



The International Centre for  
Underutilised Crops

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# ICUC-News #51

14 August 2007

Dear colleagues,

I have slowed the release of ICUC-News to bi-weekly in the rather quiet mid-summer period. Thanks to all who sent a brief introduction. I've also now worked out how to conserve the introductions of new members, and will from now on also include them in section 5 below.

**For all those who haven't sent their abstracts for the International Symposium on Underutilized Plants – we have extended the abstract submission deadline to 31 August. Please send your submissions to [symposium08@avrdc-rca.co.tz](mailto:symposium08@avrdc-rca.co.tz).**

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Six entries

With best wishes,  
Hannah

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## 1. Funding & Job opportunities

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### 1.1 Three vacancies at ILEIA

ILEIA is currently expanding its range of activities. To strengthen this, we are looking for three new team members who believe in our mission, understand the challenges faced by small-scale farmers and have a strong personal commitment to ecological agriculture and sustainable development.

Read the advert at:

[http://www.ileisa.info/index.php?url=show-blob-html.tpl&p\[fo\\_id\]=79002&p\[a\\_id\]=237&p\[a\\_seq\]=0](http://www.ileisa.info/index.php?url=show-blob-html.tpl&p[fo_id]=79002&p[a_id]=237&p[a_seq]=0)

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### 1.2 RIU Innovation Challenge Fund

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The Research into Use (RIU) programme is a new initiative funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) which was recently launched in June 2007. Its purpose is to make existing natural resources research outputs (in the form of technologies, policies, processes and knowledge) more accessible to the poor and to enhance their uptake. We are focusing on maximizing the investment and building on the legacy of DFID's 11 year Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy (RNRRS) programme which took place between 1995 and 2006, and by so doing, increase our understanding of how the up and out-scaling of these research outputs impacts upon poverty reduction and economic growth.

One of the ways we hope to achieve these goals is the Innovation Challenge Fund which we are now launching in selected countries in South/South-East Asia. A database of the RNRRS outputs under consideration for up and outscaling is available to view via our website [www.researchintouse.com](http://www.researchintouse.com). It is important to make clear that the purpose of this call is not to undertake new research, but to enhance access to existing research findings in order to maximize impact through multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Initially, concept notes will be invited where proposed activities relate to the following 6 Asian countries; Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam. In order to apply, we ask that you complete a Concept Note application form. Please find this form attached, along with guidance notes that explain more about the RIU programme and how to apply. We recommend that the guidance notes are read carefully. These are also available from our website.

If you would like to apply and feel that your proposed initiative meets the criteria mentioned in the guidelines, please could you complete the attached form and return it no later than 12 noon (GMT) on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2007 to [l.nickoll@nrnt.co.uk](mailto:l.nickoll@nrnt.co.uk). We would also be grateful if you could disseminate this email further amongst other likely interested colleagues in your own networks.

Further information on the Research into Use programme can be obtained from our website. You are also welcome to email me with any Innovation Challenge queries you might have; my contact details are all listed at the bottom of this email. Please note that I am unable to answer queries over the telephone and that it is our policy to publish on our website all questions posed and relevant answers, so everyone has equal access to information.

Kind regards,  
Lucy

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Websites: [www.nrntinternational.co.uk](http://www.nrntinternational.co.uk) [www.researchintouse.com](http://www.researchintouse.com)

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### **1.3 Vavilov-Frankel Fellowships for 2008**

The Vavilov-Frankel Fellowships Fund aims to encourage the conservation and use of plant genetic resources in developing countries by awarding Fellowships to outstanding young researchers to carry out relevant innovative research at an advanced research institute outside their own country for a period of between three months and one year.

The Fellowships are supported by the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), Australia and Pioneer Hi-Bred International Inc., United States, a DuPont Company.

The closing date for this year's Fellowships is 5 November 2007.

Announcements, application forms and guidelines for preparation of research proposals are also available from Bioversity's web site

[http://www.bioversityinternational.org/About\\_Us/Fellowships/Vavilov-Frankel\\_Fellowship/index.asp#2008\\_Call\\_for\\_Application](http://www.bioversityinternational.org/About_Us/Fellowships/Vavilov-Frankel_Fellowship/index.asp#2008_Call_for_Application).

If you have any problem down-loading files or if you would like to have additional information on the Scheme, please contact Elisabetta Rossetti, contact point for the Fellowships, at [e.rossetti@cgiar.org](mailto:e.rossetti@cgiar.org).

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## 2. Workshops & Training Courses

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## 3. Publications & Information

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### 3.1 Preserving paradise: Hawaii's national botanical garden saves islands' natural beauty (from Tevita Kete, published in the Boston Herald)

KALAEHO, Hawaii - The National Tropical Botanical Garden offers plenty of beautiful flowers, with three sites on Kauai, Hawaii's "Garden Isle." Here visitors can get off the beach and learn more about local flora.

But one aspect of what takes place at the National Tropical Botanical Garden goes well beyond aesthetics. Resident scientists face the challenge of snatching the Pacific islands' quickly disappearing plants from the brink of extinction.

"Most of our visitors to Hawaii look at this beautiful, lush landscape and they just think, 'It's paradise,' " said garden director Charles R. "Chipper" Wichman, gesturing to the verdant valley stretching out below his office window on Kauai. "They have no idea that what they are viewing is a war zone between our native plants that are trying to hold on to a space and all these invasive plants and animals that are trying to take it away from them."

The Hawaiian islands have a wealth of conservation needs and are known among botanists as the nation's "extinction capital." About 180 plant species in Hawaii have 50 or fewer survivors living in the wild, Wichman said.

Conservation at the garden involves locating and identifying endangered plants, raising them in greenhouses and then reintroducing them in the gardens and elsewhere to reconstruct native plant environments and bolster the health of the islands' many other troubled species.

At the National Tropical Botanical Garden's headquarters on Kauai's South Shore, the public can visit display gardens for free, or buy tickets and hop a tram for tours of the McBryde or Allerton gardens in a valley a couple miles away.

The McBryde Garden nurtures plants from throughout the tropics, some of which are extinct in the wild. Next door, the formal Allerton Garden was begun by Hawaii's Queen Emma in the late 1800s and transformed into its current design by a scion of a wealthy Chicago family who purchased the land in the late 1930s.

The third site, the Limahuli Garden on the lush North Shore, features many native species and stunning 700-year-old terraces for growing taro, known as lo'i kalo.

In addition to these three gardens on Kauai, the national tropical garden has two other botanical gardens and three preserves, all but one of which - the Kampong in southern Florida - are located in Hawaii.

Though created by an act of Congress in 1964, the garden does not get annual government funds, depending instead on private donations and grants from public and private foundations.

Among the garden's conservation and research triumphs is the alula, on display at both the McBryde and Limahuli gardens on Kauai. Similar in appearance to a cabbage on a stick, the cute, stocky little plant has been grown by the hundreds in the garden. But only one known alula remains in the wild, tucked away on a cliff on Kauai.

Not all the garden's tales are so simple or triumphant as the alula's. The world's only known wild kanaloa, a humble-looking member of the pea family first scientifically described in 1994, lives on a sea stack off Kahoolawe, an uninhabited Hawaiian island still sprinkled with unexploded bombs after being used for target practice by the military for five decades.

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Guided across the small island by people trained in ordnance detection, two of the garden's collectors spotted two of the unique plants on a tiny lump of offshore land topped by a piece of native vegetation that had been isolated for centuries from the human-introduced ravages of rats, grazing sheep, farming and bombs.

The collectors were able to gather samples of the plant after perilously lowering themselves down on ropes. Subsequent visits to the spot have been made by helicopter.

A lone example of this shrub grown from a seed is rooted in a tub, cordoned off from the public at the spot where the McBryde Garden and Allerton Garden meet. But so far researchers haven't found a way to produce any more of the enigmatic plant that ancient pollen records suggest was one of the dominant species here for a couple thousand years until the mid-1500s.

In all, the garden has had a hand in the discovery of 30 new species endemic to Hawaii and the rediscovery of about another 30 thought to be extinct.

But the garden has more in its sights on the research front than reproduction. It also has an Institute for Ethnomedicine, through which the garden discovered, with the help of traditional Samoan healers, a potential anti-HIV drug currently in clinical trials.

If the drug proves to be marketable, the Samoan government as well as the village where it was found and the family of the healer who helped find it will get a good portion of the royalties, Wichman said.

"Our goal is to really try and set the standard for how to work with indigenous people and honor their intellectual property rights," he said.

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### **3.2 Rich Growing Richer Faster Than Poor in Developing Asia - ADB Study**

[This is a very interesting study and well worth being cited in project proposals – have a look at the last paragraph which provides a good link to the need for more work on (underutilized) food plants.]

BEIJING, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA - The rich are growing richer faster than the poor in developing Asia, and widening disparities in standards of living can threaten the growth process in one of the most dynamic regions of the world, says a new ADB report.

Key Indicators 2007, the flagship annual statistical publication of the Asian Development Bank, says the poor are still lagging behind in the region's rapid development even as poverty rates decline. Both relative and absolute inequality have increased in most parts of developing Asia, the report adds. While relative inequality is concerned with proportionate differences in incomes, absolute inequality is concerned with actual dollar differences in incomes.

Relative inequality as measured by the Gini coefficient has risen significantly in Bangladesh, Cambodia, the People's Republic of China (PRC), Lao PDR, Nepal and Sri Lanka between the 1990s and 2000s

In the case of the PRC, the Gini coefficient is estimated at around 47 in 2004, closer to figures associated with Latin American economies and less reminiscent of the "growth with equity" experience of developing Asia's original newly industrializing economies, such as the Republic of Korea and Taipei, China.

Absolute inequality has increased virtually everywhere between the 1990s and 2000s. One consequence of this is that the most well-off have experienced considerably larger increases in their standards of living than the least well-off. For example, the expenditures of the "rich" (top 20%) have increased much more than those of the "poor" (bottom 20%). This has happened even in countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia where relative inequality declined.

"In a region as dynamic and vibrant as developing Asia, low growth in incomes of the poor is reflective of weakness in the pattern of growth," says Ifzal Ali, ADB Chief Economist. "Growing inequalities can weaken social cohesion."

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For example, a study on Nepal—a country which saw one of the most rapid increases in inequality over the last 10 years and also experienced a political conflict, found that a lack of economic opportunities was significantly associated with a higher intensity of political violence.

The report warns that in societies where wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few, there is a danger of policy levers being captured by the rich for their own benefit and a weakening of the institutional foundations of the growth process.

So, what is causing the gap between rich and poor to widen in developing Asia?

The report identifies unevenness in growth in incomes across urban and rural areas, leading and lagging sub-national regions, and highly educated households and the less educated as important factors associated with increases in inequality. Some of the unevenness in growth is a natural outcome of the development process and is to be expected. The process of economic development is unlikely to start in every part of an economy at the same time and rising inequality is not unusual during periods of rapid growth and major structural change. In the PRC, for example, there is a general consensus that sharpening income disparities between coastal and interior regions have been driven by the country's increased openness.

However, weaknesses and imbalances in policy have also been at play. In several cases, slow growth in rural incomes has resulted from weaknesses in public investments in rural infrastructure and a policy environment that has kept private investment away. Meanwhile, growth in urban areas has been insufficient to absorb surplus labor from rural areas. Instead, new opportunities generated by urban growth in developing Asia have favored the highly-educated, further aggravating the earnings gap between the rich and poor.

The reasons for these are varied and complex, but they often result from the interplay between market-oriented reforms and globalization. The report stresses, however, that this does not call for a rollback of market-oriented reforms or international integration. The overall gains from market-oriented reforms and international integration can be quite large. Instead, policy action is required on three separate fronts. First, complementary policies that can counter the negative distributional impacts of market-oriented reforms are needed. Two important examples are well designed social protection mechanisms and skills and training programs.

Second, a concerted effort involving a partnership between the public and private sectors is needed to develop new economic activities and industries that generate new employment opportunities that do not bypass the poor.

Finally, policy makers have to focus on radically improving the quality of basic health care and education available to Asia's disadvantaged.

Inequalities in life start early – and they begin with extreme circumstances that deny millions the opportunity to have adequate nutrition, health, and basic education. The key challenge to public policy here lies on not just increasing the quantum of public expenditures, but also ensuring that these are well targeted, effective, and funded through mechanisms that do not detract from economic growth.

The full report can be downloaded from:  
<http://www.adb.org/Media/Articles/2007/12077-asian-developments-reports/default.asp>

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**4. ICUC-related information**

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**4.1 Report on ICUC's future available**

The summary of the report by Dr Geoff Hawtin, consultant to the ICUC Scientific Advisory Board and GFU Steering Committee for a joint future of the two organisations is now available on our website [www.icuc-iwmi.org](http://www.icuc-iwmi.org) → go to "Our Future" in the left hand margin. If you would like to read the full report, please send a request to Sushilla Rajamanie ([s.rajamanie@cgjar.org](mailto:s.rajamanie@cgjar.org)).

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**4.2 ICUC-Research Report No. 3 published**

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Our third research report entitled “Analysis of Economic Characteristics of Value Chains of Three Underutilised Fruits of India” by Joshua N. Daniel and Prashant A. Dudhade of BAIF Research Development Foundation, India, is now available from our website [www.icuc-iwmi.org](http://www.icuc-iwmi.org). Please contact Sushilla Rajamanie ([s.rajamanie@cgiar.org](mailto:s.rajamanie@cgiar.org)) if you want to receive a printed copy.

From the Abstract: “The diverse agro-climatic conditions in India make it possible for the cultivation of a large number of fruit species. As the population in general prefers to consume fresh fruits, the processing industry is relatively small. Individual aspects such as processing and marketing of fruits have been studied, but the value chains, especially those of underutilised species, have not been adequately analysed. Hence, a study was conducted to understand the value chains of amla (*Embllica officinalis*), tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*) and kokum (*Garcinia indica*). Although underutilised these species have the potential to become a component in farming systems of smallholders. ...”

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**5. ICUC network**

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**In this section we introduce new and old subscribers to ICUC-News to encourage greater interaction and benefit from the great diversity of readers. If you haven't done so, please send a brief introduction to [h.jaenicke@cgiar.org](mailto:h.jaenicke@cgiar.org). We will not publish your email or phone contacts and if anyone is interested to establish direct contact, please write an email to me.**

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**Phil Hollington**, of CAZS Natural Resources, UW Bangor, UK. I coordinate the EU project FOSRIN - Food Security through Ricebean research in India and Nepal. We are looking at many aspects of the crop from economics and marketing through diversity to nutrition and molecular markers, with university, research and NGO partners in 5 countries.

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**John Palmer**. During my time as manager of the DFID Forestry Research Programme six projects were funded on cultivation, processing and marketing of tropical fruit trees important domestically and for improved local livelihoods but not significant in international trade. In the early 1980s, slips of the particularly aromatic variety of lemon grass (*Cymbopogon citratus*) which I had brought from Amazonian Brazil to Costa Rica were frequently stolen from my house for local propagation, thus confirming the efficiency of local networking.

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**Amparo Wagan** of the FSSRI-ASC, University of the Philippines Los Baños. One of my current research interests is the integration of underutilized crops (UC) in major agroecosystems in the Philippines so that these crops could be further developed for their environmental, economic and socio-cultural uses. Soon to start is a small project entitled Assessment of UCs in the Southern Tagalog Region which hopes to provide a basis for prioritizing UC for R & D based on their importance value as assessed by the rural communities and the industrial sector I hope our institute would also be included in the your international networks.

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**Dr.K.Kumaran**, Ph.D. Associate Professor Department of Tree Breeding Forest College and Research Institute Mettupalayam 641301 Tamil Nadu India. I have been working in a national Coordinated Network programme on under utilized crops since 1995. I work on annual uu crops like grain amaranth and ricebean; tree like Jatropha, Simarouba, etc.

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**Dr. Luis Wong Vega**. I'm from Panama but currently I'm working as head of the R&D Mgmt unit at the Institute for Innovation in Biotechnology and Industry, at the Dominican Republic. I'm interested in Orphan Fruits biotechnology. I'm writing a booklet on the matter.

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**Rupert Best.** Independent consultant. Market research and enterprise development for smallholder producers of underutilised crops.

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Championing underutilised plant species for food, nutrition and sustainable development