

New directory of training courses

Where can I do further studies in crop protection? What kind of agricultural training opportunities are available in Bangladesh? The 2001 edition of **Challenging Training Opportunities** – a useful tool for people involved in development projects – can help to answer such questions.

Simon Kohler

Human resource development is a central component of agricultural development programmes and projects. Thus it is essential to keep project staff and partners up to date with new trends in agricultural development and arrange effective training for counterpart personnel. The ever-growing quantity and diversity of agricultural training opportunities makes it increasingly difficult to choose cost-effective training events that adequately meet identified training needs. **Challenging Training Opportunities**, the training guide prepared by InfoAgrar and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), is designed as a practical tool to guide and assist people involved in development projects. It addresses development officials at headquarters or at the coordination office level, as well as project managers in the process of selecting training opportunities for project and counterpart staff.

The guide gives an overview of more than 270 training courses offered by different institutions around the world. It provides information about the content, language, date and costs of the courses, as well as necessary qualifications and relevant contact addresses. Emphasis is given to training courses in the following areas:

- ◆ Agricultural Economics and Rural Development
- ◆ Training and Extension
- ◆ Natural Resource Management
- ◆ Biodiversity/Biotechnology
- ◆ Crop Production
- ◆ Livestock Production
- ◆ Agricultural Engineering
- ◆ Project Management
- ◆ Research

The guide does not attempt to give a complete overview of training opportunities available in the very diverse field of agricultural development.

It contains a deliberate selection of courses designed to meet priority needs, organised by experienced institutions.

Challenging Training Opportunities has been carefully prepared by a group of consultants at InfoAgrar. It represents an update of the brochure entitled **Challenging Training Opportunities – A Guide to Selected Courses in Agriculture for Development**, which was published in 1998 by InfoAgrar/SDC. It includes updated information on training events listed in the

previous documents as well as new listings. InfoAgrar/SDC plans to update this brochure periodically. Suggestions for improvement and inquiries from institutions to be considered in the next edition should be addressed directly to InfoAgrar (see last page for address). The guide can be ordered from InfoAgrar. Single copies are sent free of charge.

Search the directory online at:
<http://www.infoagrar.ch/itrain.htm>

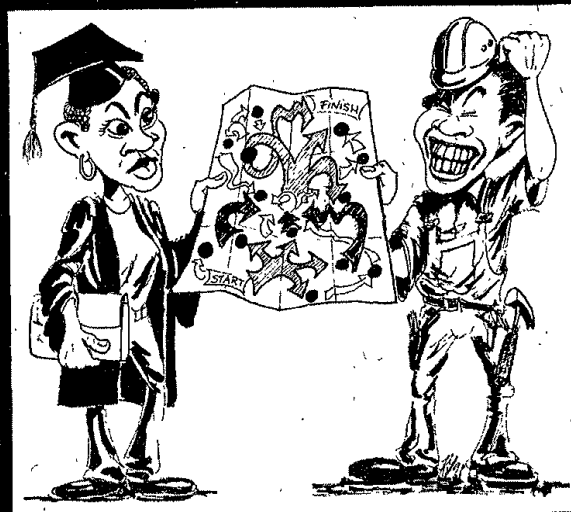


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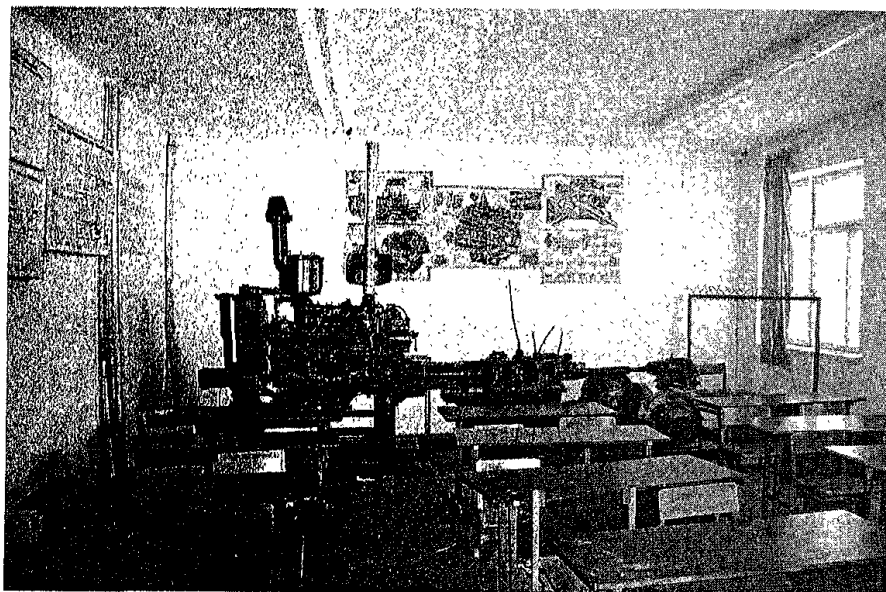
Challenging Training Opportunities

A guide to selected courses in agriculture for development



Un guide de cours sélectionnés en agriculture pour le développement

Défi Formation Continue



A typical classroom: A huge model, some posters and small desks.

Photo by Matthias Rufer

Agricultural education is one way of offering perspectives to rural youth.

The second question can be answered with a determined «yes». Both initial and continuing education are crucial in coping with transformational changes. The VE system is well established and the Kyrgyz government wants to strengthen and reform it. Since not all young people have the intellectual or financial resources to enter a university, the demand for VE will continue. At present, however, agricultural VE doesn't prepare students for the challenges of today's agriculture. Hence support and adjustment are needed for the benefit of rural youth – the faster the better. Moreover, a good initial level of education makes further education programmes, such as the advisory service supported by Helvetas (see the article by Peter Schmidt in InfoAgrar News No. 8), more efficient. Supporting vocational education is thus a logical step after the establishment of an extension service.

For these reasons, Helvetas started a new Agricultural Vocational Education Project in Naryn Oblast in January 2001 (www.helvetas.kg). The overall goal is to promote a locally adapted, effective and sustainable basic agricultural education system that enables graduates to manage private farms and helps raise the income of Kyrgyz farmers.

The Author

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As yet there is no concept of a farmer as a generalist and farm manager. Rather, as in the past, crop production and animal husbandry are considered two separate branches of agriculture, resulting in two separate professions. Overall, curricula are still very specialised and biased towards mechanisation. Economic and management issues are neglected. Only one third of the time available is scheduled for practical training, and even these hours cannot be utilised meaningfully: The schools do not have the necessary infrastructure (workshops, tools, materials, spare parts) to provide training on their own. In the past, students were sent to kolkhozes and sovkhoses for practical training. Today, training takes place mainly on parental farms. This is problematic, because most parents do not have the necessary knowledge or infrastructure to provide training. However, improvements in practical training are feasible, since all schools have land, livestock and machinery.

Additional problems include male bias in the school curricula and restricted access to VS for young people due to

poor public transport and closed dormitories.

4. Outlook

Given such a long list of problems, two principal questions remain: 1) Why have these problems not been addressed? 2) Does it make sense to support agricultural vocational education (VE)?

With reference to question one, three major factors are involved. First, the educational system has only one-third of the financial resources that were available to it in 1990. This lack of funds poses a severe impediment to reform. Second, the Republic Methodological Center has been responsible for curricula, teaching materials and further education only since 1991. It has yet to build up expertise and know-how. Moreover, the centralised structure of the VE system does not make sufficient allowance for local initiative. Third, it has simply been difficult for the VE system to keep up with the rapid if not hasty privatisation process in agriculture.