



International Labour Office  
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific  
International Training Centre

## *Employment, Poverty Reduction and Local Development*

### **An introduction to local resource-based approaches to rural infrastructure development and service delivery (Ref.: Course A351449)**

*Bangkok, 23-27 April 2007*

#### ***Background***

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Investments in rural infrastructure have important implications for employment creation, poverty reduction, and local development. The direct results of these investments include the generation of jobs, incomes and business opportunities, particularly if **local resource-based methods** are applied **for the development and maintenance of infrastructure of public and community interest**. Longer lasting impacts such as improved access to goods and services, larger production and productivity gains contribute to sustainable poverty reduction and local development.

The ILO has developed a strategy, procedures and tools to increase the impact of investments in infrastructure on employment creation, poverty reduction and local development. It works with governments, employers' and workers' organizations, the private sector and community associations in orienting infrastructure investments towards the creation of higher levels of productive employment and towards the improvement of access to basic goods and services for the poor. The ILO experience shows that a combined use of local participation in planning with the utilization of locally available skills, technology, materials, and appropriate work methods can be **an effective and economically viable approach to infrastructure works in developing countries**<sup>1</sup>.

When compared with heavily mechanized techniques, local resource-based approaches:

- absorb more un-/semi-skilled labour (direct and indirect job creation);
- contribute to an increase in household income and consumption, with positive effects on the local economies;
- strengthen the role of local suppliers and small contractors;
- enhance community participation and negotiation between local actors;
- develop local capacities for infrastructure management;
- improve maintenance;
- are more environmentally friendly.

Together with local representative groups, local administrators and practitioners have a key role to play in ensuring an optimum use of locally available resources for development purposes. However, valuable local efforts are often limited by several factors including a mismatch between required skills and existing expertise. Needs assessments and field experiences confirm that there is a growing demand for training and capacity-building services in this area.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information see <http://www.ilo.org/eiip>

Against this background, a **training course** is offered on how to conceive and implement local resource-based infrastructure schemes, as well as on how to make larger use of such schemes towards the achievement of local and national development and poverty reduction goals.

The course is organized by the International Training Centre of the ILO in collaboration with the Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (ASIST-AP Unit) of the International Labour Office and the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

The course will take place at the ILO-ROAP Office in Bangkok, Thailand from 23 to 27 April 2007.

### *Target Group*

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The course is addressed to:

- Local policy-makers and government officials responsible for area/rural development plans and programmes at the district level, as well as those dealing with employment and poverty reduction strategies.
- Decentralized units of concerned line agencies (MoPW; agriculture; rural development; etc....)
- Local Contractor Associations
- Senior staff of development projects
- Civil society representatives (social partners, NGOs and CBOs)
- Educational and training institutions operating in the development field.

### *Learning objectives*

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The objective of the course is to discuss forms of public investment that contribute to reduced poverty through the use of local resources including labour. Ultimately, course participants are expected to learn about the constraints and good practices in conceiving and executing local resource-based programmes in rural infrastructure. By the end of the course, they will also have acquired notions and tools to develop, implement and upscale this type of programmes to the benefit of the poor.

### *Course Content*

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**The course will focus on local resources-based approaches in infrastructure.** Pertinent concepts will be elaborated, and good practice will be illustrated. Practical examples will concern, among others, the development of viable small enterprises, the introduction of community contracting systems for works of community interest, and the advocacy and capacity-building work necessary for effective delivery, maintenance and supervision.

**The course will contain the following modules:**

- **Module 1: Introducing the issues**
  - *Poverty Assessment and Poverty Reduction Strategies*
  - *Decentralization*
  - *Local resource-based approaches*

- *Some examples*

This first module presents local resource-based investment as one of the responsive mechanisms in implementing local and national development plans and poverty reduction strategies. It reviews the current thinking on poverty reduction and the evolution of 'local resource-based' concepts and approaches. Going through this module, participants familiarise with the specific features and the potential of these approaches; they also have the opportunity to raise their specific interests in this area. Possible benefits to national and local governments, sectoral ministries, social partners, local communities and other concerned actors are illustrated and some relevant examples provided.

The module considers the main reasons for taking infrastructure as a strategic entry point and a catalyst for local resource-based growth. Due consideration is also given to the application of the advocated investment practices in relation to different levels of local development and complexity. The level of analysis is the local government unit. Reference is made to ongoing work in this area.

- **Module 2: Local-level planning, participation and job creation**
  - *Local development needs and priorities*
  - *Integrated rural accessibility planning: a participatory tool*
  - *Rural/urban linkages and employment*

Social development and employment/income generation in particular, are still fairly new areas of concern to rural planners and development actors. It would be necessary to make planning more relevant to the needs of local communities, by taking in the local economic, social and cultural conditions. This module provides examples of local resource-based planning and rural development strategies and instruments adoptable for addressing the needs of women and men living in poor rural communities.

In a broad sense, there is a need to adopt a more holistic approach to territorial development, and to rethink the relation rural-urban towards more positive linkages between these sectors. This module illustrates some recent initiatives geared to bridge the rural-urban divide.

- **Module 3: Design and implementation of local resource-based development programmes**
  - *Enabling environment and institutional set-up*
  - *Involving the local construction industry*
  - *Community contracting and local partnerships*
  - *Training and capacity-building aspects*
  - *Appropriate labour practices*

This session reviews the institutional forms for local resource-based schemes, and tries to assess their merits and weaknesses. Examples include: national public works programmes; rural development initiatives; social investment funds; infrastructure component of poverty reduction initiatives; and post-crisis reconstruction programmes. The session looks at the possible role of small construction enterprises in the implementation of local resource-based works, considering the conditions for a long-term local contractor development. This part of the course also focuses on issues relating to the quality of the jobs created in the framework of local resource-based schemes. With regard to this aspect, one of the main issues is the integration of appropriate clauses in the tendering/bidding documentation. Appropriate work organisation and labour management practices are discussed.

With regard to community contracting for works of community interest, the module illustrates a bottom-up contractual approach giving voice and power to local communities. The approach develops local community technical and negotiation skills, in line with the emergence of

decentralisation policies. Examples of application in the rural context are shared which refer to effective partnerships between local communities, administrations and contractors.

The part on local capacity development highlights the importance of investing in training and capacity building as an essential condition for the development and effective application of local resource-based strategies. The presentations in this part draw on the training expertise gained by the ILO over the years through various technical cooperation programmes. Information is shared on existing training materials and facilities.

- **Module 4: Sustainability, up-scaling and impact assessment**

- *Labour-based infrastructure maintenance*
- *From pilot projects to national programmes*
- *Poverty impact*

This session focuses on the maintenance of the assets created/rehabilitated which represent a critical factor for sustainability. Attention is also be given to the issue of mainstreaming local resource-based approaches and programmes into local development plans and policies and poverty reduction processes. In this respect, different operational mechanisms are described, and relevant country experiences illustrated. The methods for assessing the poverty impact of local-resource based programmes are finally considered as an important tool to inform decision-making.

- **Module 5 : Elaboration of action plans**

- *Group work*
- *Discussion*
- *Final wrap-up*

During the last part of the activity, participants are invited to reflect on the course content and to formulate suggestions/orientations for local development interventions in line with the advocated concepts and practices.

### ***Course duration and methodology***

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The course duration is one week.

The event will be facilitated by a team of ILO trainers and technical specialist. It will combine individual presentations by resource-persons, open discussions, and group work on selected topics.

A participatory approach will be adopted for ensuring an active intervention of all participants and a constructive exchange of ideas and information.

This workshop will provide the participants with: a) guidelines for the promotion of local resource-based investment approaches; b) practical orientations for applying such approaches in the execution of infrastructure works of public/community interest; c) examples of concrete achievements; (d) relevant documentation and working tools; and (e) a networking opportunity.

At the end of the week, an evaluation exercise will be carried out to determine the perceived relevance of course content to participants' needs and the effectiveness of the methodology and materials employed in achieving the course's training objectives.

Course material will be distributed to participants: it includes relevant course readings, including case study material, as well as the power-point presentations made during the seminar. ■