

IIRR



2008 ANNUAL REPORT

BUILDING CAPACITY TO OVERCOME
POVERTY





Our History, Our Work

The International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) is an international development, research and training organization with over eighty years of grassroots experience working in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Today, IIRR maintains a strong presence in Eastern Africa and Southeast Asia.

One of the few international development organizations with its headquarters in the Global South, IIRR is strategically located to facilitate south-south learning and exchange. Incorporated in the United States in 1960 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, IIRR's Headquarters and Regional Center for Asia are located in the Philippines, with the Africa Regional Center located in Kenya, a liaison office in the United States, and country offices in Ethiopia, Kenya, Southern Sudan and Uganda. IIRR has a committed team of nearly seventy staff and a global Board of Trustees.

The Credo at the center of IIRR's existence was written by its founder, Dr. Y. C. James Yen, in the 1920s and focuses on two tenets of development long before they became established as fundamental ideas in the field: participatory and sustainable development.

Since the 1920s, IIRR has been building the capacity of the poor and their organizations to help them address the root causes of poverty and to help them develop and deliver sustainable solutions. Together with our local partners, we work to release the social, economic, intellectual and physical potential of the communities we work with.

Jointly with our grassroots partners, IIRR undertakes participatory action research where we test various poverty reduction approaches and technologies. We document lessons learned and best practices from our own work and that of our partners and share these lessons with the international development community through practice-based trainings, workshops, study missions and publications. In so doing, we put into practice our credo of going to the people, learning from the people and planning and working with the people to develop systems, procedures and integrated models that can be replicated globally.

Carrying out our work in partnership with others maximizes our resources and increases the breadth and depth of our efforts. Currently, IIRR works with more than 200 organizations throughout Africa and Asia.

IIRR's efforts have enabled people to stabilize their income, expand their small businesses, obtain quality education, attain gender equality, mitigate disaster, manage conflict, protect and preserve the environment, cultivate their own food and access health services. Our program areas include the following:

- Rural Enterprise and Livelihood
- Environmental Protection
- Natural Resource Management
- Health, Education and Social Well Being

“Relief has its place. But what the people need is not relief, but release – release of their own potential for development.”

– Dr. Y.C. James Yen

Letter from the Board Chair and President

Dear Friends,

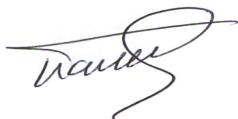
The financial crisis of 2008 not only affected world markets but also threatened the livelihoods and stability of many of the world's most vulnerable. However, thanks to our committed and tireless colleagues and supporters, IIRR continued to work with local communities to ensure access to safe water and nutritious food, mitigate the deleterious effects of natural and manmade disasters, and provide access to quality education for marginalized children. We know that the only way to bring about sustainable change is to work hand-in-hand with local communities, governments and partner organizations — even as resources dwindle. As such, we are grateful to all of you who believe in our work and remain steadfast in your commitment to end poverty in some of the world's most forgotten places.

As 2009 marches on, we reflect back on 2008 as a year marked by extreme challenges, but also by great strides and healthy change. Significant achievements in 2008 include:

- Enrollment of over 3,000 pastoralist children and over 1,000 pastoralist adults in non-formal schools in some of the most remote and arid regions of Kenya and Ethiopia;
- Bringing bio-intensive agricultural techniques, health and nutrition education directly into the classrooms of over 100 poor rural schools in the Philippines, thus reducing malnutrition and providing life-long agricultural skills to communities;
- Providing concrete skills in community-managed disaster risk reduction to some of the world's most at-risk communities in Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Indonesia, thus mitigating harmful effects and paving the way towards reconstruction and development; and
- Conveying modern agricultural techniques and crucial business and life skills to over 4,000 internally displaced persons, refugees and orphaned children in the war-torn region of northern Uganda, enabling them to create and maintain sustainable livelihoods

We honor Tony Gooch, who served as Chair on our Board of Directors for the past two years, and former President, Mike Luz, who led IIRR as President for three years. Their dedication to the mission and vision of IIRR has been invaluable and we are where we are today in part because of their unwavering efforts and commitment.

We are grateful to all of our supporters and ask that you share in our sense of accomplishment and also in the urgency of the work ahead.



Isaac Bekalo
President



James F. Kelly
Board Chair

Vision

A world of equity, justice and peace where all people can lead lives of quality and dignity.

Mission

Building the capacity of the poor and their organizations to overcome poverty.



Isaac Bekalo
President



James F. Kelly
Board Chair

Our Work

The Lakole Mobile School: A Brighter Future for Pastoralists in Kenya

Commencing in 2006, the Pastoralist Education Program contributes to the efforts of government, community and development actors to increase access to quality education for out-of-school children and adult learners in the pastoralist areas of northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia. Innovative delivery methodologies, such as mobile schools that travel with the community and after-hours schools that allow for shepherding during the day, are designed to respond to the lifestyles of pastoralist communities, with particular emphasis on the enrollment and retention of girls. For children, particularly girls, in remote regions such as Lakole, mobile schools are their only hope for a better and brighter future.

Twenty kilometers northwest of Merti town in northern Kenya lies Lakole, a newly-established pastoralist settlement. Lakole means ‘twins’ in the native Boran language, and describes the tendency of animals to produce twins because of the rich vegetation in the rangeland around the settlement. While Lakole initially started as a temporary grazing area, it has now grown into a fairly large, semi-nomadic human settlement. This is largely due to the opening of the Lakole Mobile School.

The Lakole Mobile School opened its doors in May 2006 to provide basic learning facilities to pastoralist children who could not otherwise go to school. Prompted by a large number of children who wanted to attend school and strong demand from parents, Merti Integrated Development Programme (MID-P), a local NGO, consulted with IIRR and worked together to establish the school.

Today the Lakole Mobile School boasts an enrollment of fifty-four students, growing from twelve in 2006. There is one full-time teacher and the school looks forward to being



registered by the Kenyan Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Health in Isiolo has provided a mobile clinic for the school as well as potable water and latrines. The introduction of the school and its facilities has led to a rise in the number of people in Lakole, growing the local economy, as parents now have the option of sending their children to a school that accommodates their pastoralist lifestyle. Even adult herders are enrolling in free evening classes courtesy of the mobile teacher.

Thirteen-year old Muslima Taki is just one of the fifty-four students who has reaped the benefits of her newfound education. Muslima, who comes from a family of nine in Lakole village, helps her family with many domestic chores, including fetching firewood and water. She had never attended school before the Lakole Mobile School opened. Instead, she used to accompany the family donkey to ferry milk to and from Merti town, 25 miles across the scorching desert. Now, Muslima attends Lakole Mobile School because they offer evening classes and, when they move, the school travels with the community. Last term, she was at the top of her class scoring 498 points out of 500. Muslima has excelled at math and now helps her mother keep an accurate record of her milk sales. A brighter future now lies ahead for Muslima, her family and Lakole village.

“Commitment cannot be taught; it can only be caught.” –Dr. Y.C. James Yen

Tackling the Food Crisis: Bio-Intensive Gardening Comes to Philippine Schools

Malnutrition continues to undermine global development gains and accounts for 60 percent of all fatalities in children under the age of five (WHO, 2001). In the Philippines, 32 percent of preschool children and 20 percent of adolescents are underweight. Twenty-eight million Filipinos do not have enough food to meet their nutritional requirements and other basic needs.¹ Due to this global food crisis and its concomitant impact on health, IIRR is returning to one of its foundational programs, Bio-Intensive Gardening (BIG).

IIRR has been at the forefront of sustainable development and agriculture since the 1960s. In 1984 and 1985, IIRR developed and packaged the BIG technology as a response to widespread starvation on Negros Island in the Philippines that was brought about by the collapse of the sugar industry. As a hunger-prevention strategy, IIRR worked with local communities to set up thousands of bio-intensive gardens throughout the province.² In 2005, IIRR embarked on a 'BIG Intensification Program' that brought BIG technology, health and nutrition education

directly into the classrooms and compounds of over 100 poor, rural schools in the Philippines, thus reducing malnutrition and providing life-long agricultural skills to communities.

BIG is a biological (as opposed to chemical) form of agriculture in which a small area of land is intensively cultivated using nature's own ingredients to produce food while maintaining the soil's long-term productivity. At the heart of the approach is the effort to improve the soil's capability to nurture and sustain plant life. What a BIG gardener tries to do on his or her own small plot of land is to stimulate and replicate a natural forest, with the constant recycling of nutrients and regular maintenance of soil, moisture and microbial conditions.

IIRR provides training to school administrators and school boards on how to effectively design school feeding programs using BIG technology. This training allows them to adopt a more sustainable approach to gardening, eliminating the use of chemical inputs and producing healthy vegetables used to supplement their school feeding programs. Outcomes have included the decrease in numbers of underweight school children, improved school attendance and school performance and even the introduction of BIG as an income-generating activity.

IIRR believes that BIG is just one strategy that should be linked to a broader community-managed health system for malnutrition. While gardens are commonplace in rural areas, health centers or clinics are often not. By bringing BIG into the school systems, IIRR hopes to integrate education, nutrition, food security and community health in many more remote rural areas.



Photo: Diana Wu, 2008

IIRR has partnered with local school boards and the Department of Health in Davao, a region in southern Philippines, to introduce BIG to over fifty public elementary schools. Representatives of the Parent-Teacher-Community Associations (PTCA) are developing BIG gardens in each of the schools.

Through a grant from the Washington Sycip Family Foundation, IIRR and the Sisters of Mary School in Silang, Cavite, Philippines, established a sustainable agriculture project using BIG technology in two local schools in order to re-introduce agriculture as a separate subject in the school's largely industrial curricula.

¹ http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/nutrition/phi_en.stm

² In 2003, Dr. Pratima Kale, then president of IIRR, was invited to speak at the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization conference of ASEAN education ministers hosted by the Philippines Department of Education. At that meeting, Dr. Kale spoke of school-based BIG as a strategy for involving parents and the community in school affairs, notably school health and nutrition, referring to the Negros BIG experience of 1984-85. Twenty years later, school-based bio-intensive gardens in the town of Ilog continue to be planted and harvested by community groups for school-feeding and for home consumption, attesting to the long-term viability of the technology.

The Ugandan Seed Fair - A Path Towards Livelihood Development

Continued conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa leave vast numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) without the skills and abilities needed to create and maintain sustainable livelihoods. As a result, food insecurity is a fact of life. To address this crisis, IIRR introduced the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach in vulnerable communities in post-conflict northern Uganda. In partnership with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the project teaches modern agricultural skills, offers alternative and sustainable livelihood options and, ultimately, enhances food security at the household level to Ugandan IDPs.

In the aftermath of the devastating civil war in northern Uganda that lasted for more than twenty years, 1.6 million people were forced from their homes. Lack of income, food insecurity and preventable diseases affect those internally displaced by the guerilla movement known as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

The lucky ones stay in camps by night, fearing attacks from the LRA, and return to their small farms during the day so that they can tend to their land, which provides them with their only source of income. Others who used to till the land to grow food are now dependent on food aid.

When the Ugandan government called for people to return to their home villages through a voluntary return process, bilaterals, international governments and the UN designated resources to ease the transition. To this end, FAO in partnership with IIRR and the local community organized a local seed fair in the two sub-counties of Anaka and Amuru in the Amuru district of northern Uganda.



The seed fair created a venue whereby returnees, IDPs and other vulnerable people could access a variety of seeds for



local food production and where local farmers could sell their wares. To protect the buyers from purchasing poor quality seeds, IIRR agricultural extension workers planted seed samples for testing. Local farmers only distributed seeds with a germination rate greater than 75 percent.

The two-day fair took place in April 2008, and 3,000 vulnerable beneficiaries (mostly returnees and IDPs), 60 percent of whom were women, were given vouchers worth 20,000 Ugandan shillings (\$9) that they used to purchase a variety of seeds of their choice from over 300 local farmers. Because the fair was locally organized, community members collectively decided who would be eligible for the vouchers. The community decided that the vouchers should go to the most vulnerable: child-headed households, widow/widower households, HIV/AIDS-affected households, persons with disabilities, returnees and war victims. In addition to vouchers for seeds, beneficiaries received two hoes each and a panga (machete) to facilitate planting.

Renewing an age-old tradition of seed exchange, IIRR's work has empowered these returnees and IDPs who desperately needed to reengage in agricultural food production. By ensuring that women—who have also traditionally had the role of selecting and saving seed stock—have equal or greater control of the seed vouchers, the impacts are far-reaching. The benefits are readily observable, from improved harvests to increased economic activity. Because of the success of the fair, members of the community have advocated for and plan to organize more seed fairs like this in the future.

Reclaiming Dignity Through Seed Sales: A Personal Story

As a result of the war between the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army, food security has become one of the most grievous challenges facing the people of northern Uganda today. In an effort to address this crisis, IIRR, with support from the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), is implementing projects that enhance food security in the Amuru district of northern Uganda. The story that follows is one woman's account of how IIRR's work transformed her life.

When thirty-seven-year-old Christine Aryemo lost her husband in the Ugandan civil war, her life came to a sudden halt. Her husband, who died fighting with the Ugandan forces, was a loving man and a caring father. He was also the sole breadwinner for their family.



Christine attending to one of her customers at her store



Anaka community members during the seed fair market

Although grieving and frightened for her future, Christine resolved to take charge of her life despite her loss. In order to support herself and her children, she embarked on small-scale farming. She leased 1 ½ acres of land and decided to focus on marketing produce as her new venture. With some savings she had from previous sales from earlier harvests, she began selling seeds.

In April 2008, Christine was invited to participate in the seed fair organized by IIRR. Over 300 seed vendors took part in the two-day fair, which was held in three different market centers in Amuru district.

Of the 300 vendors at the seed fair, Christine ranked third in sales. Of the 172 women vendors at the fair, she ranked highest, selling 130 kilograms of seeds including simsim, groundnuts and beans. Her sales during the fair totaled Ugandan shillings 1,125,000 (\$661) making her a profit of 250,000 shillings (\$147). A beaming Christine explained that she used one hundred thousand shillings (\$59) from her profits to purchase iron sheets and timber for construction of a store to expand her new microenterprise.

Christine has been one savvy business woman, saving her earnings so she can reinvest it in her microbusiness. Her most recent endeavor has been the purchase of land to expand her work. Christine now has 2,500,000 shillings (\$1,470) in capital from her farming and produce businesses.

Christine explained that the initial seeds and tools provided by IIRR gave the community the basic components to work towards food sufficiency. "It is degrading for one to queue for food from humanitarian organizations when you know that you can produce the same food. We need to reclaim our dignity," she says.

Christine was pleased with the way IIRR organized payment to the seed vendors during the fair. "We received our payments in a lump sum which made it easy for me to budget and use my money wisely. I am also interested in the Farmer Field Schools through which IIRR works with farmers and also trains them in modern agricultural techniques to increase food production."

Now Christine can start thinking about other things besides survival, such as enrolling her children in good schools, expanding her business and increasing her skills. The efforts of IIRR have helped her do so.

BICOL Communities - Taking on the Challenge of Climate Change

After five years of the Building Initiatives for Community Opportunities and Livelihood (BICOL) Program, three watershed networks in the Bicol region of the Philippines have continued to grow and prosper. The networks are made up of multiple community stakeholders including local women's groups, youth groups, farmers' associations and members of local government. As a result of IIRR's unique approach to community self-help, the three watershed networks now independently design, manage, implement and monitor their own programs and projects, thus sustaining their own gains—a true, grassroots contribution to poverty alleviation and civil society development.

Through the BICOL Program, the watershed networks have begun to embrace the need to collaborate. They all share the same limited natural resources and must therefore, work together to protect them



rather than act as isolated actors. Now, community needs related to health, livelihood, environment and education are addressed and managed collectively. The networks' major activities include the planting of seedlings to help reforest coastline areas and restore fish breeding grounds; development of partnerships with local government units; the establishment of relevant income-generating activities, such as mung bean production and duck raising; and the implementation of community-managed projects such as child feeding programs.

To build on the strength and capacity of these local networks, IIRR is now working with them to address climate change through Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction (EcoDRR). This framework integrates the management of a community's natural assets with rural livelihood adaptation and community-managed health and nutrition, thus decreasing community vulnerabilities and, at the same time, mitigating the impact of climate change.

Piloting this framework, IIRR has returned to Ticao Island in Masbate. The island's valuable natural resource base is under threat from uncoordinated responses to natural resource management, which exacerbates poverty and destabilizes food security. On Ticao Island, local villagers are experiencing the impacts of climate change: shoreline erosion, a noticeable shifting of climate patterns and dwindling water resources now threaten their homes and livelihoods. Building on past successes, IIRR aims to address harmful patterns of unsustainable and uncoordinated natural resource use in Masbate by demonstrating coordinated and integrated management practices that can be replicated on a national level.

“We work with the people not out of pity but out of respect for their potential for growth and development, both as individuals and as communities.”

– Dr. Y.C. James Yen

Bringing Safe Water to Barwaqo: Community-Managed Disaster Risk Reduction in Action

Community-Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) is an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction that puts communities at the center of hazard identification, analysis, risk assessment and management. This approach employs broad partnership where local actors implement while IIRR provides capacity building through training and mentoring. CMDRR addresses how communities cope with a given hazard to reduce vulnerability and safeguard livelihoods. For example, in the event of drought, CMDRR supports community initiatives to bring safe water to villages and reduce the burden on women and girls. In the story that follows, you will see how.

One year ago, the primarily pastoralist community of Barwaqo, an arid village in northern Kenya, was continually struggling to find safe water. The community settled there after they lost their livestock in the 2006 drought. In order for households to access potable water, women and girls would trek up to 18 kilometers through difficult terrain. These daily journeys could take as long as five hours. Incidents of wildlife attacks and rape were common. Glassy-eyed and tired, mothers would crouch on the hot, desert sand for hours waiting for their daily ration of water.

In mid-2008, one of IIRR's local partners, the Rural Agency for Community Development and Assistance (RACIDA) conducted a four-day workshop in community-managed disaster risk reduction with a focus on livelihood development and water and sanitation improvement. A risk assessment was conducted and the community identified that the lack of clean water was a major challenge to their health and well-being, where women and girls were predominantly affected. As an outcome of this workshop and the subsequent risk assessment, the village of Barwaqo decided to excavate and reconstruct an underground water tank as part of a community management project.

The community mobilized resources to contribute to the rebuilding of the tank by collecting the essential building materials such as gravel and hardcore. RACIDA helped them acquire additional materials, masons and other casual laborers. RACIDA

also helped clearly define the roles of the community and the service providers, thus ensuring a smooth, efficient and fair construction process. The tank construction took forty-three days and was completed in time to harvest the short rains.

In communities like Barwaqo, underground tanks play a strategic role in providing water for domestic use during prolonged dry periods. For practical purposes, it is important to construct the tanks close to other water sources, such as manmade dams. The technology, though not new, uses surface water run-off to fill the tank during the rains. Such low-tech solutions are effective, straightforward and essential for community survival. RACIDA has constructed more than seventeen underground tanks and rehabilitated three others in the region. These tanks store water towards the end of the dry season for those left in the village when the men and boys take their livestock in search of greener pasture.

Compared to traditional pastoralist communities, Barwaqo is now considered semi-sedentary. The distance to water points has reduced from eighteen kilometers to less than one, freeing up time for women and girls to attend school or engage in other meaningful activities. Rahma, a resident in the area, says, "I now have time to prepare the food rations and to do some weaving to adorn my little hut." She still recalls the harsh conditions of days gone by: "Even the donkeys looked emaciated by the lack of pasture. They could barely make the trip, let alone carry the water loads. Now, everything is different."

Now, as Abdifatah Hussein, a management committee member, says, "We can hire water tankers on our own and store the water in the huge tanks if the rains fail. We collect levies from the water so that we can be independent and truck water on our own. Previously, we had nowhere to store even the trucked water."

Since the construction of the tank, an estimated 530 people in the village now have access to safe water for a period of two to three months during the dry spell. The community, after having come together to rebuild the tank, has engaged in other beneficial activities. For example, they decided to establish a school and had nineteen students enroll in the first year alone.

IIRR is continuing to work with partners like RACIDA to empower them to create more opportunities for communities like Barwaqo.



An underground tank under construction



Completed water tank

Recognizing Ethiopian Women's Role as Leaders in Peace

In October 2008, sixty community leaders, NGOs and government staff convened in Addis Ababa for twelve days to document the experiences of Ethiopian women in peace building and conflict resolution.

Using IIRR's *writeshop* process, the group developed the publication entitled *Culture at Crossroads: Ethiopian Women in Peace Building*, which captures fascinating stories, approaches and tools that Ethiopian women have used for centuries in peace building and conflict resolution. The initiative is part of the larger *Women in Peace Building and Conflict Resolution* project funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Ethiopia. Below are some vignettes describing how Oromo women negotiate peace in their society.

Sinke: The Oromo stick of peace and justice

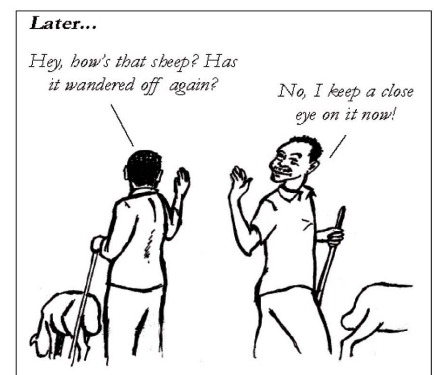
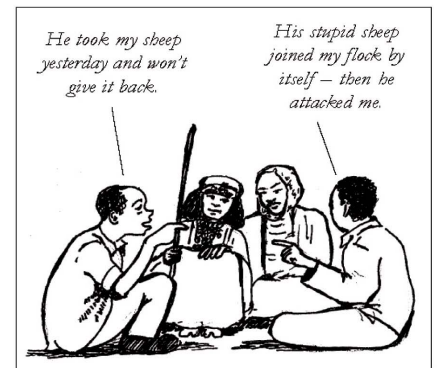
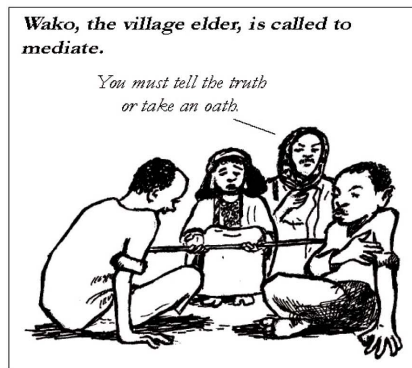
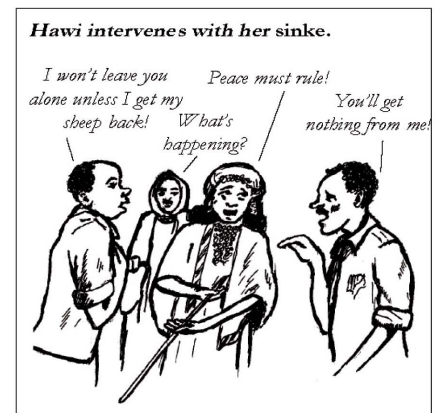
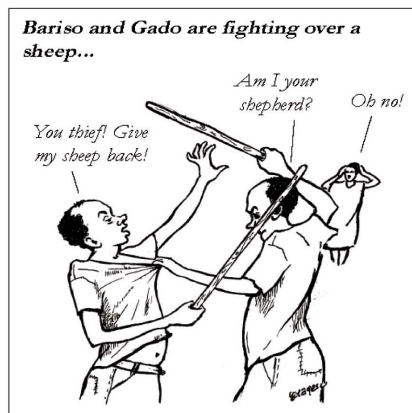
When an Arsi Oromo girl gets married, she is given a long, thin stick that is as long as she is tall. This stick is called a *sinke*. Like the wedding ring worn in the west, the *sinke* shows that she is married. It is also a powerful symbol of authority and justice within Oromo society. A woman first receives her *sinke* at her wedding. It is given to her along with a *chocho*, a specially-decorated woven pot used for milk. An Oromo woman carries her *sinke* whenever she needs it, whether for a special ceremony or for exercising authority within the community.

A woman can use her *sinke* to enforce women's rights and resolve conflicts according to *murti amba*, the traditional law of the Oromo. If she sees a group of people fighting, for example, she, alongside other women, can use their *sinke*s to intervene. In the process, they *ululate* (call out) to stop the fight and attract other villagers' attention. They will place their *sinke*s between the fighters to separate them while the village elders come to resolve the dispute. The men do not dare to continue fighting in the presence of the *sinke* since they are bound by tradition and culture to the *murti amba*.

A woman can also use her *sinke* as a way of making an appeal. If her family has no cattle or money, she takes her *sinke* and appeals for a *hirpha*, or contribution. As a result, her neighbors and people from her ethnic group will feel duty-bound to help, usually by donating livestock to the unfortunate family.

A mother whose baby has died or a woman who is infertile can use her *sinke* to appeal for a child to foster. She takes her *sinke*, a *tunto* (a baby's milk bottle made of grass) and a *kaldo* (a leather sling used for carrying a baby) to another family which has a baby. The family will feel obliged to give their baby to her to foster.

A woman who is considered to be late in marrying can even use a *sinke* to find a husband. Using a *sinke*, she sneaks to a man's house, unnoticed. She first throws the *sinke* into the house, then goes in and sits down inside. The unsuspecting man has no choice but to accept her as his wife or to find someone else in his family or ethnic group to marry her.



IIRR and SIPA's Workshop in Applied Development: Providing Field-Based Rural Development Experience to Future Practitioners

Continents away from IIRR's headquarters in the rural Philippines, master's students at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) at Columbia University learn about rural poverty and participatory development in real life situations in places like the Philippines, Sudan and Indonesia. What follows is one student's perspective on how students make the connection between what they've learned in the classroom and how organizations like IIRR actually implement programs and projects in the field.

Since 2003, IIRR has developed a learning relationship with SIPA in which students involved in the Workshop in Applied Development at SIPA have the opportunity to gain practical experience working with IIRR. In 2008, a team of five graduate students designed and conducted a participatory evaluation of a community-based integrated watershed management project in the Bicol Region, Philippines. Team member and current IIRR staff member, Scarlett Lopez Freeman, talks about her experience working with IIRR:

"My experience with IIRR really showed me how grassroots development is done and also what it means to work with a real client.

My colleagues and I traveled on a January field visit to the Bicol region. This region is the second poorest in the Philippines, after Mindanao. My mother, who is Filipina, tried to prep me with the typical stereotypes of Bicol, which, if you think about it, could apply to the entire country. It is poor and developing, prone to typhoons, volcanic eruptions, floods, and



landslides, and, if not currently, it at least has a history of localized conflict.

The project that my team evaluated focused on two watershed networks in Bicol. While there is already a history of civil society in the Philippines, these networks were to organize based on a common environmental interest. The organizations that were part of the network were able to see how it was in the interest of everyone to maintain shared natural resources for everyone's benefit. Through the network, they were able to realize how their actions towards the environment in one part of the watershed could negatively or, hopefully, positively affect other communities. Collaborating instead of competing increased the overall social benefit for the network members.

IIRR staff members served as intermediaries, providing the networks with trainings on how to create their own proposals, how to budget, and how to create relationships with local government units. The networks, in turn, used these skills to develop their own projects, which ranged from tree planting to child feeding programs.

"The Workshop in Development Practice is the 'capstone' experience for SIPA students interested in working in international and local development. It gives them the opportunity to gain practical experience while working with innovative organizations such as IIRR. Our workshop teams hopefully add value to their clients' programs and projects by introducing fresh perspectives and making practical recommendations. We especially value our long-term relationship with IIRR, which really embodies the principles of people-centered and sustainable development that we try to foster at SIPA."

- **Eugenia McGill, Associate Professor at SIPA and Director of Workshop in Applied Development**

"I have genuinely believed in partnerships between development organizations and universities to help bridge the gaps between development theory and practice, and to provide opportunities for students to learn about poverty and development in real life situations. It was a privilege for me to be associated with IIRR when we developed a partnership with SIPA. I am now pleased to be working as faculty advisor with some of the SIPA student teams involved in workshops in development practice. Having gained these two perspectives, I believe even more firmly that these partnerships should be maintained and nurtured."

- **Pratima Kale, former President of IIRR (1999-2005), currently Adjunct Professor at SIPA, Columbia University**

Once the evaluation was completed, we presented it to IIRR's Board of Trustees. Our final report, "Evaluation of the NZAID Project," was also published in the Spring 2009 issue of *Consilience: The Journal of Sustainable Development* [available online at <http://www.consiliencejournal.org>]."

The relationship between IIRR and SIPA has developed over the years, with many connections through SIPA students, faculty members, staff, and trustees. Scarlett graduated from SIPA in May 2008 and joined IIRR's US Office in October 2008 as Development Associate.

How the Gender in Leadership and Decision Making Project transformed my life: the story of Meskerem Tolecha

While Ethiopia has a positive policy framework that encourages women's empowerment through participation at all levels of society, implementation has been difficult due to limited technical and institutional capacity and the lack of public awareness of its existence. Existing cultural norms that discriminate against women remain dominant, making it difficult to advance this agenda.

Initiated in 1999, IIRR's *Gender in Leadership and Decision Making (GLDM)* project fosters the advancement of Ethiopian women and girls in positions of leadership by creating an enabling environment at the micro, mezzo and macro levels. The overall goals of GLDM include 1) developing the capacity of government, NGOs, local associations, media outlets and schools to mainstream gender concerns into policies and programs; 2) building the skills and confidence of women leaders; and 3) creating and enhancing public awareness of gender equity using creative media solutions and effective communication strategies. IIRR currently works with fifteen federal ministries and state agencies, media organizations, four NGOs and six schools in furthering the work of GLDM.



Meskerem Tolecha, a teacher at the Tesfa Kokeb School, shares her experiences on how GLDM has helped her to address the challenges she faces at the personal, family and institutional level.

“Previously, I was extremely shy and passive. I did not think that I had any potential beyond my routine responsibilities. I did not know my rights, so I could not stand for the rights of others. When the project was introduced in our school, I went through training.

This has given me new knowledge and skills such as communication, facilitation, public speaking, leadership and management and lobbying skills. My attitude and behavior has changed dramatically.”

“With increased confidence, I am now able see opportunities and address challenges with ease. After a series of follow-up visits by IIRR, I am a testimony of a transformed personality. I have a strong zeal to see other lives changed. I feel confident to rebuild my broken family and lead a happy marriage. I now appreciate my potential and I am committed to developing my career. I am pursuing two degree courses at the same time because I want to be a leader in my day-to-day life and a scientist at the same time. Soon after completing the GLDM training, I registered for the leadership degree and will be graduating in 2009. After a year, I enrolled in another degree program in science and I have so far completed two years successfully.”

“It is not easy to be a mother, a wife, and a professional, let alone with the additional demand of studying for two degrees. This requires time, discipline and concentration. This has been possible due to the strong and positive attitude that I developed after exposure to the trainings I received. It has encouraged me to be the first woman unit leader in sixty-five years of history of the school. I have paved the way for other women to climb the leadership ladder and be assertive about their rights.”

“Currently, I am serving as a leader of the gender desk, heading a department and school clubs. I also provide gender training to the school community. I have composed gender songs, written poems, as well as coordinated GLDM activities and lobbied for gender issues in my home area.”

Meskerem also plays an important role in integrating gender into the organizational systems and procedures of her school. The school has become more sensitive to the needs of women and, now, the leadership has been transformed from a solely male-dominated one to a gender-responsive one.

Dr. Y.C. James Yen: Founder of IIRR and Modern Revolutionary in Rural Development

A 1918 graduate of Yale University, Dr. James Yen was born in Sichuan Province, China, the country from which he would revolutionize the framework of development. In 1923, Dr. Yen became head of the Chinese National Association of the Mass Education Movement, and in partnership with the American Cooperating Committee, supported mass literacy campaigns throughout China and pioneered experiments in integrated rural development, using practices now considered mainstream long before they were the norm.

In 1940, Dr. Yen and his colleagues established the National College of Rural Reconstruction to train Chinese men and women as rural reconstruction professionals. In conjunction with the Chinese-American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction, he played an instrumental role in the development of Taiwan. In 1951, Dr. Yen, William O. Douglas, Fowler McCormick, Eleanor Roosevelt and others formed the International Mass Education Movement for which Dr. Yen served as President. In 1952, Dr. Yen helped civic minded Filipino leaders organize the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, with movements that followed in Colombia, Guatemala, Ghana, India and Thailand. In 1960, he established the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction.



Dr. Yen is considered one of the most profound pioneers in the field of development and was a man of enormous vision and immeasurable faith in the strength of the common man in solving the world's toughest challenges. In 1943, he was honored alongside Albert Einstein, Orville Wright, Henry Ford and John Dewey with the Copernican Citation as one of the ten outstanding "modern revolutionaries" of the world. His wisdom and deep commitment to the world's poor lives on through IIRR's work.

"Technical know-how of the experts must be transformed into practical do-how of the people."

– Dr. Y.C. James Yen

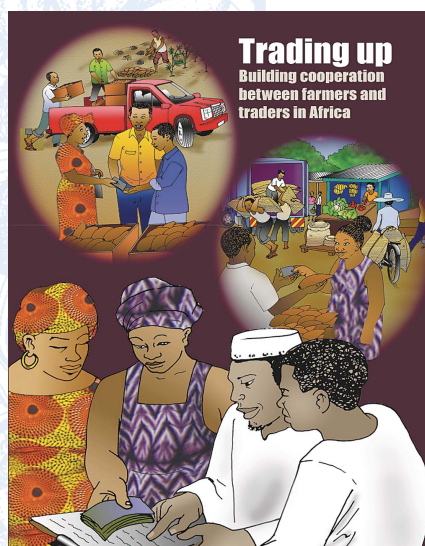
2008 Publications

IIRR produces the majority of its publications through *writeshops*. Writeshops are intensive, participatory workshops that aim to produce a written output documenting an innovative development practice, method or tool. The output may be in the form of a book, a set of leaflets, a toolkit or a training manual. Participants in the process may include scientists, researchers, government personnel, teachers, NGO staff, extension agents, farmers and other local people; anyone who has, in one way or another, been involved in the experiences to be documented. A team of facilitators, editors, artists and designers co-author and produce the publication during an intensive one- to two-week writeshop.

*The value of the writeshop is the way it brings together a wide range of people, each with their own experiences and specific knowledge, to work in groups documenting their part of the story – a story that normally might never find its way.*¹

Because of the process used in producing these publications, IIRR's books are copyright free and in the public domain. They may be copied and shared with others provided that acknowledgement is given. The following publications were initiated or launched in 2008:

Trading Up: Building cooperation between farmers and traders in Africa



Trading Up: Building cooperation between farmers and traders in Africa is the second book in the value chain development series and was produced following a writeshop in Kenya where over thirty-five traders, farmers and practitioners from a dozen African countries gathered to document their experiences of overcoming distrust and learning to cooperate for their mutual benefit. *Trading Up* highlights the role between producers and traders in the value chain. Unknown to most producers, traders operate in a climate of great uncertainty, facing enormous risk. Most private traders possess little working capital—often relying on their own funds, advances from wholesalers, acceptance by farmers of deferred payments and, at times of peak financing requirements, high-interest moneylenders. Farmers often believe that if they could just eliminate the trader, profits would improve. But traders fulfill a vital role in the value chain. Appropriate trading partners ensure better returns for farmers.

Trading Up shows that traders are not villains, as are they often perceived to be. The case studies presented here recognize the specialized role of all actors in the value chain. Ranging from transporting livestock in Kenya, selling yams in Ghana, and exporting Tanzanian coffee and tomatoes from Burkina Faso, the case studies describe all the actors in the chain, the challenges they face and how they negotiate changes in the market structure. This book highlights how organizing both farmers and traders alike improves business relations.

Trading Up was published with the support of Cordaid (the Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid), ICCO (Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation), and Oxfam Novib—all important IIRR partners who promote the value chain approach as part of their policies to improve small-scale agriculture.

In Addis Ababa, during the book's launch, the State Minister for Trade and Industry Ato Tadesse Haile spoke about the need to build good relationships between farmers and traders. He pointed out that traders are the main channel through which farmers' produce reaches markets and the consumers who need it. He praised the book, suggesting it should be translated into local Ethiopian languages to broaden opportunities for learning. IIRR and KIT will produce a third book in the series which addresses issues of financing in the value chain.

¹ Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), <http://www.kit.nl>.

Community-Based Forest Management at 10: A multistakeholder forum

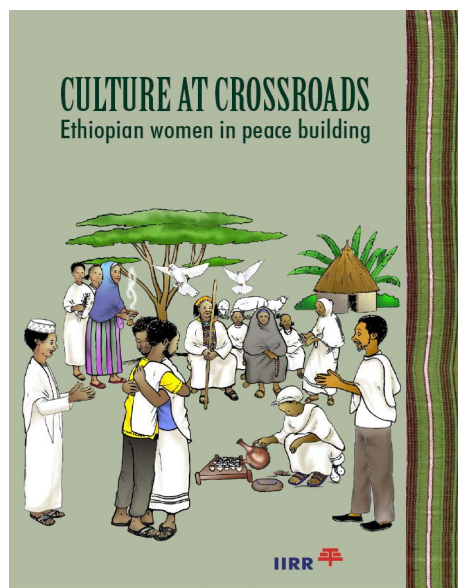
Community-Based Forest Management at 10 revisits and documents ten years of multi-stakeholder approaches to community-based forest management in the Philippines, which is considered to be the national strategy to achieve sustainable forestry and social justice.

The ten-year multi-stakeholder review of Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) was held on the IIRR campus in April, 2006. The forum, organized in partnership with the College of Forestry and Natural Resources of the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, provided an opportunity for CBFM stakeholders to share, reflect on and analyze issues related to forestry management and to develop action plans for future initiatives.

Fifty participants came together representing a diverse cross-section of NGOs, national and local government, local, people's organizations, donors, researchers and academicians. The publication that was developed as a result of the forum contains a description of the process, documentation of experiences and best practices and an account of significant outputs and action plans. Of special note are the people's organizations that presented and authored their stories.



Culture at Crossroads: Ethiopian Women in Peace Building



Culture at Crossroads: Ethiopian Women in Peace Building looks at the role Ethiopian women play in conflict prevention and peace building. This publication is the result of a writeshop held in Ethiopia in 2008 and is scheduled for launch in 2009.

Though both victims of and actors within the arena of conflict, women experience conflict and its effects differently from other members of the community. Ethiopian women suffer from marginalization when it comes to their active involvement in formal mechanisms of national and international peace building. This book shows how Ethiopia's women are overcoming structural, cultural and economic constraints to their participation in peace building. It gives an overview of the many positive peace tools and conflict-mediation methods that lie within the scope of Ethiopia's women and examines how they can be employed towards the achievement of sustainable peace. It highlights the voices and skills of Ethiopian women from different parts of the country and reviews the many challenges they face in so doing and the progress made so far in winning the struggle for peace.

*"Outsiders can help, but insiders must do the job."
– Dr. Y.C. James Yen*

2008 Donors

IIRR gratefully acknowledges the following individuals and institutions for their commitment to the rural poor. Your generosity and support help us enable the poor and their organizations to achieve their full potential and implement lasting solutions for overcoming poverty.

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The Jimmy Yen Society

The Jimmy Yen Society is an honorary organization that recognizes friends who have designated IIRR as a beneficiary in their estate plans. These planned giving donors create lasting legacies through deferred gifts such as bequests, charitable trusts, endowments and life income arrangements. We would like to acknowledge the following members of the Jimmy Yen Society, named after the visionary founder of the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, to thank them for their support of IIRR.

Y.C. James Yen

Dorothy H. Cooke

Maisie Fulton

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Elizabeth Leslie

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G. A. Mudge

Henrietta H. Swope

Marie Simpson

The 2008 sources of financial support identified above are consistent with the 2008 Financial Summary included in the annual report and with the audited financial statement of IIRR for 2008. For US reporting purposes, IIRR is required to recognize revenues in the year in which funds are received or formally committed, even though committed funds may be received or used over several years.

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Financial Summary

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL RECONSTRUCTION
(A Nonprofit, Nonstock Organization)

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION (In U.S. Dollars)

	As of December 31	
	2008	2007
ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 419,547	\$ 482,793
Investments	522,351	796,102
Contributions Receivable	2,402,992	2,304,673
Other Receivables	323,263	406,054
Property and Equipment - net	174,588	270,291
Prepayments and Other Assets	24,200	37,118
TOTAL ASSETS	\$3,866,941	\$4,297,031
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Accounts Payable and Other Current Liabilities	\$ 390,956	\$ 330,251
Funds Held in Trust	4,264	4,264
TOTAL LIABILITIES	395,220	334,515
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	64,371	743,143
Temporarily restricted	2,689,368	2,501,391
Permanently restricted	717,982	717,982
TOTAL NET ASSETS	3,471,721	3,962,516
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$3,866,941	\$4,297,031

1. Data extracted from the audited financial statements of IIRR for the year ended 2008. The audited financial statements for 2008 and prior years are available by writing to IIRR.
2. 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.
3. 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.

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL RECONSTRUCTION
(A Nonprofit, Nonstock Organization)

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
(In U.S. Dollars)

	Years Ended December 31				
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total 2008	Total 2007
REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT					
Contributions/Grants:					
Foundations	\$ 36,195	\$2,157,352	\$ -	\$ 2,193,547	\$ 1,091,024
Governments	-	298,373	-	298,373	1,153,860
Individuals	138,854	44,006	-	182,860	278,162
Corporations	5,214	239	-	5,453	86,066
Training Courses	270,188	-	-	270,188	341,512
Technical Assistance	472,862	-	-	472,862	444,889
Workshops	42,308	-	-	42,308	83,335
Study Programs	86,636	-	-	86,636	83,865
Use of Campus Facilities	95,092	-	-	95,092	95,039
Publication Sales	21,039	-	-	21,039	32,865
Others	163,095	-	-	163,095	209,823
Net assets released from restrictions:					
Satisfaction of program restrictions	2,136,993	(2,136,993)	-	-	-
Expiration of time restrictions	175,000	(175,000)	-	-	-
	3,643,476	187,977	-	3,831,453	3,900,440
EXPENSES					
Program Services:					
Learning Community	2,234,841	-	-	2,234,841	1,645,963
Education and Training	872,948	-	-	872,948	992,134
Publication and Communication	201,221	-	-	201,221	338,336
	3,309,010	-	-	3,309,010	2,976,433
Supporting Services:					
Management and General	479,484	-	-	479,484	361,168
Fund Raising	100,387	-	-	100,387	124,626
	579,871	-	-	579,871	485,794
	3,888,881	-	-	3,888,881	3,462,227
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT OVER EXPENSES OF CONTINUING OPERATIONS					
	(245,405)	187,977	-	(57,428)	438,213
DEFICIENCY OF REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT OVER EXPENSES OF DISCONTINUED OPERATIONS					
	-	-	-	-	-
Translation Gain (Loss)	(433,367)	-	-	(433,367)	101,311
NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	743,143	2,501,391	717,982	3,962,516	3,422,992
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	\$ 64,371	\$2,689,368	\$ 717,982	\$3,471,721	\$3,962,516

Learning Community Program

This Program aims to: (1) enable people and their communities to effect meaningful change in their lives through research and learning processes; and, (2) generate knowledge about participatory human development through practical experience. Capacity building of people and their institutions is achieved at the community level through this program.

Education and Training Program

This Program aims to share knowledge to strengthen the capacities of learning communities, development practitioners and the international development community to promote participatory human development through training courses, workshops, study programs, conferences and other educational fora.

Publication and Communication Program

This Program aims to share knowledge to strengthen the capacities of learning communities, development practitioners and the international development community to promote participatory human development through the production, distribution and use of publication and communication materials produced and shared using participatory approaches.

REVIEW OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE IN 2008

OVERVIEW

In accordance with generally accepted accounting principles as applied to not-for-profit corporations, IIRR showed a deficit of \$57,428 in 2008 before currency translation loss, as compared with a surplus of \$438,213 in 2007. The surplus in 2007 was attributable to substantial multi-year grants obtained and recorded during that year, for use in subsequent years. By using funds obtained in prior years, IIRR was able to implement its program activities in 2008. On an operating basis, IIRR recorded a deficit of \$170,619 in 2008, as compared with a surplus of \$40,527 in 2007.

Of total revenues, gains and other support (\$3,831,453) in 2008, \$2,680,233 (70%) consisted of contributions and grants, and \$1,151,220 (30%) consisted of earned income from training courses, technical assistance, workshops, study programs, use of campus facilities, publication sales and other earned income. This represented a slight shift from 2007, in which 67% of total revenues came from contributions and grants.

REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT

Contributions and Grants

Total contributions and grants in 2008 were \$2,680,233, an increase of \$71,121 (3%) from 2007. Significant increase in foundation giving was partially offset by decreases in corporate, government and individual giving. Particularly notable was a grant from Catholic Organization for Relief and Development (Cordaid), Nairobi, Kenya \$892,736 (Euro 577,306) for Capacity Building for the Effective Participation in Disaster Risk Reduction Processes, which is scheduled to run from January 5, 2008 to April 30, 2010.

Training Courses, Workshops, Technical Assistance, Study Programs, Use of Campus Facilities, Publication Sales and Other Earned Income

Aggregate income in these categories was \$1,151,220, a decrease of \$140,108 (11%) from 2007. Substantial decreases in earned revenue

from training courses, workshops and other income were partially offset by increases in earned revenue from technical assistance and customized study programs.

EXPENSES

Program Services

Program service expenses are classified in accordance with IIRR's current program components: the learning community program, the education and training program, and the publication and communication program. Aggregate expenses of program services were \$3,309,010 in 2008, an increase of 11% over 2007. Expenses of the learning community program increased by \$588,878 (36%), expenses for the education and training program decreased by \$119,186 (12%), and expenses for the publication and communication program decreased by \$137,115 (41%).

Supporting Services

Aggregate expenses for supporting services were \$579,871, or 15% of total expenditures, in 2008, as compared with \$485,794 (14%) in 2007.

LIQUIDITY AND CAPITAL RESOURCES

Cash at year-end was lower in 2008 as compared with 2007. The decrease was largely attributable to increases in contributions receivable. Total net assets were lower on December 31, 2008 as compared with the prior year, by 12%. Of total net assets at December 31, 2008, \$64,371 (2%) were unrestricted, \$2,689,368 (77%) were temporarily restricted, and \$717,982 (21%) were permanently restricted endowment funds. The temporarily restricted funds will become available for use in 2009 and subsequent years, upon compliance with donor restrictions and agreements.

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Offices

Headquarters

Isaac Bekalo, President
Y.C. James Yen Center
Silang, Cavite 4118
Philippines
Tel/Fax: +63 46 414 2417
+63 2 886 4385
Email: isaac@iirr-africa.org

U.S. Office

Leslie Enright, Director
40 Exchange Place, Suite 1111
New York, NY 10005
USA
Tel: (1-212) 880-9147
E-mail: us.office@iirr.org,
leslie.enright@iirr.org

Regional Center for Asia

Robert Solar, Officer-in-Charge
Y.C. James Yen Center
Silang, Cavite 4118
Philippines
Tel/Fax: +63 46 414 2417/
+63 2 886 4385
E-mail: robert.solar@iirr.org

Africa Regional Center

Isaac Bekalo, Director
P.O. Box 66873-00800
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 20 444 6522
+254 20 444 2610
Fax: +254 20 444 8148
E-mail: admin@iirr-africa.org

Ethiopia Country Program

Firew Kefyalew, Coordinator
P.O. Box 7931
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel: +251 11 6477 236
+251 11 6477 238
Fax: +251 11 6477 237
E-mail: firewkef@gmail.com

Uganda Country Program

Kennedy Igbokwe, Coordinator
Office: Plot 6,
Charles Lwanga Road Ministers
Village, Ntinda
Mailing: P.O. Box 35536
Kampala, Uganda
Tel: +256 41 286331
+256 782 692 578 (cell)
E-mail: iirr@utlonline.co.ug
kennedy.igbokwe@iirr.org

Credits

Coordination/Editing

Isaac Bekalo
Leslie Enright
Scarlett Lopez Freeman
Paul Karaimu
James F. Kelly
Mary Mbulo
Aileen Ogolla
Jennifer Risch

Staff Contributors

Africa Debebe
Scarlett Lopez Freeman
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Hassan Hulufu
Sarah Kalembe
Mintesinote Kassa
Firew Kefyalew
Rahab Ngumba
Emilita Monville Oro
Magnolia Rosimo
Alden Secretario
Robert Solar

Cover/Graphic Design

Lilibeth T. Sulit-Villela

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The IIRR Credo

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

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