and access to advanced technology, hindering participation in the digital economy.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are integral to economic empowerment efforts. Recognizing women's vital role in rural economies, initiatives should particularly aim to expand

financial inclusion for women, enhancing their access to resources, education, and decision-making processes. Empowering women strengthens their economic status and has positive ripple effects on family well-being, community development, and social progress overall.

Economic empowerment of rural communities involves providing access to financial resources, skills training, and market opportunities to promote self-sufficiency and sustainable development. By empowering rural communities economically, these areas can experience enhanced agricultural productivity, increased income levels, reduced poverty rates, and improved access to essential services such as healthcare and education. Ultimately, economic empowerment plays a crucial role in fostering economic growth, reducing inequality, and creating a pathway to a better future for rural communities.



**FINANCIAL INCLUSION:** supporting financial literacy, training, and access to funds

**ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT:** providing local entrepreneurs and small businesses the resources to enable market support, training, and access

**SOCIAL PROTECTION:** mitigating social and economic difficulties for vulnerable populations in rural communities

**SECURING ASSETS:** promoting equity by supporting locals in procuring resources, such as land tenure



# Enterprise Development

**PROJECT:** Strengthening the Capacities of Farmers Groups Towards Community Enterprise Development

**LOCATION:** Quezon, Cavite and Rizal Provinces, Philippines

**DATES:** December 2021 to June 2022

**PARTNER:** Department of Agriculture under the Balik Probinsiya, Bagong Pag-asa Program

**PARTICIPANTS:** 1,150 local farmers

**PROJECT GOAL:** To capacitate farmer groups with tools to manage agri-based community enterprises.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The agricultural sector plays a significant role in the economy of the Philippines, employing 24% of the country's workforce and producing 8.9% of its GDP. However, the Philippines' agricultural sector is especially vulnerable to extreme weather. The country's location along the typhoon belt and the Pacific Ring of Fire exposes it to an average of 20 cyclones a year, which can destroy crops and entire livelihoods within seconds. Farmers are poorly compensated within traditional food value chains despite the intense difficulty and financial risk of producing crops in such conditions. According to the Philippines Statistics Authority, incidences of poverty in the Philippines are highest within the farmer community, accounting for roughly a third of all cases. A combination of immediate need, lack of education, and lack of market access prevents farmers from receiving just economic return for their labor.

The effects of such inequitable food systems are widespread. The lack of economic return means that

farmers cannot make sufficient investments in their crops, leading to smaller and less nutritious yields. Empowering farmers, therefore, not only improves their livelihoods but enhances the productivity of our food systems.

IIRR's Strengthening the Capacities of Farmer Groups towards Community Enterprise Development project sought to empower farmers by providing them with agricultural provisions and agri-business training that heightened their ability to participate in value chains. Seven farmer's associations received training in areas such as Financial Management and Recording, Business Plan Preparation, and Group Building. The associations also undertook activities to define and test operational systems to support their enterprises. As a result of these activities, all participating farmer groups demonstrated improvement in their operational and accounting systems. These groups are continuing to build upon the training they received by utilizing ongoing coaching and mentoring to grow their businesses.



# Securing Assets

**PROJECT:** Community-based land registration on Customary Land Kabale District

**LOCATION:** Kabale District, Kigezi Sub-region, Uganda

**DATES:** January 2022 to June 2023

**PARTNERS:** UN-Habitat, Global Land Tool Network, Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands

**PARTICIPANTS:** 2,500 rural smallholder farmers

**PROJECT GOAL:** scaling up community based land registration and land use planning on customary land in Uganda for improved tenure rights aimed at improving food security in South Western Uganda

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

In rural Uganda, where the majority of the population relies on agriculture and traditional land tenure systems are prevalent, legal land registration and obtaining a Certificate of Customary Ownership (CCO) is essential for promoting economic development and fostering social stability. Formalizing land ownership provides security and prevents disputes over land ownership, reducing the risk of land grabbing and unauthorized land sales. Such registration empowers rural communities, especially marginalized groups such as women and indigenous people, by granting them legal recognition and protecting their access to and control over land resources. With secure land rights, farmers are more motivated to make long-term investments in their land, leading to increased productivity and economic growth. The registration processes provide a formal legal mechanism for addressing conflicts and reducing tensions within communities, and documenting land boundaries and resource rights helps prevent encroachment and promotes responsible land use practices.

The project activities included awareness creation meetings to sensitize men and women about gender differences in traditional systems of land rights and land ownership. In most areas, men have primary ownership as a result of customs and patriarchy. Women often are not represented in land ownership and are at risk of becoming displaced from the land upon the death of their husbands. For this reason, the project placed particular emphasis on registering family-dwelling land to a family unit rather than to an individual family member.

The project utilized the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) tool to outline the boundaries using handheld GPS technology and GIS software. This tool is inexpensive and easy to demonstrate to community members. Local volunteers were trained to use the tool and software, which enhanced participants' understanding of and trust in the mapping process.

The land-mapping phase of this project was not without challenges. For example, despite outreach efforts, some rural farmers continued to believe that informal land sale agreements are sufficient for establishing ownership of a parcel of land. Other rural farmers recognized the importance of obtaining the CCO but were unable to meet the land registration requirements to complete the process. Other farmers focused on registering strategic land parcels while ignoring other parcels that they deemed as less valuable, making systematic land mapping more difficult. Lastly, some farmers registered land in order to use the CCOs as collateral to secure loans and credit from financial institutions rather than using the designated land to improve food security.

Despite these challenges, the project was able to support 2,500 rural farmers – primarily women – in obtaining customary land certificates. Participating in the project activities and obtaining this important documentation has provided a sense of security and stability to the farmers, who are optimistic about future benefits to their communities.



# Financial Inclusion

**PROJECT:** Agriculture Value Chain Development Project (AVCP)

**LOCATION:** 15 districts in Central and Western Uganda

**DATES:** November 2021 to October 2023

**PARTNER:** African Development Bank; Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries

**PARTICIPANTS:** 633,031 farming households

**PROJECT GOAL:** Promote agricultural development in Uganda, leading to increases in household incomes, food security, and climate resilience through commercial agricultural practices, sustainable natural resource management, and agricultural enterprise development.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Agriculture is central to Uganda's economy and livelihoods, employing 70% of the country's population and contributing 40% of the country's GDP. The Agriculture Value Chain Development Program (AVCP) is focused on transforming small-holder farmers from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture by increasing their knowledge and skills in farming techniques and improving their access to markets and value chain support services, with maize and rice being the target agro-enterprises.

Using a Village Agent Model and working in partnership with 14,040 local farmers groups (FGs), the project aimed to increase household incomes and generate employment for rural farming households by promoting the integration of science and technology resources, improving farming infrastructure, and increasing access to quality social services. The project placed a priority on furthering the financial inclusion of women farmers, recognizing that gender equality is a prerequisite for accelerating socioeconomic transformation of rural communities.

Across the 15 participating districts, farmers received technical agricultural extension services for increased production and productivity of maize and rice, as well as training in farming as a business and post-harvest handling. The farmers received additional support to address issues present in all districts, including poverty, nutrition, gender disparities, HIV/AIDS, and

environmental management. Local seed businesses and village savings and loan schemes were established in every district, and farmers groups were linked to financial and insurance service providers.

Higher incomes and increased knowledge of farming techniques and business operations have allowed participating farmers to be more fully included in the larger economy. Maize yields have tripled to 1,500Kg/acre, leading to maize farmers increasing their net incomes from an average \$78.95 to \$460.52 per acre. Rice farmers have likewise had an increase in net income, from an average \$131.57 to \$578.95 per acre. Nearly half of the FGs are now engaged with a savings portfolio (valued at \$6.4 million), and 15% of FGs have opened bank accounts with financial institutions. 58% of VSLA members have applied their acquired business skills to establish additional income-generating activities, such as produce aggregation, animal rearing, grocery kiosks, roadside retail sale tables, and transport services. 84% of FGs have at least one member who is on a digital platform, allowing increased use of digital transactions, access to information, coordination of meeting schedules, e-purchases, and e-marketing. The evidenced increase in financial inclusion and opportunity benefits the individual farmers, their households, and their communities through improved food security, nutrition, income stability, and gender equity.

# Biodiversity and Community Resilience in the Omo Valley (BIOM)

## Project Launch

South Omo Zone, Jinka Town  
December 12, 2022

## Social Protection

**PROJECT:** Biodiversity and Community Resilience in the Omo Valley (BIOM)

**LOCATION:** Omo Valley, Ethiopia

**DATES:** May 2022 to May 2027

**PARTNER:** USAID

**PARTICIPANTS:** members of indigenous communities living in the Tama Plane of Lower Omo Valley (Mursi, Bodi, Kwegu, and Ari ethnic communities)

**PROJECT GOAL:** To build biodiversity, enhance livelihoods resiliency, and advocate for the rights of indigenous people

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

One of IIRR's newest activities, the Biodiversity and Community Resilience in the Omo Valley (BIOM) project formally launched in December 2022. In partnership with USAID, the \$8.7 million project will improve biodiversity, livelihoods, and human rights in Ethiopia's lower Omo Zone in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region (SNNPR) through community-based conservation, peacebuilding, and ecotourism.

Early activities of the BIOM project included advocating for a fair demarcation of the Tama Community Conservation Area in the SNNPR, negotiating a balance between indigenous communities' land rights and the government's developmental goals. Local communities, relevant regional and local authorities, and private actors reached a consensus on establishing a designated conservation area, carefully setting aside an area to be managed by the indigenous communities. Preventing large-scale commercial from entering the area removed a direct threat to biodiversity and security of the local communities' land tenure.

A conflict context assessment was conducted to identify key drivers of conflict and facilitate the development of peacebuilding interventions. To increase diverse representation

in local peacebuilding, the project established five community peace committees to include women and youth. Unlike previous committees dominated by male elders, the new committees have 26 women out of 49 members (53% female participation). Peace committees address tension and conflict at the local level, and build trust between communities. They also help local government institutions to design early warning systems or other preventive mechanisms to settle disagreements before they escalate.

To further support the communities' social protection efforts, the project is launching a functional adult literacy (FAL) program in the project area. Limited literacy creates issues for indigenous community members; many are unable to differentiate currency notes, understand legal communications, or fully participate in government representation. Eager to begin this new program, community members are contributing to the construction of FAL center shades to provide a more comfortable learning site. Although still in its early stages, the BIOM project is already showing success in its efforts to improve livelihoods in rural Ethiopia. USAID and other stakeholders have commended the project's grassroots approach of community participation and leadership in their own development process.



# Education

According to UNESCO, approximately 244 million children and youth worldwide were out of school as of 2022. 773 million youth and adults worldwide still lack basic literacy skills in 2021. Within this figure is significant regional variation, with lower literacy rates observed in many low-income countries and rural communities.

Education combats poverty and better the lives of communities. It is a catalyst for social and economic progress, enabling individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities necessary for personal development and active participation in society. It empowers

individuals to break the cycle of poverty, improve their livelihoods, and contribute meaningfully to the growth of their communities. Education in rural areas is paramount for achieving inclusive and sustainable development. By addressing the unique challenges rural communities face and implementing targeted initiatives, we can ensure that education reaches every individual, unlocking their potential and empowering them to contribute to the overall progress of society. Through collaborative efforts and a commitment to equitable access, we can create a future where education knows no boundaries, and individuals in rural areas can thrive and succeed.



**ACCESS:** focuses on making accessible for all, including girls and women, children, people with disabilities, and others.

**SKILLS FOR SUCCESS:** uses proven learning methods to train, upskill, and reskill rural people, affording them access to opportunities to start businesses, generate employment opportunities, and improve livelihoods.



## Access

**PROJECT:** Enhancing Students Learning Performance in the midst of COVID 19 Pandemic

**LOCATION:** 2 woredas, Guji Zone, Oromia Region, Ethiopia

**DATES:** July 2022 to December 2022

**PARTNER:** Banyan Tree Foundation

**PARTICIPANTS:** 14,682 students, teachers, and school leaders

**PROJECT GOAL:** To improve learning achievement of 15 second cycle (5-8) Primary School Children while contributing to COVID 19 response efforts in two woredas (districts) of Guji Zone, Oromia Region

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Ethiopia is the second largest country in Africa, with a population of approximately 103 million. The school-age population between 6 and 18 years old continues to grow, with the current number nearly 36 million (49.2% girls), including 4.3 million with disabilities. Currently, 25 million students are enrolled in pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools, and 700,000 teachers are deployed. Ethiopia's education sector is severely affected by the multifaceted effects of the COVID-19 disruption, which posed challenges such as limited institutional and individual capacities to ensure inclusive education, a significant number of out-of-school-children, a low enrollment rate, and a weak education information management system, amongst others.

Interventions directed to address Ethiopia's education sector challenges have come in the form of infrastructural developments, policy formulation and implementation, and improvement on educational resource availability and accessibility, including the introduction of a revised curriculum from the Ministry of Education to enable structural changes in the sector.

IIRR has been implementing education activities in the communities in two Woredas (districts) of Guji Zone, Oromia Region in Ethiopia, focusing on increasing access to education, retention/transition, and improving learning achievement. In 2022 (the second year of implementation), the education project supported provisions for improved quality education.

Based on the new curriculum, professional education lecturers produced supplementary materials such as student handouts and worksheets for Math, English, and Science subjects for grades 5 to 7. These updated materials were distributed to target project schools, with the intention of having students use the materials in class, at home, and during their free time.

Refresher orientations on the prevention, spread, and treatment mechanisms of COVID-19 were also provided for students and other members of the school community. Reflections from students and teachers indicate that this approach enhanced student motivation and performance.



# Skills for Success

**PROJECT:** Learning Our Way Out (LOWO) Phase II

**LOCATION:** 2 Woredas, Kembata Tembaro Zone, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Region

**DATES:** July 2021 to July 2024

**PARTNER:** LOWO Foundation: Jane Boorstein and Jim Boorstein

**PARTICIPANTS:** 15,995 conversation facilitators, community conversation participants, and community members

**PROJECT GOAL:** To contribute to various efforts of poverty reduction through a "self-propelled community movement".

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Education involving skills for success goes beyond traditional academic knowledge and focuses on equipping individuals with practical, transferable skills essential for their personal and professional development. These skills are often referred to as "soft skills" or "21st-century skills" and encompass a range of abilities, including communication, critical thinking and problem-solving, collaboration and teamwork, adaptability and flexibility, digital literacy, and emotional intelligence.

Rural communities face specific challenges such as geographic isolation, limited infrastructure, and access to services. Skills for success help communities navigate these challenges effectively, fostering resilience and enabling individuals to find innovative solutions and adapt to changing circumstances to further the development of their communities.

One of IIRR's focuses has been to empower individuals and communities in rural areas by providing them with the skills and knowledge needed for success. One innovative program is the Learning Our Way Out (LOWO) Phase II project, which continues the LOWO Phase I project implemented in Southern Ethiopia over 15 years ago.

LOWO Phase II is a three-year project that seeks practical and community-led solutions to communities' social, economic, environmental, and political challenges. A key component of the project is community conversation which involves participatory

learning and action, engaging the community members directly in the learning and decision-making process. Local facilitators are trained using a guide based on a community needs assessment, and conversation groups are convened to include participants of diverse ages and genders.

The LOWO community conversations that involve discussions of local issues happen at least once a month. Issues identified in each meeting are followed by the implementation of a practical action plan that has to be carried out in the respective participating localities before the next community conversation sessions are held.

For example, an issue identified in all participating communities in 2022 was access to roads and bridges. One action plan discussed was to approach the district government administration leaders for their support, approval, and assistance in facilitating the rehabilitation of local community roads and bridges while taking ownership of the initiative.

The community conversation approach helps participants apply their knowledge and develop a proactive approach to solving their local problems as learning their way out (LOWO) rather than waiting for external entities to intervene or initiate solutions to a community's problems.

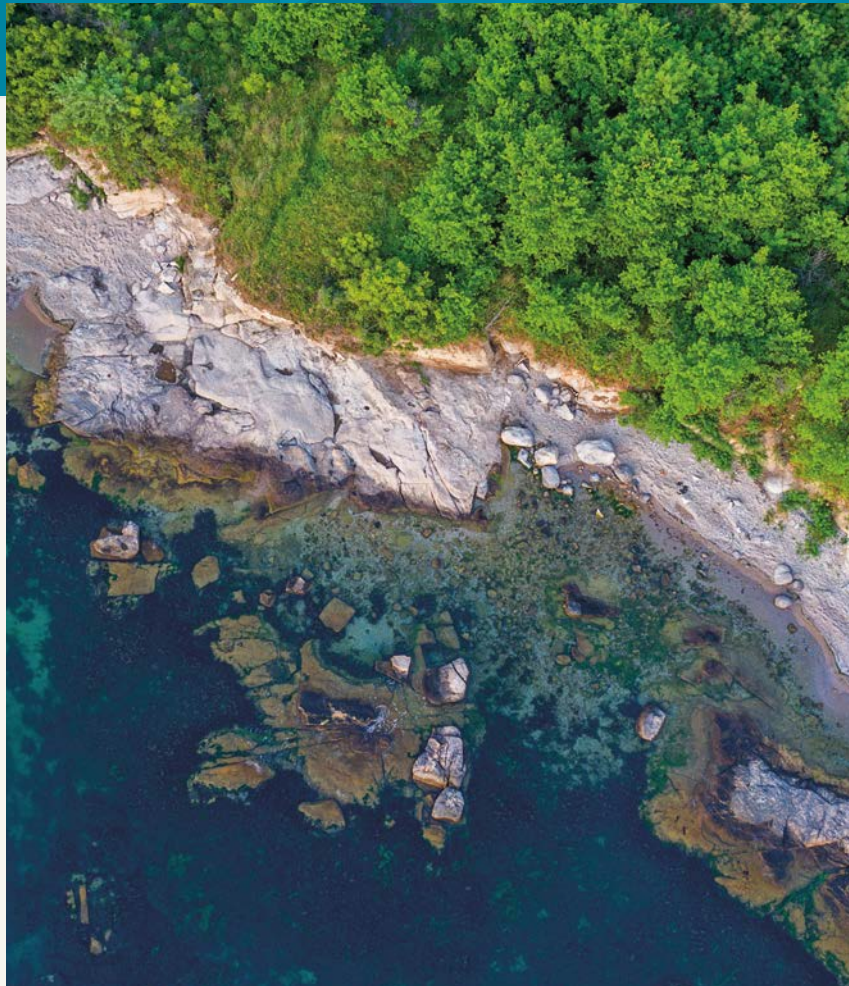
# Environment

**C**limate change has had a significant impact on rural communities around the world, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and posing new challenges. Rising temperatures, unpredictable rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events have disrupted agricultural activities, leading to decreased crop yields and increased food insecurity. Water scarcity and increased frequency of droughts have affected livestock production and the availability of clean drinking water. Additionally, climate change has increased the prevalence of vector-borne diseases, adversely impacted livestock and natural ecosystems and threatening the livelihoods of communities that are heavily reliant on farming and natural resources.

Climate change impacts are also responsible for an increase in forced migration. Rural residents, facing diminishing

livelihood opportunities and deteriorating living conditions, often seek better prospects in urban areas or even attempt to migrate to other countries. This movement of people causes a strain on resources and infrastructure in receiving regions, exacerbating social and economic tensions.

To mitigate the impacts of climate change on rural communities, efforts must be made to enhance climate resilience and adaptability. This includes promoting sustainable farming practices, such as agroforestry and conservation agriculture, to improve soil health, water management, and crop diversity. Access to climate information and early warning systems can help communities prepare for extreme weather events, while investments in renewable energy and clean technologies can provide alternative energy sources and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

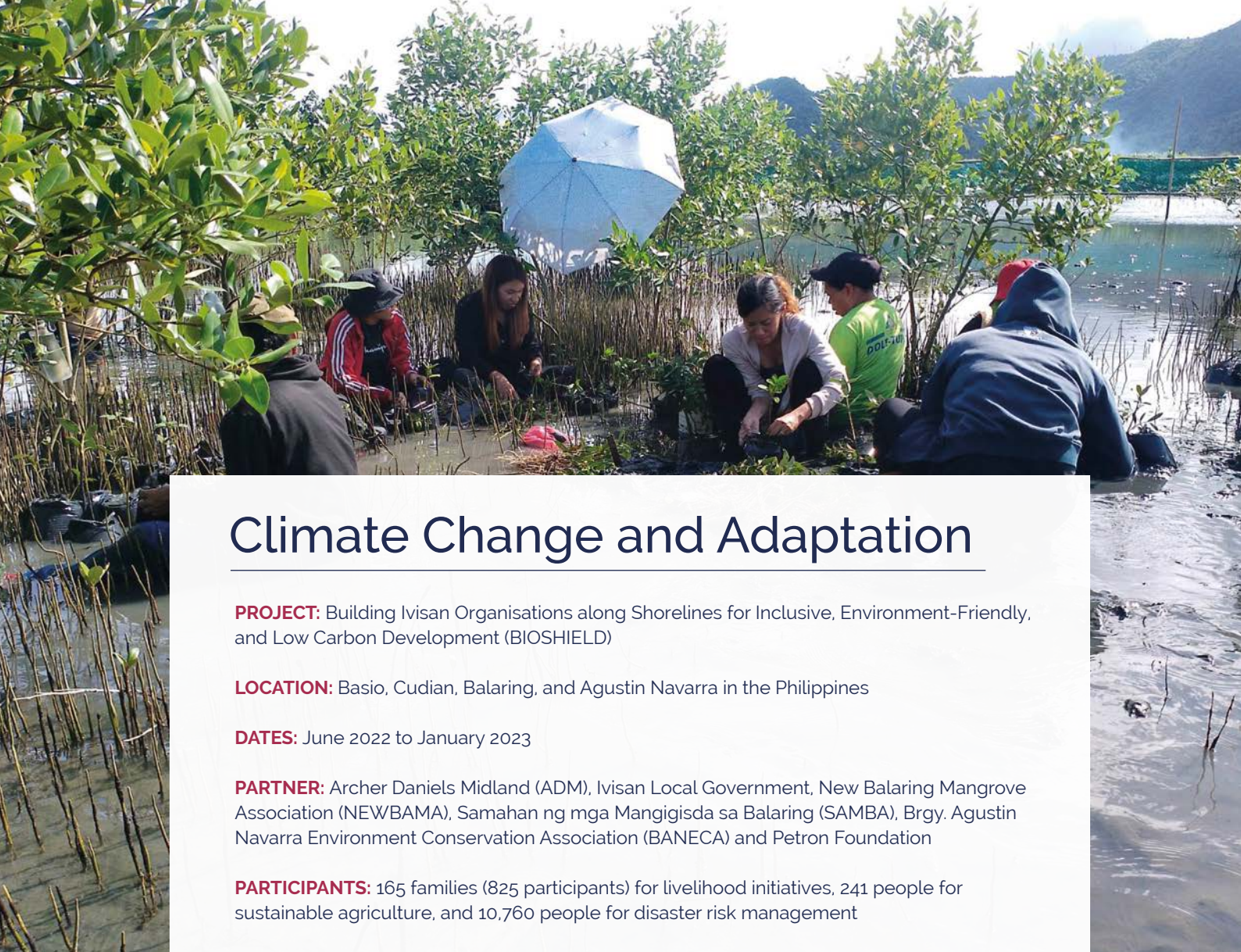


## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION**

IIRR promotes and implements climate-smart villages around the world. By encouraging the implementation of sustainable management of landscapes and waterscapes, these projects foster rural community resilience to climate change as agrobiodiversity regenerates.

## **DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

IIRR fosters a systematic approach to managing natural disasters. These projects identify the underlying causes of disasters, build community resilience, and determine the most efficient way to deliver crisis management in the wake of a disaster.



# Climate Change and Adaptation

**PROJECT:** Building Ivisan Organisations along Shorelines for Inclusive, Environment-Friendly, and Low Carbon Development (BIOSHIELD)

**LOCATION:** Basiao, Cudian, Balaring, and Agustin Navarra in the Philippines

**DATES:** June 2022 to January 2023

**PARTNER:** Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), Ivisan Local Government, New Balaring Mangrove Association (NEWBAMA), Samahan ng mga Mangigisda sa Balaring (SAMBA), Brgy. Agustin Navarra Environment Conservation Association (BANECA) and Petron Foundation

**PARTICIPANTS:** 165 families (825 participants) for livelihood initiatives, 241 people for sustainable agriculture, and 10,760 people for disaster risk management

**PROJECT GOAL:** To rehabilitate Ivisan's coastal mangroves to ensure fisheries and provide bio-shields against the ravages of climate change, to improve livelihood sources through food diversification for communities in mangrove areas in Ivisan, and to engage communities in disaster preparedness.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Mangroves are a vital source of food and income for coastal communities and also serve to protect these communities from extreme weather events. Environmentally, mangroves are one of the most carbon-rich biomes – storing five times more carbon below ground than tropical forests. Mangroves also stabilize coastline ecosystems and prevent erosion. Despite their protective role, these ecosystems are exceedingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, as evidenced by the scale of devastation caused by Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, in which 6,000 Filipinos lost their lives and more than 900,000 families were displaced.

The BIOSHIELD project, funded by ADM, worked in partnership with local government officials, farmers, fisherfolks, and business owners to identify challenges and previous local coping mechanisms for living in and around Ivisan's mangroves. The project targeted the rehabilitation of mangroves and construction of nurseries to repair and expand the forests. Local communities planted 4.2 hectares of mangroves, built two new nurseries in Agustin Navarra and Cudian, and supported the

existing nursery in Basiao.

While new mangroves were being planted, community members – in consultation with barangay councils – purchased livelihood packages consisting of materials to support oyster production, fish farming, raising livestock and poultry, and garden containers for vegetable gardens. These livelihood packages were accompanied by training on climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and scaling methods for livestock and poultry production.

In addition to rehabilitating mangrove forests and food processing systems, the project reviewed community contingency plans for future disasters. In partnership with Capiz Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office and Roxas City LGU Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office, community members were trained on contingency planning and then returned to their villages to develop their own plans. All four participating villages prepared a disaster risk management plan for 10,760 people.



## Disaster Risk Reduction

**PROJECT:** Applying seasonal climate forecasting and innovative insurance solutions to climate risk management for the agriculture sector in Southeast Asia (DeRISK Southeast Asia)

**LOCATION:** Cambodia and Myanmar

**DATES:** April 2018 to March 2022

**PARTNERS:** CGIAR-Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), the International Development Research Center-Canada (IDRC), the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT (The Alliance), local NGOs, various government agencies

**PARTICIPANTS:** 10,986 village farmers, members of agricultural cooperatives, and local authorities

**PROJECT GOAL:** To develop climate risk management systems, best practices, and insurance products that will shield smallholder farmers and businesses across the agricultural value chain in Cambodia and Myanmar from physical and financial disaster associated with climate change. The project assists in developing national and regional adaptation and risk management strategies.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

An estimated 2.1 billion people rely on agriculture as their primary source of income. Drought is putting these livelihoods at risk, often halting and reversing gains in food security and poverty reduction. Rather than relying on short-term solutions (such as increasing use of fertilizers), seasonal forecasting provides long-term outlooks of changing climates, thereby providing local communities with data to create more resilient and adaptable food systems.

Implemented across four Southeast Asian countries – Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Laos – the DeRISK project worked in partnership with rural communities to implement climate-smart villages (CSVs) to facilitate community-based adaptation in farming practices as a response to climate change.

Early planning for these CSVs involved community engagement in mapping, seasonal forecasting, and focus group discussions through a Participatory Climate Risk and Vulnerability

Assessment (PCRVA). Using this assessment, community members co-identified critical effects of climate change on specific crop production, contributing to the formation of locally relevant climate smart agriculture (CSA) practices.

Forecasting and meteorological data to support effective implementation of CSA practices was made available to communities via the SESAME mobile app. Orientation to CSA and access to improved technology enabled farmers to adapt crop planting and rotation, as well as diversification into livestock and poultry farming.

Communities established Local Technical Agro-Climatic Committees (LTACs), which supported the further development of local CSVs. Roving workshops with government officials, NGOs, and other farmers were organized throughout the areas to foster resilient networks for ongoing learning on agrobiodiversity and climate adaptation practices.

# Food Systems

According to the FAO, the number of people affected by hunger increased by 46 million in 2021, totaling 828 million worldwide. Extreme weather patterns, political instability and rising food and transport costs continue to hinder the production of crops and prevent food from reaching the people who need it most. Our current food systems are unable to withstand the pressures of these increasing issues and, in fact, are directly responsible for a large portion of them. Intensive farming practices devastate the environment, compounding the impacts of climate change and making it increasingly difficult to grow the quantity and quality of crops required to support a healthy global population. Under our current food systems, smallholder farmers who do the majority of the work are denied sufficient economic rewards in food-value chains. The contribution of women to our food systems is particularly overlooked, with drastic consequences. A study by the FAO found that if women worldwide had the same access to productive resources as men, they would increase farm yields by 20-30%. Achieving equity and sustainability within our food systems is thus essential if we are to meet the demands of a growing global population.



## FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

As well as providing emergency relief to those facing hunger, IIRR addresses malnutrition by promoting dietary diversity. Through cost-effective and sustainable solutions such as community gardens, rural communities are not only afforded access to nutritious food, but are also made more resilient to social risks such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

## AGRICULTURE

In order to address the damage that our current food systems are doing to rural communities and the world, IIRR's agriculture programme promotes sustainable agricultural practices. By adopting innovative bio-farming techniques, farmers are able to boost yields while protecting their environment. In addition, IIRR empowers farmers within the food-value-chain, allowing them access to increased capital.



# Food Security

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**PROJECT:** Emergency Livelihoods Response Programme

**LOCATION:** Lake State, Rumbek North County, South Sudan

**DATES:** June 2022-October 2022

**PARTNER:** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

**PARTICIPANTS:** 41,129 community members

**PROJECT GOAL:** Provide sustainable emergency relief to vulnerable rural communities facing food insecurity.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

In 2022, South Sudan faced a severe drought that exacerbated the country's existing challenges and led to a humanitarian crisis. The drought, which was caused by a combination of factors including climate change and insufficient rainfall patterns, resulted in widespread crop failures, water scarcity, and livestock losses. The drought's consequences were particularly dire in rural areas, where the majority of South Sudan's population resides and depends on subsistence agriculture. Crop failures and depleted pastures resulted in dwindling food supplies and limited income opportunities. Many families were forced to sell their assets, including livestock, in order to cope with the situation, further deepening their vulnerability. Fighting between the country's rival factions further contributed to severe food shortages by preventing people from planting and harvesting crops and cutting them off from alternative food sources. As a result, over 7 million people - more than two-thirds of the country's population - continue to face extreme hunger. According to the IPC, 1.4

million children under the age of 5 will experience acute malnourishment in 2023.

To address the extreme food insecurity of rural South Sudanese people in this acute time of need, IIRR delivered an emergency program to distribute crop and vegetable kits with the help of funding from the FAO. Packs of planting tools, maize, sorghum, cowpea, cabbage, and eggplant seeds were distributed to 5,000 households in hard-to-reach areas. At least 60% of these households were headed by women, and distribution prioritized especially vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, people with illnesses and disabilities, and child-headed families. IIRR formed and trained several committees to ensure that all vulnerable groups were considered and to secure the effective delivery of these packs. As a result, 5,000 households were equipped with sustainable food sources that reduced their vulnerability to conflicts and extreme weather in the region.





# Agriculture

**PROJECT:** Gulayan Sa Barangay

**LOCATION:** Silang, Imus City, and Indang, Cavite Province, Philippines

**DATES:** September 2021 to December 2022

**PARTNERS:** MetroBank and Give2Asia

**PARTICIPANTS:** 2,480 individual members of landless households

**PROJECT GOAL:** To improve the food security of rural communities in the Philippines through community gardens using bio-intensive agricultural techniques.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

According to the ADP, 18.1% of the population in the Philippines lived below the national poverty line in 2021. Despite having an agricultural sector that employs 24% of the national workforce, food inaccessibility is a significant problem in the country. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated this problem. The disruption of food supply chains, inflation, and loss of employment have pushed roughly 1 in 10 households into food insecurity, according to figures published by the World Food Programme (WFP).

IIRR's flagship project Gulayan Sa Barangay seeks to transform conventional food systems to provide rural communities with sustainable food sources and make them resilient to social and environmental shocks. In 2022, partnerships with MetroBank and Give2Asia led to the establishment of seven new school-based community gardens in Cavite Province. The gardens gave landless households access to land, allowing them to cultivate green spaces to grow fresh vegetables for food and income. Families received planting tools, seeds, and training in the bio-

intensive agricultural techniques that IIRR has been championing since the 1980s. Through this training, project participants acquired the knowledge and skills required to plant indigenous vegetables, make organic pesticides and fertilizers, and use sustainable, cheap irrigation methods by storing rainwater.

Using these techniques, the participants successfully harvested a variety of over 20 types of vegetables, such as pechay, eggplant, radish, string beans, tomatoes, mustard, and okra. Over the course of the project, 550 families experienced benefits including increased access to land and increased consumption of locally-sourced vegetables. As well as providing a valuable food source for the entire community, the harvests from the gardens also generated an additional source of income for project participants and their families. Of the food produced, a large proportion was consumed at home, and the rest was either shared with neighbors and relatives or sold to the community at local markets. In this way, the gardens provided a local food system that benefitted the community as a whole.

# Health

**P**romoting health and wellbeing for all at all ages is an important Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), encompassing a wide range of services and activities. By integrating health into the sustainable development agenda, there is recognition that a healthy population is fundamental to economic growth and social development. It acknowledges the interconnectedness between health and other sectors, such as education, poverty eradication, gender equality, and sustainable communities.

Good hygiene represents a key element to health and remains difficult when almost half of the world's population lacks access to safe sanitation, including soap and water. Likewise, resilient health services are essential for global health and wellbeing, particularly in a healthcare landscape affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate crisis.

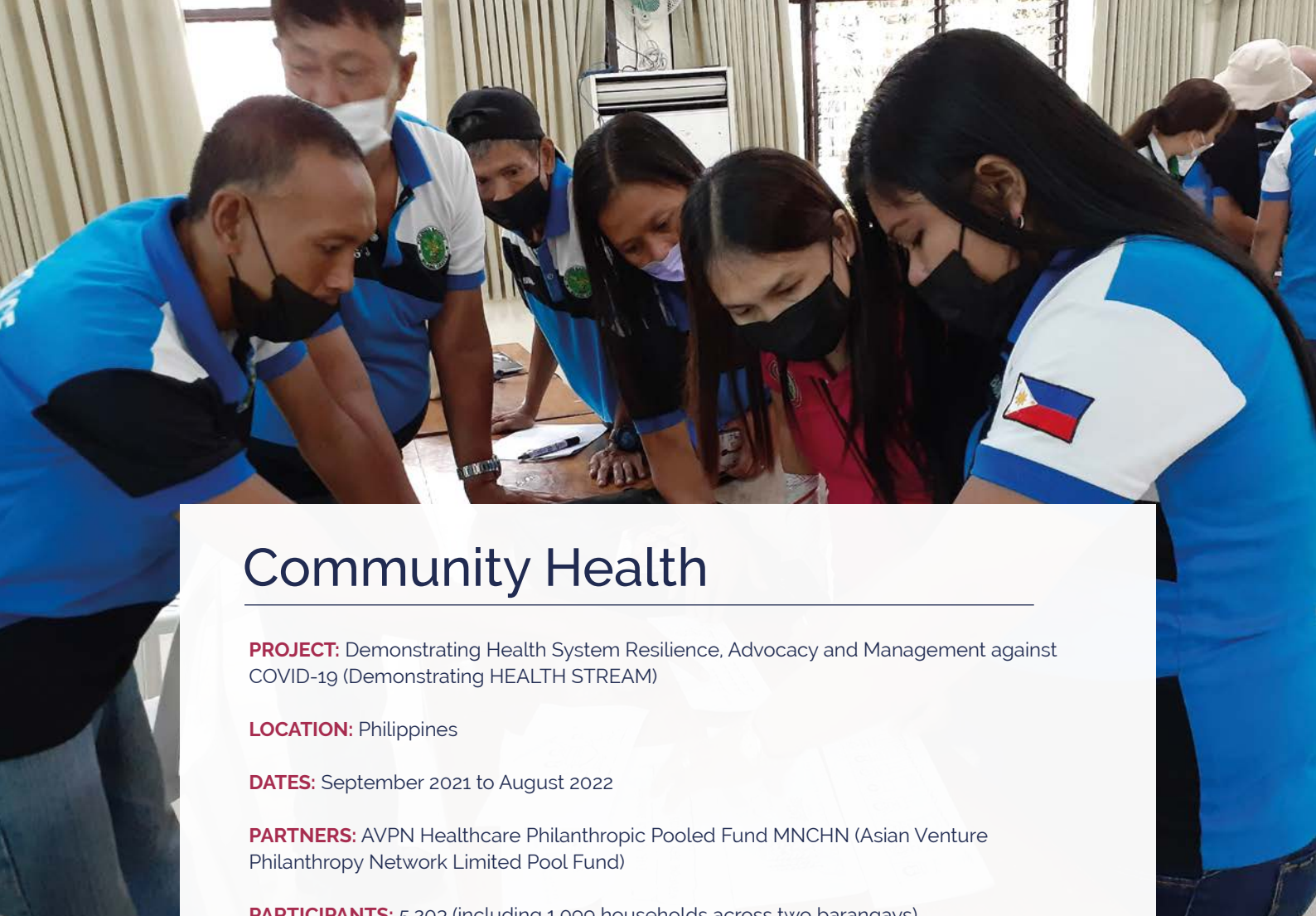


## **WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH):**

Aims to help members of the community increase the adoption of better hygiene practices via education and the construction of water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities.

## **COMMUNITY HEALTH:**

Fosters increased health system resilience through education and equipment in order to better prepare for future pandemics, emergencies and natural disasters. This program also advocates, builds awareness, and educates on sexual reproductive health and rights.



# Community Health

**PROJECT:** Demonstrating Health System Resilience, Advocacy and Management against COVID-19 (Demonstrating HEALTH STREAM)

**LOCATION:** Philippines

**DATES:** September 2021 to August 2022

**PARTNERS:** AVPN Healthcare Philanthropic Pooled Fund MNCHN (Asian Venture Philanthropy Network Limited Pool Fund)

**PARTICIPANTS:** 5,203 (including 1,099 households across two barangays)

**PROJECT GOAL:** To mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and increase the capacity to handle emergencies and disasters in rural communities through the training and formation of the Barangay Health Emergency Response Teams (BHERTs) and to enhance capacity and resilience by furnishing communities with response equipment.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Health system resilience encompasses the capacity to ready for and respond to shocks while minimizing associated negative impacts, recover rapidly, and adapt accordingly. Strengthening this resilience results in better preparedness for future emergencies and disruptions to healthcare provision. COVID-19 has illuminated the strengths and flaws of many health systems worldwide, exposing where they needed more resilience. The Philippines employs a health system marked by decentralization involving a network of regional and national health systems, which poses disadvantages in terms of fragmentation and advantages in confronting crises, such as Typhoon Ruby in 2014. Still, COVID-19, unprecedented in its scope, intensity, and duration, severely tested the health system. As such, bolstering communities' healthcare systems through equipment and training has proven essential in combating future pandemics and disasters, particularly as demonstrated by insufficient core capacities in Southeast Asia in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strengthening Primary Healthcare Systems in Southeast Asia to Mitigate the Impact of COVID-19 and Future Pandemics, a project conducted in collaboration with AVPN, supported the Philippine government's Barangay Health Emergency Response Teams (BHERTs) in their efforts to improve awareness surrounding COVID-19 and vaccination among community members, as well as to improve capacities of community health leaders on preparedness, prevention, mitigation, and response to COVID-19 and future emergencies and disasters, especially in rural communities most vulnerable to the effects of future pandemics and disasters. It also sought to improve access to primary health care and strengthen the capacity of local health workers – fundamental to the resilience of health systems. The provision of resources, assistance, and training where needed by the community to fill gaps identified by community members and leaders helped strengthen and increase organizational capacity and human resources. The program thus helped improve community health systems' resilience in the face of the pandemic while further strengthening them for future crises.



# Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

**PROJECT:** Bio-Intensive Gardens in Schools

**LOCATION:** Cambodia

**DATES:** June 2020 to August 2022

**PARTNERS:** funded by IIRR Cambodia

**PARTICIPANTS:** 2,318 children, 80 parents, 74 teachers

**PROJECT GOAL:** To increase adoption of good hygiene practice among children and parents through the development and dissemination of information and educational materials and to support the construction of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Handwashing ranks among the most important practices of hygiene and food safety. It significantly reduces the transmission of a number of illnesses, including those acquired from germs found outside. For example, proper handwashing helps decrease diarrheal diseases by 30%, some of which can prove fatal. Diminishing cases of diarrheal illness and the subsequent malnutrition it can cause contributes to significant reduction, prevention, and elimination of stunting among children under 5. It is therefore important to wash hands with soap and water before and after gardening and especially before eating.

The Bio-Intensive Gardens in Schools project, implemented and funded by IIRR Cambodia, worked in partnership with teachers, village chiefs, commune councils, district agriculture officers, district officers of education, parents and youth to develop programming that taught children, parents, and teachers sustainable agricultural techniques adapted to climate change and variation, as well as hand hygiene. The program targeted 8 schools (7 primary and 1 junior high school) with 2 schools participating

in a special awareness program surrounding hand hygiene. Awareness training involved educating teachers and students with workshops demonstrating proper handwashing technique, as well as information regarding how often they should wash their hands and when they should wash their hands, highlighting the importance of doing so in the setting of gardening and eating.

Such training accompanied lessons in the sustainable production of vegetables and trees using natural resources without harsh chemicals. Participants also traveled to other schools to teach others the agricultural and hand hygiene techniques they had themselves learned. Ultimately, participants were afforded the ability to manage their own gardens utilizing an agro-ecological approach while employing proper hand-washing technique with soap and water. Participants thus learned not only the importance of sustainable, self-sufficient agriculture but also the significance of water, sanitation and hygiene in gardening and food safety.

# Furthering Knowledge in International Development

In the realm of international development, thought leadership and knowledge product management play vital roles in shaping effective strategies, fostering innovation, and driving sustainable progress. As the world faces complex challenges related to poverty, inequality, climate change, and other global issues, the need for well-informed and visionary leaders who can generate and disseminate valuable knowledge has never been more crucial.



**Thought leaders** contribute valuable perspectives that can shape policies, strategies, and interventions. They help advance the field of international development by generating innovative approaches to complex challenges, promoting evidence-based practices, and advocating for positive change. By sharing their knowledge and experiences, thought leaders can mobilize support, build consensus, and drive collective action towards achieving sustainable development goals.

**Knowledge product management** includes reports, research findings, case studies, best practices, guidelines, and policy briefs, among others. In international development, knowledge products facilitate learning and capacity-building by capturing and disseminating lessons learned from past experiences. They also enable evidence-based decision-making by providing policymakers, practitioners, and communities with current and reliable information. Effective knowledge product management enhances accountability and transparency by making development efforts and their outcomes more visible and accessible to the public.

IIRR is widely recognized as a leader in furthering knowledge through its training, research, documentation, and technical assistance activities. In 2022, IIRR led a multitude of these activities, including:

- Technical assistance to the Leyte Sab-a Peat Swamp Forest Restoration Initiative
- Training on Tracking Progress and Impacts via Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL)
- Training on Facilitating Community-based Adaptation: Lessons from Climate Smart Village
- Technical Assistance to the Study on Peatland Business Model in South-East Asian Countries
- Research study on conservation and use of traditional vegetables and school food environments in the Philippines
- Technical Assistance on Climate-Smart and Community-Driven School Feeding
- Documentation for Deepening Knowledge Management in Regenerative Agriculture through the Development of the Pulses Value Chain in Eastern and Central Kenya
- Training on Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction
- Technical Assistance to 6 countries on landscape level approaches for Sustainable Land and Forest Management using Farmer field schools (FFS)/Agro-pastoralist field school (APFS) and development of two accompanying knowledge products
- Documentation to finalize the report on the South-South and Triangular Cooperation technology and knowledge exchanges at FAO-MASHAV capacity development courses to support the livestock sector and strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities in Africa

IIRR is proud of the role that the organization plays in furthering thought leadership and knowledge product management in the field of international development. Building upon individual and collective expertise from its more than 60 year history, IIRR is a leading actor in empowering individuals and organizations to shape the rural development agenda, promoting evidence-based practices, and driving positive change towards a more equitable and sustainable world.





# The Yen Center

The Yen Center, named in honor of the organization's founder, Dr. Y.C. James Yen., serves as headquarters for IIRR. The Center is nestled on 50 hectares of beautiful forest grounds, 39 km. south of Manila.

In recent years, the Yen Center played a significant part in the fight against COVID-19 by cooperating with the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Silang, Cavite to provide quarantine facilities as part of efforts to slow transmission of the virus. Due to pandemic restrictions, the Yen Center could not operate at its full capacity for the majority of 2022 and did not resume regular operations until the later part of the year.

Nonetheless, the Yen Center witnessed several significant achievements in 2022, the first of these being an agreement with 16th Cent Food Services. During the height of the pandemic, 16th Cent was established as a coffee shop at The Observatory in nearby Tagaytay, enjoying instant success by drawing significant foot traffic to the venue. This early success prompted 16th Cent to expand its business into Food Services and partner with tourism establishments, including the Yen Center. The partnership goal with 16th Cent is to establish a Nature Theme Café at the Yen Center, a catalyst for the Center's branding to be a premier ecotourism destination.

The Yen Center's second achievement of 2022 was an agreement with COMPASS, a maritime training center, to hold the Bestlink College of the Phils. Wood Camp on YC campus grounds. This agreement enabled the Center to transform through the installation and construction of obstacle courses and team-building facilities needed for the program. Almost 9,000 students attended the camp from October to December to fulfill a requirement for all incoming first-year college students under the National Service Training Program (NSTP).

The third significant activity for the Yen Center in 2022 was the preparation of the campus to host the first International Ecotourism Travel Market in association with the Asian Ecotourism Network and the International School of Sustainable Tourism (ISST) in early 2023. Yen Center staff worked tirelessly to beautify the grounds and facilities in anticipation of hosting the first green travel marketplace and selling event of its kind, showcasing goods with a significant ecotourism and sustainability component.



# IIRR's Global Learning Program



## Mission, approach and legacy

IIRR's commitment to empowering communities and building a sustainable future through the transformative Rural Reconstruction (RR) approach remains resolute. Our applied learning program has trained more than 12,600 individuals and 370 organizations across 97 countries since our inception in 1960. These achievements have been made possible through fruitful collaborations with esteemed partners like the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), enabling us to expand our reach and share our expertise in rural reconstruction, participatory development, and innovative solutions.

With an unwavering focus on empowering individuals and communities, our training program has continuously evolved to address emerging needs and challenges. We have embraced vital themes such as Regenerative Agriculture, Gender Equality, Food Security, Aquaculture, and Participatory Action Research, recognizing their significance in creating sustainable and resilient societies. In the dynamic 1980s, we fostered partnerships with international NGOs, channeling our efforts into the RR approach and the key capabilities envisioned by our founder, Y.C. James Yen.

Today, our collaboration with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) has allowed us to implement impactful country-level programs in critical areas, including food systems, environmental preservation, education, economic empowerment, and health. Through these targeted initiatives, we enhance community resilience, foster sustainable development, and contribute to a more equitable world. These endeavors are aligned with IIRR's comprehensive 2025 Strategic Plan, guiding our collective efforts to create lasting positive change.

## Current and future directions

IIRR's Applied Learning Program has transformed into the Global Learning Program (GLP), marking a significant shift in our capacity development approach. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the GLP remains committed to building the capabilities of development workers worldwide, fostering people-centered development aligned with Rural Reconstruction (RR) principles. Our focus for the next four years (2022-2025) is strengthening organizational systems, program development, and promoting community-led development practices through peer coaching, learning exchanges, and evidence-based knowledge dissemination.



The NSP participants taking a sightseeing visit to the famous Chocolate Hills in Bohol, Philippines, as part of their course activities. This excursion offers them an opportunity to explore the beauty of the country and its rich natural wonders.



In 2022, the GLP collaborated with other IIRR programs to successfully organize and facilitate two international training courses. The first course, Facilitating Community-based Adaptation Lessons from Climate-Smart Villages (CSVs), took place in October alongside the IDRC Regional Sharing on CSVs' Studies on Household Resilience, Food Systems, and Economic Empowerment of Women. This course attracted diverse participants, with the regional workshop drawing 55 on-site and 110 online attendees. In November, the GLP held a course titled Enhancing Capacities on Nutrition-Sensitive Programming (NSP), with 20 individuals representing 18 organizations from 11 countries. These courses aimed to enhance participants' understanding of sustaining natural resource-based livelihoods, household food security, nutrition, and the risks and vulnerabilities associated with climate change's impact on food security and nutrition.

In addition to training courses, the GLP supported the management team of the Regional Center for

Asia (RCA) and collaborated with partners such as the Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Network (SUN CSN) Secretariat. These partnerships enabled us to share expertise, enhance capacities, and promote people-centered development approaches. The GLP team has continuously been supporting the IIRR country teams in Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Uganda as pilot host countries in the Person-centered Food System (PCFSy): Fostering Human Rights-based Approaches initiative. IIRR has been a member of the PCFSy Consortium along with the Biodiversity and CIAT Alliance, and Rikolto in Honduras, led by the John Hopkins University and funded by the Swedish Development Cooperation (SDC).

In 2023, the GLP will organize events focusing on nutrition-sensitive programming, climate-smart villages, and participatory monitoring, evaluation, and learning. Through such initiatives, the GLP aims to enhance capacities and promote people-centered development approaches. Participants will gain valuable knowledge and skills to integrate key considerations into their development programs, contributing to sustainable and inclusive development practices.

To expand its impact, the GLP is engaging experts from various fields as resource persons and exploring partnerships with academic and private sector institutions. These collaborations aim to broaden our reach and promote sustainable and inclusive development practices.

IIRR remains dedicated to empowering development actors, generating and disseminating knowledge, and driving effective social transformation. We are excited about the future and the positive impact we will create together.

To learn more about IIRR's Global Learning Program (GLP), we invite you to visit our website at [iirr.org/learn-with-us/](http://iirr.org/learn-with-us/)



## Feedback

"The training provided valuable insights to me and my work. The field visit was full of learning too. After I returned, I shared back learning with my team. I also planned to review the climate-smart program and incorporate some of my learning. Unfortunately, resource limitations stemming from post-COVID-19 ODA cuts in the UK significantly constrained our program. As a result, there was little enthusiasm for implementing new interventions. Nonetheless, our program continues to incorporate climate-smart approaches, and I eagerly anticipate an upcoming field visit to assess its progress in the coming weeks."

**Bimal Ghimire**, British Embassy in Nepal, CBA/CSVs training participant

"The course surpassed my learning expectations, and I would like to thank IIRR for ensuring the training was successful. The coordination from pick-up transport, accommodation, meetings, and travel to Bohol was excellent. I would also like to express my appreciation to SUNCSN for identifying and addressing gaps among networks. I strongly believe that this training will go a long way in empowering CSAs in implementing effective nutrition-sensitive interventions."

**Kudakwashe Zombe**, National Coordinator, Zimbabwe Civil Society Organizations Scaling Up Nutrition Alliance, Zimbabwe, NSP Training Participant



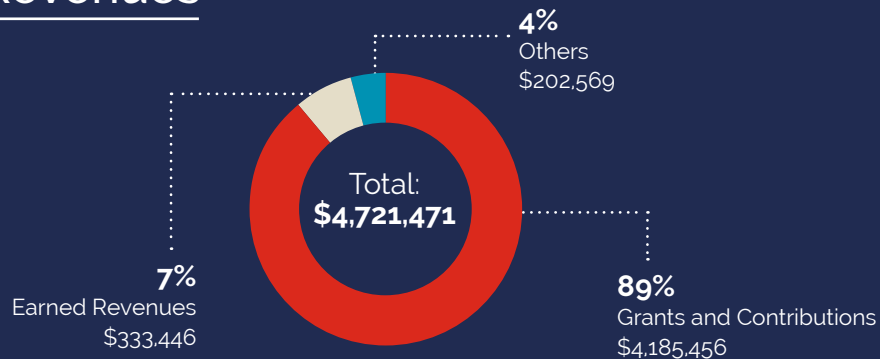
# 2022 Financial Report

**W**e are sincerely thankful to our supporters, donors, partners, and volunteers for providing resources that helped us pursue our work and mission. Through your generous support, 2022 revenue reached \$4.7 million, of which \$4.2 million or 89% came from partner project funding and various other contributors supporting our programs. The remaining 11% of revenue, or \$500 thousand, came from offering training courses, technical assistance, and other services that augment the development funds for the communities we serve.

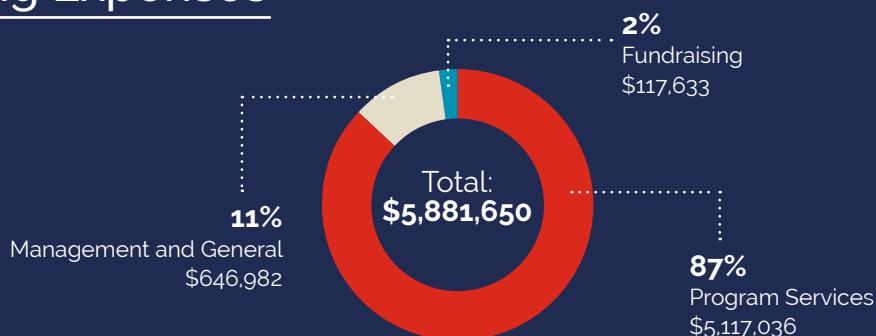
For the year 2022, spending was \$5.9 million; this includes expenses in implementing the projects which were approved in the current year and also from previous years. Of this spending, 87% or \$5.1 million was used to implement our core programs on Education, Food Security and Resilient Livelihoods, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Climate Change Adaptation. The remaining 13% or \$800 thousand, was expenses for Management, General Operations, and Fund Raising.

We are proud to be recognized as an accountable and transparent organization receiving the highest ratings in the industry.

## Operating Revenues



## Operating Expenses



# Statements of Activities and Changes in Net Assets (in US dollars)

|   | Without donor restrictions | With donor restrictions | Total Unaudited 2022 | Total Audited 2021 |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Operating activities</b>                               |                            |                         |                      |                    |
| Operating Revenues  |                            |                         |                      |                    |
| Contributions/grants                                      |                            |                         |                      |                    |
| Foundations   | \$-                        | \$1,816,825             | \$1,816,825          | \$2,048,344        |
| Governments   | -                          | 2,044,120               | 2,044,120            | 4,683,835          |
| Corporations  | 136,049                    | 46,795                  | 182,844              | 115,730            |
| Individuals   | 115,617                    | 26,050                  | 141,667              | 275,419            |
| Use of campus facilities                                  | 147,020                    | -                       | 147,020              | 118,855            |
| Training courses, study missions and technical assistance | 181,426                    | -                       | 181,426              | 166,556            |
| Workshops   | 5,000                      | -                       | 5,000                | -                  |
| Publication Sales   | -                          | -                       | -                    | 175                |
| Other revenues  | 202,569                    | -                       | 202,569              | 247,208            |
| Total operating revenues before releases                  | 787,681                    | 3,933,790               | 4,721,471            | 7,656,122          |
| Net assets released from restrictions:                    |                            |                         |                      |                    |
| Satisfaction of program activities                        | 4,789,363                  | (4,789,363)             | -                    | -                  |
| <b>Total operating revenues</b>                           | <b>5,577,044</b>           | <b>(855,573)</b>        | <b>4,721,471</b>     | <b>7,656,122</b>   |
| <b>Operating expenses</b>                                 |                            |                         |                      |                    |
| Learning community  | 4,646,504                  | -                       | 4,646,504            | 2,250,827          |
| Applied learning  | 470,532                    | -                       | 470,532              | 321,022            |
| Management and general                                    | 646,982                    | -                       | 646,982              | 220,512            |
| Fundraising   | 117,633                    | -                       | 117,633              | 49,612             |
| Total operating expenses                                  | 5,881,650                  | -                       | 5,881,650            | 2,841,973          |
| Change in net assets from operating activities            | (\$304,606)                | (\$855,573)             | (\$1,160,179)        | \$4,814,149        |
| <b>Non-operating activities</b>                           |                            |                         |                      |                    |
| Translation and exchange gain (loss)                      | (151,826)                  | -                       | (151,826)            | (240,055)          |
| Others  | 12,518                     | -                       | 12,518               | 107,826            |
| Change in net assets from non-operating activities        | (139,308)                  | -                       | (139,308)            | (132,229)          |
| Change in net assets                                      | (443,914)                  | (855,573)               | (1,299,487)          | 4,681,920          |
| Net assets, beginning of the year                         | 1,307,816                  | 7,331,590               | 8,639,406            | 3,957,486          |
| Net assets, end of the year                               | 863,902                    | 6,476,017               | 7,339,919            | 8,639,406          |

# Statement of Financial Position (in US dollars)

| Assets   | As of December 31  |                    |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
|  | Unaudited 2022     | Audited 2021       |
| <b>Current assets</b>                          |                    |                    |
| Cash and cash equivalents                      | \$1,563,422        | \$1,860,603        |
| Investments                                    | 503,461            | 683,102            |
| Contribution receivables                       | 3,165,092          | 2,182,684          |
| Other receivables                              | 191,094            | 156,495            |
| Prepayment and other current assets            | 94,897             | 22,574             |
| <b>Total Current assets</b>                    | <b>5,517,966</b>   | <b>4,905,458</b>   |
| <b>Noncurrent Assets</b>                       |                    |                    |
| Noncurrent portion of contribution receivables | 1,860,534          | 4,324,273          |
| Property and equipment, net                    | 185,020            | 80,604             |
| Retirement benefits asset, net                 | 254,772            | 76,467             |
| Other non-current assets                       | -                  | 26,382             |
| <b>Total noncurrent assets</b>                 | <b>2,300,326</b>   | <b>4,507,726</b>   |
|  | \$7,818,292        | \$9,413,184        |
| <b>Liabilities and net assets</b>              |                    |                    |
| <b>Current liabilities</b>                     |                    |                    |
| Accounts payable and other liabilities         | \$475,969          | \$771,150          |
| <b>Non-current liabilities</b>                 |                    |                    |
| Other liabilities                              | 2,404              | 2,628              |
| <b>Total liabilities</b>                       | <b>478,373</b>     | <b>773,778</b>     |
| <b>Net assets</b>                              |                    |                    |
| Without donor restrictions                     | 863,902            | 1,307,816          |
| With donor restrictions                        | 6,476,017          | 7,331,590          |
| <b>Total net assets</b>                        | <b>7,339,919</b>   | <b>8,639,406</b>   |
|  | <b>\$7,818,292</b> | <b>\$9,413,184</b> |

1. Latest annual report filed with the Attorney General of the State of New York is available from IIRR or from the offices of the Attorney General of the State of New York, Department of Law, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.

2. The Institute is exempt from Federal income taxes under Section 501 (c) (3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code and has been classified as an organization which is not a private foundation under Section 509 (a). The Institute qualifies as an organization to which contributions are subject to special limitation provisions under Section 170 (b) (1) (a) of the Code. Donations and contributions made to IIRR are tax deductible.



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IIRR is very grateful to our donors and takes this special opportunity to acknowledge the following institutions and individuals for their commitment to the rural poor. Your generosity and support are helping us to enable communities to reach their full potential and implement solutions to poverty.

**Thank you!**

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