

« Agro- cultures » Programme

- How to conciliate farming systems productivity and the conservation of natural resources through the development of “**agro-ecological**” practices?
- How to reach a sustainable territorial development by promoting local identities and living heritages ?
- What are the factors (institutional, political and social) that make the success of rural development approaches, allowing a conciliation of social and economical development with the **conservation of biological and cultural diversity**?
- How to promote a real knowledge dialogue between conventional science and traditional knowledge, in order to reach a more sustainable system of knowledge, science and technology?
- What role can innovating approaches of education to urban consumers have in the construction of more diversified and sustainable food consumption and production patterns?
- How to benefit from the **information and communication** technologies in order to spread and promote sustainable farming practices?

Here is the type of questions which represent a crossroad between issues related to food and farming with the **educational, scientific, cultural and communication** aspects that we will try to tackle through the “agro-cultures” platform, while analysing and testing potential specific answers for these questions within the World Network of Biosphere Reserves network.



Agroforestry training in the Luki biosphere reserve BR
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Since November 2005 UNESCO leads a work of exchange and reflection, jointly with the association “Terroirs et Cultures” on the concept of “Terroir” as a unique interaction space between biological and cultural diversity. This work is in line with a larger programme which we are willing to develop with other organisations on the **promotion of local identities, living heritage and traditional knowledge as rural development factor**.

Different contacts were established, particularly with the **RIMISP** platform (www.rimisp.org) which works on South America on the potential role cultural heritage can have in the rural development processes, and also with the United Nations University, which works on the Japanese concept of “Satoyama”, very close to the concept of “Terroir” (www.ias.unu.edu). Through these different collaborations, our objective is to analyse, develop and promote the existing links between the promotion of local cultures and rural development. In reality, it is the interrelation and the promotion of interactions between different areas of expertise as well as different knowledges that make the strength of these new approaches of sustainable development in rural areas.

At this level of the project, the identification and the selection of pilot sites which would already have implemented approaches of development based on the promotion of local living heritages are a priority. The MAB secretariat (mab@unesco.org) is at your disposal for further information and/or to receive your proposals of case studies and partnerships.



Coconut candies: Value-added product
Seaflower Biosphere Reserve, Colombia
(Credit:© Lesley Louden)