



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations



PROMOTING PRODUCTIVE  
EMPLOYMENT  
AND DECENT WORK IN  
RURAL AREAS

## Lesson 2

# The centrality of employment and decent work for agricultural development, poverty reduction and food and nutrition security

Text-only version

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## Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- describe the overall linkages between employment and work, agricultural development, poverty reduction and the four dimensions of food and nutrition security;
- illustrate the synergies between the right to adequate food and the right to decent work.

## Introduction

Decent work is enshrined in international law as a human right to which every person is entitled.

However, **much still needs to be done to improve work conditions and opportunities** for the unemployed, the underemployed and all those for whom having a job does not yet translate into a sustainable livelihood.

In the world 80% of the working poor live in rural areas and are engaged in vulnerable employment.



### Working poor

The working poor are those individuals who are: 1) employed and 2) living in households whose income or consumption levels fall below a poverty threshold.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) distinguishes between:

- the extreme working poor (< US\$1.25/day);
- the moderate working poor (US\$1.25-2/day);
- the near poor (US\$2-4/day);
- developing middle-class workers (workers living in households with per capita consumption of US\$4-13/day); and
- developed world middle class and above (workers living in households with per capita consumption > US\$13/day).

Source: ILO, [\*KILM 18. Poverty, Income Distribution, Employment by Economic Class and Working Poverty\*](#).

This lesson will help you to understand why promoting productive employment and decent work in rural areas is crucial for agricultural development, poverty reduction and food security. You will also be made aware of synergies between the right to adequate food and the right to decent work.

## Main impacts of promoting decent jobs in rural areas

The main impacts of promoting productive employment and decent work in rural areas are:



**Agricultural development**



**Poverty reduction**



**Food and nutrition security**



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a specific goal on decent work, namely Goal 8: *"Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all"*. Goal 8 is closely linked to Goal 1: *"End poverty in all its forms everywhere"*, as well as to Goal 2: *"End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture"*.

### The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

At the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, world leaders adopted the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice and tackle climate change by 2030.



**Agricultural development**

**What are the main impacts of promoting productive employment and decent work in rural areas?**

### Situation

Kim and Alovat, who work at the Ministry of Agriculture, are discussing the employment problems of a rural province in South Asia, before starting a development project in that area.



Kim: *"The wool value chain is vital for the employment and incomes of many of the province's inhabitants. Yet most people working in the value chain remain very poor."*

 Alovat: “Yes, in fact, this is one of the poorest provinces in the country! Lack of access to modern technology and marketing skills is keeping productivity and incomes very low. I wonder how we can change the situation?”

 Kim: “The problem is that workers are really low-skilled and households lack business skills to go beyond subsistence.”

 Alovat: “You are right. It is a very difficult situation. Another challenge is that women and young girls only engage in home-based activities due to cultural norms. It is really difficult for them to access skills, extension services and technology.”

 Kim: “The value chain is underdeveloped and for many the only available employment opportunity is to work as casual labourers in urban areas.”

The agricultural sector is underperforming in many developing countries. Some of the causes are employment related and include:

- poor working conditions and lack of skills;
- use of unsustainable practices (e.g. child labour);
- exclusion from the right to associate and bargain collectively;
- gender and age inequalities in rural labour markets;
- under employment, lack of regular employment contracts.

### Situation

Alovat describes the project implemented in South Asia at a conference.

 Alovat: “In our project, we have introduced some innovations. We conducted a participatory value chain analysis, since we wanted to engage all stakeholders in identifying the productivity bottlenecks along the entire value chain.

To improve productivity, which was very low, the project provided labour-saving and productivity-enhancing technologies and trained workers to use them. Workers were also trained in improved practices - such as washing wool before shearing, classifying colour graded-wool, grading fleeces

and producing fibre of uniform length through mechanical shearing - to increase the income they earn from their labour.

To improve women's engagement, female extension officers were trained, allowing women herders and producers to access support in a socially acceptable manner. Women engaging in higher value added activities – e.g. pre-washing, grading, spooling and dyeing – were also trained to use better technologies for wool production and to market their produce.

Finally, we facilitated the setting up of a Wool Farmers' Marketing Collective to support and adequately represent all those working along the value chain, including women.”

 Participants: “Did these changes bring any results in terms of wool production?”

 Alovat: “Yes, they are already bearing fruit! Modern sustainable technologies and practices are now known and used by all the herders and producers, men and women, in the project area. Many workers have seen substantial productivity growth. For instance, women who foot peddle spinning wheels, and were trained in using them, reported an average tenfold increase in their daily output of processed wool products.”

**So, to boost agricultural growth, it is important to promote more and better jobs in rural areas.**

Employment and decent work priorities in agriculture are:

- improving workers' skills, organization and working conditions;
- creating additional productive employment opportunities;
- attracting **youth** to the sector and reducing the productivity gap of **women**;
- increasing rural incomes and therefore rural workers' own investment in agriculture, as well as the demand for agricultural products of higher value;
- fostering agriculture and livelihood diversification to reduce pressure on natural resources, such as forests and marine resources.

This leads to **SUSTAINABLE INCREASE IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION.**



### **Youth and agriculture**

Young people in most developing regions still face many structural barriers to fully developing their capacities and agency, especially in rural areas.

**Youth are disproportionately represented in unemployment and the informal economy**, and, due to the lack of opportunities and the drudgery of rural life, they are increasingly turning their backs on agriculture and rural areas as a whole. Small-scale agriculture, in particular, is often not seen as a desirable livelihood option, but only as a coping strategy in the absence of adequate social safety nets and more gainful employment opportunities. Due to the lack of attractive employment opportunities, services and facilities in rural areas, **young people are increasingly migrating to urban areas and abroad**. Many of them end up on the margins of urban economic systems, characterized by unemployment growth and the proliferation of slums.

Yet, the agricultural sector needs the energy and innovative potential of youth. Agricultural populations are ageing and the sector urgently needs to rejuvenate, if it is to increase agricultural productivity and meet growing demand for food in a sustainable manner. In particular, **young people could better contribute to agricultural growth if they had access to land, credit and markets**. Also, to attract youth, agriculture will need to be more dynamic and appealing, and young people will need to view the sector in a more positive light. For this to happen, present levels and quality of public investment in agriculture need to increase, and features introduced to make programmes sensitive to the needs of youth.

Farm jobs aside, there is also significant potential for job creation in rural non-farm economic activities around food value chains linked to sustainable agriculture, agribusiness development and related support services.

### **Women and agriculture**

Rural women account for 43 percent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries. However, **their productivity is constrained by various forms of bias and discrimination**, such as access to land. They constitute a significant proportion of contributing family workers and are less likely to engage in wage employment than men. When they do, women are more likely to hold part-time, seasonal and/or low-paid jobs in the informal economy.

Also, women **face an excessive work burden**, owing to a combination of productive and reproductive tasks, making it more difficult for them to engage in income-generating activities. Closing the gender gap in access to and use of productive resources and

services is essential in order to unlock the potential of women as food producers. Decent jobs in rural areas attract youth to engage in the agriculture and allow to harness their energy and capacity to innovate. Decent jobs allows workers to develop their skills and therefore increase their productivity, income and own investment in agriculture which, in turn, results in the advantages for the entire sector. Also, higher incomes in rural areas lead to increased demand for agricultural products of higher value.



## Poverty reduction

### Situation

Let's go back to the conference and hear the additional questions that Alovat is answering about the livestock project in South Asia...

 Participants: *"Apart from the positive impact on production, did people earn higher incomes and manage to lift themselves out of poverty?"*

 Alovat: *"Yes they did! Our project has been very successful in reducing rural poverty. Incomes of workers along the wool value chain have increased fourfold. Now, producers are also able to provide education for their children. Also, the daughters are going to school as families can afford to hire labour."*

### **More and better jobs in rural areas are critical to reducing rural poverty.**

Employment is widely recognized as one of the main transmission channels through which economic growth and development impact poverty reduction. However, in order to drive development, **jobs have to be "decent"**. If jobs do not generate sufficient and stable incomes and - still worse - disempower workers by violating fundamental human rights, employment will not be a vehicle for sustainable livelihoods.

In rural areas of developing regions, relatively low official unemployment rates often mask endemic underemployment and high rates of poor quality, informal jobs.

When talking about employment and decent work in rural areas, targeting the agricultural sector is a priority. While circumstances may vary across contexts and country income levels, agriculture is an

important source of employment and income in the rural areas of most developing regions.

However, agriculture alone will not address the employment challenge.

Increased investments are needed to accelerate dynamic job growth in rural areas, in particular **fostering employment and entrepreneurship in the rural non-farm economy.**



### **The non-farm economy**

**Non-farm activities are an important source of income** for farm and other rural households, including the landless poor.

While on-farm production is still a particularly important income source in sub-Saharan Africa (40-70 % of rural households earn more than three-quarters of their income from on-farm sources), in Asia and Latin America, a large share of the rural labour force is already working full- or part-time in non-agricultural jobs.

Income gains at household level are often associated with a shift towards employment opportunities in the non-farm sector. Also, in the face of credit constraints, **non-farm activities affect the performance of agriculture by providing farmers with cash** to invest in productivity enhancing inputs.

Developing non-farm activities in the food system (including agro-processing, distribution and the provision of farm inputs) may increase the profitability of farming by increasing the availability of inputs and improving access to market outlets.

Such economic diversification will need to build on strengthened rural-urban linkages, in order to create additional job opportunities in trade, transportation and rural services.

It is important to create more and better jobs along the entire agricultural value chain, including in food storage and handling, and in agro-processing, through marketing and distribution. Value addition activities may include sorting and grading, packaging and labelling, as well as chilling and cool chain operations.



## Food and nutrition security

### How do productive employment and decent work affect food and nutrition security and its four dimensions?

Access to productive employment and decent work is an essential precondition for sustainable food and nutrition security<sup>1</sup> and its **four dimensions**:

1. By producing food, rural workers directly contribute to **FOOD AVAILABILITY**;
2. Rural workers' labour incomes determine their **ACCESS TO FOOD**;
3. Rural workers' health and working conditions heavily impact **FOOD UTILIZATION**;
4. The stability of rural workers' jobs affects the **STABILITY** of their food supplies.

The rural poor often have very limited access to productive assets such as land or livestock, or to social protection. Therefore, in order to obtain food and a living income, poor people's main asset is often their own labour.

According to the latest FAO figures on hunger and malnutrition, about 795 million people are still undernourished globally. The highest burden of hunger falls in Southern and East Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Africa. Not surprisingly, these are also the regions with higher vulnerable employment and working poverty rates.



**Higher agricultural labour productivity is generally associated with lower levels of undernourishment.**

Let's have a closer look at the links between **productive employment and decent work** in rural areas and each of the **four dimensions** of food and nutrition security.

#### 1. Productive employment and decent work in rural areas and food availability

Let's consider a scenario that shows how major decent work deficits reduce the capacity of producers and agricultural workers to produce food.

<sup>1</sup> "Food and nutrition security exists when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to food, which is safe and consumed in sufficient quantity and quality to meet their dietary needs and food preferences, and is supported by an environment of adequate sanitation, health services and care, allowing for a healthy and active life."

Source: Committee on World Food Security (2012).

### *Scenario*

In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), farming systems are dominated by smallholders, who in most cases depend on subsistence farming, with an average landholding of 2 ha and very poor value addition.

Most work is done by family members (often children), who engage in long, arduous and sometimes hazardous work to cut costs and compensate for the farm's low productivity.

Family members typically lack technical, management and business skills and do not have access to adequate extension services to sustainably intensify or diversify their production.

The level of mechanization is very low. The principal power source is humans who dig, by hand, between 50 and 80 percent of the area under cultivation.

While this keeps the family farm viable in the short term, such working conditions ultimately undermine the well-being and productive potential of the family.

Generally, crop yields in SSA are very low and of low quality, compared with other regions in the world.

Farmers, fishers, hunters, herders and pastoralists, as well as wage agricultural workers, make a direct contribution to food production. Improving their working conditions and supporting them to access decent jobs can contribute to a sustainable increase in food availability. So, investing in productive employment and decent work in rural areas can **increase** food availability by:

- improving agricultural workers' skills, organization and working conditions, therefore increasing agricultural labour productivity;
- harnessing the partially untapped potential of women and youth producers;
- increasing rural incomes and therefore demand for products of higher value, as well as mechanization and rural workers' own investment in agriculture;
- fostering agriculture and livelihood diversification, thereby reducing pressure on natural resources, such as forests and marine resources.

## **2. Productive employment and decent work in rural areas and food access**

In the scenario below, lack of jobs or poor incomes and wages reduce the capacity of rural people to access food.

### Scenario

Shifts in fishing operations from subsistence-based artisanal occupations to profit-oriented business transactions may have negative effects on livelihoods in coastal fishing communities. The modernization of operations risks making the poor's traditional skills, knowledge and manual labour redundant. For example, in some fishing communities in South Asia, as fish started being sold directly to traders at the point of landing, fishermen no longer depended on women to sell them. Single women in the fish trade were the worst affected by these changes. Another worrying trend is that fishers cannot afford to eat the fish they catch. As the sector grows, the fish species that were traditionally consumed have become so expensive that fishers consume fish less often, or only eat cheaper varieties. Also, there is a clear correlation between the irregular working hours and the nature of the employment relationship and family's food security, leading to pronounced irregularities in patterns of daily consumption of various foodstuffs.

Improved working conditions and more productive employment in rural areas lead to greater access to food: the amount of income generated from work is one of the main determinants of the amount and quality of food that workers and their families can purchase.

Investing explicitly in promoting more and better jobs for rural people can increase food access by:

- increasing incomes and purchasing power due to higher return employment opportunities;
- empowering women and therefore increasing their bargaining power and gender equality within/outside households;
- promoting income diversification, including through non-farm employment along the agricultural value chain.

### **3. Productive employment and decent work in rural areas and food utilization**

In this scenario, an increased workload for women puts households' nutritional outcomes at risk. This shows that work in itself does not lead to enhanced food utilization. A decent work approach is needed which, by promoting safe work, acceptable working hours and more gender-sensitive practices, also contributes to redressing the vicious circle of low productivity, low wages, malnutrition, ill health and low working capacity.

*Scenario*

In many developing countries, the proportion of women of working age who are employed in agriculture has been rising over time. This has led to the "feminization of agriculture", especially for specific activities such as the harvesting of cotton. Besides being intensive in the use of time, cotton harvesting is also a physically intensive task, which involves working under the sun all day. Workers need to cover long distances by walking to and from cotton fields. In particular, women from share-cropping tenant families, particularly those from socially marginalized and dependent communities, have virtually no choice but to work long hours.

There is a strain on the availability of care within the household, simply because of pressing time constraints. Also, the work environment presents health hazards such as hand injuries, and breathing difficulties due to the presence of dust, cotton fibre and pesticide residue in cotton fields. This has direct implications for women's own health and nutritional status, but often also for the nutritional outcomes of their children.

Improved working conditions and more productive jobs would positively contribute to improving the utilization of food. Women's access to better jobs is particularly important in this regard, because they are typically responsible for food preparation and are therefore crucial to the dietary diversity of their households. So, investing explicitly in promoting productive employment and decent work for rural people can improve food utilization through:

- improved diets, due to higher and more stable own production and incomes;
- improved workers' health, due to better working conditions;
- increased attention to care services and women's empowerment, leading to better equilibrium between their productive and reproductive responsibilities.

#### **4. Productive employment and decent work in rural areas and food stability**

In this case, guaranteed employment of acceptable quality contributes to sustainably increasing the food security of rural households and its stability.

### Scenario

India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is one of the largest rights-based employment and social protection programmes in the world, providing legal entitlements of wage employment to rural households.

Universalized since 2008, the Act guarantees that every rural household in need of work is provided with at least 100 days of employment in asset-creating public works programmes every year at the minimum wage.

Employment must be provided within 15 days of application for a job card within a 5-kilometre radius of the village.

In case of unsuccessful applications, households are entitled to unemployment allowances.

By providing guaranteed working days and therefore a predictable income for the rural poor, the programme ensures the self-reliance of selected households in the procurement of food, among other things.

While performance varies significantly across states, evaluations found that participants in the scheme significantly increased intake of protein and energy, such as in Andhra Pradesh.

Main areas of intervention to increase the stability and security of jobs in rural areas are:

#### ➡ **Enhanced policy and social dialogue**

In rural areas, employment precariousness is exacerbated by the structural characteristics of rural labour markets, such as high levels of informality, a prevalence of multiple job holding, casual work arrangements, labour force fragmentation, information asymmetries, seasonality and the uncertainties of agricultural production.

Both the public and private sector therefore have a major role to play in **guaranteeing the respect of social safeguards and enhancing decent work standards in rural areas**. In the long term, enhancing the institutionalization of labour markets should be a priority (e.g. by increasing formalization, the organization of producers and workers, minimum wages, etc.).

#### ➡ **Workers' protection against risks**

Risks at work may cause temporary or permanent job loss, through injury and illness, crop loss, poor fishing seasons or market fluctuations. Cash transfers, insurance and other risk-mitigation or risk-sharing strategies are important mechanisms in this regard, especially given the limited coverage of traditional contributing social security schemes in rural areas.

In general, **employment and social protection interventions** need to join forces to **enable farmers to make more productive investments** that will translate into asset building and increased productivity. Ultimately, this will bring longer-term benefits of poverty reduction, sustainability and stabilization of the food supply.

#### **➔ Enabling environment for agricultural development**

For agricultural workers, and particularly the self-employed, such as small-scale producers, **security of income and employment depends on the overall enabling environment** for agricultural and rural development.

This requires investments that address key productivity gaps and challenges facing the agricultural and agribusiness sector, including investment in climate change adaptation, value chain development and related infrastructure and business development services. But sectoral growth can be promoted in various ways and a key challenge is identifying what actions can be taken in a specific context, to ensure that development happens in a way that is more employment smart (e.g. prioritizing local employment or support to disadvantaged categories of producers, such as women or youth).

#### **➔ Employment diversification**

**Diversifying rural economies** is an urgent priority, so as to reduce pressure on natural resources and increase the number and quality of rural jobs. This requires **enhancing the links between agriculture and other sectors**, creating an enabling environment for increasing agricultural and rural productivity and job creation, promoting rural-urban linkages and creating a vibrant rural non-farm sector.

Diversification through access to high return non-farm employment opportunities can improve households' ability to stabilize food supplies where income and production are seasonal, while more dynamic rural labour markets can support families in quickly regaining an adequate food supply in case of a shortfall

Stable and secure jobs, associated with social protection mechanisms along the life cycle, contribute to the stability of people's access to food. Overall, productive employment and decent work can help to enhance the capacity of the food system of auto-reproduction, innovation and growth, in order to protect and increase future productivity. It is an investment in the human capital of a society which can lead to a more educated, skilled, healthy, fulfilled and therefore productive workforce.

Investing explicitly in promoting productive employment and decent work for rural people can improve food stability through:

- increased income predictability and resilience to shocks of rural people, so that they can avoid coping strategies such as reducing expenditure on other basic needs (e.g. education, health and housing), selling important assets or migrating due to distress;
- enhanced sustainability of production systems through sustainable increases in labour productivity and in the investment capacities of rural workers.

## Right to adequate food and right to work synergy

The link between food security and employment and decent work in rural areas is so tight that, at global level, the **right to adequate food and the right to decent work are already defined as complementary** areas of focus in initiatives and processes such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge.



### The right to adequate food

Initially recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to adequate food finds its main legal basis in Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

While the right to adequate food has further been guaranteed through other specific international, regional and national instruments, in 1999, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights detailed its content in its General Comment 12 by notably stating that "the right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has **the physical and economic access at all times to adequate food** or means for its procurement".

In addition, the Voluntary Guidelines to support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security were adopted by consensus by FAO Member Countries in 2004.

These provide States with practical guidance for implementation, outlining how to ensure the respect, protection and fulfilment of the right to adequate food.

FAO has contributed extensively to the promotion of the Right to Adequate Food Guidelines over the past decade, with the aim of further implementing the right to adequate food.

This derives from the fact that the promotion of a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) is a common basis for their implementation.



### Human rights-based approach (HRBA)

The following components will assist you in applying a human rights-based approach when assessing, formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies, strategies and programmes that contribute to generating more and better jobs in rural areas and to the realization of the right to adequate food:

Ensuring the active and empowered **participation of all stakeholders**, especially marginalized and vulnerable groups and individuals;

Favouring a **holistic intervention** through cross-cutting issues, multi-stakeholder participation, increased capacities and institutional coordination;

Focusing on the **most vulnerable and marginalized groups** and individuals throughout the process;

Carrying out **rigorous assessment and monitoring** activities by clarifying stakeholders' roles, responsibilities, rights and obligations, and by having transparent objectives, targets, benchmarks and timeframes;

**Supporting duty bearers** in understanding and fulfilling international human rights obligations;

Developing **claim mechanisms to ensure adequate redress** when obligations are neglected and rights are violated, and empowering rights holders to claim them.

However, aside from commitment reiterated at global level and from a few selected country initiatives, synergies between these two human rights have not yet been systematically addressed in practice.

Let's look at the main reasons why addressing the right to adequate food and the right to decent work in an integrated manner strengthens the formulation and implementation of food and nutrition security, rural development and poverty reduction policies, strategies and programmes:

**a. Improved targeting of interventions towards the most vulnerable**

In low-income countries of Central America, South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and other regions where poverty rates remain high, **agriculture** is expected to remain among the **main drivers of growth and the main source of employment** for several decades at least. The vast majority of farmers are smallholders.

Producing food for personal consumption remains crucial for rural people, since they often have very limited access to other sources of income or social protection.

Adding a human rights-based overall objective, such as the realization of the right to adequate food, to the growth and productivity lens of agricultural modernization, helps to ensure that the most vulnerable people, and the root causes of their food insecurity, are at the centre of the solution.

Such an approach advocates for improved job prospects and conditions in agriculture and in local and regional food systems, including smallholder agriculture.

It also fosters human development and life skills, viewing them as critical to increasing sustainability, longer-term impact and adequacy of the rural agriculture labour sector.

*Example*

**FAO Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS)**

FAO Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) aim to realize both human rights through a skills development approach. These schools, implemented in over 20 countries, provide rural youth with gender-sensitive skills needed for long-term food security, reduce their vulnerability to destitution and offer risk coping strategies, thereby contributing **to better opportunities for decent employment**.

The JFFLS target vulnerable groups, selecting them through criteria on food insecurity and labour vulnerability. For example, in Mozambique, the JFFLS supported orphans living in HIV and AIDS affected communities. In Malawi and Tanzania, the schools targeted rural youth who were unemployed or underemployed, while in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, schools selected vulnerable youth affected by the conflict and young refugees.

These schools combine agricultural, life and entrepreneurship skills in **a participatory learning approach** tailored around rural communities and low literacy levels. Training subjects are chosen together with the young people themselves, increasing ownership of the efforts in the process.

In the West Bank, the young people became full members of local cooperatives. In Malawi and Tanzania, the JFFLS were part of a public-private partnership model seeking to address

constraints that rural youth are facing in guaranteeing their own food security and access to productive and decent employment.

For more information on the JFFLS approach: [www.fao.org/rural-employment/work-areas/youth-employment/skills-development/en/](http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/work-areas/youth-employment/skills-development/en/)

**b. Broader and strengthened legal basis**

The right to adequate food is a human right of all individuals enshrined in a number of key international and regional instruments. **Right to adequate food** recourse and claim mechanisms - whether administrative, quasi-judicial, judicial or customary - contribute to holding different stakeholders accountable and strengthening the rule of law, by linking the right to adequate food to other **connected rights**, such as the **right to education, health** and, in particular, the right to **decent work**.

**c. Improved overall effectiveness**

Striving for the realization of both rights in an integrated manner, and through the promotion of a HRBA, will contribute to more vulnerable-centred development solutions, enrich assessment and monitoring activities and improve the overall understanding of stakeholders' roles and responsibilities, rights and obligations.

In particular, **a right to adequate food analysis will benefit from detailed consideration of the level of access to productive jobs** in rural areas, as well as of the main decent work deficits.

Similarly, an employment and decent work analysis will benefit from explicit consideration of the needs of rural workers in terms of their enjoyment of the right to adequate food, so as to ensure its integration into livelihood strategies.

Let's consider the way forward to further strengthen cooperation and ensure mutual reinforcement between these areas of work. It is fundamental to:

- emphasize the need for access to productive employment and decent work and investments in life and employment skills in rural areas, as part of right to adequate food related interventions;
- prioritize the realization of the right to adequate food, together with the right to decent work, in the design, implementation and monitoring of rural development interventions; and

- promote right to adequate food legal provisions and claim mechanisms in employment and broader rural development interventions.

### Example

#### **Brazil's Fome Zero strategy**

Established in 2003, Brazil's **Fome Zero** strategy unites four sets of programmes:

- facilitating access to adequate food;
- agricultural support;
- income-generating activities;
- social participation.

While hunger and food insecurity have been the main entry point, **the Fome Zero strategy is a truly integrated rural poverty reduction strategy**, and a driving force behind the development and the strengthening of numerous laws, policies, programmes and institutions aiming to realize human rights in Brazil.

An important feature of the Brazilian strategy is the Unified Registry, which enables easier identification of the poor. This helps decision-makers to **target vulnerable populations with better and more efficient strategies**, for example on hunger reduction, as well as on decent employment. In turn, this approach allows rights holders to have easier access to the different programmes under Fome Zero.

The Unified System of Social Security also promotes actions to ensure the realization of social rights guaranteed by the national constitution, such as the right to work and the right to adequate food.

Anchored in a national law, actions include skills training, as well as the facilitation of rights holders' integration into the labour market.

## Summary

This lesson has analysed the overall linkages between decent work in rural areas, agricultural development, poverty reduction and the four dimensions of food and nutrition security:

- Promoting productive employment and decent work for all in rural areas, particularly in agriculture, is critical to improving agricultural sector performance and sustainability;
- Productive employment is one of the main transmission channels through which economic growth and development impact poverty reduction;

- More and better rural jobs contribute to food and nutrition security by directly influencing its 4 dimensions: food availability, access to food, food utilization and food stability.

Finally, the lesson has highlighted the complementarity between the right to adequate food and the right to decent work, and explained why it is important to promote them in synergy.