



**Brussels Rural Development Briefings**  
**A series of meetings on ACP-EU development issues**

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**Youth and Rural Development in ACP countries**  
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**The Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS)**  
**Peter Wobst – FAO, Italy**  
**Executive Summary**

The Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) programme was first piloted in Mozambique in 2003-04. Since then, the FAO developed approach has been introduced in 14 mostly African countries providing training in agriculture, business, marketing and personal skills and promoting employment and entrepreneurship among young people in the rural areas. Specifically trained extension workers, teachers and social animators use this participatory methodology to pass on agricultural knowledge and life-business skills to both boys and girls. For one entire school year, a multidisciplinary team of facilitators leads participatory sessions with a group of about 30 youth who range in age from 15 to 24.

The one-year learning programme follows the crop cycle and links are established between agriculture, nutrition, health, gender equality and life-business skills knowledge so that young participants learn to grow healthy crops while making informed decisions for leading healthy lives. Participatory field activities include crop selection and cultivation, land preparation, pest management, cultivation of medicinal plants and income generation, while local theatre, art, dance and songs are also integral aspects of each JFFLS day. Experience has shown that the schools provide a safe and social space for boys and girls, enabling them to develop their self-esteem and confidence.

Recently, FAO has strengthened the institutionalization aspect of the JFFLS in West Bank and Gaza Strip and Malawi, working closely with the Ministries of Education, Youth, and Labour and in collaboration with the national farmers' organizations. The JFFLS graduates are systematically grouped together so to form new Youth Farmers' Associations or youth branches of already consolidated Farmers' Cooperatives.

Pre and post programme evaluations have proved the JFFLS approach to be an effective tool to tackle youth unemployment in rural areas.

The JFFLS methodology has developed various modules to be used and combined during the youths' trainings:

- Preparation* (land preparation and soil leveling)
- Planning* (planning in agriculture and planning in life)
- Growing up healthy* (health, sanitation, hygiene, diseases)
- Diversity* (agriculture diversity)
- Protection* (Integrated Pest Management –IPM - and personal protection)
- Threats and Loss* (how to face them)
- Processing and conservation* (food processing and conservation)
- Entrepreneurship – business skills* (agri-business)
- Water for life* (irrigation methods, water for agriculture and water for life)
- Land and property rights*
- Child Labor Prevention*
- Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit*

Since 2003, 19,000 youths and 2,000 facilitators have been trained in the JFFLS approach in 17 countries and new JFFLS schools are foreseen in 2010 in Haiti, Comoros and Niger.