



GOOD NEWS SERVICE #49: SPRING 2017

Editorial: Much of this issue is given to two things: 1) the rise of leadership by small farmers aided by UN agencies like IFAD; 2) the amazing leadership given to us by a 19 year old woman from Pakistan “The world needs leadership, based on serving humanity – not based on how many weapons you have. Canada can take that lead.” With these words, on March 14, nineteen year old Malala Yousafzai charmed the assembled parliamentarians in the House of Commons. “Education is vital for security around the world.” she said, “because extremism grows alongside inequality, where people feel they have no opportunity, no hope. When women are educated there are more jobs for everyone. But in the world today 130 million girls are out of school...” (Also see item #1 below.)

1. Ottawa, March 14/17 Malala Yousafzae’s speech to Canada’s Parliament wasn’t just moving; it was also funny

Before a packed Parliament, Malala Yousafzae, Canada’s newest Honorary Citizen, spoke both about the man who almost killed her and the one who attacked Parliament Hill. “The man who attacked Parliament called himself a Muslim – but he did not share my faith, nor that of the 1.5 billion Muslims living

in peace around the world. He did not share our Islam – a religion of learning, compassion and mercy. He shared the hatred of the man who attacked the Quebec City mosque, killing six people who were at prayers. The same hatred as the man who killed civilians and a police officer in London three weeks ago. The same hatred as the man who shot me. These men tried to divide us and destroy our democracies, our freedom of religion, our right to go to school. But you refused to be divided. Canadians, wherever they were born, stand together. And nothing proves this more than your commitment to refugees.

“I have travelled the world and seen many of the problems we face today – war, economic instability, climate change and healthy crises. And I can tell you the answer is girls. The Brookings Institute calls secondary schools for girls the most cost-effective and best investment against climate change. And when a country gives all its children secondary education they cut the risk of war in half. If the whole world stopped spending money on the military for just eight days the \$39 billion saved would provide 12 years of free quality education to every child on the planet.”

2. International Criminal Court provides redress for victims of violations of their human rights

UN Adviser. 7 Feb/17).The Ideals and values that inspired creation of the International Criminal Court still hold true . The setting up of the International Criminal Court (ICC) was a “reckoning” for those who had long disregarded the lives and dignity of their people, the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide has said. It warned that withdrawing from the tribunal could have grave implications for victims seeking redress for serious human rights violations.

“The establishment of the Court signified a global commitment to protect victims, when national judicial mechanisms lacked the capacity, willingness or jurisdiction to prosecute those responsible for the most serious crimes,” wrote Special Adviser Adama Dieng in an opinion piece published in *The East African*. Since the

adoption of the Rome Statute in 1998, more than half of the world's States have joined the Court, 34 among them are African nations – the biggest regional block to date". From the *Good News Agency*. March 10/17.

3. Small Farmers Aided by Back Yard Communities project in Mozambique

Good News Agency, 3 March 2017 – For Argentina Wamuse, a farmer in the outskirts of Maputo, Mozambique, her aspiration to sell agricultural supplies began when she learned how her cousin was successfully selling seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides to local farmers. As a savvy businesswoman, Argentina saw an opportunity to replicate her cousin's success when she learned about the business competition program offered by the Livelihoods, Empowerment, and Development (LEAD) project, a BHP Billiton Sustainable Communities funded, ACIDI/VOCA-implemented program supporting community and economic development in Maputo province.

The LEAD project provided financing to entrepreneurs like Argentina for the creation of small scale supply businesses. Interested applicants created business plans, with the most competitive and viable proposals receiving substantial co-financing assistance. So far, 20 suppliers like Argentina have opened businesses in their backyards, providing farmers in the community with direct access to essential agricultural materials—saving considerable time and money by bringing supplies closer to home. <http://www.acdivoca.org/2017/03/backyard-business/>

4. UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development active in Cambodia

28 February 2017, Rome – The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Government of Cambodia signed a financial agreement today to fund a rural development project that aims to increase incomes for 75,000 smallholder farming households by expanding commercial agricultural markets and developing links between producers, buyers and service providers. Though there has been a dramatic reduction in poverty in Cambodia over the last decade, economic growth in rural areas has become stagnant. This situation can be improved by developing the agricultural sector and specifically, high-value agricultural products for both domestic and export markets. Current challenges include smallholder farmers' limited access to financing and fractured links among smallholder farmers, agribusinesses and markets. The project aims to expand the agricultural sector by organizing and guiding farmers and small and medium businesses to intensify and diversify production, and boost the market value of agricultural products by improving on the quality of production and

processing. The project will also develop and promote 'value chains' by linking producers, buyers and service providers. A 'value chain innovation fund' will be established together with rural banks to provide direct financial support to innovative business proposals by farmers, agricultural cooperatives, agribusinesses and service providers.

https://www.ifad.org/en/newsroom/press_release/tags/p17/y2017/40399923

5. UNESCO Leadership Training is designed by Earth Charter International

Good News Agency: During February of 2017, over one hundred young sustainability leaders gathered in Dublin, Beirut, Nairobi, and New Delhi to train in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Leadership using a UNESCO curriculum developed by Earth Charter International (ECI). This series of ESD Leadership trainings in various regions around the world constitutes the pilot phase of the Flagship Project for Partner Network 4 of UNESCO's Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development. GAP is the follow up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) which aims to generate and scale-up concrete actions in ESD. Within GAP, there are five Priority Action Areas identified.

As the first phase of the Flagship Project for GAP Partner Network 4, UNESCO contracted ECI to develop the training script for a young leaders training on "ESD Leadership". The second phase, carried out in February 2017, was the implementation of regional pilot workshops, where key partners experimented with the training script and trained the first round of ESD Leaders. The Coordinator of Youth Projects at ECI, Sarah Dobson, joined by other GAP key partners from Partner Network 4, attended the pilot workshop in Dublin, Ireland. Meanwhile, the ESD Leadership training was also conducted in Nairobi, New Delhi, and Beirut with young sustainability leaders from each region and joined by other GAP key partners. The trainings used interactive exercises and multimedia methods to engage participants on themes of ESD, systems thinking, leadership, visioning, and facilitation.

6. Climate Change resistance linked to food security in rural areas

13 February 2017, Rome – A statement of intent between the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) promises to boost resilience to climate change and improve the livelihoods of thousands of smallholder farmers around the world. The partnership will serve to maximize the work of both agencies by making new climate-smart technologies and innovations developed by CIAT research available to the smallholder farmers participating in IFAD-supported projects in developing countries. Two new projects will be launched following the signing and will lay a strong foundation for the

partnership. They will promote climate-smart agriculture in Central America, and improve dairy production in East Africa through the use of improved, drought-resilient forage grasses. These projects will demonstrate the value that science and scientific research can bring to IFAD's work on the ground, as well as the support and opportunities that IFAD can offer CIAT to deliver scientific breakthroughs directly to smallholder farmers.

https://www.ifad.org/en/newsroom/press_release/tags/p12/y2017/39583918

7. Up to 24 million small farmers helped to access water for their crops in Indonesia

Good News Agency: Feb. 2017, Rome – The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Government of Indonesia signed a financial agreement today to fund a rural development project that will greatly improve access to water for irrigation and consequently improve food security, incomes and livelihoods for up to 24 million smallholder farmers. IFAD is providing a US\$98.5 million loan and a \$1.5 million grant towards the \$852.9 million Integrated Participatory Development and Management of Irrigation Project. Co-financiers are the Asian Development Bank, the Government of Indonesia and other sources.

Smallholder farmers in Indonesia face a number of challenges, including declining rural infrastructure, diminished access to land, high transport and logistics costs, difficulty reaching markets, vulnerability to erratic weather patterns and lack of rainfall due to a changing climate. The project will improve farm productivity by providing a range of support options that include farmer-to-farmer knowledge dissemination, crop intensification and diversification methods, and better access to, and storage of, high-quality seeds. It will also establish better access to financial services, prioritize innovation in local value chains and encourage partnerships with private suppliers of agricultural inputs. Farmers will be in charge of managing the irrigation systems to ensure that access to water is equitable and that maintenance costs and responsibilities are shared. In 2016, IFAD opened a country office in Jakarta, servicing Indonesia, the Pacific Countries, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste.

https://www.ifad.org/en/newsroom/press_release/tags/p13/y2017/39637917

8. Owls Build Bridges to Peace

Good News Network, March 26, 2017. Scientists from Tel-Aviv University observed that Israeli farmers' use of pesticides to kill rodents was also killing the rats' natural bird predators and having a broader negative effect on biodiversity. They eventually convinced the government to

eliminate the use of pesticides and instead to build boxes to attract owls and kestrels. The owls now consume thousands of rodents per year and increase control capacity by producing as many as 11 offspring per mating pair, every year.

Awareness then shifted to the existence of this as a regional rather than a national problem. Farmers in Palestine and Jordan also struggled with rodents. A “Birds Know No Boundaries” project began to attract attention from individuals in all three countries and many of these participants have become friends, across the borders. The success of the project in the Middle East was noticed in China and there is hope that a similar project might help build bridges between North and South Korea.

<http://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/nature-conservation-becomes-bridge-peace-middle-east/>

9. Turning Ashes into Accommodations

Good News Network, March 29, 2017. The people – and the buildings – of Palestine have been battered by conflict. Two Palestinian women in Gaza have developed a way to recycle ashes from the city’s debris into environmentally friendly, low-cost, heat-resistant, sound-proof bricks to be used in rebuilding houses that have been destroyed during the past ten years of conflict.

<http://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/women-rebuilding-gaza-brick-brick-citys-old-ashes/>

10. The link between agriculture and peace

Because several of the stories in this issue involve agriculture we thought you might be interested in reading more about the role of agriculture in fueling conflict and, conversely, in nourishing stability and peace. The Research Paper Promoting Agricultural Development in Support of Peace was written more than ten years ago, but is an excellent primer on the topic. The following two paragraphs are excerpted from the Executive Summary. The whole paper can be found at <http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0708/DOC15350.pdf> .

Civil wars continue to threaten peace in some of the poorest parts of the world. While the disastrous consequences of civil wars on agriculture, food security and hunger are relatively well studied and documented, the reverse line of causality has been much less explored and understood. It poses much more complex questions: under what circumstances can poor agricultural performance fuel violent conflict and how can robust agricultural development facilitate peace and security, especially in countries prone to civil war? Agriculture

is viewed in a broader context of socio-economic and political development and is aimed at providing livelihood opportunities for the poor to reduce their vulnerability. Many conflicts have their origin in rural agricultural areas, which can no longer provide sufficient food, other basic goods and services, and employment opportunities for their resident populations. Natural resource degradation and increasing scarcity and lack of technological innovation are generally the primary factors that lead to food insecurity. In such situations, growing numbers of poor people might be induced to join a violent conflict in the hope for a better life.

The Next Issue of Good News Service

The preceding item provides a lovely segue to a mention of our next issue. We thought we would take a look at the good work being done by NGOs (Numerous Good Organizations.) They will include at least two that look at agricultural and rural issues in countries at risk: Canadian Food Grains Bank and Veterinarians Without Borders. If you are aware of NGOs or even simple clusters of people who are working to make the world a better and more secure place, please let us know. We'll add them to the report. Thanks! Go well.

.....
The Good News Service is produced by Murray Thomson of Ottawa (613.224.8155) and Randy Weekes of Lanark ON (613.259.2072). We welcome your views and news of other occurring events you wish to share with us. Emails: RandyLWeekes@gmail.com; mothom@rogers.com
.....