

VOICE OF CIRDAP

Empowering The Rural Communities

ISSUE 15, NOVEMBER 2025

World Rural Development Day 2025

Integrated, Inclusive, Sustainable and Enterprising Rural Development



Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP)

An Intergovernmental & Autonomous Organization Working For
Strengthening Integrated Rural Development Systems for 15
Asia and The Pacific Countries.



www.cirdap.org

Asia and Pacific Region have a population of 4.8 billion out of which more than half live in rural areas. One out of seven on an average in the region belongs to disabled category and around 70 percent of Disabled categories such as physical, sensory, intellectual and behavioral living in rural areas. Holistic rural development is incomplete without the empowerment of disabled section in rural communities.

How to achieve inclusive development? Maintaining updated Disability Data along with degree of disability and geo location is very critical for this mission. Sharing this database with all the stakeholders regularly and using appropriately is needed for the time.

Mainstreaming the mission of 'Disability to Ability' in all ministries, developmental programs and customizing the provisions of the respective ministries to link with Disability Information System will be the major step to take advantage of all public programs for the benefit of Disabled youths. Accommodating flexibility and establishing the operational linkage with active NGOs needs institutionalization.



Establishment of Disability to Ability Incubation centers in NGOs is important to pilot test new ideas, Livelihood opportunities need special considerations. We need to create success stories and path which would assist easy upscaling at national level with much ease effectively by all stakeholders

Special frequent campaigns to sensitize the society about Disability and to transform sympathy to empathy is required. Society led Disability management efforts are more sustainable by involving family, relatives, Neighborhood and institutions. Social media can enhance effectiveness. Present generation is more empathetic to disability but needs constant sensitization and mechanism to involve them in management of disabled population. We need triggers

How can we promote livelihood opportunities for Disabled Youth? Challenging Stereotypes, Inclusive Skills Development, Promoting Self-Employment, Leveraging Technology, Ensuring Physical Accessibility, Strengthening Support Networks, Fostering Partnerships, Involving Disabled Youth in Design, Improving Access to Finance, effective Policy Implementation and Awareness would energize the Mission Disability to Ability

Approaches for rehabilitation of rural disabled youth, focusing on practical and scalable solutions includes Tele-rehabilitation Services, Mobile Health (mHealth) Units, Low-Cost Assistive Devices, Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Models, Digital Skills & E-commerce Training, Integrated Therapeutic Income Generation Programs, Augmented and Alternative Communication (AAC) Apps, AI-Powered Learning Software, Peer Mentoring Networks, Accessible Physical Modifications,

Several success stories across the globe have proved that diversified empowerment initiatives yielded very good results such as Annapurna Social Mobility Model, India in tailoring and food processing, Novib Leprosy Livelihood Projects, Nepal in vegetable farming, IFAD's Innova tech 2.0 Agri-Startups, In Guatemala and Honduras, startups like Leprosy-inclusive groups selling produce online, World Vision's Disability-Inclusive Agriculture, In Ethiopia and Kenya in adaptive beekeeping and dairy co-ops, RYCAAD Youth Agri-Coop, Uganda in fair trade of rice and maize, Handicap International Livelihood Hubs, Vietnam in bamboo weaving, LEAP Ethiopia in greenhouse vegetable startups, Globe Federation of ILEP's Skill Centers, Brazil in Agri-processing, Phinda Zikalala's Youth Disability Agri-Project of South Africa: A BRICS-backed initiative in hydroponics

Holistic Rural Development is incomplete without MISSION DISABILITY TO ABILITY

With Warm Wishes

Dr. P. Chandra Shekara
Director General, CIRDAP

A Round Table Discussion titled “Scope and Opportunities for Young People with Disabilities and Youths Affected by Leprosy in Rural Development” and the MoU signing ceremony between CIRDAP and Centre for Disability in Development (CDD) were held in 25 November 2025 at Six Seasons Hotel, Gulshan-2, Dhaka. The event was organized by CDD in association with CIRDAP, with support from Liliane Fonds, Netherlands, and Dhaka Tribune joined as the Media Partner.

H.E. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, attended as the Chief Guest and highlighted the importance of mainstreaming disability inclusion across all ministries and development agendas. He emphasized that persons with disabilities are partners in development, capable of leading innovation and driving change when supported with the right opportunities.

The event was attended by various distinguished guests, including the senior adviser of Jica, the adviser of CDD, and senior representatives from the Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB), the National Institute of Local Government (NILG), Liliane Fonds (LF), the Netherlands, civil society organizations, and youths with disabilities.



Ms. Rakhi Barua, Senior Coordinator at CDD and CIRDAP Expert, delivered a powerful keynote presentation focusing on global, regional, and national disability contexts. She stressed the need for stronger societal acceptance, supportive legal frameworks, and the dismantling of barriers that hinder participation.

The programme concluded with the formal MoU signing by HE. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, and Mr. Nazmul Bari, Executive Director of CDD. The primary objectives of this agreement are to promote and strengthen integrated and inclusive rural development programs, empower persons with disabilities in rural communities, foster collaborative efforts, and facilitate the exchange of information, technical knowledge, and resources to advance social inclusion.



A Strategic Partnership for Innovation:

CIRDAP Signs MoU with CARE Bangladesh



The CARE Bangladesh team visited the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) Headquarters in Dhaka, on 3 November 2025, marking an important milestone for innovation and inclusive development in South Asia.

During the visit, CIRDAP and CARE Bangladesh officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen a strategic partnership focusing on knowledge sharing, capacity building and training, and joint innovation for sustainable development.

The signing ceremony was graced by Mr. Ram Das, Country Director of CARE Bangladesh; H.E. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP; Ms. Emebet Menna, Deputy Country Director – Programs; Mr. Mehrul Islam, Senior Director from CARE Bangladesh; and Mr. F. A. M. Zakirul Huq, Head of Administration, CIRDAP, along with other officials from both organizations.

The event also included an engaging discussion on the upcoming CIRDAP–CARE International Training Programme symbolizing shared commitment to sustainability and growth. Together, CIRDAP and CARE Bangladesh look forward to co-creating solutions that empower communities and strengthen resilience across the region.

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), in collaboration with the Rural Economic and Educational Development Society (REEDS), is preparing to launch an exciting new initiative titled the Rural Development Innovation Challenge. This upcoming programme aims to identify, support and promote groundbreaking ideas that can transform rural lives across CIRDAP's fifteen Member Countries in Asia and Pacific Region.

Rural communities across Asia and the Pacific continue to face multiple and interconnected challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate risks, limited access to education and healthcare, poor infrastructure, lack of digital connectivity, and restricted employment opportunities leading to youth migration. Recognizing these pressing issues, the Innovation Challenge will serve as a platform to inspire creative solutions and practical models that can address these challenges and contribute to sustainable rural transformation.

The CIRDAP-REEDS Innovation Challenge will call for submissions from experts, agencies, ministries, non-governmental organizations, research institutions, and individuals from CIRDAP Member Countries. Entries may include innovative technologies, processes, policy models, success stories, or community-based initiatives that demonstrate measurable impact and potential for scaling up.

Through this initiative, CIRDAP seeks to:

- Encourage innovation and creativity in tackling rural challenges.
- Promote low-cost, high-impact, and inclusive solutions.
- Empower women, youth, indigenous peoples, and vulnerable groups.
- Advance progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Innovation Challenge will offer recognition, awards, and opportunities for collaboration, spotlighting the most outstanding rural innovations emerging from within CIRDAP Member Countries. Last date of submission : 28 February 2026.

For details please click the link below:

[The Innovation Challenge will offer recognition, awards, and opportunities for collaboration, spotlighting the most outstanding rural innovations emerging from within CIRDAP Member Countries. Last date of submission : 28 February 2026.](#)

Stay tuned for more updates on how to participate in this upcoming initiative that promises to bring “One Innovation. Endless Change. Countless Smiles.”

For future announcements and details, please contact: communication_officer@cirdap.org



AARDO Assistant Secretary General Visits CIRDAP: Partnership in Progress



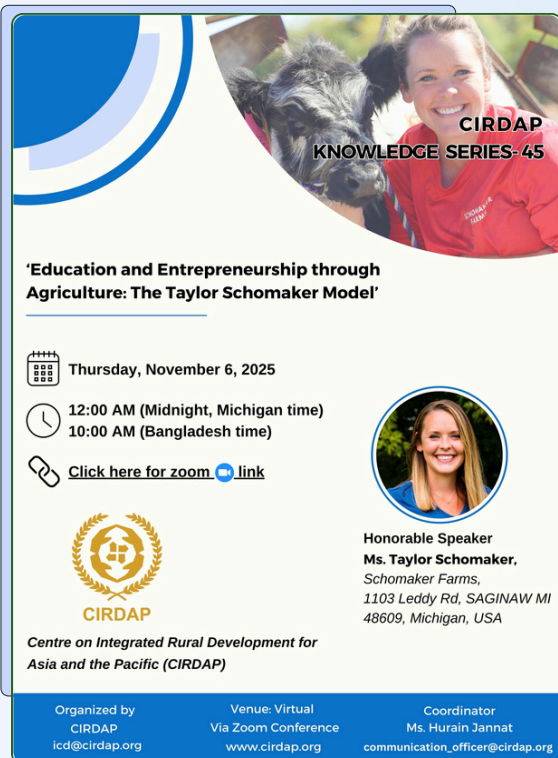
The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) was honored to welcome a delegation from the African Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO) on 30 November 2025, at the CIRDAP Headquarters, Dhaka.

Mr. Rami M. A. H. Qtaishat, Assistant Secretary General of AARDO, visited CIRDAP and had a fruitful discussion

with His Excellency Dr. P Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP. The delegation also included Dr. Khushnood Ali, Head, Research and Programme, Policy and Planning Divisions from AARDO, and Mr. Abdullah Al Mamun, Director Training of Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD).

CIRDAP officials shared their recent activities with the esteemed visitors to strengthen a strategic partnership focusing on knowledge sharing, capacity building, training, and joint innovation for sustainable development. This exchange strengthens the collaborative spirit between the two organizations dedicated to rural development.





CIRDAP KNOWLEDGE SERIES- 45

'Education and Entrepreneurship through Agriculture: The Taylor Schomaker Model'

Thursday, November 6, 2025

12:00 AM (Midnight, Michigan time)
10:00 AM (Bangladesh time)

[Click here for zoom link](#)

Honorable Speaker
Ms. Taylor Schomaker,
Schomaker Farms,
1103 Leddy Rd, SAGINAW MI
48609, Michigan, USA

Organized by
CIRDAP
icd@cirdap.org

Venue: Virtual
Via Zoom Conference
www.cirdap.org

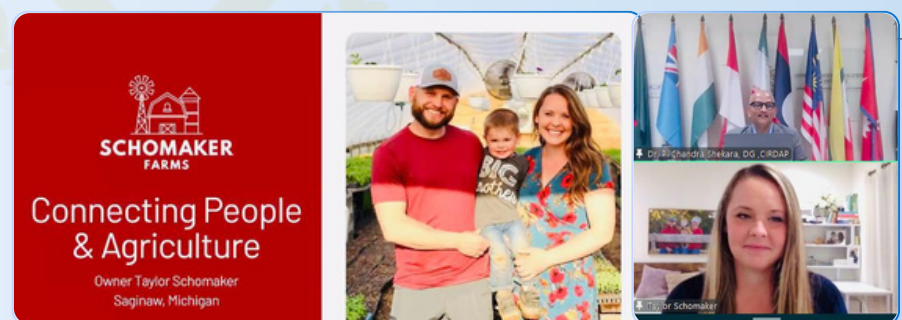
Coordinator
Ms. Hurain Jannat
communication_officer@cirdap.org

CIRDAP
Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP)

CIRDAP successfully hosted its Knowledge Series 45 Webinar on “Education and Entrepreneurship through Agriculture: The Taylor Schomaker Model” on 6 November 2025.

The session featured Ms. Taylor Schomaker, Owner of Schomaker Farms, Michigan, USA, as the distinguished speaker. She shared her inspiring journey of transforming a century-old family farm into a vibrant hub for diverse produce, livestock, and agritourism—beautifully blending education, entrepreneurship, and innovation in modern farming.

Ms. Schomaker aims to bridge the gap between farming and nutrition education, inspiring people—especially youth and urban residents—to reconnect with the roots of food production. Her passion for sustainable agriculture and community engagement resonated deeply with all participants.



The event brought together experts and

participants from CIRDAP Member Countries, including Heads of Departments and faculty members from the University of Cooperative and Management, Thanlyin, Myanmar. The session was chaired by His Excellency Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, and received high appreciation for its practical insights on building sustainable and profitable agricultural cooperatives.

You Want to Partner: CIRDAP Launches the Project Facilitation Centre

Ready to make your rural development dream a reality by transforming rural ideas into real impact?

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) proudly presents the Project Facilitation Centre (PFC), a forward looking initiative designed to empower and support our network of partners across member countries!

This dynamic platform is your central hub for collaboration and innovation. We work to ensure that your transformative ideas are turned into impactful actions that drive inclusive and sustainable growth.

The Project Facilitation Centre strengthens your capacity by:

- Unlocking access to global funding opportunities.
- Mobilizing essential resources for your project.
- Streamlining project planning and implementation processes.
- Fostering coordination to enhance rural livelihoods.

Do not let your transformative ideas wait! Submit your project proposal, and we will facilitate it on your behalf with our Development Partners! Operational Guideline for CIRDAP Project Facilitation Centre (PFC) Please click the link below:

https://cirdap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/PFC-Operational-Guide_final.pdf

For more information or inquiries, contact us at: director_research@cirdap.org



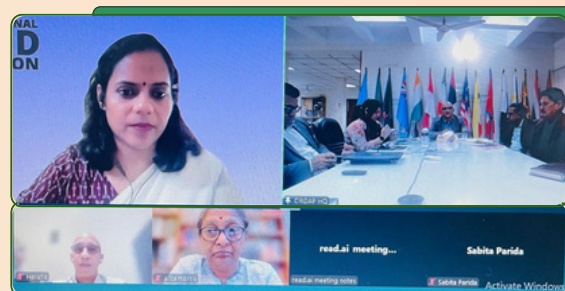
The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) is pleased to announce the renewal of its Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Land Coalition Asia (ILC Asia) on 13 November 2025.



ILC Asia, established in 2003 and headquartered in Rome, Italy, is the regional platform of the International Land Coalition—a global alliance of more than 300 organisations committed to people-centered land governance. The regional network comprises 64 civil society organisations across 15 countries, including farmers, Indigenous Peoples, pastoralists, women, and youth. Notably, 24 of these organisations directly represent 14 million people in their respective countries.

Through this renewed collaboration, CIRDAP and ILC Asia will work together to:

- ◆ Promote and scale up agrarian reforms, agricultural cooperatives, and farmers' associations to strengthen equitable land tenureship and address climate vulnerabilities across Asia and the Pacific.
- ◆ Empower farmers and rural communities through cooperative-based development, knowledge exchange, and capacity-building.
- ◆ Jointly implement programmes, training, and workshops in alignment with the International Year for Women Farmers (2026) under the Decade of Family Farmers.
- ◆ Enhance information sharing, technical cooperation, and resource exchange to support rural transformation and sustainable livelihoods.



The MoU was signed by FAM Zakirul Huq, Head of Administration, CIRDAP and Anu Verma, Regional Coordinator of ILC Asia. The ceremony was graced by the presence of HE. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP and along with officials and representatives from both organizations.

The partnership outlines clear responsibilities for both organisations, emphasizing technical support, training, cooperative development, knowledge sharing, and collaborative fundraising to drive impactful rural development initiatives across the region. Together, CIRDAP and ILC Asia reaffirm their shared commitment to advancing inclusive, sustainable, and resilient rural communities.

Call for CIRDAP Research Proposals 2026: Towards Vibrant, Prosperous and Happy Rural Communities

CIRDAP is pleased to announce a Call for Proposals for Research Projects 2026 under the theme "Towards Vibrant, Prosperous and Happy Rural Communities." This initiative reaffirms CIRDAP's commitment to promoting inclusive and sustainable rural development through evidence-based research and knowledge sharing.

The call invites innovative and policy-relevant proposals from CIRDAP Experts, MoU Partners, Link Institutions, Academic and Research Organizations, Civil Society Groups, and Government Agencies across CIRDAP Member Countries. Priority areas include Community-driven development, Rural entrepreneurship, Youth engagement, Gender empowerment, Climate resilience, and innovations in rural service delivery.

Two projects will be selected for 2026, each receiving USD 6,000 in financial support along with technical guidance from the CIRDAP Secretariat. The research should be completed within one year, culminating in a publishable report or case study to enrich regional policy dialogue.

The deadline for proposal submission is **31 December 2025**. Proposals should be submitted electronically to ea_research@cirdap.org (cc: director_research@cirdap.org) with the subject line "Proposal Submission – Research Project 2026."



CIRDAP KNOWLEDGE SERIES - 46

'Scientific Poultry House Management: Taiwan Innovations and Learnings'

Thursday, November 27, 2025

11:00 AM (Bangladesh time)
01:00 PM (Taiwan time)

[Click here for zoom link](#)

Honorable Speaker
Shang-Ho Bruce Yang, PhD
Professor and Director
Graduate Institute and Bio-Industry Management
Professor, International Bachelor Program in Agribusiness and International Master Program in Agriculture, National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan

CIRDAP
Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP)

Organized by CIRDAP
icd@cirdap.org

Venue: Virtual
Via Zoom Conference
www.cirdap.org

Coordinator
Ms. Hurain Jannat
communication_officer@cirdap.org

CIRDAP successfully concluded its Knowledge Series 46 Webinar on "Scientific Poultry House Management: Taiwan Innovations and Learnings" on 27 November 2025. The distinguished speaker, Dr. Shang-Ho Bruce Yang, Professor and Director of the Graduate Institute and Bio-Industry Management at National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan, presented key findings on how improved henhouse design, enhanced environmental control, and advanced farm management practices can boost productivity, reduce mortality, and strengthen the economic performance of Taiwan's layer industry.



CIRDAP KNOWLEDGE SERIES - 46

Scientific Poultry House Management: Taiwan Innovations and Learnings

Presenter: Shang-Ho (Bruce) Yang Director & Professor
Graduate Institute of Bio-Industry Management
National Chung Hsing University



The webinar highlighted the importance of stable and reliable egg supply for national food security, especially in the context of climate change and disease challenges. Participants explored strategies for upgrading farm infrastructure, adopting climate-adaptive practices, and building resilience for a sustainable poultry industry.

The session was chaired by His Excellency Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, and attended by experts and participants from CIRDAP Member Countries and Taiwan.

'COCOFRIENDS' from CIRDAP and NIRDPR, India Action Research Project

CIRDAP and NIRDPR, India, are collaborating on an action research project titled "Action Lab for the Inclusion of Transgender and Gender-Variant Youth in Mainstream Livelihood" in India. This Project is an Action Lab for setting up sustainable livelihood models for transgender and gender variant youths, enabling their inclusion in the mainstream. The objectives of the project are to create an action lab that would work in collaboration with several national initiatives and institutions for fighting multidimensional poverty within India's transgender and gender-diverse populations by promoting action-oriented research; develop policy framework; provide technical support to various livelihood initiatives; implement collaborative intervention programs; document best practices, and sharing the knowledge with a wide range of stakeholders in order to bridge the skill, employment, resilient livelihoods and entrepreneurial leadership gaps within the transgender community.

Coconutshell Wonders from Rural Pollachi
by

COCOFRIENDS
TRANS HANDS, TIMELESS CRAFTS



01 430 INR
Cocoshell teacups and snack bowl set of three



02 500 INR
One wine glass and two tea cups made from cocoshells



03 175 INR
Cocoshell teacup



04 199 INR
Wine glass made of cocoshell

As part of the livelihood interventions of the action research project, three action lab initiatives are planned to be established in India. Four training programmes were organised in various sectors and trained a total of 53 individuals in four different locations. Under Action Lab-1, through the Sahodari Foundation, a three-day training was organised from July 28 to 30, 2025, in Pollachi, District Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India, where 11 individual transpersons were trained on Coco-shell crafting. Under Action Lab-2, with the support of PLEQSUS India Foundation, training in mushroom cultivation was conducted in West Bengal, during which 15 individuals were trained. In November 2025, two training programmes, namely Spice Grinding training (for 15 individuals) and Sewing Training with the support of USHA International (also for 15 individuals), were also conducted. Additionally, two other activities focusing on poultry farming (poultry sheds have been installed) and cattle rearing are also in the pipeline.

The transgender group, which was trained under Action Lab-1, acquired the skills to transform discarded coconut shells into beautiful, functional items such as tea cups, wine glasses, snack bowls, and decorative pieces. The group has commenced its activities and is marketing its products under the brand name COCOFRIENDS, and is ready to fulfil customized orders. The group initiated the process for registering their group as a nano/micro enterprise. A catalogue of some of their products is available for reference. For orders, please contact the crafting team at the Mobile No. +91-7639741916 or Email: reachsahodari@gmail.com.

CIRDAP Hosts Stakeholders' Engagement Session to Reconnect with Experts and Partner Institutions for a Better Rural Future

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) successfully hosted an online Stakeholders' Engagement Session on November 19, 2025. The interactive gathering brought together valued Memorandum of Understanding Partners, Experts, and Collaborating Institutes to reconnect, share valuable insights, and explore enhanced opportunities for integrated rural development across the Asia Pacific region.

The Director General of CIRDAP His Excellency Dr. P. Chandra Shekara provided a comprehensive CIRDAP Overview and Key Activities, introducing the organization and its crucial mandate.

A presentation was also delivered during the session by Ms. Hurain Jannat, Communication Officer, highlighting major past, ongoing, and planned activities, including the Innovation Challenge, partner engagements, successful CIRDAP publications, webinars, social media initiatives, and key highlights from World Rural Development Day.

Following this, Dr. Ganga Dutta Acharya, Director (Research) of CIRDAP, led a discussion on the CIRDAP Project Facilitation Center and Research Initiatives, detailing the organization's efforts to drive evidence based rural transformation.



A key highlight of the session was the Open Discussion on Sharing Ideas and Collaboration Opportunities. Participants actively shared their perspectives, experiences, and proposals for future cooperation. Their contributions underscored the importance of collective action, knowledge sharing, and innovation in addressing emerging rural development challenges.

CIRDAP expressed its strong belief that the insights and expertise provided by its partners are invaluable in redefining strategies for rural transformation and enabling impactful collaboration.

Director General of the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), His Excellency Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, had a courtesy meeting with Mr. Mohammad Showkat Rashid Chowdhury, Secretary of the Rural Development and Cooperatives Division (RDCD) within the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development, and Cooperatives, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, on November 26, 2025. He is also an esteemed Executive Committee (EC) member for CIRDAP in Bangladesh.



The discussion focused on strengthening the working partnership between Bangladesh and CIRDAP in advancing rural development initiatives. The meeting was attended by Ms. Munima Hafeez, Additional Secretary, Ms. Rahima Akter, Additional Charge of Deputy Secretary of the Rural Development and Cooperatives Division, and Mr. FAM Zakirul Huq, Head of Administration, CIRDAP.

Strengthening Ties:

DG CIRDAP's Courtesy Meeting with the Maldives High Commissioner in Bangladesh

The Director General of CIRDAP, His Excellency Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, held a courtesy meeting with the High Commissioner of the Republic of Maldives in Bangladesh, HE. Shiuneen Rasheed, on 18th November 2025. The meeting focused on enhancing cooperation and exploring opportunities to strengthen partnerships between CIRDAP and the Republic of Maldives in the field of integrated rural development.



This engagement underscores CIRDAP's commitment to fostering strong international partnerships and supporting

member countries in achieving sustainable rural development goals. Both parties expressed their enthusiasm for continued collaboration and the potential for future joint programs that will benefit communities in the region.



IRD Model 15- Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Story

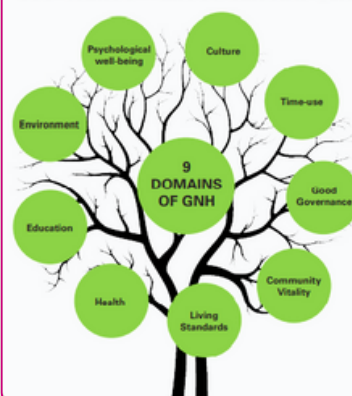
A Journey towards Happiness beyond Monetary Measures

Bhutan's development story is unlike that of any other country. In the early 1970s, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Fourth King of Bhutan, introduced the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) as a gentle but powerful reminder that a nation's progress cannot be measured by economic growth alone. Even as a young monarch, he questioned the idea that Gross Domestic Product could fully represent the well-being of people. His vision was inspired by Bhutan's ancient legal code of 1629, which stated that if a government cannot create happiness for its people, it has no reason to exist. This principle, rooted in compassion and Bhutan's Buddhist values, laid the foundation for a development philosophy centred on people, community and harmony with nature.

GNH reflects Bhutan's belief that material prosperity must go hand in hand with spiritual, emotional and cultural well-being. Today, research around the world supports this idea, showing that income alone does not ensure life satisfaction. Bhutan has long understood that true progress means creating an environment where individuals and families can live meaningful, balanced and fulfilling lives. This is why GNH has become more than an ideal; it is now a practical framework that guides the country's policies and development goals.

THE NINE DOMAINS OF GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS

The nine domains articulate the different elements of GNH in detail and form the basis of GNH measurement, indices and screening tools.



When Bhutan transformed into a democratic nation in 2008, it preserved the spirit of GNH within its Constitution. This commitment ensures that happiness is not just a guiding principle but an enduring national priority. Today, GNH is defined as a multidimensional approach to development that seeks a harmonious balance between material well-being and the cultural, emotional and spiritual needs of society. Its four pillars—Good Governance, Sustainable Socio-economic Development, Preservation and Promotion of Culture, and Environmental Conservation—capture the key elements needed for a thriving and resilient society.

These pillars are further expanded into nine domains, which illustrate how different aspects of life contribute to happiness. They include living standards, education, health, environment, community vitality, time use, psychological well-being, good governance and cultural resilience. By focusing on these interconnected domains, Bhutan recognises that happiness depends on more than wealth. It is shaped by our relationships, our environment, our cultural identity and the time we have for rest, family and personal growth.

Bhutan’s approach continues to inspire global discussions on what it truly means to develop. At a time when many countries seek new ways to balance economic progress with human well-being, Gross National Happiness offers a refreshing and meaningful alternative. It shows that development can be compassionate, sustainable and deeply rooted in the values that make life worth living.

DC CIRDAP’s Courtesy Meeting with Brunei High Commissioner of Bangladesh: Expanding Development Alliances

The Director General of the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific, His Excellency Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, held a courtesy meeting with the High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam, HE. Haji Haris Bin Othman, on 19 November 2025. The meeting was also attended by Rozaimie Abdullah, First Secretary of the High Commission of Brunei Darussalam, and FAM Zakirul Huq, Head of Administration, CIRDAP.



The discussion focused on identifying and strengthening potential rural development opportunities in Brunei. CIRDAP looks forward to enhanced partnership and knowledge exchange to support sustainable and inclusive rural transformation in the region.

CIRDAP Partnership: Media for Rural Change The CIRDAP-Krishi Jagran Partnership: Advancing Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development across Asia and the Pacific

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) and Krishi Jagran, a leading agricultural media organisation in India, have developed a strong and strategic partnership to advance sustainable agriculture, rural development, and farmer empowerment across the region. This collaboration was formally initiated through a Memorandum of Understanding signed on December 1, 2024, marking the beginning of a comprehensive effort to amplify rural voices, promote innovation, and strengthen regional development initiatives. December 1, 2024



As part of the partnership, Krishi Jagran serves as a key media ally in promoting CIRDAP's programmes, achievements, and rural development efforts across member countries. A major highlight of the collaboration is the extension of the prestigious "Millionaire Farmers of India Awards" to CIRDAP member countries, enabling the recognition of outstanding farmers who demonstrate leadership, innovation, and sustainable agricultural practices. In addition, Krishi Jagran has become the official media partner for the World Rural Development Day, an international initiative led by CIRDAP and recognised by the United Nations.

The partnership gained further momentum during CIRDAP's 46th Foundation Day and the first-ever World Rural Development Day celebration held in Dhaka, Bangladesh. On this occasion, CIRDAP proudly launched the Special Edition of Agriculture World magazine in the presence of diplomats from eleven Asia-Pacific countries, along with representatives from the Food and Agriculture Organization, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. This special publication, supported by Krishi Jagran, features insights from rural development ministers, secretaries, national institutes, experts, and various CIRDAP partners, reflecting a shared commitment to advancing rural transformation.

Further strengthening the collaboration, His Excellency Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, visited the Krishi Jagran office in New Delhi on 26th March, 2025. During this visit, he engaged with journalists and held discussions with the Chairman of Krishi Jagran, Mr. Dominic, underscoring the importance of continued joint efforts to promote rural development across Asia and the Pacific.

Krishi Jagran has played a significant role in amplifying CIRDAP's outreach, contributing to more than three million views through collaborative social media engagement. This impactful communication support continues to ensure that rural issues, innovations, and success stories reach wider audiences at national, regional, and global levels.

As part of CIRDAP's commitment to showcasing meaningful collaborations, this month's bulletin features the CIRDAP-Krishi Jagran partnership as an exemplary model of how media engagement can strengthen rural development initiatives. CIRDAP extends its appreciation to Krishi Jagran for its steadfast support, and looks forward to expanding this partnership to further enhance sustainable agriculture, promote farmer-centric development, and uplift rural communities across the Asia-Pacific region.



Attention To The CIRDAP EXPERTS

CIRDAP would like to seek the support of the CIRDAP Experts for their greater involvement in enriching the lives of Rural Communities on CIRDAP platform.

Experts are invited to contribute in the following ways:

1. Provide updated information as indicated below. This reply will be treated as Experts renewed interest in CIRDAP Activities:

Name, Designation, Office, Contact detail, Photo, Country, No. of years of Experience, Areas of Expertise in Integrated Rural Development (Mention only FIVE important areas) and Complete CV.

2. A monthly e-bulletin 'Voice of CIRDAP' has been started by CIRDAP which is reaching 1.18 lakh stakeholders covering member countries every month. Experts are requested to give at least one Innovation on Rural Development with good photos in not more than one page for publication.

3. Please provide 2-3 minutes **video on any innovation, experience in Rural Development** which would be added to newly created CIRDAP YouTube Channel.

4. CIRDAP will be very happy to process/forward any of your national/International projects on Rural Development to funding agencies through **Project Facilitation Centre of CIRDAP**. If approved, the project will be led by the expert who prepare the project.

You are requested to send all the above information to Dr. Venkatamallu Thadaboina, Program Officer (Learning) and CIRDAP Email: po_learning@cirdap.org



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and support us to the RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) is an Intergovernmental, Regional, and Autonomous organization. It was established on 6 July 1979 at the initiative of the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations with support from several other UN bodies and donors. The Centre came into being to meet the felt needs of the developing countries at that time as an institution for promoting Integrated Rural Development in the region.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared the date of 6 July as the World Rural Development Day, which is also the foundation day of Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), as a recognition of the organizations significant role in sustainable rural development endeavors in its member states in the Asia-Pacific region. The World Rural Development Day will be celebrated every 6 July as to inform and to remind everyone on his/her role and responsibility for collaborative actions on integrated rural development to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

From the original six members, CIRDAP has now grown up as a Centre of 15 member countries. The member-countries are Afghanistan, Bangladesh (Host Country), Fiji, India, Indonesia, IR Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

The main objectives of CIRDAP are to:

- Assist National Action;
- Promote Regional Cooperation;
- and Act as a servicing institution for its member countries for promotion: Integrated Rural Development (IRD) through Research, Action Research, Pilot Project, Training, and Information Dissemination. Amelioration of Rural Poverty in the Asia-Pacific region has been the prime concern of CIRDAP.

The programme priorities of CIRDAP are set under four Areas of Concern:

- Agrarian Development;
- Institutional/ Infrastructural;
- Resource development, including human resources;
- Employment.

Within these Areas of Concern, the thematic areas identified are: Poverty alleviation through participatory approaches with emphasis on social sector development (e.g. Health, Education and Nutrition); Employment generation through Microcredit support, Infrastructure Development and Local resource mobilisation; Gender issues; Governance issues; and Environmental concerns for Sustainable Rural Development.

Operating through designated Contact Ministries and Link Institutions in member countries, CIRDAP promotes Technical Cooperation among nations of the region. It plays a supplementary and reinforcing role in supporting and furthering the effectiveness of Integrated Rural Development Programmes in the Asia-Pacific region.

Voice of CIRDAP - Monthly E-Bulletin of CIRDAP

Voice of CIRDAP (VoC) is a monthly newsletter published by CIRDAP. The purpose of the VoC is to highlight various facets of IRD in the Asia-Pacific region and activities of CIRDAP with stakeholders.

The designations employed and the presentation of materials in VoC do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of CIRDAP concerning the legal status of any country, city or area, or of its authorities or boundaries. News items, viewpoints on IRD and related issues are welcome. All correspondence should be addressed to the Editor.



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