

RURAL

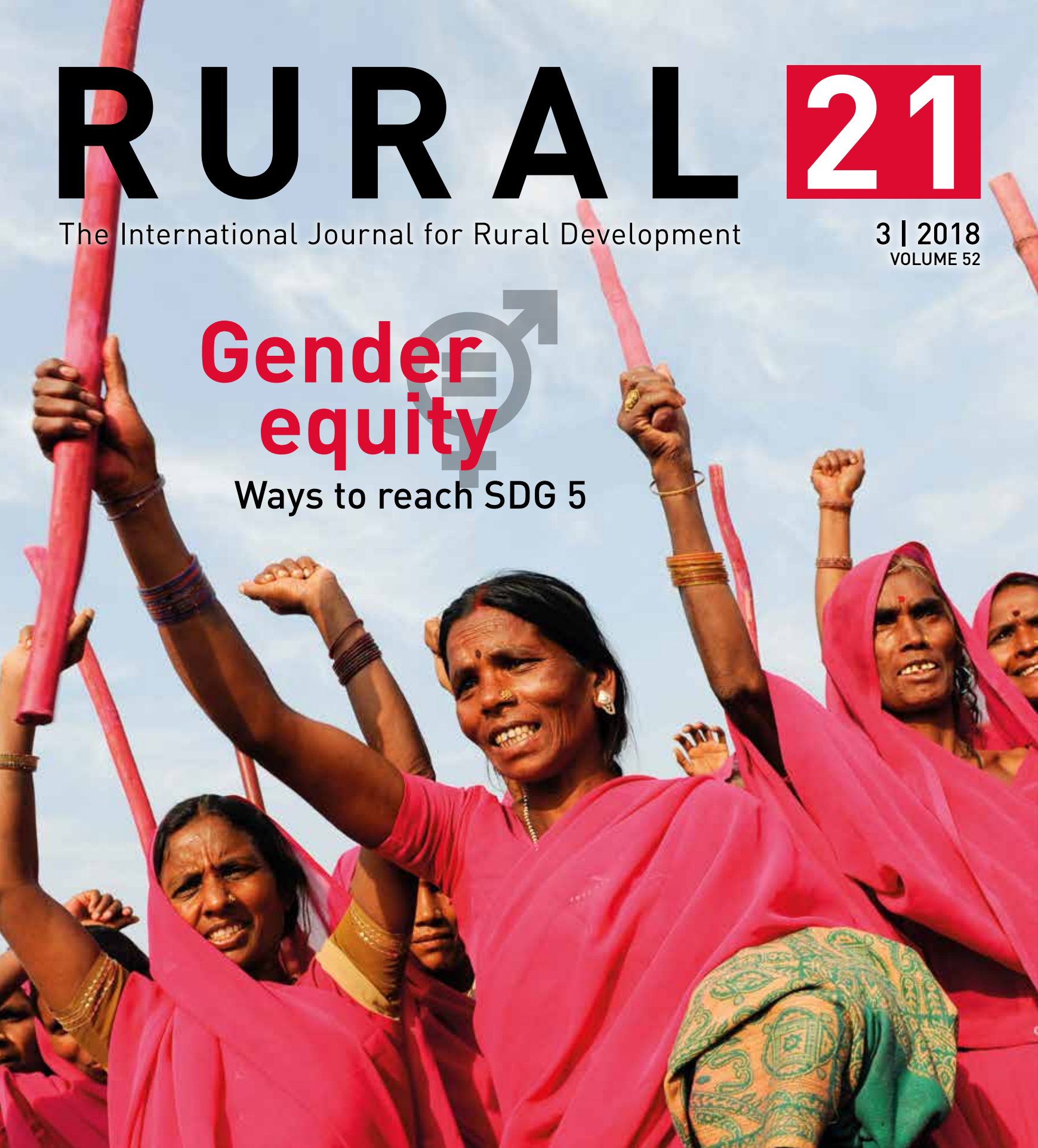
21

The International Journal for Rural Development

3 | 2018
VOLUME 52

Gender equity

Ways to reach SDG 5



WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Are we on track towards equal rights?

JOB FOR THE RURAL YOUTH

Vocational training in Cambodia

BURKINA FASO'S COTTON

GM seed contracts impairing quality

DEAR READERS,

The 24th July 2018 was a historic date, marking the first time that women in Saudi Arabia enjoyed the right to drive a car. At last, they were able to move from A to B without having to be chauffeured by their husband, brother or father, self-determined, and without being watched at every turn. No doubt this was a pioneering achievement. But as is so often the case, this is only half the truth. For numerous women activists who had campaigned for years and years for an end to the ban on women driving – the last of its kind world-wide – experienced this date behind prison bars. Only a few days before it, they had been arrested, officially because of having been in contact with “hostile foreign elements”. Unofficially, yes, one is eager to show the world that one is willing to introduce reforms. But just how far they reach is still determined by those in power. And they are first and foremost still men, not only in Saudi Arabia.

No doubt a lot has happened in terms of gender equality over the last few decades. There are women who head states and hold high positions in international organisations. There are women who successfully lead enterprises and have long ceased limiting their role to that of a caregiver. But progress is extremely slow. And some of it has been reversed, as the 2017 Global Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum notes. In 27 out of the 144 countries examined, progress towards gender parity is once again regressing. And since the #MeToo movement at the latest, it has become frighteningly clear just how commonplace it continues to be to mercilessly take advantage of the power structure

between men and women – in order to inhibit, humiliate, sexually molest, hit and kill them. Whether we are in the Global North or the Global South makes little difference in this context.

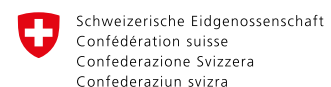
What is particularly perfidious is when those professing to help actually become perpetrators. Sex in return for help is probably the most perverse excess of male abuse of power. It would be naïve to believe that the handful of organisations that have reported such incidents in the last few months are the only ones in which such abuses occur. Rape has been used as a tool of war throughout history. The public are only gradually becoming aware of the phenomenon of sexual coercion in development co-operation.

Gender equality and women’s empowerment represents a topic that is far too complex to be dealt with comprehensively in one single edition. We can only touch briefly on many of the areas that it no doubt encompasses, including both those mentioned above and education, the digital gender divide, reproductive health und female genital mutilation. We nevertheless hope that our selection of themes will make you more aware of this topic. For as Liberia’s President George Weah noted at this year’s European Development Days, as long as discrimination, violence and marginalisation are embedded in our cultures, nothing is going to change. We need persistent efforts to change the mindsets of people.

Your editorial team.

The Rural 21 editorial team at work: Silvia Richter, Daniela Böhm (editor-in-chief), Angelika Wilcke, Olive Bexten, Ines Lechner (from left to right).

Photo: Andrea Trapani/DLG-Verlag

Partner institutions of Rural 21

Direction du développement
et de la coopération DDC



Photo: Larissa Stiem-Bhatia

NEWS

- 04 World Water Week – a call for nature-based solutions
- 05 Youth employment in agriculture as a solid solution to ending hunger and poverty in Africa
- 07 Gender-transformative approaches to women’s land rights

FOCUS

- 08 No sustainable development without women!
An introduction by UN Women
- 11 The economic potential of gender equality
- 12 Rural women and food security – of myths and facts
- 15 Measuring women’s empowerment in agricultural development projects

- 17 Doing things differently: gender-transformative skills development in agriculture
- 19 Innovations for women’s access to land
- 22 From German rural women for rural women in Ghana
- 24 “I would like to be involved, but I just don’t have the time”
Trail bridge access to Nepal’s remote communities
- 27 Access to justice for women in Tajikistan
- 30 It’s high time to end child marriage in Africa

- 36 “Empowering women and girls is the best way to eradicate poverty and inequality”
Canada’s Minister of International Development Marie-Claude Bibeau about the Feminist International Assistance Policy

INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM

- 38 Supporting youth in agriculture – evidence from Cambodia
- 41 White gold – Burkina Faso’s fight for quality
The case of Africa’s biggest cotton producer

OPINION

- 33 „We must acknowledge women’s economic contribution and value it”
Interview with Miriam Nobre, Brazilian feminist organisation SOF



Photo: DLY



Photo: GIZ



Photo: Jörg Böttling

WORLD WATER WEEK – A CALL FOR NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Stressed ecosystems and high pressure on limited water resources are threatening livelihoods, while water scarcity is strongly related to violence and conflicts. Especially women and girls are suffering from water shortage, as they are responsible for households water demands. At World Water Week 2018, experts discussed what is needed to prevent a global water crisis and called for more nature-based solutions.



Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, at the Opening Plenary.

Photo: Thomas Henriksson/SIWI

More than 3,300 water experts, development professionals and business representatives from all over the world met at the World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden, in late August 2018 to discuss the topic of “Water, ecosystems and human development”. Following the argumentation of this year’s United Nations World Water Development Report, the meeting concluded that more nature-based solutions were urgently needed to avoid a global water crisis.

Nature-based solutions use natural processes to contribute to the improved management of water. These solutions include changing farming practices that allow soils to retain moisture and nutrients, harvesting rainwater, re-charging aquifers, conserving wetlands that capture runoff and filter water, restoring floodplains and turning rooftops into gardens.

“With the rapidly growing demand for water, it is becoming increasingly clear that water is

everybody’s issue. Scarcity of water has become the new normal in so many parts of the world,” said Torgny Holmgren, Executive Director of the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), which organises World Water Week, in his welcome address at the opening ceremony. To counter water scarcity, he called for a shift towards more green infrastructure solutions. So-called ‘green’ infrastructure, as opposed to traditional ‘grey’ infrastructure, focuses on preserving the functions of ecosystems, both natural and built. It has multiple applications in agriculture, by far the greatest consumer of water.

At the opening ceremony, Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, talked about the strong link between environmental degradation, poverty and violent conflicts. This is not least visible in her home country of Nigeria, which in recent years has suffered from terrorism. Mohammed pointed out that while technology and political policies might be necessary to achieve water security, it was now time to take action. She urged to focus the discussions at World Water Week primarily on how to turn theory into practice.

WOMEN AND GIRLS HARDEST HIT BY WATER SCARCITY

Åsa Regnér, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director and Director for the Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships Bureau, at UN Women, stressed just how closely the topics of water and gender were interlinked at the opening event.

According to Regnér, women and girls are playing an important role in the sustainable management of water resources. They are responsible for supplying households with water, have to walk several miles a day to fetch water or have to queue for hours to cover the family’s daily water needs. If family members get ill because no clean water is available, the women are the ones who have to look after them.

KEEPING THE SDGS IN MIND

The topic of this year’s World Water Week, „Water, ecosystems and human development“, above all addresses the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

SDG 6, target 6: “by 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes”;
SDG 15, target 1: “by 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and

their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands”; and
SDG 9.1 “develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all”.

Of course it must be borne in mind that especially with regard to water, the SDGs have to be interlinked.

Thus women and girls spend a considerable amount of time organising water – time that is lacking elsewhere: in coping with day-to-day life in general, and especially in school education. “Alone in Sub-Saharan Africa, women and girls spend 40 billion hours a year collecting water, equivalent to a year’s worth of labour by the entire workforce in France,” Åsa Regnér said. “That „limits their freedom to live their own life.” She criticised that “women are doing the works of pipes, their bodies are part of infrastructure”.

PREVENTING WATER CRISIS MEANS PREVENTING CONFLICTS

“If we continue along our current path the world will face a 40 per cent shortfall in water availability in 2030,” warned Amina J. Mohammed. This scenario would result in widespread instability, because water scarcity was strongly related to violence and conflicts. However, co-operation can prevail over conflict as history shows. Just what such co-operation could look like and what the limiting

factors were, was discussed by participants of the High-Level Panel on Water Diplomacy. Danilo Türk, Chairman on the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, pointed out that it was forty years since the first and only United Nations conference had taken place and asked “whether the time has come for another major policy meeting at the highest level to make sure that models of co-operation and water diplomacy are going to respond to the needs of our time”.

Wetlands are playing an important role in maintaining peace and security by supplying water and food and sustaining human health and livelihoods, the not-for-profit network organisation Wetlands International, which organised the side-event “Connecting water, peace, and security through ecosystems”, pointed out. According to them, degradation of wetlands was contributing directly and indirectly to water scarcity. As of 2009, the world had lost 33 per cent of its wetland in area. Around the world, the loss and degradation of wetlands had led to reduced livelihood options, social tensions and human displace-



Scarcity of water has become the new normal.

Torgny Holmgren, Executive Director of the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)

ment. Therefore, the organisation calls for the mapping of wetlands ecosystems that act as regional ‘peacekeepers’.

Wetlands International takes the example of the region around Lake Chad, where the Boko Haram insurgency has displaced more than 2.3 million people since mid-2013, including 1.3 million children. The Lake Chad Basin has lost 95 per cent of its surface area owing to water abstraction for irrigation projects, and youths from this region are joining armed groups because of a lack of opportunities.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN AGRICULTURE AS A SOLID SOLUTION TO ENDING HUNGER AND POVERTY IN AFRICA

Could African youths be attracted back to agriculture? Participants from 40 countries addressed this issue at the international conference “Youth Employment in Agriculture as a Solid Solution to ending Hunger and Poverty in Africa”. The two-day event was organised by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the African Union and the Government of Rwanda.

The international conference “Youth Employment in Agriculture as a Solid Solution to ending Hunger and Poverty in Africa – engaging through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Entrepreneurship” that took place in Kigali, Rwanda end of August 2018, had a special focus on youth employment, ICTs and entrepreneurship. The two-day event was co-organised by the Rwandan Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, the African Union and Food

and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Young people from more than 40 countries, their ministers, government officials and international developmental partners participated in the youth in employment conference.

Over sixty per cent of Africa’s estimated 1.2 billion people are under the age of 25, and with most youths unemployed. “Could African youths be attracted back to agriculture?”

was the question that resonated to all during the meeting.

A high-level interactive panel involved policy-makers, youth leaders, business and innovation leaders, as well as key partners. Specifically, stakeholders discussed the relative importance of known drivers of youth-centred entrepreneurship and innovations in agriculture and agribusiness along the following major themes:



The official opening session of the conference.

Photo: © FAO

■ Youth and entrepreneurship:

solutions that offer new opportunities for youth entrepreneurship, including on-farm and beyond, along the agricultural value chains. This theme looked at policy, financial and leading examples of incentives to foster youth-led business services.

■ Digital innovations to overcome agriculture value-chain related constraints:

technological solutions that support youth-related innovation and modern production technologies in agriculture; solutions to foster youth-focussed networking.

■ Future of work in the rural economy:

developing a framework and roadmap that will transform work for youth in agriculture and share the future of work demanded in Africa's rural areas. This lays a broad framework and course of action towards steering the course of future interventions.

AS AFRICA'S POPULATION GROWS, SO WILL THE DEMAND FOR FOOD

The food demand in Africa is projected to grow by more than 50 per cent in the coming years because of continued population growth, rapid urbanisation, and dietary changes as household incomes rise. The World Bank expects African agribusinesses to create a market worth a trillion US dollars by 2030. Thus the agricultural sectors had "an invaluable and

untapped potential to address the youth unemployment challenge, but it is well-known that young people seeking to gain a decent livelihood from agriculture face numerous constraints," FAO Director General José Graziano da Silva said.

He noted how young people were usually employed on a casual or seasonal basis, with limited access to relevant education and technical training; limited access to finance, information and markets; and low involvement in decision-making processes.

Da Silva further commented that the FAO intended to strengthen its activities to support countries in realising the potential of agriculture and food systems to create more job opportunities for youth. In particular, the FAO ought to help countries to develop and implement legal and regulatory frameworks and services for youth's inclusion as well as trainings to young people in financial literacy, business development and management, and also in innovative digital finance solutions.

PREPARING YOUNG PEOPLE TO ENTER THE JOB MARKET

In the coming years, more and more agricultural activities and employment in the sector will require digital skills. Co-operatives or other forms of association provide family farmers and young professionals with techni-

cal assistance, capacity building and access to modern technologies.

Da Silva stated that there was a need to "think beyond farm jobs", and to explore employment opportunities across the agri-food chain. The increasing demand for high-value products in urban areas offered multiple employment opportunities in processing, distribution, marketing and retailing of food products.

According to da Silva, achieving this requires "a new kind of rural transformation," which means equipping rural areas with basic services such as education, health, electricity, as well as internet access. "These services are themselves another important source for employment, especially for women and young people," he said.

"VOICE OF THE YOUTH" SPECIAL SESSION ON YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Several youths have successfully entered into agriculture, and serve as role models to fellow youths. The speakers shared their motivations, experiences, challenges and successes in engaging in the sector. Insights were discussed and exchanged on how successful young entrepreneurs should be better supported to act as role models for their peers.

The key demands of the youth were:

- access to capital and better equipment instead of cash
- access to land and resources to farm
- access to markets and technical support
- capacity building on new farming methods
- a rebranding of agriculture to appeal to young Africans.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Key capacities are required to enable youth to participate effectively in competitive agricultural value chains. For example, skills in certification schemes which regulate some important markets are needed. Training entities and universities may consider setting up an advisory consulting service to provide entrepreneurs with the right information at the right time, particularly for youth who may not have a background in agriculture or business. Equally, governments should establish and support well-designed and affordable training and mentorship to build the entrepreneurial skills of youth.



Youth from 40 countries discussed jobs beyond farming and a new rural transformation strategy.



Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, addresses the opening meeting of the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Photo: Loey Felipe/UN Photo

GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES TO WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS

Items discussed at this year's Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women included how to move beyond addressing the symptoms of gender equality in rural areas.

It has been a good year for women's empowerment in rural areas judged by the prominence of the subject on the international policy agenda. With the 62nd Session UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) dedicated to the topic of "Empowering rural women and girls" and the European Development Days revolving around "Women and Girls at the Forefront of Sustainable Development", the subject has resurfaced as a policy priority once again.

Yet, while broad consensus exists that women play a central role in rural households and the rural economy, the question of how approaches can evolve from increasing participation of women in activities to approaches that translate into lasting impact on the well-being and decision-making power of women in rural areas remains a huge challenge. To work on this "how", the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the European Commission's Directorate for Development, and Finland, brought together representatives from government and civil society at the 62nd UN CSW in New York, USA, to exchange on gender-transformative approaches to women's land rights in Africa.

TACKLING THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF INEQUALITY

Gender-transformative approaches are commonly understood as approaches that aim to tackle the underlying causes of gender inequality such as social norms, attitudes, beliefs and patriarchal value systems. Such transformative approaches strive for long-term social change. They are viewed not as a linear process but as one that involves plenty of deliberation and also anticipates resistance and setbacks along the way. Increasing women's access to land and land use rights is considered as one of the most promising ways of achieving such long-term social change in rural areas. Three key take-

1. Land and tenure security is a vital precondition for the empowerment of women, but land titles for women can only be translated into economic and social benefit if they are accompanied by access to resources such as agricultural inputs, training or finance. One example from the panel was the case of Namibia. Since 2013, women in Namibia have been able to apply for land titles in their own name and no longer depend on their families or husbands for signature. In order to translate the land titles into revenue-generating activities, the Namibian Communal Land Development Programme, which is supported by German development co-operation, promotes the economic empowerment of women through access to agricultural extension and inputs.

2. For women to be able to enforce their rights, changes in legislation have to be accompanied by efforts to build knowledge and acceptance of these rights in society and with traditional authorities. In the framework of Germany's One World-No Hunger initiative, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation is implementing the "Strengthening Women's Land Use and Land Ownership Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa" project. Building on the legislative framework, the project works with local authorities to inform and sensitise not only women but also men about women's land rights. The first years of activity prove that when traditional authorities are included and convinced, real change is possible. While this engagement may be cumbersome and resource-consuming, finding champions for change within existing power structures can open up pathways for lasting transformation of the women's status.

3. Governments, donors and other stakeholders have to better understand their own interventions and the effects they have on women and draw lessons from past experiences.

aways emerged from the stakeholder discussions in New York:

HOW TO TARGET WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

A number of organisations have been advocating for a rethinking of how women are targeted in development interventions and have worked out practical tools to access interventions, such as the reach-benefit-empower typology of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) or the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), both of which go beyond tracking numbers of women reached, to assessing real changes in their power and control. A unit of the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) working on food security and rural development put this into practice. They reviewed their current agribusiness projects to assess how gender equality has been addressed with the aim of identifying key success factors for future replication. The review identified some interesting gender-transformative initiatives at the heart of European Union investments, such as supporting women to open bank accounts or promoting women's awareness and voice around their land rights, for example through radio programmes.

The take-aways above represent but a fragment of the exchanges and do justice neither to the complexity of women's realities in rural areas nor to any intervention within these contexts. As ever so often, the devil lies in the detail. Women and girls are not a homogenous target group. In the same region, just a dozen of kilometres apart, you might find a strikingly different division of roles and power between men and women. But there was agreement among the participants that despite this challenging complexity, governments and implementing agencies alike have to try harder to recognise the gender dimensions of their interventions.

Alessandra Fiedler worked in the GIZ Sector Project Rural Development until April 2018 and was a member of the German Delegation to the 62nd Session of the UN CSW.
Contact: alessandra.fiedler@giz.de



It is time to change the narrative about women's potential and role in contributing to a prosperous world.

Photo: Fikerte Abebe/UN Women

NO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT WOMEN!

Thanks to the relentless efforts of women's rights advocates from across the globe, the commitment to gender equality features prominently and comprehensively in the 2030 Agenda, cutting across every issue. But gender equality is far more than just a human right to be achieved in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For without it, we won't be able to master the enormous challenges that humankind faces today.

By Letty Chiwara

In September 2015, the 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Comprising the 17 SDGs, 169 targets and 232 indicators, the 2030 Agenda tackles a broad range of global challenges, aiming to eradicate poverty, reduce multiple and intersecting inequalities, address climate change, end conflict and sustain peace. Building on the commitments and norms contained in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the United Nations (1995) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UN CEDAW, 1979), the 2030 Agenda has a clear message: *“Development will only be sustainable if its benefits accrue equally to both women and men; and women's rights will only become a reality if they are part of broader efforts to protect the planet and ensure that all people can live with dignity and respect.”*

Unlike the Millennium Development Goals, there has been broad local ownership of the SDG agenda, and with that have come concert-

ed efforts by all actors, government, donors, and indeed civil society organisations to ensure that their investments and actions “leave no-one behind”. This principle of the SDGs is very relevant to the recognition that the world will not be able to address all the development, humanitarian, climate change, security and social challenges if development plans and actions leave out half the population – who are the women and girls. Women's role in achieving the SDGs is no longer questioned – it is a priority!



The gender discrimination still holding too many women back is holding our world back, too.

Gender equality is a right. Fulfilling this right is the best chance we have in meeting some

of the most pressing challenges of our time – from economic crises and lack of healthcare to climate change, violence against women and escalating conflicts.

Not only are women more affected by these problems, they also possess the ideas and leadership potential to solve them. The gender discrimination still holding too many women back is holding our world back, too. It is only by ensuring the rights of women and girls across all goals of the Development Agenda that we can achieve justice and inclusion, build economies that work for all, and sustain our shared environment now and for future generations. Here are some examples.

It is a well-documented fact that in most of the world, and particularly in Africa, more than 70 per cent of agricultural production is in the hands of women. A McKinsey report reveals that the economy in sub-Saharan Africa stands to grow by USD 300 billion through greater overall inclusion of women as employees,

entrepreneurs and leaders. As a significant and often dominant group involved in agriculture and household activities, women are at the forefront of efforts to push widespread adoption of clean energy technologies and practices designed to mitigate the effects of climate change, as a United Nations Women Watch report demonstrates. This applies equally to efforts to drive community involvement in environmental conservation. Similarly, as borne out by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), women's involvement in national and multinational policy dialogues on issues of climate change and environmental protection can lead to more socially relevant and impactful programmes.



If progress continues at the same pace, it will take more than 88 years to achieve gender equality in the world.

A 2015 UN Women's analysis of 40 peace building processes since the end of the Cold War shows that, in cases where women were able to exercise a strong influence on the negotiation process, there was a much higher chance of an agreement being reached than when women's groups had only weak influence or none at all. Where women were strongly influential, an agreement was almost always reached. It also became clear that peace agreements were

64 per cent less likely to fail when civil society representatives participated. Moreover, women's participation increases the probability of a peace agreement lasting at least two years by 20 per cent, and the probability of a peace agreement lasting 15 years by 35 per cent.

The participation and leadership of women in politics contributes to democratic governance and decision-making. Mixed-gender governments, parliaments and cabinets are more effective because they make informed decisions that consider a broad range of experiences and needs – hence ensuring that “no-one is left behind” in government policies, programmes and budget allocations. Women continue to play a critical role in public discourse and civil society; they have been at the forefront of many historic movements, including those advocating for basic human rights and universal suffrage, and continue to present a strong force in these spaces.

WHERE DO WE STAND?

The insights are there. But what does equal participation of women look like in reality? In 2015, the whole world came together to review 20 years of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA). While some progress has been reported, sadly no country in the world has so far achieved gender equality. The UN Secretary General's Report confirms that if progress continues at the same pace, it will take more than 88 years to achieve gender equality in the world.

The Beijing+20 report revealed some progress on removal of discrimination in laws and adoption of new laws to promote gender equality and girls' enrolment in primary and secondary education, and to address violence against women and girls. Women's participation in the labour force has also increased in some regions. Harmful practices, such as female and child genital mutilation and early enforced marriage, have started to decline in some contexts. There have been important gains in women's representation in national parliaments in a number of countries. As reported in the UN Secretary General's Report of 2015, women's representation in national parliaments has been steadily increasing over the past 20 years. The global picture for 2014 is that women occupied 23 per cent of the seats in single or lower houses of parliament, up from twelve per cent in 1995. Significant normative advances have been made in the global agenda on women, peace and security. For example, in Africa, 19 AU Member States had, by 2015, developed and adopted National Action Plans in line with UN SCR1325 (Security Council Resolution 1325). Others, like Namibia, have a National Gender Policy and Action Plan with a specific chapter on women, peace and security.

Overall progress, however, has been unacceptably slow, with stagnation and even regression in some contexts. Change towards gender equality has not been deep enough; nor has it been made irreversible. Discrimination in the law persists in many countries, particularly in family law. Women's increasing educational

WOMEN TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES: A SUCCESS STORY FROM ETHIOPIA

Kamso Bame is a widowed mother of twelve in Wabi Batu village of Dodola District in the Oromia region of Ethiopia. Her husband, who died six years ago, used to cultivate the family's farmland with a pair of oxen. After his death, she sold the oxen to continue supporting the family and for a while, this affected their main source of living: farming. However, Kamso's membership in a village-based Abdi Boru Women's Cooperative supported by the Rural Women Economic Empowerment Joint Programme (JPRWEE) – a global initiative by several UN organisations – was key to unlocking her opportunities in many ways. Through the co-operative, Kamso was able to move from the hard labour of ploughing with oxen to cultivating the land by a tractor which is owned and leased to members by the co-operative. *“Before the death of my husband, when the rainy season came I remember him spending three to four days ploughing the one hectare of farmland. Every day, he and the oxen used to come home exhausted. Today it is different as I am privileged to farm the same land with the tractor and it takes a maximum of three hours,” she testifies with pride and joy.*



Kamso, second from left, appreciating the new technology with some of the co-operative members.

Photo: Fikerte Abebe/UN Women

attainment and rising participation in the labour market have not been matched by better employment conditions, prospects for advancement and equal pay. At the current pace of progress, it would take more than 75 years to reach equal remuneration for work of equal value. Too many women remain without access to decent work, are denied equal rights to inheritance and property and are vulnerable to poverty. Women's disproportionate share of unpaid care work continues to limit their enjoyment of human rights in several areas. Violence against women and girls persists at alarmingly high levels in many forms in public and private spaces. Unacceptably high levels of maternal mortality persist in some regions. Women's already limited presence in decision-making at all levels is frequently subject to setbacks. Women remain significantly underrepresented at the highest levels of political leadership, as an article in the *American Political Science Review* reveals.

CRISES RAISE VULNERABILITY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

In recent years, progress on gender equality has been held back by forces in the global political and economic landscapes that have been particularly hard to mitigate or combat. The World Bank Global Monitoring Report (2007) underlines that women in conflict and fragile situations are disadvantaged in three major ways: less access than men to rights (equality under the law), limited access to resources (equality

of opportunity) and, lack of voice and agency (political equality). By the end of 2013, 51.2 million individuals were forcibly displaced in the face of persecution, conflict and violence – the highest number in the post-Second World War era. Conflict related sexual and gender-based violence, including the continuing occurrence of rape, harassment, sexual slavery and forced marriage, remains a serious concern. All forms of violence against women increase during and immediately after conflict as part of a continuum of violence. Sexual violence remains underreported because of the fear and trauma faced by survivors and witnesses. Victims may be confronted with severe stigmatisation as well as limited availability of services providing help. Additionally, in 2013, 96 allegations of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse by soldiers were made across all United Nations entities. In 2014, reports surfaced that the crimes had been committed by soldiers deployed by the African Union.

Global financial and economic crises, volatile food and energy prices, and climate change have intensified inequalities and vulnerability, and have had specific and almost universally negative impacts on women and girls. Women are still among the poorest of the poor and are traditionally in charge of their family's water and food supply, healthcare and education of



children. In times of climate crises, women are often hit hardest – during droughts, they walk further to find water; in famine, they eat less to feed their family; and when natural disasters strike, children cannot attend school,

leaving their mothers to care for and educate them. Despite women being more likely to act as positive agents of change by taking actions that reduce their environmental impact, they have the least input in planning, policy development and decision-making, a UN Women report reveals.

Inequalities and gender-based violence are also reflected in the context of migration. A woman's decision to migrate can, for instance, be due to gender inequality in the country of origin, for instance in the form of unequal job opportunities and exposure to gender-based violence. It is also well-documented that many female migrants face gross violations of their rights because they are vulnerable to unscrupulous recruiting agents and traffickers. They face a high risk of physical, emotional and sexual violence at the hands of recruiting agents, employers and public officials, while access to justice for survivors of violence is severely hindered. But gender has an impact on all aspects of the migration experience of both women and men, as the Report by the UN Secretary General on Violence on Migrant Workers demonstrates: "Gender affects reasons for migrating, the decision of who will migrate, the social networks migrants use to move, experiences of integration and labour insertion in the destination country, and relations with one's country of origin."

Changing the narrative about women's potential and role involves a shared responsibility to demonstrate women's successful strategies and innovative practices not only in transforming their lives but also in contributing to a prosperous and peaceful world. This is the only way the world can truly achieve the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Letty Chiwara is the UN Women Representative to Ethiopia, the African Union (AU) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).
Contact: letty.chiwara@unwomen.org

WHAT NEXT? PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE ACTION

1. A holistic review and reform of national economic and social policies taking cognisance of the invisible economy of women's unpaid care and domestic work is needed. Principally, macro-economic policies can and should support the realisation of gender equality and women's empowerment commitments.
2. Translate wealth into job creation by and for women. Addressing women's high poverty and unemployment rate requires expanding gender-sensitive business development opportunities and promoting women entrepreneurs and their access to finance and other productive assets, including land and technology.
3. Fast-track efforts are required to enhance girls' education, especially at the secondary and tertiary level, and to increase the number of women and girls in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), finance and innovation.
4. Peace is a necessary enabler to unleash women's potential. For sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Africa and around the world, there is need for peace and promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.
5. Harnessing diverse cultural heritage as a driving force to address deeply entrenched inequalities perpetuated by traditional norms and practices cuts across all actions as an indispensable element for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE).
6. A critical mass of male champions can drive a real change and impact for GEWE. Stakeholders should pledge to raise "HeforShe"s that support GEWE at different levels across the whole world.
7. Robust, well-resourced and accountable national institutions can catalyse the formulation, implementation and monitoring of gender responsive policy and programmatic interventions and the realisation of the GEWE commitments.

For references, see online version of this article at: www.rural21.com

THE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF GENDER EQUALITY

Two recent reports suggest that gender inequality is costing enormous amounts in terms of lost income. Both a World Bank survey and a McKinsey Global Institute study indicate that promoting gender equality could have a huge impact on economic growth.

By Mike Gardner

The significance of gender equality in taking up the enormous challenges the world faces has been addressed in two major international reports. The McKinsey Global Institute maintains in a September 2015 publication that advancing women's equality could add at least twelve trillion US dollars to the gross domestic product of 2025. And a May 2018 report by the World Bank concludes that achieving gender equality for girls and women would not only improve their welfare and their capacity to exert power but would also help their countries to reach their full development potential.

“Unrealized Potential: The High Cost of Gender Inequality in Earnings” is the first in a series of World Bank reports that seeks to establish the global economic costs of gender inequality, and it concentrates on losses in lifetime earnings. The World Bank maintains that gender gaps in educational attainment as well as discrimination and social norms result in women being less likely to join the wage labour force. When they do, it states, they are more likely to work part-time and in the informal sector, and to be paid less. This in turn decreases their bargaining power and voice.

The World Bank points out that globally, women account for a mere 38 per cent of human capital wealth, compared to 62 per cent for men. It estimates that gender inequality in earnings could lead to losses in wealth of USD 23,620 per person globally, but explains that losses in wealth based on gender equality tend to increase in absolute values with economic development. Correspondingly, losses in absolute terms are largest in the relatively wealthy member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). If women were to earn as much as men, for the 141 countries analysed in the



Men and women playing an identical role in the economy would greatly boost the global economy.

Photo: Stephan Gladieu/ World Bank

study, the World Bank reckons that human capital could increase by 21.7 per cent globally, and total wealth by 14 per cent.

The World Bank's report highlights the issue of girls getting married before the age of 18, and points out that children of young and poorly educated mothers face higher risks not only of dying by the age of five or being malnourished but also of doing poorly at school. It argues that achieving gender equality would greatly improve women and girls' welfare and agency, in turn benefiting both their households and communities and their countries' development prospects.

PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT NEEDED

Also taking the target year of 2025, the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) report “The power of parity: How advancing women's equality can add \$ 12 trillion to economic growth” sets out from a “best in region” scenario to demonstrate that if all countries were to catch up with their best-performing regional neighbours in terms of achieving gender parity, this could indeed result in a huge boost to the economy. And in a “full potential” scenario, in which men and women play an identical role in the economy, parity would add up to USD 28 trillion, roughly the equivalent of the US and Chinese economies combined, to global GDP by 2025.

The MGI examined a total of 95 countries, using 15 gender-equality indicators falling into the four categories of equality in work, essential services and enablers of economic opportunity, legal protection and political voice, and physical security and autonomy. Forty of the

countries in the survey had high or extremely high levels of gender inequality for at least half of the indicators. A strong link was identified between gender equality in society, attitudes and beliefs about the role of women and gender equality in work, and virtually no countries were found with high gender equality in society but low gender equality in work.

According to the MGI survey, effective action could move more than 75 per cent of women affected by gender inequality closer to parity in areas such as time spent in unpaid care work, political underrepresentation, violence against women, low maternal and reproductive health, unequal education levels or financial exclusion. The MGI maintains that six types of intervention are needed to bridge the gender gap: financial incentives and support, technology and infrastructure, the creation of economic opportunity, capacity building, advocacy and shaping attitudes, and laws, policies and regulations. It stresses that the private sector will have to play a more active role and co-operate with governments and non-governmental organisations in tackling gender inequality. However, it also maintains that companies could benefit both directly and indirectly by taking action.

Both advanced and developing countries could gain from promoting gender equality. Based on the best-in-region scenario, compared to business-as-usual, in 46 countries, annual GDP could increase by more than ten per cent, with the highest boosts in India and Latin America.

Mike Gardner is a freelance journalist specialising in development, environmental and higher education issues, and is German Correspondent for UniversityWorldNews.

Contact: mike.gardner@zaehlwerk.net



With very few exceptions, most smallholder production relies on the labour of both men and women.

Photo: Farha Khan/IFPRI

RURAL WOMEN AND FOOD SECURITY – OF MYTHS AND FACTS

When it comes to describing the link between rural women, food security and the conservation of natural resources, certain claims are bound to turn up again and again in specialist essays. Not only do they promote stereotypes of women as either victims or saviours, their impact on policy design for food security and gender equality can be disastrous as well. Our authors take a closer look at four myths about rural women and show how we could do better.

By Agnes Quisumbing, Cheryl Doss, Ruth Meinzen-Dick and Sophie Theis

It is not unusual to read an article or blog on gender and agriculture claiming that women make up 70 per cent of the world's poor, produce 60 to 80 per cent of the world's food, own two per cent of the land, and can save the planet! Unfortunately, none of these myths can be supported by evidence. Indeed, if women were able to produce all that food by themselves, with very few resources, and be stewards of the environment, they would be Wonder Women indeed!

Myths persist because they contain a kernel of truth. It is true that, globally, women control fewer resources than those needed to fulfil their responsibilities to ensure food and nutrition security for themselves and their families. However, none of these claims are based on sound empirical evidence and all risk leading to misguided policy and action. We unpack these myths in a recent article in *Global Food Security* (Doss et al., 2018) and draw on it heavily for this article.

MYTH 1: 70 PER CENT OF THE WORLD'S POOR ARE WOMEN

Let's start with the myth that women account for 70 per cent of the world's poor. Despite the well-documented disadvantages that women and girls face in terms of schooling, land, assets, and voice in their households and society, no data exist to support this claim. Poverty measures are calculated from income and expenditure data, which are usually collected at the household, not the individual, level. To make an assertion about women's poverty levels, one typically classifies households according to the sex of the household head or makes assumptions about the distribution of resources within the household – both of which are unsatisfactory.

The myth itself has demographically implausible implications. It suggests that men and children make up only 30 per cent of the world's poor, which vastly underestimates the number

of children in poverty. It also disregards the fact that there are more women (in absolute terms) living in male-headed households than in female-headed households because the former are more common and typically larger.

Why does debunking this myth matter for food security? Aside from casting women as victims, rather than as contributors to food security, the focus both on women as disproportionately poor and on female-headed households as more vulnerable to poverty can distort the design and implementation of programmes and policies. This view assumes that all women are alike, but there are wealthy women as well as poor women, and characteristics other than gender, such as caste and ethnicity, may be more important for programme design and targeting. The focus on female headship also masks important differences among female-headed households – female heads of households who receive remittances from a migrant husband, maintain social connections



The myth that women own only one to two per cent of the land masks the diversity of tenure situations.

Photo: Neil Palmer/IWMI

to the husband's family, and expect to have their husband return are very different from a widowed or divorced female household head. By ignoring girl children and adolescents, the myth ignores the different experiences through the lifecycle.

MYTH 2: WOMEN PRODUCE 60 TO 80 PER CENT OF THE FOOD

The second myth – that women produce 60 to 80 per cent of the world's food – is equally popular, especially when referring to African agriculture. It is true that women are important for food security, especially within their households. Women's kitchen gardens or homestead plots play an important role in providing diverse diets, and in some contexts, women also grow a large share of the staple cereal or root crops that are consumed by the household. They also contribute labour to family farms or work for wages on others' farms.

But there are no data to support a claim about the amount of food that women produce. First, it is difficult, if not impossible, to attribute a share of the food that is produced to women. With very few exceptions, most smallholder production relies on the labour of both men and women, so that allocating the output between them is problematic. Second, measuring agricultural labour is challenging. Even if it could be measured accurately, ag-

gregating across tasks would still be difficult. Does an hour spent weeding count the same as an hour preparing the fields? And men and women tend to do different tasks. In addition, much of women's work in producing food, such as tending kitchen gardens or small livestock or poultry, is often not included as agricultural work.

Better data on women's and men's labour in agriculture and household production are critical for designing policies to promote food security. When new opportunities arise, through changes in markets or technologies, the social norms and traditional patterns of labour will shape who is able to take advantage of them. Women's responsibility for domestic chores and food production may limit their ability to take advantage of these opportunities. To increase food security, we shouldn't focus on measuring how much food women produce; we need to recognise that agriculture is important for rural women, strengthen their access to the resources needed for productive agriculture, and reduce the time and energy burdens of agricultural and household work, including food processing and preparation.

MYTH 3: WOMEN OWN ONE TO TWO PER CENT OF THE LAND

A third myth is that women own one per cent or two per cent of the world's land. This myth

is often linked to issues of food security; the concern is that women are extensively involved in food production but rarely own the land that they farm. It is true that both the legal systems and patriarchal gender norms may prohibit or make it difficult for women to acquire and retain land. Moreover, women are disadvantaged in most inheritance systems.

Again, this myth isn't supported by evidence. First, it implies that men own the other 98 to 99 per cent of land, when much land is under some form of customary tenure or is owned by the state, without formal documentation (titles). Second, of that land that is owned, it does not consider land that is jointly owned by a man and a woman, which is a sizeable proportion in many countries. Finally, analyses of nationally representative data from Africa (Doss et al., 2015) all find that of the land owned by individuals, women's share ranges from four per cent in Nigeria to 40 per cent in Malawi. While this illustrates the wide variety in land ownership regimes across Africa, it is definitely more than two per cent.

To ensure food security, it is critical for farmers, both men and women, to have secure tenure to the land that they farm. While both men and women face risks of losing land, women are exposed to an additional level of vulnerability since they may lose access to their land in the case of divorce or the husband's death. Thus, attention should be paid to strengthening land

tenure, with particular attention to women's land rights. Both land law and family law – including inheritance and marital property law – must protect and enforce women's rights to own and inherit land. Women's rights have to be protected when land rights are formalised through titling or certification, through simple steps like having women's names on land documents. Women must also be aware of their rights, be able to enforce them, and challenge social norms limiting their land rights. Legal literacy programmes and mobilising community workers as paralegals can contribute to actualising women's land rights.

The myth that women own only one to two per cent of the land misrepresents the situation on the ground and masks the diversity of tenure situations. The proposed solutions tend to simply promote titling in women's names, when what is needed is more complex. Better data availability on land ownership and land rights, disaggregated by sex, will provide the means to monitor changes over time.

MYTH 4: WOMEN ARE BETTER STEWARDS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The final myth is that women are better stewards of the environment. The basis for this myth is that because of women's traditional roles of gathering firewood, collecting water and managing agriculture, natural resource depletion particularly affects them and they therefore have incentives to conserve resources. The myth also suggests that women will provide healthy, sustainably grown food to feed their families and communities. Women often do have specialised knowledge of certain resources, like medical plants or landraces of crops, and if women are responsible for selecting and storing seeds, they may protect biodiversity. This myth has been useful in drawing attention to women's knowledge, which is too often overlooked by projects that tend to meet primarily with men.

The first problem with this myth is that the evidence is quite mixed: in some contexts, women are better managers of environmental resources, and in others, they are not. Much depends on women's incentive to invest in natural resource management. A second problem is that it treats all women alike, simplifies the relationship between women and nature, and neglects men's role in natural resource conservation. Studies using data from many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America have shown that men play a larger role than is often assumed, such as in collecting firewood, and



Projects to change gender roles are more successful when men are explicitly integrated.

Photo: Desirey Minkoh/FAO

these patterns vary considerably across sites. Women's actions may be motivated more by their limitations in other resources, a desire to reduce their own work burdens, or a way to guarantee old age support in communities where women do not control resources – than by an intrinsic connection to nature.

Finally, this myth can lead to ineffective policies and programmes. Targeting women in environmental or climate-smart agriculture projects can increase their workload and ignores the potential and actual complementarities between men and women in terms of their knowledge and skills. Instead of assuming that women are naturally better resource managers, recognising that women's (and men's) roles in natural resource conservation are varied helps to identify other factors that influence conservation, including tenure security, access to information and complementary resources (such as cash, labour, or sanctioning authority) needed to protect and conserve resources for long-term food security. For example, providing women with secure land tenure may increase their incentive to invest in natural resources.

WHY DO MYTHS PERSIST?

While intended to highlight rural women's contributions to food security and natural resource management despite inequality and discrimination, these stylised facts promote stereotypes of women as either victims or saviours, treat women as a monolithic group, ignore the role of men, communities, and institutions, and provide a simplistic and even misleading basis for the design, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programmes to promote food security and advance gender equality.

Yet they persist. One reason is a lack of data: data on income and assets is often collected at the household level, and survey convention often defaults to treating a man as the household head and the sole owner of assets. Households are still frequently conceptualised as unitary – where all resources are pooled and the household head makes all the decisions. This neglects women's role in decision-making as well as the reality that, in a large number of households, many resources are jointly owned or controlled and many decisions are made jointly. Part of the persistence can be traced to the use of “scare tactics” in advocacy: exaggerated claims are often effective in rallying around a cause and attracting funding. Inertia plays a role: once a statistical system or a method for gathering and analysing data is in place, it is very hard to change. Finally, the myths all have an element of truth. Thus, challenging the myths is often viewed as challenging the importance of women in agriculture.

HOW COULD WE DO BETTER?

The first step is recognising that these four myths, despite their kernel of truth, are indeed unfounded. We need to stop using them, even if they are convenient, and to call out those who are using them. The second is to invest in better data collection, grounded in a deeper understanding of how households function and how men and women relate to each other and work together in different societies. The third is to learn from project experience so that we can design and implement better projects for women and their families – a new generation of nutrition-sensitive agricultural projects, for example, finds that involving men explicitly through community conversations or communication to change gender roles increases the success of projects. Finally, we need to work with both men and women to understand the constraints that each face, shaped by their gender roles and dynamics, as well as other forms of social difference.

Agnes Quisumbing and **Ruth Meinzen-Dick** are Senior Research Fellows and **Sophie Theis** is a Research Analyst at the International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington DC, USA. **Cheryl Doss** is an Associate Professor and Senior Departmental Lecturer in Development Economics at the University of Oxford, UK. Contact: a.quisumbing@cgiar.org

For references, see online version of this article at: www.rural21.com

MEASURING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The large number of different approaches and goals pursued by agricultural development projects make it difficult to assess their impacts on women's empowerment and inclusion and to formulate recommendations on future strategies. This is where the recently compiled Project-Level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (pro-WEAI) could help.

By Elena Martinez, Greg Seymour and Hazel Malapit



Do projects bring about a more just division of labour between men and women? Work balance is one of the indicators used to measure women's empowerment.

Photo: Shammi Ferdousi/ANGeL

Agricultural development agencies and project implementers increasingly recognise the importance of women's empowerment in improving food and nutrition security. But if projects are using different approaches, how do we know which strategies worked best to empower women? Some projects could be teaching women how to prepare nutritious foods for their children, while others might be training milk traders on food safety practices. Whereas some projects could be organising women into self-help groups, others might be training men to be more supportive of their wives in caring for children. Without an appropriate metric that can be compared across settings, it would be very difficult to assess whether these projects are achieving their goals. It was this problem that led to the development of a new survey-based index for measuring empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agriculture sector called the Project-Level

Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (pro-WEAI).

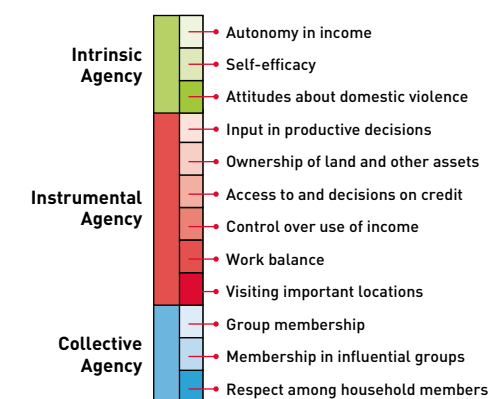
In April 2018, the pilot version of the pro-WEAI was launched by the Gender, Agriculture, and Assets Project, Phase 2 (GAAP2). Developed jointly by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, and 13 partner projects in the GAAP2 portfolio, the tool helps agricultural developmental projects assess women's empowerment in a project setting, diagnose areas of women's disempowerment, design strategies to address deficiencies, and monitor project outcomes. Pro-WEAI is an adaptation of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), originally developed in 2012 by IFPRI, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI).

WHAT DOES PRO-WEAI ACTUALLY MEASURE?

Pro-WEAI comprises twelve indicators of women's empowerment in agriculture: autonomy in income, self-efficacy, attitudes about domestic violence, input in productive decisions, ownership of land and other assets, access to and decisions on credit, control over use of income, work balance, visiting important locations, group membership, membership in influential groups and respect among household members. These indicators are organised into three domains: intrinsic agency (power within), instrumental agency (power to) and collective agency (power with).

A respondent is considered adequate in a particular indicator if she or he reaches a certain threshold. For example, a respondent is adequate in group membership if she or he

Domains and indicators of the pro-WEAI



is an active member of at least one group in the community. The indicators are weighted equally, and a respondent is considered empowered if she or he is adequate in at least 75 per cent – or at least nine out of twelve – of the indicators.

The Three Domains of Empowerment score (3DE) is calculated from these twelve indicators, and reflects how many respondents are empowered across the three domains and the extent of their empowerment. Pro-WEAI is a composite index that tells us how empowered the women surveyed are as a group. Pro-WEAI combines the 3DE score with the Gender Parity Index (GPI), which assesses how empowered women are in comparison with the men in their households.

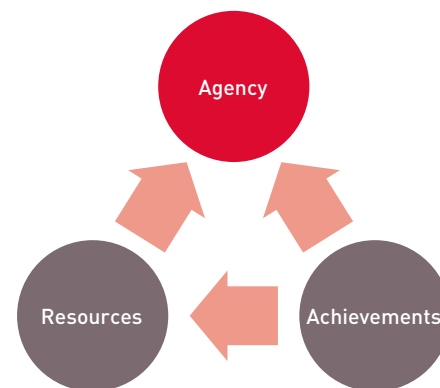
WHAT IS NEW ABOUT PRO-WEAI?

The original WEAI is based on five domains of empowerment: production, resources, income, leadership and time. In pro-WEAI, we measure many of the same areas of empowerment, but organise them into domains that are more explicitly based on the existing literature on empowerment. For example, social economist Naila Kabeer describes empowerment as a dynamic process: resources enable women to have agency, or with the ability to make decisions, women can achieve outcomes (see Figure on the right).

Pro-WEAI includes new indicators of empowerment that were not part of WEAI, assessing areas such as self-efficacy, domestic violence, mobility and intrahousehold relationships. Further, many of the indicators of pro-WEAI have stricter cutoffs for adequacy than WEAI to allow for projects to detect changes in empowerment over time. For example, in WEAI, a respondent is considered adequate in control over use of income if she or he has input in decisions about at least one source of income. In pro-WEAI, a respondent is considered adequate in this indicator if she or he has input in decisions about income from all of the income-generating activities in which she or he participates.

Pro-WEAI is intended to measure changes in women's empowerment over the course of an agricultural development project, and it focuses on indicators of empowerment that a project could change. In addition, pro-WEAI includes

The concept of empowerment



Naila Kabeer conceptualises empowerment as a process of change made up of three interrelated dimensions.

optional add-on modules to look at women's empowerment in projects that focus on outcomes related to nutrition, health and livestock.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Pro-WEAI was developed and tested using baseline data collected by nine partner projects in the GAAP2 portfolio. Partner projects are now designing their endline surveys in which pro-WEAI will be fielded again. Analysing pro-WEAI baseline and endline data in each of the participating projects will enable us to assess their impact on women's empowerment. In the meantime, the GAAP2 index development team is using the projects' pilot data, results and insights to continue to test and refine the new index.



The MoreMilk project adapts the project-level WEAI to the context of peri-urban milk traders to assess women's empowerment in milk-trader households.

Photo: Jessica Heckert/MoreMilk

Elena Martinez is a research analyst at the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH), led by IFPRI.

Greg Seymour is an associate research fellow at the Environment and Production Technology Division at IFPRI. His research focuses on developing and testing the validity of various indicators of women's empowerment, the gender dimensions of technology adoption, agricultural productivity, time use and subjective well-being.

Hazel Malapit is a senior research co-ordinator at the Poverty, Health and Nutrition Division at IFPRI, and co-Principal Investigator for GAAP2. Contact: h.malapit@cgiar.org

The original version of this article was published on the GAAP2 website.

For references and further reading, see online version of this article at: www.rural21.com



An ATVET student operating a tractor at Adidome Farm Institute in Ghana.

Photo: GIZ

DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY: GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN AGRICULTURE

The Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) for Women project aims to empower women in the African agricultural sector, using a gender-transformative approach that includes women as well as men.

By Miriam Heidtmann

Women are the driving force in Africa's agricultural sector. They produce 80 per cent of the food and account for nearly 50 per cent of the agricultural workforce, which is mainly active in rural areas. At the same time, women lack access to essential knowledge and training opportunities in relevant agricultural value chains owing to existing socio-cultural norms and barriers. As a result, women's potential to increase agricultural productivity and profitability on the continent remains untapped.

The African Union (AU) established the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as a strategy to achieve agriculture-based growth and food security on the continent. The ambitious CAADP goals and the vision of agricultural transformation can only be realised if the majority of the workforce in the sector – African women – are empowered. This includes decision-making

power and access to income-enhancing skills development.

For this reason, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), on behalf of the German government and in partnership with the continental partners the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency and the African Union Commission, is implementing Agricultural Technical Vocational Education and Training (ATVET). In order for women to benefit, training delivery has to be inclusive, gender-sensitive and labour market-oriented. The ATVET for Women project is currently being implemented in six out of 55 AU member states: Kenya, Malawi, Ghana, Benin, Burkina Faso and Togo. The gender-transformative approach to agricultural skills development takes into account women's diverse roles and needs in society by focusing on competency-based training courses along

selected agricultural value chains like horticulture, citrus, dairy, aquaculture and others.

DOING MORE THAN A LITTLE, DOING SOMETHING DIFFERENT

ATVET for Women promotes women's economic empowerment, in correspondence with the G7 Leaders' Declaration of Elmau Summit in 2015. In line with the Gender Action Plan 2016–2020 of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), it gives fresh impetus to efforts that involve men as change agents in promoting gender equality. ATVET for Women is the only programme in the agriculture and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sectors with a Gender Equality Policy Marker 2 (GG2) within the German technical co-operation portfolio. Given this status, the pro-

gramme builds gender competence at project and partner level and addresses current needs with innovative interventions and methods.

GENDER EQUALITY POLICY MARKER 2 (GG2):

As a modular goal considering the programme objective of development co-operation, gender equality is the principal objective of the development co-operation measure, i.e. it is crucial to its implementation. Men and boys may also be the target of a GG-2 measure.

As part of the GG2 mandate, the programme has to do more than a little. It is not enough to increase the number of women in agricultural skills development (gender equity). Even doing a lot is insufficient, for example merely taking structural barriers that women face into account, but not seeking to change them. Instead, the ATVET for Women programme strives to do something different. This includes initiating gender transformative change by designing activities specifically to transform gendered power dynamics and to address the social norms and structural barriers to women's inclusion and empowerment.

The programme acknowledges the challenges and respects cultural norms. However, it is striving for innovative approaches to address longstanding traditions in order to achieve women's empowerment in the agricultural sector for a broad-based development on the continent.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEN AND WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE

The above can also be explained by the reach-benefit-empower principle. Reaching women can involve their inclusion as participants in training along the horticulture value chain. As such we offer men and women equal opportunities to participate. However, men and women are not equally able to benefit from the training. A woman might be unable to benefit from increased productivity and subsequent higher income, because of social norms and customs preventing her from applying her new knowledge and skills on the family plot. In order for the woman to benefit, part of the intervention could be to include the husbands/village chiefs – for example by holding a briefing session at the start of the training and to obtain their consent that the woman can apply the knowledge on the family

plot to increase productivity and income for the family.

In the next step, a gender-transformative approach aims at empowering the women by strengthening their ability to make strategic choices and to put those choices into action. This may include opening their own bank accounts and having decision-making power over the use of the money in regard to investments on the farm, choice of produce to grow and more. In the design of benefit and empower interventions, the inclusion of men, family members and community leaders is crucial to ensure their commitment and support for the women. In Ghana, Agricultural Technical Colleges were trained in gender-transformative outreach to increase the participation of women in their pineapple and citrus trainings. After an outreach campaign that targeted the husbands of interested women, 1,500 women came to register for the trainings – together with their husbands.

UNIQUE SELLING PROJECTS – CHAMPIONING WOMEN AS VISIBLE ROLE MODELS

In the second year of implementation, all participating pilot Agricultural Technical Colleges in the six countries include provisions of national gender-sensitive policies in their work plans and/or statutes. Twenty-six training modules in value chains like soybean, dairy and horticulture with high employment and income potential (e.g. processing and packing) are being implemented. Modules for life skills are integrated into curricula, and several national, regional and international knowledge exchanges have taken place, e.g. alongside the 'Africa talks Jobs' conference by the African Union in 2017.

In all six partner countries, the programme has designed 'Unique Selling Projects' (USPs). These interventions use 'Human Impact Stories' to demonstrate barriers to women's empowerment in agriculture and how to overcome these with gender-transformative skills development. It is intended that championing women – and men – as visible role models and agents of change will lead to a gender-transformative shift in perception and result in glass ceilings finally being shattered for the African female farmer.

In Malawi, a successful couple are showcasing their support for each other on their jointly owned and highly successful training farm as a role model for other couples. In Benin, the USP

is following a female alumna of an agripreneurship training to demonstrate the successes and challenges of becoming a female agripreneur for an innovative product in Benin: organic fertiliser. In Kenya, female agripreneurs are showcasing an all-female mentorship programme to support each other in their agribusinesses.

TAPPING INTO THE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

It is not an option to continue doing business as usual. Only using mainstreaming and sensitisation interventions in agricultural programmes is not enough if we want to tap into the economic potential of women's contribution to agricultural productivity to end hunger and poverty on the continent. Therefore, innovative and, above all, daring and courageous programme interventions that address social norms and barriers for women have to be conceptualised, tested, analysed and upscaled. Project staff have to be coached to become gender-transformative change-makers. All this means showing greater tolerance towards risks, accepting and learning from risks, celebrating gains and pushing the bar continuously higher.

In 2013, during its 50th anniversary celebrations, the AU adopted Agenda 2063, a roadmap for the next 50 years. Aspiration Six provides for development that is people-driven, and Goal 17 sets out the bold vision of gender equality in all spheres. At the 2015 AU Summit in Johannesburg, women from grassroots organisations demanded that the continent "Retires the Hoe to the Museum". Women are asking for solutions which not only increase their productivity but create wealth and enable them engage more actively in citizenry. Agenda 2063 is designed to respond to such calls for action, and this programme intends to support these actions through gender-transformative skills development in agriculture across the continent. Tapping into the potential that women hold can truly boost agricultural productivity throughout Africa.

Miriam Heidtmann is based in Pretoria, South Africa, and works for Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). She is the co-ordinator of the CAADP ATVET for Women programme.

Contact: miriam.heidtmann@giz.de

For references and further reading, see online version of this article at: www.rural21.com



Representatives of Tiarako and the District Administration presenting the "Procès-Verbal" document.

Photos: Larissa Stiem-Bhatia

INNOVATIONS FOR WOMEN'S ACCESS TO LAND

Tenure insecurity is a key obstacle to sustainable rural development in sub-Saharan Africa, and women are most affected by it. This article showcases a process that secures land-use rights for women building on traditional systems of land governance. The core component is voluntarily negotiated intra-household tenure arrangements.

By Larissa Stiem-Bhatia and Saydou Koudougou

Women make up 57 per cent of the workforce in sub-Saharan agriculture. Yet, only 15 per cent of landowners are female, and even their land use rights are usually precarious. In rural Burkina Faso, where customary law prevails, women's land use rights can be withdrawn at any given time – commonly by their husbands. Consequently, many women are unable to make long-term investments in land productivity, such as soil fertility measures, which limits their potential to enhance agricultural production, incomes and standard of living. In many ethnic groups in Burkina Faso, widows experience less tenure insecurity. Their land use rights are relatively stable, as these are of unlimited duration. However, widows only inherit permanent use, and no ownership rights, under customary law.

While major land rights reforms are ongoing in many African countries, the prospects of significant change for women remain weak. In Burkina Faso, most of them still face tenure insecurity – even in cases where family land ownership has been formalised. It is against this background that GRAF (Groupe de Recherche et d'Action sur le Foncier; Research and action group on land rights; see Box on page 20) and TMG Research have tested an instrument to secure women's access to land through voluntary tenure arrangements between, in most cases, husband and wife. Today, in total, 228 women have secured access to land in the village of Tiarako, where this mechanism was piloted.

THE GENDER GAP IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Most land in rural Burkina Faso is still managed under customary law. Land law reform since 2007 and the adoption of land law 034-2009 represent attempts to formalise customary claims to land. In addition, land law 034-2009 reinforces the decentralisation of land governance. Due to lacking financial resources and a consequent limited number of land governance institutions at sub-national level, the land law has so far only been realised in 112 out of 351 districts.

A baseline study conducted by the authors examining Sustainable Land Management (SLM) development projects in the provinces Houet, Tuy and Ioba over the past 20 years has shown that only three out of ten analysed projects address land governance issues, even though tenure insecurity remains one of the main obstacles to long-term and sustainable adoption of SLM practices.

The legal framework for land governance recognises equal rights for men and women. Under the land law 034-2009, women, like men, can obtain formal land possession certificates

as well as inherit land. The land law further promotes allocation of at least 30 per cent of state-owned agricultural land to women. Except for these provisions, current land policies do not actively endorse instruments to address women's restricted access to land within the family's land ownership as practised under customary law. When land ownership is formalised and secured, it is frequently done so in the name of the family head, mostly a man, or in some cases of widowed women who lead the household.

The disadvantaged tenure situation of married women, and patriarchal control of land, is likely to persist even with implementation of the land law advancing. Similarly, there are probably not going to be any significant changes in the situation for bachelor women through the formalisation of customary land rights in the name of the head of the household. They continue to be recognised as labourers on their family farm, or may be allocated a small plot with insecure use rights.

Initiatives that have aimed to facilitate the formalisation of land rights for women remain limited. One of them is the project "Securing tenure for women in Niéssin and Panasin in the rural district of Cassou", implemented by GRAF as well as the Millennium Challenge Account, a development co-operation fund by the US government that financed, among others, a pilot programme to formalise land rights in Burkina Faso.



GRAF experts holding discussions with men at the Village Assembly in Tiarako.

Photo: Larissa Stiem-Bhatia

A COMPLEMENTARY INSTRUMENT TO THE LAND LAW

Against the background of lacking policies and programmes to tackle women's tenure insecurity in a comprehensive manner, the process showcased in this article addresses a major gap. GRAF and TMG Research have tested the feasibility of voluntary intra-household tenure arrangements in the village of Tiarako, Houet province. This initiative was carried out under the research project accompanying the global programme on "Soil Protection and Rehabilitation for Food Security", implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

In essence, the leaders of the family farm and other family members – typically their spouses – agree on the duration of land use rights and rules of termination of this agreement. The process of testing this instrument involved a range of local stakeholders – the villagers, their traditional leaders, the district administration and public extension service providers. In regular multi-stakeholder dialogues and workshops, facilitated by GRAF and TMG, the mechanism was developed, assessed and adjusted.

The implementation in the village followed a step-wise approach (see Figure). The first phase was dedicated to awareness raising of the

economic benefits of women's secured access to land, followed by negotiations of tenure agreements. GRAF experts led and facilitated dialogues through village assemblies, focus group discussions, and one-to-one conversations. After men and women had agreed on the transfer of land use rights, the secured plots were GPS-referenced, documented and validated by the village assembly under the presidency of the mayor.

Step-wise approach of securing land access process

Awareness raising on the economic benefits of women's secured access to land for the entire family

Negotiations of tenure agreements on duration and size of land and rules of breach of the agreement

GPS referencing and documentation of the secured plots

Validation of intra-household tenure agreements by the village assembly

Since this instrument does not require legal titling, it needs relatively few financial resources. With a spending of less than 50,000 euros over a period of nine months, 185 plots, 2.2 ha on average and 407 ha in total, for more than 228 women have been secured. Nine-

ABOUT GRAF

Founded in 2001 and based in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, the Groupe de Recherche et d'Action sur le Foncier (Group for Research and Action on Land Tenure – GRAF) is a major actor in national land tenure reforms. It has produced basic documents and moderated and actively participated in multi-stakeholder thematic forums which helped formulate national policies for securing land tenure in rural areas. The network also actively supported drafting of Law 034-2009 in 2009, and has since contributed actively to enforcement and outreach of this law by means of projects and programmes for safeguarding vulnerable groups. On the international level, GRAF has (inter alia) organised regional conferences for West and Central Africa and Madagascar on formulating voluntary guidelines for governance on the tenure of land and other natural resources.

ty-six per cent of these land use agreements are for an unlimited period. According to the villagers, over 90 per cent of the men who are able to cede land participated in this process. Spending of this relatively small sum of money, compared to programmes to formalise land rights, included six multi-stakeholder meetings and workshops as well as the salaries of three experts, two of whom spent more than two weeks in the village.

BREAKING WITH PATRIARCHAL PRACTICES

The men in the village played a crucial role in the implementation of this process. Participation reached a tipping point after opinion and customary leaders had been convinced of the proposed mechanism. Many other men followed these first adopters in ceding more secure land use rights to their women within the family farm.

Several factors contributed to encouraging these men to break with patriarchal practices. Awareness raising on the economic benefits of women's secure access to land contributed greatly to men's willingness to cede land user rights. GRAF experts invested much time in discussing the role of the woman as an important contributor to the family's income and well-being with the villagers. During their field stays, they were always available to interact, consult and assuage worries. The bond



Women sowing maize on their secure fields.

Photo: Larissa Stiem-Bhatia

built by GRAF experts speaking their local language increased men's trust in this process.

As heads of the family farms, men were able to suggest terms and conditions of the tenure agreements. Typically, most men demanded that women only have these secured land use rights as long as they were part of the family. In case of a divorce, the woman would lose the right to use the land permanently. Granting this first level of control to men and respecting traditional arrangements related to the bond of marriage was important to make men buy into the idea of improving the tenure situation for women. Many men accepted women's demands for increased surfaces of land, which would allow the latter to produce not only for subsistence use but also for the market.

Finally, the support and endorsement by the municipal administration and customary chiefs played a crucial role in men's willingness to open up to new ideas of managing and controlling land within the family.

RECOGNITION OF LAND RIGHTS THROUGH SOCIAL LEGITIMACY

The voluntarily negotiated intra-household tenure arrangements resulted in a preceding and facilitating document for Rural Land Possessions Certificates, a so-called "Procès Verbal" of a Village Assembly. As such, it is not a legal document but rather an accord validat-

ed by the village assembly and recognised by the municipal administration. In case of contestation, the village's conciliation committee members intervene to mediate disputes.

Issuance of formal land titles to women was neither possible nor desirable within this pilot process. Land titles could not be delivered, as local institutions responsible for issuing land possession documents did not exist in the region the process was being tested in. Building on GRAF's decade-long professional experience in land governance, tenure arrangements grounded in social legitimacy were privileged in the design of this complementary instrument to the land law. As such, the process was largely led by the village community, and compatible with traditional practices of negotiating and allocating land rights. Furthermore, all tenure agreements were validated and recognised by the village assembly.

Providing villagers with decision-making power over the process and consensus given by the villagers themselves underpinned the legitimacy of these tenure agreements. In other instances, formalisation of land rights is imposed on beneficiaries with much less involvement of customary village authorities. Even where formal papers are available, they do not automatically result in social acceptance within a community, as observed by Saïdou Sanou, founding member of GRAF, who stated: "Someone can have a land title but not be able to exploit the field simply because on the

LOOKING AHEAD

GRAF and TMG Research are currently producing a technical guide accompanied by a movie to enable actors to take up the process and apply it in their communities. A recent multi-stakeholder workshop in Ouagadougou has shown strong interest among the National Farmer Confederation, the Ministry of Agriculture and others in implementing this instrument in more villages. As yet, funding commitments are missing, though. This instrument may also be suitable for implementation – in an adjusted manner – in other countries with a similar precarious tenure insecurity situation for women, such as Benin.

village level the people do not agree with him or her managing this field."

CONCLUSIONS

The instrument piloted by GRAF and TMG Research to secure women's access to land is well adapted to socio-cultural conditions in a specific context. Thanks to its resource efficiency and the possibility to implement it in the absence of formal land governance institutions, this instrument offers good prospects for replication and up-scaling. The process of voluntary intra-household tenure arrangements could be perfectly integrated within wider landscape restoration initiatives. Securing land rights for disadvantaged groups and promoting sustainable land management (SLM) practices in an integrated way is crucial in pursuing the principle of "leaving no-one behind".

Saydou Koudougou is the current Executive Secretary of GRAF. With a Master's degree in Sociology, he has fifteen years' experience in research, design and implementation of projects in land tenure and gender and management of agrosylvopastoral resources.

Larissa Stiem-Bhatia currently works at TMG Research gGmbH – Think Tank for Sustainability, based in Berlin, Germany. In the transdisciplinary research project "Soil Protection and Rehabilitation for Food Security", she co-ordinates research activities in Burkina Faso focusing on gender, land rights and structural hindrances to adoption of technologies for sustainable land management (SLM). She holds a Master's degree in Environmental Studies and Sustainability Science. Contact: larissa.stiem-bhatia@tmg-thinktank.com

FROM GERMAN RURAL WOMEN FOR RURAL WOMEN IN GHANA

Women are key actors in rural development but also face numerous challenges when working as smallholder farmers. The German Association of Rural Women (Deutscher LandFrauenverband, DLV) has taken up the task of strengthening Ghanaian women smallholder farmers to achieve gender equity and equal participation in the agriculture and food sector – a project from rural women for rural women.

By Brigitte Scherb, Anne-Sophie Weißenhorn and Mildred Suglo

Over 60 per cent of Ghana's roughly 29 million inhabitants derive their livelihood from the agricultural sector. Women in rural areas are mostly engaged in unpaid family work. They are key actors in the agricultural sector, where they constitute more than 50 per cent of the labour force and produce 70 per cent of the country's food stock. Similarly, 95 per cent of those working in the agro-processing sector and 85 per cent of the workforce in food distribution are women. However, women are constrained by low education attainment, limited access to productive resources such as land and credit and to the market, technology and extension services. Moreover, they have to cope with overwhelming workloads. Clearly, women are critical stakeholders in the agriculture, food security and nutrition sectors, and they deserve adequate support.

As a recent study shows, a lack of economic opportunities is causing people to migrate from rural to urban regions (see on page 23). Especially youth seeking better conditions are moving to towns and cities, but with an underdeveloped industrial sector, the urban areas offer no decent jobs. The majority of migrants (both temporary and permanent) tend to be men. Women in the rural areas are then left behind and have to see to the farming and household chores and take care of the children. Thus, migration results in lower agricultural production in the rural areas while aggravating social problems in the urban areas – the overall impact is food insecurity and chronic poverty in both rural and urban areas.

RURAL TO RURAL MIGRATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Apart from this general situation in rural Ghana, many farm families from northern Ghana migrate to the south to benefit from two cultivation seasons instead of just one in the north. North-to-south migration leads to considerable ethnic diversity, with migrants forming the overwhelming majority in farming communities where land is available. This is the

case, for example, in Krachi East District in northern Volta, whereas the majority of farming communities in the more southern districts of the Volta region are locally indigenous people. Limited farmland combined with a growing population has resulted in local differences in the ethnic, social and traditional setting of farming communities. But the farming families from northern Ghana mainly stay within their new community settlements in the southern regions, whereas indigenous tribes keep to themselves.

The migrating women and their husbands get access to farmland from landowners through leasing agreements, sharecropping or purchase. However, because the men move first and their wives and other members of their families follow later, landowners prefer to deal with families through the men. As a result, migrating women access farmland through their husbands. Since they are more disadvantaged in taking independent decisions, this implies a constraint to their empowerment.

WOMEN GROW VEGETABLES, MEN GROW CASH CROPS

Gender equality is a key development topic and a crosscutting issue. Gender inequality in the agricultural sector undermines the achievements of sustainable agricultural development because programmes and projects have not sufficiently assessed the needs of men, women and youth within traditional settings to make responsive interventions. In this context, two sister projects of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the Market Oriented Agricultural Programme (MOAP) and the Green Innovation Centre Project (GIC) Ghana, conducted a study in collaboration with the Ghanaian Ministry of Food and Agriculture in 2017 on "Promoting Gender Equality and Mainstreaming within the Traditional and Cultural Settings of the Operational Areas of Selected Value Chains of GIZ, MOAP and GIC in Ghana". The study was carried out in three regions in southern Ghana (Volta, Central and Brong Ahafo).

It shows that in the Volta region, women mainly grow vegetables and other labour intensive crops, while men are mostly in charge of cultivating cash crops such as maize, rice, yam and cocoa. This is because men have relatively large acreages and more financial resources than the women. However, the women contribute labour in cultivating these crops. Rice cultivation was seen as a women's crop in Akpafu Odomi in the Volta region.

Furthermore, the study reveals that farming is more difficult for women because the cost of labour is high and women lack small farm implements and access to resources such as farm inputs, land, labour and credit. Study results show that women had a considerably lower acreage of land than men with an average half to two acres for rice and maize, compared to the men's six acreages.

The study concluded that amongst other things, there was a need to form and strengthen groups, especially women farmers' based organisations through which women can get better and more independent access to resources. Furthermore, a design of agricultural extension systems, fabricating labour and cost-saving technology with specifications favourable to women as well as support to women's agricultural processing, storage and marketing efforts could enhance gender equity. In addition, education on reproductive health and nutrition to reduce maternal and child deaths is a key element to strengthen women, especially in rural areas.

Based on the study findings its sister projects, the German Association of Rural Women (DLV) has taken up the task of strengthening Ghanaian women smallholder farmers to achieve gender equity and equal participation in the agriculture and food sector.

FACING THE CHALLENGES THROUGH ACTIVITIES OF THE GERMAN'S ASSOCIATION OF RURAL WOMEN

The goal of the DLV activities is to strengthen the professional interests of women in Ghana's

agricultural and food sectors and to contribute to an equal participation in economic and personal development opportunities of Ghanaian women in rural areas. The objective is to increase the income of smallholders, to increase employment in rural areas as well as to improve regional food supply by strengthening women in rural areas. Given north-to-south migration, DLV works with mixed ethnic groups in their communities to empower them to develop themselves and their community, thus reducing the risk of further migration.

The activities focus on gender equity through a multi-level approach using four components: rice processing, nutrition education, strengthening smallholder women interest groups in rural areas and exchange programmes with Germany.

RICE PROCESSING

The income of beneficiary rice farmers and processors in the Volta region is expected to increase by minimising post-harvest losses such as breakages of grains during milling. This will be achieved by processing locally produced rice to parboiled rice. Thanks to its specific characteristics, parboiled rice is more nutritious than straight-milled white rice and less susceptible to pest infestations. Its reduced cooking time also means that less fuel will be burned. Local partners will provide support to the women when marketing their parboiled rice. Introducing these innovative techniques in processing rice will create alternative employment opportunities and new jobs along the rice value chain, thus creating attractive prospects for young women to stay in the Volta region.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

Nutritional deficiencies and malnutrition in smallholder households are expected to decrease significantly in the project region. German and Ghanaian women act together as facilitators to improve food security and nutrition trainings. This is where the knowledge of Ghanaian and German agricultural and nutrition experts meets. In co-operation and exchange with each other, innovative training modules for multipliers will be developed. The aim is to teach a basic understanding of healthy and balanced nutrition centring on locally available food. Furthermore, a women's network for nutrition education was established through regular exchange meetings of the trained multipliers. Now it will be possible



German and Ghanaian rural women sharing ideas at a nutrition training in Ghana.

Photo: DLV

to enhance food security and reduce maternal and child deaths.

REPRESENTATION OF INTERESTS OF WOMEN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN RURAL AREAS

In addition, the DLV activities are strengthening women farmers' based organisations as group formation in general facilitates women's access to resources (land, credit and farm inputs). Selected representatives from the rice and maize supply chains in the programme regions will be supported in their efforts to improve political and social framework conditions. Seminars on lobbying and advocacy are aimed at empowering women to better represent their interests in order to improve their social conditions. This includes gaining influence on government policies.

EXCHANGE AND TRAINING IN GERMANY

As part of the DLV activities, women professionals as well as female decision-makers from the agriculture and food sector in Ghana participated in seminars in Germany in order to develop innovative approaches for local adaptation in rural areas. Seminars focused on women leadership and organisational development as well as innovative approaches in agriculture. They also included field trips to farms led by female farmers in Germany. This offered the opportunity to exchange knowledge and experience among Ghanaian and German rural women, among Ghanaian rural women as well

as among women from Ghana with women from other countries of the Green Innovation Centres for the agriculture and food sector.

Through these activities, the empowerment of women and the creating of awareness for gender-sensitive project designs that are also necessary in accordance with the result of the gender study and rural development can be promoted as rural women are key actors in the agricultural sector – in Ghana, in Germany and world-wide.

The German Association of Rural Women (Deutscher LandFrauenverband, DLV) was officially founded in 1948 with the aim of improving the social, economic and legal situation of women in rural areas in Germany. DLV has internationalised its activities and is committed to implementing a project in Ghana.

The DLV project in Ghana is part of the "One World – No Hunger" initiative of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and is implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

Brigitte Scherb is President of the German Association of Rural Women.

Anne-Sophie Weißenhorn works at the German Association of Rural Women as Project Coordinator Ghana. She is based in Berlin, Germany.

Mildred Suglo works at the German Association of Rural Women as National Project Coordinator Ghana. She is based in Accra, Ghana.

Contact: weissenhorn@landfrauen.info

"I WOULD LIKE TO BE INVOLVED, BUT I JUST DON'T HAVE TIME"

Nepal's new 2015 constitution guarantees full and equal rights for women, giving them formal equality with men. Yet in practice this status remains barely imaginable to most Nepalese women. This article considers the extent to which the provisions of the constitution are reflected in the government's trail bridge programme, which provides remote rural communities with vital access to schools, health centres and markets.

By Mona Sherpa, Ansu Tumbahangfe and Jane Carter*

The rugged mountainous terrain of Nepal has long impeded access to rural communities, and hence development opportunities. Although rural road construction has proceeded apace in recent years, many citizens still travel by foot, along winding trails rendered long and hazardous by gorges and ravines. Trail bridges are an important means of shortening distances and making travel safer. There are now over 7,500 in the country, with up to 500 more being constructed each year (see also article in Rural 21, No. 1/18).

The Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC), with technical assistance from Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, has supported trail bridge building in Nepal for over 50 years – initially through direct implementation overseen by Swiss engineers, and subsequently by training Nepalese engineers and assisting with policy and guideline development, in part through a community-based approach. Nepal's trail bridge programme is

now fully government-run, with technical assistance being provided by Helvetas staff from the Trail Bridge Support Unit (TBSU), a body still financially supported by SDC.



Meetings can take place at short notice, and this lack of notice makes it difficult for the women members to attend.

Mina Kumal, Treasurer of the Bhorleghat Bridge user committee and Dalit woman, Arghakhachi District.

Some ten per cent of trail bridges are so-called long-span bridges; they are technically complicated and constructed by private contractors. The vast majority of bridges, so-called

short-span bridges with a length of less than 120 m, are constructed under a community-based scheme.

The Nepal government's Trail Bridge Strategy 2006, Trail Bridge Sector Wide Approach Frameworks and Directives II 2014 and the User's Committee Guidelines 2012 provide the legal foundations for the bridges. Bridge construction is preceded by a process facilitated by a local NGO, in which the primary future users of the bridge are identified and organised into a user group with a user committee. Meetings of the user group are called to take broad decisions regarding the planning, implementation and maintenance of the bridge, whilst the committee has responsibility for ensuring that construction proceeds in line with the agreed government budget allocation and time-frame. It is the committee members who order materials, ensure that workers are hired as required, and liaise with government officials as necessary.

Working on Lodegad Bridge, Achham.

Photo: Tekendra Kunwar/SEBAC



Although Nepal has undergone considerable social change in recent decades, society remains strongly patriarchal and hierarchical, especially in rural areas. Men dominate decision-making, whilst members of so-called “low castes” or Dalits and indigenous groups (Janajatis) have faced systematic discrimination in the past and still live with the effects – both material and psychological. The government recognises the need for affirmative action to address this situation; one example in this regard is the use of quotas for women’s and Dalit’s representation in last year’s local, state and national elections. The Box outlines the government provisions for promoting women’s and Dalit’s engagement in the trail bridge programme.



Women fitting a steel deck on Ghurswaghat Bridge, Kanchanpur.

Photo: Resham J Singh/TBSU

HOW GENDER PROVISIONS ARE EXPERIENCED IN PRACTICE

Over the period August 2016 to April 2017, a group of Helvetas staff, including the authors, conducted a small study funded by ReCAP (Research for Community Access Partnership) to investigate the extent to which the trail bridge programme contributes to transforming gender relations in Nepal. Being present or past members of TBSU, several members of the group have extensive knowledge of trail bridge construction.

The idea for the research was prompted by awareness that trail bridges are generally assumed to have an equally positive impact on men and women, although post-construction studies have indicated that this is an over-simplification. Men tend to use trail bridges for access to markets and services; women are more likely to use them in performing domestic tasks, such as accessing fodder and fuelwood. Nevertheless, figures showed a growing number of women in user’s committees. The overall target of 40 per cent women in user committees now tends to be met – but there was little or no data available on the extent to which women were able to influence committee decision-making, i.e. exert their agency.

As part of our study, we first considered the relevant legal frameworks and the rules, regulations and guidelines established for their implementation. We then examined practices in the field, focusing on nine bridges. Here, we collected information through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with local women. We also interviewed other key informants – especially government officials and local NGO and project staff – and verified

our findings through a consultative workshop with national-level stakeholders.

Quotas for women

"Now each and every policy is in favour of women or has provision for the involvement of women..."

Uttam B. Pal, husband of Basanti Pal (of the privileged Thakuri caste), Chholabagar bridge users’ committee member, Darchula.

We broadly expected user committees with a higher percentage of women to have a higher degree of women’s engagement and influence. However, almost the opposite was the case. Amongst the bridges visited, there were two examples of all-women user committees, but in neither of them were the women highly empowered. Rather, we found that women-only committees can be used as a means for others to exert control “behind the scenes”. Of course, this depends on the awareness and knowledge of the women concerned, but it was striking that one of the user committees with the lowest number of women members reported the most inclusive decision-making. The reason behind this was the active support of the men involved, who were both family members of the women concerned, and the male members of the user committee.

Women’s unpaid care work

"We (women) carry the stones at the construction site, mix the cement and earn some money, so the people have started

to realise that women can work on a par with men. However, the situation is still far from being equal. Before going to work, I cook, feed the children, get them to the school, and finish the rest of the household chores."

Pavitra Tamang, Phaklantapu bridge user and Janajati woman, Sunsari District.

It was clear from our investigation that the greatest factor inhibiting women from participating in trail bridge construction – either in decision-making positions or as labourers – is, simply, time. Women’s unpaid care work is in direct competition with time required for engagements outside the home. The absence of many men on labour migration often further adds to the domestic workload. Those women who participated most successfully in trail bridge activities were all helped by family members – men and/or women – through a redistribution of domestic tasks. In addition, user committee sensitivity to women’s time poverty, i.e. organising meetings at times convenient for women, also proved to be an important factor. Conversely, arranging meetings at short notice was perceived, and in some cases clearly used, as a way to exclude women.

Leadership training for women and men

"This was the first time I left my house for another place. I was scared initially, wondering what would happen, but when the training began I was at ease. I can now go anywhere I want with confidence, and put my views across without hesitation."

Sangita Ghimire, Adarsha bridge warden and woman of the privileged Brahmin caste, Morang District.

Traditional social norms discourage women from being outspoken, so training in public speaking can be very helpful. Community leadership training is offered to user committee members through the TBSU, and those who had attended such sessions expressed their strong appreciation. However, it was found that many eligible individuals were unable to participate because the timing clashed with other commitments or due to family restrictions on mobility, incompatible care responsibilities and similar reasons.

Social facilitation of trail bridge building

"We make sure that there is involvement of women in the committee, and also in one of the executive positions at the time of planning. During construction and maintenance, we also make sure that poor people and women get employment opportunities."

Purna Bahadur Mahar, President (and Dalit man), Social Welfare Society (NGO), Darchula.

Under the current guidelines, a local NGO provides both social and technical facilitation of bridge planning, building and maintenance. The performance of these NGOs is monitored under a system that covers both technical and social aspects, but focuses on the former. It is thus perhaps not surprising that the NGOs themselves place greater emphasis on technical matters, generally limiting their facilitation of social aspects to ensuring that the rules outlined in the Box are followed. The team concluded that whilst the letter of the regulations was being followed, the spirit was often lacking – that is, the true and active participation of women and disadvantaged groups was not systematically facilitated by the NGOs.

Improving women's wages

"Women labourers are unable to participate in skilled work because they are not trained. They only worked as load carriers and as unskilled labour."

Govindi Odha, general user of Chholebagar Bridge and Dalit woman, Darchula.

We found that the principle of equal pay for equal work was generally known and usual-

CHIEF CURRENT GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION ELEMENTS IN TRAIL BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION

Pre-construction phase

- All potential users – men and women – are invited to a public hearing.
- Users' committees are formed, comprising at least 40 per cent women.
- Women users' committee members are provided with demonstration model bridge training.

Construction phase

- Community leadership trainings are held for women users' committee members.
- Employment opportunities are targeted towards disadvantaged groups, including women.
- Equal pay for equal work is upheld, and all labourers are covered by a group accident insurance policy.
- Public reviews may be called to assess progress and explain any deviations from the plan.
- A public audit is conducted on completion, presenting the full expenditure.

Post-construction phase

- Women are prioritised as bridge wardens for routine maintenance.
- 40 per cent of bridge maintenance committee members are women.

ly respected. However, most women did not earn the same amount as men as they were only ever employed as unskilled labourers. No specific training programme exists to give women the competences that would class them as skilled.

TAKING THINGS FORWARD

The above points are among our main findings, and we are taking them forward by advocating the following:

- continued support for quotas of women in user committees, but set at 50 per cent rather than 40 per cent, in keeping with Nepal's constitution;
- awareness about women's time constraints and explicit provision to address this through, for example, child-care facilities at construction sites and mandatory minimum advance notice of meetings;

- a greater focus by NGOs on social issues in the facilitation of community-based bridge building;
- continued community leadership training, with repeat offers for those who missed out on earlier opportunities;
- skills training for women labourers to qualify them for tasks paid at skilled wages (as currently offered in some other Helvetas-supported projects).

Overall, what this translates to is a transformative change in societal attitudes towards women and their role. This means moving from women being confined to the home and expected to defer to male authority to becoming active, respected and equal participants in the wider community. In a radical upheaval of its political and administrative system, Nepal last year became a federalised state, transferring local decision-making authority to 753 rural and urban municipalities. It is these municipalities that are now responsible for trail bridges in their locality. It is to be hoped that they will champion the socially transformative processes recommended above.

Mona Sherpa was Deputy Country Director, Helvetas Nepal from August 2014 to April 2018. During this time, she directed the organisation's Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) programme in Nepal, as well as managing the programmes of Good Governance and Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management. She conceived and led this ReCAP study.

Ansu Tumbahangfe is a member of the Trail Bridge Support Unit (TBSU) in which she is the Result Monitoring and Reporting Manager. She worked for TBSU over 2007–2009, and after pursuing other professional challenges, re-joined the team in October 2014.

Jane Carter is the International Programme Adviser at Helvetas Nepal and has worked for Helvetas (and its earlier part-parent organisation Intercooperation) since 1997. She has a long-standing interest in Nepal, dating back to her doctoral research in the late 1980s. Contact: Jane.Carter@helvetas.org

* With input from Niraj Acharya, Helvetas Nepal, Professor Dr Devendra Chhetri (retired) and Indu Tuladhar, Independent Policy Analyst.

The authors would like to acknowledge with thanks the funding provided by UK Aid (Department for International Development, DFID) for the ReCAP study on which this article is based.



Women at a legal information session (left) and women meeting the project team during the field monitoring visits in Rasht District in northern Tajikistan.

Photos: Helvetas

ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN IN TAJIKISTAN

Over the last quarter century, Tajik people have suffered from horrible civil war, economic collapse and a massive labour migration following the break-up of the Soviet Union and independence from it. Many women were left with no support, since their husbands and fathers had either been killed or had migrated to work in Russia. Forty-nine per cent of Tajik women live in the rural areas. They are especially challenged by limited access to justice and hostile gender customs. The “Access to Justice” project is to change this.

By Umeda Fazilova

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, women in Tajikistan have faced the re-assertion and adoption of conservative social norms regarding acceptable gender roles. As a result, in rural areas in particular, women’s access to education, employment and justice has been drastically reduced, while the control of men over women has increased. When it comes to education, inheritance, land rights and employment, boys enjoy more advantages, while girls leave the family as soon as they get married, and often live with their husband in his family’s house.

WHERE HELP IS NEEDED MOST: FAMILY RIGHTS, PROPERTY RIGHTS, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Another harmful gender custom is male polygamy, commonly spread in rural areas. Polygamy is prohibited by law in Tajikistan. However, men tend to initiate the religious marriage (‘nikoh’) with their second or third wives. Religious marriage is not recognised as a legal marriage by Tajik legislation. Moreover, it does not protect women’s fundamental rights as stipulated in Tajik law. Divorce in the religious marriage can be initiated by the men

repeating the word ‘talaq’ three times. Women and their children often face adverse consequences when the “marriage” breaks down.

Nearly half of Tajik women have experienced physical, psychological or sexual violence. One in every five married women reported having experienced emotional, physical or sexual violence by their husbands (19 per cent), and 4 per cent of women disclosed that they had experienced sexual violence at least once.

Source: ADB Tajikistan Country Report, 2017

The most common issues for women divorced from religious marriage are establishing paternity, claiming child support (increasing/lowering the amount of child support), splitting up property among ex-spouses and determining where the child is to stay.

According to a 2012 Soros Foundation study, the majority of women in Tajikistan face legal issues that are related to family rights (registra-

tion of marriage and divorce, obtaining child birth certificates, care of children, child allowance payments, etc.) and property rights (joint property of spouses, inheritance of spouses, etc.) associated with them. The same statement is confirmed by a 2011 Eurasia Foundation study, which stipulates that the most common legal issues in the Republic of Tajikistan are divorce and related matters of child allowance payments and property division, documents on civil registration, domestic violence, theft, and land and property disputes.

In addition, domestic violence, including intimate partner violence, has been reported to be the most common form of gender-based violence in Tajikistan. Between a third and half of all women in Tajikistan regularly experience physical, psychological, or sexual violence.

Before the adoption of the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence in 2013 and the subsequent State Program for the Prevention of Domestic Violence for 2014–2023, domestic violence was largely considered as a private matter to be resolved within individual families. The introduction of the new law sent the powerful message that domestic violence is a social issue in which the state should intervene.

THE "ACCESS TO JUSTICE" PROJECT IN TAJIKISTAN – WHERE IT STARTED

While the government's efforts to reform the justice system in Tajikistan are commendable, the people in Tajikistan still face obstacles in accessing justice because of capacity gaps resulting from the population lacking knowledge of the laws and their own rights. These problems are especially prominent in rural, remote and hard-to-access areas of the country.

In 2015, the Government of Tajikistan started the implementation of the Judicial and Legal Reform Programme for 2015–2017, which envisaged the establishment of the state free legal aid system. By that time, Helvetas already had experience providing free legal aid through non-governmental Legal Aid Centers funded by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). While this system was successful, SDC wanted to see it upgraded to a government-run, government-funded system, in co-ordination with the creation of a policy dialogue platform that would allow civil society to have input – first into the creation of a new legal aid system, and eventually into general access to justice. SDC therefore encouraged a partnership between Helvetas and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in a new project: 'Access to Justice' (A2J). The overall goals of the project were to provide free legal aid, particularly to women and poor people, to create a policy dialogue platform and to lay the foundations for a state-run system of free legal aid. It was envisioned that the project would consist of several four-year phases.

Major milestones of the Phase I (which lasted from December 2012 to November 2016) included development of curriculum modules on family law for 10th grade pupils of Tajik schools, the development and approval of the concept paper on state guaranteed legal aid and creation of the free hotline for free legal consultation by phone. According to a 2016 monitoring of the project, 84 per cent of clients were satisfied with the quality of services via the hotline, and 85 per cent stated that these consultations saved them money. The hotline was transferred to the ownership of the Ministry of Justice in January 2016 and is still fully operational. Meanwhile, the project Legal Aid Centers provided free legal aid to over 16,000 people across Tajikistan. Over two-thirds of these (68 per cent) were women, and an estimated 80 per cent of them were poor.



Schoolchildren (10th grade) preparing the group task during the Family Law Class which is part of their curriculum.

Photo: Helvetas

From December 2016 onwards, Helvetas, in consortium with the United Nations Development Programme, has been implementing phase II of the project (which will last from December 2016 until November 2020). The project is to continue supporting the system of free legal aid and legal awareness raising among the population.



Me and my husband had a religious marriage. After 15 years of married life, my husband decided to marry another woman. He expelled me from his house with our five children. I cannot get back to my parents' house, and I have nowhere to go. I can't even claim alimony.

N.Z, 36-years-old, from Khujand city

Legal awareness is raised via legal infotainment activities, campaigns on TV and the radio, and in print media and social media. According to a study conducted by the project in 2017, the proportion of respondents who indicated that they were receiving legal information from any one of the information sources equalled more than 48 per cent. Over 80 per cent referred to TV as the most useful source of legal information, and the Internet (15 per cent of respondents) was considered as the second most useful one. The outcomes of the study are being taken into account for the implementation of project phase II. In particular, the project will put more emphasis on legal aware-

ness raising through community outreach activities, the development of Information and Communication Technologies, collaboration with the registry offices and local authorities in the most remote areas of the country.

All in all, the project plays a facilitative role in the process of reforming the country's judicial system through engaging the government, local authorities and civil society with each other, strengthening the rule of law and increasing legal awareness of people in order to mitigate economic vulnerability, social exclusion, violent extremism and inequalities. The project is above all meant to benefit vulnerable and marginalised people, especially in Tajikistan's remote areas, and in particular women, who are known to use legal aid services approximately three times as often as men, and youths, especially girls, who frequently have no access to legal information and education.

TWO PILOTING MODELS OF FREE LEGAL AID

The system of free legal aid provides the following services to the population: (1) written and verbal consultations, (2) help with the preparation of legal documents, (3) services on pre-trial settlement of conflicts (mediation) in civil disputes and (4) representation in court.

The system of free legal aid in Tajikistan functions via two piloting models, the providers



The aim of the Family Day event organised by the project was to increase young people's awareness about their legal rights via interactive games such as legal quiz, sport competitions and theatrical performances.

Photo: Helvetas

being the state and the non-governmental organisations. The state's support is based on the concept of state guaranteed legal aid the government accepted in 2016. Within the context of the concept, state free legal aid would be provided to the country's most vulnerable people: women, youth and people with disabilities.

Within the first model, free legal aid is provided by the State Agency Legal Aid Center (SALAC) that was established in 2016 as the structural unit of the Ministry of Justice. At the moment, SALAC is providing free legal aid in 18 rural districts through 18 state-run Legal Aid Centers.

Within the second model, the project is supporting six NGO-run Legal Aid Centers. Here, one of the NGO partners conducts regular legal awareness raising sessions in the piloted district. The results of the project's previous phase I indicated that 45 per cent of the participants had applied legal information that they had acquired during the legal awareness raising sessions. Another 32 per cent of the participants shared knowledge and provided legal advice to their families and friends.

From December 2016 until the end of May 2018, more than 7,700 people (64 per cent women) received free legal aid from both state and NGO-run Legal Aid Centers. The level of legal awareness among the population in the piloted district rose to 61 per cent from 25 per cent before the legal awareness raising sessions. More results of the project phase II are summarised in the Box.

The government is expected to develop and adopt the Law on Free Legal Aid by 2019. Once it has been adopted, the system of free legal aid will be fully taken over by the state. Meanwhile, NGO-run Legal Aid Centers will be phased out by the end of 2018. The knowledge and experience of NGO lawyers will be transferred to the state lawyers.

However, the sustainability of the state free legal aid system is under question owing to the government's lack of financial, technical and human capacities to support it. That is why the project, which stands a fair chance of being extended for another four years, continues to provide the capacity development opportunities for the state free legal aid providers and focuses on their institutional and human resources development.

POLICY DIALOGUE AS A NEW PLATFORM FOR RESOLVING LEGAL ISSUES

Helvetas as an organisation makes sure that in each project, our partners are engaged to influence policy-makers to endorse inclusive, pro-poor and fair policies. Within the "Access to Justice" project, the policy dialogue platforms are established at grassroots level, so that the community activists and the civil society representatives have a chance to speak up about the legal issues of their districts and call the local authorities into action to resolve them.

At the moment, the project supports training on policy dialogue for community activists,

RESULTS OF THE ACCESS TO JUSTICE PROJECT (DECEMBER 2016 TO MAY 2018)

- 6 NGO Legal Aid Centers
- 18 State Legal Aid Centers
- 7,776 clients received free legal aid
- 214 legal information sessions conducted
- 10 videos with legal messages broadcasted
- 9,500 brochures on family law distributed
- mobile app & web-portal for free legal consultations developed
- 99.1 per cent of clients satisfied with legal aid provided

civil society representatives and local authorities in six districts of Tajikistan. It is expected that by the end of 2018, the aforementioned training participants will be able to conduct policy dialogue sessions in their own districts.

CHANGES NEED TIME


The activities of the project contribute to a change of mind-set on gender roles and to the empowerment of women. Within the framework of the project, women are involved in the policy dialogue sessions and have an opportunity to speak up about their issues. Moreover, in the project districts, a woman can become a provider of free legal aid herself. She has to undergo the basic legal training run by SALAC, and as a paralegal, she can then give primary consultation to the members of her community on a voluntary basis.

Meanwhile, in 2010, the Government of Tajikistan passed the National Gender Policy and the National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women, which listed concrete actions on how to improve women's participation in education, the labour market, entrepreneurship, human rights and politics. These two measures are giving a major impulse for the further successful implementation of the Access to Justice project – a hope that in Tajik society, the role and opportunities of women and girls will be enhanced and expanded.

Umeda Fazilova is a Communication and Reporting Assistant at HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Contact: Umedakhon.Fazilova@helvetas.org

IT'S HIGH TIME TO END CHILD MARRIAGE IN AFRICA



Ritual washing of a 14-year-old girl before she is handed over to her husband.

Photo: Mads Nissen/Laif

During the last few years, child marriage has mostly been handled as a human rights and social issue in the international debate. While this is no doubt justified, a strong economic case also exists for speeding up the efforts and enhancing resource allocations to end child marriage and promote gender equality. Our authors shed a light on the costs of early marriage for Africa's development and present the encouraging example of Zambia.

By Auxilia Ponga and Monika Bihlmaier

Each year, twelve million girls marry before the age of 18 – almost one every two seconds. The highest incidence rates are in sub-Saharan Africa, where 38 per cent of girls get married before they are 18 years of age.

Much speaks in favour of ending child marriage. Not only is it a violation of human rights and a major impediment to gender equality; for the girls affected, child marriage means an overall lack of freedom and choices, it hampers sustainable growth, and moreover, it is costly. While some governments have addressed this issue legally and revisions to the legislative framework are also being undertaken, the efforts to tackle the root causes have been slow.

THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF POVERTY – ROOT CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF CHILD MARRIAGE

Unpacking child marriage leads us to three topics which are equally its cause and effect and must be addressed if we are to put an end to this practice:

i) Access to sexual and reproductive health and early and unwanted pregnancies. Girls married at an early age are hit by high mortality rates. Their children also tend to run the risk of dying at an early age, as high infant mortality among young mothers shows.

ii) Traditional norms and practices. Child marriage is driven by traditional practices and beliefs and the low social status assigned to women and girls. There are also inconsistencies with what is provided for under statutory law and customary law regarding child protection, with the customary legal system allowing girls to be married as soon as they have reached puberty. Available evidence indicates that for each year a girl is married before adulthood, her literacy reduces by 5.6 per cent. This low level of literacy will affect hygiene and health at household level and the future education of children growing up in such a home. Moreover, child brides face a higher risk of gender based violence than women in general.

iii) Low levels of education. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) estimates that at least half of the youth in sub-Saharan Africa do not go to school. This leads to an enormous number of young people not being able to live up to their full potential and consequently not con-

tributing to national economic growth. Child marriage takes girls out of school and is likely to produce a cycle of reducing education prospects for the next generation. As a result, in many cases, the child brides as well as their offspring remain in a vicious cycle of poverty and their potential contribution to national development is not utilised. That is why, when tackling the problem of child marriage, we should not only be talking to ministers of gender and family affairs as well as social welfare but should also include ministries of finance, education and planning in our discussions.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND AND AFRICA'S EFFORTS

As briefly described above, the problem is particularly prevalent in Africa, especially in rural areas. Fifteen out of 20 countries with the highest rates of child marriage are in sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, in June 2014, in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the African Union (AU) launched the Campaign to End Child Marriage – in order to enhance continental awareness of the harmful impact of



In the next 35 years, 1.8 billion babies will be born in Africa; the continent's population will double in size; and its under-18 population will increase by two thirds to reach almost one billion.

UNICEF: "Generation 2030. Africa: Child demographics in Africa"

child marriage and by taking appropriate legal, social and economic measures. In June 2015, the AU formally adopted a common position on ending child marriage in Africa. Since then, the Member States of the African Union held the first Africa Girls' Summit on Ending Child Marriage in Africa in Zambia in November 2015, and they are currently planning a Second Africa Girls' Summit.

While we can witness political will and a huge momentum, progress is slow, and even though the number of girls being married is decreasing, the decline is not fast enough to match population growth on the continent. Furthermore, the median age of marriage has not changed significantly. In fact, in some countries, such as Burkina Faso and Niger, the actual number of girls being married is set to increase, as a

Child marriage and the SDGs

Given its overall impact on economic development, eliminating child marriage and harmful traditional practices is also addressed in the Sustainable Development Goals, more specifically in target 5.3 to "eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations" by 2030.

2017 UNICEF report shows. One of the main reasons for this is the rising number of people below the age of 18, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, as of midyear 2016, Zambia had a population of 16.6 million, with an annual population growth rate of 3.0 per cent; 45.4 per cent of Zambia's population were under age 15. Between 1990 and 2015, there was only a slow decline in the total fertility rate, and the average number of children per woman over the course of her lifetime declined from 6.5 children to 5.5 children. In order for Zambia to realise a demographic dividend, fertility must decline significantly. Combined with the right investments in health, including sexual and reproductive health services, education, and job creation, such a decline could open a window of opportunity for economic growth.

Owing to its direct link to fertility rates and thus population growth, child marriage is a key component to be addressed in the coming years and to harvest the fruits of a demographic dividend. The World Bank states that "the welfare benefits from lower population growth when ending child marriage are estimated globally (for 106 countries) at USD 22 billion in 2015 and USD 566 billion in 2030".

ZAMBIA'S STRATEGY

One of the few countries that have developed strategies to end child marriage is Zambia. In addition to the legal and policy framework, the Zambian government has formed a consortium of line ministries working with civil society organisations (CSOs) network and co-operating partners. The work is guided by the National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage 2016–2021 and is to be performed via an Action Plan supported by a special budget. Measures include a survey on the Boys to



Girls taking part in a radio information programme on the negative consequences of child marriages in Zimbabwe.

Photo: Plan International Zimbabwe

Men project and boys and men's role in ending child marriage as well as in mitigating the high prevalence of gender-based violence in Zambia.

Involving traditional authorities is key to success

Government in co-operation with partners, media, faith-based groups and traditional leaders is providing evidence of what works in communities. It is above all the involvement

CHILD MARRIAGE – ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR RURAL AREAS

Child marriage is associated with high levels of poverty, which continues to be a rural problem. Poverty leads many parents in sub-Saharan Africa to withdraw their daughters from school and offer them for marriage to older men (in most cases) in exchange for payment of 'lobola' (a dowry for the bride). This is a form of economic empowerment for rural communities. In contexts where bride wealth or bride price is practised (i.e. a groom or groom's family provides assets to the bride's family in exchange for marriage), families may reap immediate economic benefits from marrying their daughters. The younger the bride is, the greater the benefits may be.

of traditional leaders that is bearing great impact. For example, in 2017, Chief Chamuka, together with a Task Force, developed, enacted and launched by-laws on ending child defilement, teenage pregnancies, child marriage and child labour in his chiefdom in Central Province. The Task Force was constituted in 2015, within his chiefdom. Parents with the intention of marrying off their daughters are requested to produce a birth certificate to the headman to ascertain whether the girl has reached a rightful age to get married.

To strengthen the fight, village headmen have the power to approve marriages on condition that all requirements are met. A family found forcing their daughter into marriage are fined 10,000 Kwachas (around 1,000 US dollars), and all revenues obtained through the marriage are forfeited to the chiefdom Child Protection Bank Account. The Chiefdom has a Child Protection Unit which is in charge of overseeing the funds. These funds are used to support vulnerable children with school fees and other school requirements.

Put money on the table!

For communication and resource mobilisation purposes, the international community likes to develop one-size-fits-all solutions. Nevertheless, it cannot be that easy, and to really understand and tackle underlying traditional and cultural practices, joint efforts should support community-born and youth-driven solutions

that address the root causes of it. Furthermore, we need to focus our discussions on tools and instruments to monitor the implementation of the legal framework and budget in place to end child marriage, comprehensive sexuality education for in and out of school, and family planning.

Ending child marriage will not be an easy thing to do as it is a multi-faceted and complex issue which has to include a discourse about sexual reproductive health and rights, changes in mind-sets as well as behaviours and education and hence what the country is prepared to invest in those issues. It is not enough to leave the matter in the discussions of the women's movement and machinery where in general, resources are very limited and ministries under budgeted for.



Two 8-year-old girls at Jipe Moyo (in Tanzania's Mara Region), a shelter of the Catholic church for girls who escaped from their village to avoid child marriage or female genital mutilation.

Photo: Jörg Böhling

It is important to look not only at the words spoken but also at the budget lines allocated and tracked towards gender equality. Yes, political will is key – however, it will not be enough.

Dr Auxilia Ponga is Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Gender and Development of the Republic of Zambia.

Monika Bihlmaier is Team Leader for East and Southern Africa at Plan International Germany. Contact: Monika.Bihlmaier@plan.de

“ WE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE WOMEN’S ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION AND VALUE IT ”

Feminism, food sovereignty and agroecology are inextricably linked for the Brazilian feminist organisation SOF – *Sempreviva Organização Feminista*. We wanted Miriam Nobre, SOF Co-ordinator for the Ribeira Valley, a region in the south of the State of São Paulo, to tell us what the situation is in her country regarding the rights of rural women, what the Brazilian government is doing to strengthen these rights, and what role SOF plays in this context.

Ms Nobre, what is the gender equality situation in Brazil’s rural areas?

Women who want to continue farming, return to farming or become farmers face a number of challenges. The first is access to farmland. In the last 20 years, rural women’s movements have made important achievements in women’s rights regarding agrarian reform processes, such as joint ownership of lots. Yet women still have access to less land and worse quality land. According to the latest agriculture census conducted in 2006, the average size of farms run or owned by women was just 38 per cent of the average owned property. There were twice as many landless women producers compared with the total number of producers under the same conditions. Within a family-run establishment, women tend to have their power of decision concentrated in the area around the house and have little influence on decisions concerning what and how to plant over the entire farmland.

Are indigenous women particularly disadvantaged?

Indigenous women as well as women from traditional communities – quilombolas or riverside communities – lack secure titles to the land and have problems removing occupants from their land. At the present time, they are threatened by the repeal of or increased difficulty in exercising rights won in the 1988 Constitution, especially in the federal legislature. They are struggling to strengthen their voice within their communities to ensure that their wishes and land management projects are considered.

In the education and health fields too, rural women and girls are often in a worse position than their male counterparts ...

Rural women who work as farmers or in non-agricultural activities face particular difficulties here. Although female schooling has increased in the countryside, functional illiteracy still persists

among older women. Moreover, of the women completing secondary or higher education, very few take up agricultural careers. Early childhood education is practically non-existent in rural areas and the progressive closure of rural schools brings problems such as education that is unrelated to the reality of rural children.

As for health, a problem becoming more and more visible is pollution by pesticides, causing an increase of early menarche in women, reproductive health problems and cancer.

How can women’s social status and economic autonomy be improved?

To strengthen women as farmers, it is necessary to start by acknowledging the work they already do and the knowledge associated with it. In their backyards, women grow food and medicinal plants, raise small animals, domesticate varieties, select seeds, and make agroecological experiments. This production for self-consumption is fundamental in the family economy; also, through exchanges or gifts women’s produce is fundamental in guaranteeing diverse food for the community and for relatives living in the city. We must acknowledge this economic contribution and value it. Some examples: registration in PRONAF – a national programme for strengthening family agriculture – by means of a Declaration of Aptitude (DAP) which allows access to public policies to strengthen family agriculture, should consider production for self-consumption as part of the income of the family production unit; Technical Assistance and Rural Extension, and funding policies should consider backyards and kitchen gardens as production spaces.

Acknowledging what women farmers already do strengthens them to open up new paths: to negotiate with husbands and fathers about other production forms in the family or community establishment, to set up collective production systems managed by women’s groups, and to have an active voice in associations and co-operatives.



Photo: Cinthia Darenho

Miriam Nobre is an agronomist. She joined the SOF team in 1993, developing training and research activities in areas related to feminist economy, solidarity economy, agroecology and food sovereignty. Miriam was co-ordinator of the International Secretariat in the World March of Women between 2006 and 2013. During that period, SOF held several joint actions with La Via Campesina, such as the Nyeleni Food Sovereignty Forum held in Mali in 2007. Currently, Miriam co-ordinates SOF’s work team in Vale do Ribeira. She is also a member of the Working Group of Women in the National Agroecology Coordination.

In everyday life, power inequalities between women and men take different forms – from subtle discrimination through to physical violence. How do things stand on that?

In rural and urban milieus, gender violence is very present, but it has its own characteristics. Women farmers report permanent disparaging of their production initiatives by their partners: "this is not going to work", "it's a waste of time". Permanent control of women by families and communities is expressed in moral judgement of those who are absent from home to study, participate in a movement or have contact with men in marketing negotiations. Sexual division of labour is very present in agriculture, and it seems quite difficult for a woman without a partner to live from agricultural activity. Thus, single women undergo a series of open or subtle boycotts, and this experience serves as an example to the other women in the community. Fear of not having a partner and going through deprivation is still very strong.

As for ecological agriculture, women farmers report a number of instances of "patrimonial" violence: husbands who apply herbicide to their agroecological crops, who cut flowers, who make it impossible for them to raise chickens.

Domestic violence by a near male relative is the most common. However, increased reporting of sexual violence and femicides practised by strangers is to be noted. In this context, an important aspect is sexist violence used to intimidate social-movement leaders who are fighting for the integrity of their territories.

Can you tell us a little bit about SOF's work?

SOF has been systematically involved with rural women since 1996, when it organised a debate and exchange between activists of rural women's movements and the trade union movement in different regions of the country in order to relate the "gender" and "family farming" categories. Action over the years has been moving forward, beyond these descriptive categories of reality to principles that affirm the transformation of current relations: feminism, agroecology and food sovereignty. This transformation was translated into education and mobilisation activities and proposals for public policies. At the end of 2015, SOF began to implement one of the public policies it had contributed to build: Technical Assistance and Rural Extension, or ATER, for women based on agroecology. The activ-



Preparations for technical assistance. Women from Quilombo Cangume, Itaca, drawing a socio-biodiversity map.

Photo: Sheyla Saori

ities were carried out with 240 women family farmers, quilombolas, indigenous and artisanal fishers – the caícaras – from the Ribeira Valley, in São Paulo. The largest continuous area of Atlantic Forest lies in this region. It is a biome of great biological diversity in a mountainous region and it is full of water courses. This biodiversity has been maintained and expanded thanks to the traditional communities of quilombolas, natives and caícaras that live there. However, government environmental conservation policies often go against these communities.

Is the extension service still working there?

This public ATER was developed up until March 2017. Institutional changes in the country following the impeachment of President Dilma Roussef resulted in no new calls from ATER, in particular those addressing women. But SOF's work in the Ribeira Valley continued through a training programme that co-ordinates the personal and collective autonomy of women, agroecological practices and the social development of markets. It has been very important to build a market that mobilises workers and city workers to directly purchase products from farmers in the Ribeira Valley.

Farmers began to count on a monthly income which, although small, has already allowed them to make investments such as buying a

cell phone, improving their communication with buyers, and improving their homes, such as placing flooring on the soil or buying an electric shower. In the city, workers from public universities and residents at the outskirts of Taboão da Serra were able to eat organic products at a price compatible with their income. Relations of trust between buyers and producers were strengthened, for example, people from consumption groups participated in joint efforts to install biodigester pits. Sewage treatment ensures healthy food, improves the lives of farmers who no longer have to live with bad smells and flies, and reduces water pollution.

This training programme was supported by the British Council, and is now supported by the Fédération Genevoise de Coopération. The programme builds on SOF's broader training methodology and educators, with continued support from international co-operation, such as a partnership with Bread for the World.

Do you also work with men to achieve a change of attitude? And if so, how do they react?

When we started working in Vale do Ribeira, a first challenge was to get the women to participate in the meetings. It took several months of visits from house to house until we could hold the first meeting that could last only two hours. The women got involved little by lit-

tle and wanted to get more and more. In one community, they arrived back home one day and their husbands were already there, angry because dinner was not ready. They wanted to forbid them from returning to the meetings, but women supported each other and they all came back.

In a debate during an activity organised by SOF, a woman farmer was asked what changes had happened in her home. She went on to tell how her husband had become involved in domestic work to support her in participating in the women's group, and had started taking her and her female companions to meetings. While she was reporting, she reflected and concluded: "I changed, and he changed too." Today he is very involved in installing biodigester pits. It must be noted that it was women's groups that highlighted the problem of open sewage and solving it with biodigester pits.

These examples show that the SOF methodology of generating spaces for reflection and empowerment of women helps them to negotiate other forms of relationships and work organisation in their families. In our experience, this process generates the deepest and most lasting changes.

Furthermore, as the women's groups mature, other problems and solution proposals have arisen that must be shared by the community as a whole, involving adult, elderly and young men. For example, we have been talking with the women farmers and quilombolas about the proposal to install an autonomous communication network – a mesh network. They would also like to use this network to distribute Internet signals in the community. This topic involves everyone – both men and women – and meetings held were attended by women and men of all ages. Another example is women's concern that they are not included in decision-making spaces in the production cooperative in the region. SOF invited cooperative members to learn about the work done by women farmers, by developing – together with the women's groups – preparatory activities for the National Agroecology Meeting.

What governmental measures aim to improve the situation of rural women?

A number of strengthening policies for women farmers and traditional communities were developed under the governments from 2003 to 2015. Measures were implemented to ensure joint ownership and changes in selection criteria to ensure the rights of female household heads in agrarian reform settlements. Affirmative actions were established at ATER, rural

credit, public procurement programmes, and a programme to universalise rural women's access to civil documentation. These policies were coordinated by a new institutional framework – the Policy Department for Rural and Quilombola Women of the Ministry of Agrarian Development, which had a significant budget.

Most of these policies were worked out with the intense participation of social movements. This is why we talk about the co-construction of public policies. The mobilisation of rural women, such as the Marcha das Margaridas – a gathering of 50,000 women at several moments in Brasília – played a key role in establishing the National Plan for Organic Production and Agroecology (PLANAPO) and policies to combat violence against rural women. Although deeply involved in the construction of public policies, women in the social movements maintained their autonomy and the demand for a deepening and ongoing upgrading of these policies.

So all is going well?

Not really. The impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in April 2016 meant a profound shift in direction for policies in favour of family and peasant agriculture. The Ministry of Agrarian Development was closed, and its activities are now co-ordinated, with a very small budget, by institutions with less political power. Policies and programmes to strengthen women farmers have been practically cancelled, the Executive Board has been dismantled, and the advisory group created to replace it does not have its own budget or an adequate number of civil servants for implementation and follow-up.

Historical achievements of the rural women's movement, such as the special-insured status in the social security system, are under strong threat in the pension reform proposals with a neoliberal bias put forward by the federal government.

LAND-USE IN BRAZIL AND RIBEIRA VALLEY

Brazil is marked by a large concentration of land. Data in the 2006 Agriculture Census show that 0.91 per cent of Brazilian rural enterprises account for 45 per cent of the country's rural area. On the other hand, holdings with an area of less than ten hectares account for more than 47 per cent of the country's total enterprises; although they occupy less than 2.3 per cent of the total area, they account for a large part of production and food, such as cassava and beans.

The Ribeira Valley, the region in which SOF operates, is home to 7,037 family holdings, as well as to 24 Guarani indigenous communities and 66 quilombola communities, and also to big farming estates ("fazendas") and very large properties with little or no agricultural productivity ("Latifundios"). It is both the largest continuous stretch of Atlantic Forest in Brazil (1,7 million hectares) and the region with the highest poverty rates in the richest state in the country (State of São Paulo).

To preserve the region's Atlantic Forest, the Jacupiranga Mosaic was created. It is a combination of 14 conservation units of different types covering a total area of 234 thousand hectares. Areas where, historically, traditional communities – quilombolas and caixaras – lived and managed the territory and maintained the biodiversity have been transformed into Sustainable Development Reserves, which, while allowing for some planting activity and forest management, do so with precarious authorisation and with a number of restrictions. That means, the logics common of the use of the territory and the associated knowledge of traditional communities are rendered powerless by policies motivated by "preservation" or "financialisation" of nature.

Miriam Nobre

If you had three wishes, what would you ask from women, men and government?

I would ask women to go on being self-confident and placing hope in their organisations so that the small and large changes they have already accomplished can still carry on working in a very adverse context.

I would ask men to trust that real equality between women and men, although it may imply loss of privileges (meaning the hours not dedicated to housework and care), will enable them to become better people and strengthen the movement advocating for their territories and ways of life.

I would ask government to respect women as women farmers, to acknowledge their economic, social and political contribution, to not threaten the rights that have already been conquered, to resume the policies of income and power distribution and to not be an accomplice to those who take away the life and hope of better days.

The interview was conducted by Silvia Richter



Marie-Claude Bibeau is Canada's Minister of International Development. In June 2017, Bibeau launched the country's new Feminist International Assistance Policy.

Contact: media@international.gc.ca

“ EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS IS THE BEST WAY TO ERADICATE POVERTY AND INEQUALITY ”

In June 2017, Canada launched its Feminist International Assistance Policy. Canada's Minister of International Development, Marie-Claude Bibeau, explains what her country seeks to achieve with it and why we cannot afford to leave the potential of women untapped.

Lucia John, a smallholder farmer in the Wau region of South Sudan, has more status and say in her family and community as a result of having participated in the Fortifying Equality and Economic Diversity project. Lucia attended a Farmer Field School where she learned new agricultural techniques, developed new skills, and gained invaluable knowledge. She quadrupled the size of the land she ploughs with the help of an ox that she received through the project. All of this helped Lucia to increase production of her crops and her income. She can now feed her family three meals a day instead of only two. Her success means that her husband now treats her with more respect and shares in the household tasks like cleaning and collecting water.

Fatoumata Mariko's life also changed when she joined the Sabati co-operative of more than 1,800 women producers in Zantiebougou, Mali, through the Support for the Marketing of Agricultural Products project. By working in a co-operative, the women in Sabati are able to get better prices for their products and access credit to invest in growing their businesses. The Sabati women now all have stable incomes and are able to send their children – girls and boys – to school. They have even set up a canteen so that children from neighbouring communities can eat before school. The women's newfound economic power gives them more influence. Fatoumata now has a say in family decisions and is no longer too shy to participate actively in community meetings.

WHY A FEMINIST INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE POLICY?

Lucia and Fatoumata's stories are what Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy is all about: empowering women to make better lives for themselves, their families and their communities. Our policy is based on evidence that the most effective way to eradicate poverty and inequality for everyone is to empower women and girls.

We built the policy after consulting for a full year – with more than 15,000 people, including many youth, in over 65 countries. Our partners told us that protecting human dignity, promoting gender equality, and building local capacity must be at the heart of Canada's development and humanitarian actions. We listened – centring our policy on Canada's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the understanding that SDG 5 – to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls – is an enabler and accelerator to achieving the Goals as a whole. Our policy takes a human rights-based approach – one that considers all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, ethnicity, place of birth, colour, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability or migrant or refugee status.

MAIN FEATURES

By 2022, our goal is for 15 per cent of our bilateral international development assistance funding to support gender-transformative projects that directly target women's empowerment and gender equality and for 80 per cent to integrate gender equality. We want to see more women included in decision-making, so that all of the initiatives we support take into account the specific needs and priorities of women and girls. To make sure that we effectively track and reach these targets, gender equality specialists review each initiative.

The complexity of empowerment is reflected in the six action areas of our feminist policy. One targets gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls specifically, and the other five focus on human dignity, growth that works for everyone, environment and climate action, inclusive governance, and peace and security, while mainstreaming and targeting gender. Sustainable agricultural development underpins two of these action areas in particular: growth that works for everyone and environment and climate action.

Investing in women and girls can change the world – and there is no better example of this than women farmers.

Women make up 43 per cent of the global agricultural labour force, and 79 per cent of women who work in the least developed countries report agriculture as their primary source of income. In Asia and in sub-Saharan Africa, women who are employed are more likely to have jobs in agriculture than in any other sector. Despite this, women make up less than 20 per cent of land owners. Discriminatory laws and cultural norms prevent women from securing property rights, controlling or owning agricultural resources such as livestock and seeds, accessing financial services and training to help them start or build their businesses, or engaging in markets. These kinds of gender inequality mean that women farmers produce on average 20 to 30 per cent less than their male counterparts do. Estimates indicate that closing this gender gap could increase global agricultural production by up to four per cent and potentially reduce world hunger by as much as 17 per cent.

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS THROUGH AGRICULTURE

Tapping into the potential of women and girls is not an opportunity we can afford to ignore. As powerful agents of change within the agricultural sector, women can actively contribute to improving food security, advancing economic development, and mitigating the effects of climate change. Advancing the rights of women and girls is critical to sustainable agriculture. Empowering women in agriculture is about ensuring that they have decision-making power – over production and productive resources and within households and communities. It also means improving women's property rights, access to land and markets, and leadership opportunities.

Through its feminist policy, Canada will support work on all of these fronts. We will provide assistance to local women-led agricultural businesses and help them to scale up, and we will promote women's full and equal participation in rural economies. We will strengthen women's skills and knowledge, and empower them to manage natural resources in a sustainable manner. We will support governments to develop and put in place gender-sensitive legislation and regulations that enforce women's rights to land and resources, and provide women with the right to inherit and possess land and other property.

HOW HAS TAKING A FEMINIST APPROACH CHANGED THINGS?

This year, the Government of Canada provided the means to deliver on our feminist policy by injecting an additional two billion Canadian dollars into our official development assistance and committing 1.5 billion dollars towards innovative financing for development. This funding will support initiatives that promote the rights, health, education and empowerment of women and girls.

During its 2018 G7 Presidency, Canada made gender equality the overarching theme of the G7. Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau set a new precedent for the G7 by creating the Gender Equality Advisory Council to ensure that gender equality continues to guide the work of the G7 Leaders' Summit. This not only helped to focus G7 discussions on women and girls, it also translated Canada's feminist talk into concrete global leadership and action.

The development finance institutions of the G7, including Canada, also committed to mobilising three billion US dollars by 2020. Through the 2X Challenge Financing for Women initiative, the funding will advance women as entrepreneurs, business leaders, employees and consumers of products and services.

Women's organisations are instrumental to advancing the rights of women and girls, including in agriculture. That is why Canada is investing in building capacity to make lasting change for the world's women and girls by supporting the needs of local women's rights organisations in developing countries through initiatives like Women's Voice and Leadership. The creation of a unique partnership of philanthropists, investors, private sector, and civil society – from Canada and internationally – is expected to catalyse new investments that could advance women's rights in developing countries.

Educated and empowered women invest more in their families' health and well-being: making sure that girls and boys attend school, have nutritious food to eat, and are able to access quality health care when needed. They also contribute fully to their communities.

Lucia, Fatoumata and the many remarkable women and girls I have met around the world are proof of that. They are full of possibility and potential. They can and will change the world for the better. They are the reason why Canada is investing in gender equality and in the empowerment of women and girls through our Feminist International Assistance Policy.



Thanks to her taking part in the rural development programme, farmer Lucia John's living conditions haven't only changed in economic terms, she now also enjoys more status and say in her family and community.

Photo: Oxfam



The Junior Farmer Field and Life School programme teaches vulnerable children and youth about farming and how to take care of themselves.
Photo: Johannes von Stamm

SUPPORTING YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE – EVIDENCE FROM CAMBODIA

Following last year's Rural 21 Focus Edition "Tapping the potential of rural youth", the authors address the concepts of decent rural youth employment and agricultural entrepreneurship to assess how vocational training in Cambodia can enable young people in rural areas to have job opportunities along the agricultural value chain.

By Manuel Marx and Heidi Feldt

Although the main drivers of the Cambodian economy are the industry and the service sectors, agriculture is still its most important sector of Cambodia's economy, and is fundamental to its development. Nevertheless, agriculture has a perceivable bad reputation, mainly because working conditions are very poor. Many Cambodians living in rural areas work primarily as unpaid family workers and own-account workers. Child labour in general, but also especially in the agricultural sector, is still a considerable problem in the country. Young people are not interested in working in agriculture and are increasingly turning to other employment opportunities. The accompanying structural change in rural areas has so far not been adequately guided by agricultural policy. Above all, the potential of young people to develop new ideas to shape structural change in rural areas, and particularly in agriculture, is not used.

If the Cambodian economy is to benefit from the agricultural sector, it has to promote, protect and modernise its agriculture at local level. Not only must the government boost investments and improve policies targeting small-

holder farmers, it also needs to focus on the youth who bear the greatest potential to become drivers of sustainable agriculture.

To address some of these challenges, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in co-operation with the Centre for Rural Development (SLE), commissioned a research team in 2017 to develop a practitioner's guide assessing skills and training needs of youth based on a case study in Cambodia. Furthermore, the study was meant to support the implementation of the childhood protection policy of the Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF).

Both the demand and supply side of the labour market were investigated. During the field phase in three provinces (Kampong Cham, Battambang and Kampong Chhnang), qualitative methods were applied. Data was collected through 37 focus group discussions, 89 expert interviews and two stakeholder workshops. Focus group discussions were held with young people, in particular with youth aged 15 to 17 years. The purpose of the focus group discussions was to pinpoint skills and training needs,

and to identify the barriers and enabling factors that influence access to decent employment. To verify the information, further interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with parents, teachers and local authorities in the villages. Employers, training providers and participants and other stakeholders, such as research institutions, job centres and provincial departments, were interviewed in order to explore the skills and training needs.

DECENT RURAL EMPLOYMENT IN CAMBODIA

Four key areas were identified that influence the agricultural sector and limit access to decent employment in the three case study provinces: working conditions in agriculture and access to markets, administration and policy, the labour market as well as education.

Above all, the work is physically demanding, and income generated is low. High input prices mean that farmers spend a disproportionate amount of their income on seeds, fertilisers and pesticides, while on the other hand, prices

for agricultural products are often perceived to be too low and unstable.

With regard to the rural labour market, there is limited information on what jobs actually exist and what skills are needed to access these jobs. In fact, there are very few enterprises that engage in high-level processing or employ skilled workers on a permanent basis. Only a small number of employers in agricultural production and processing could be identified as doing so. Instead, most employers preferred unskilled and seasonal labourers. Hence, there appears to be no strong formal mismatch between employers' demands for skills and the skills provided by youth. However, employment opportunities were rarely found, and jobs mainly lacked decent incomes and working conditions, and did not fulfil occupational safety standards.

Still, it is important to consider that most youth who will be working in agriculture will be self-employed, mostly as small-scale farmers. When planning to develop capacities and skills (e.g. through training programmes), it is crucial to consider the type of self-employment envisaged for the target group, which ranges from someone that sells his/her own labour daily to someone running an enterprise. On the one hand, it is important for rural youth who work as seasonal labourers on plantations to be able to weigh their expenses (i.e. transport costs) against their daily or monthly wages and to quickly adapt to changing working environments if there is no contract securing long-term employment. On the other hand, a young person running a small processing company needs to have the skills to create a comprehensive business plan, to manage more complex administrative and financial processes and to be able to lead a team.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BARRIERS

While Cambodia's agriculture policy framework and strategy are designed to improve working conditions and diversify the sector, challenges persist in implementing regulations and providing the intended support to young people. Policies such as the National Policy on Youth Development prepared by the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MOEYS) or the Strategic Framework on Childhood Development Protection in the Agriculture Sector developed by MAFF are well-intended, although a lack of resources and capacities limits their implementation. The MAFF has not yet addressed youth in its Agricultural Extension

Policy and its Agricultural Sector Strategic Development Plan.

Sound education and vocational training is needed to support rural youth in productively engaging in agriculture or related activities along the value chain. However, training in this area is not favoured, and opportunities are few. Given these realities, it is unfortunate that training needs of young rural people — in particular those related to capacities in engaging in productive, profitable and sustainable agriculture — have rarely been systematically addressed in the Cambodian training agenda. Instead, the country's formal vocational education system often ignores defining characteristics of rural youth and fails to address the specific training needs of young people. This is especially the case when it comes to youth aged 15 to 17 years, a stage in life that is typically decisive in how youth will develop from school to work and for the likelihood of transitioning out of poverty. Furthermore, youth under 18 years face specific barriers and vulnerabilities. They can easily succumb to child labour and face additional challenges in accessing decent employment opportunities, productive resources, services, employment opportunities and markets.

Training programmes in Cambodia are offered in formal Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions that are co-ordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MOLVT). The programmes complete with a certification or are provided as non-formal trainings by other ministries, NGOs, and extension services, amongst others, and do not necessarily end with an official certification. Formal TVET is primarily offered in urban areas, which limits access for rural youth. The parallel structure of formal and non-formal trainings creates governance problems between the MOLVT and MOEYS. For example, responsibilities regarding the supervision and co-ordination of non-formal trainings are overlapping and



Life skills training components, focusing on self-esteem, problem-solving and decision-making, are key issues for young people.

Photo: Johannes von Stamm

unclear. Most of the agricultural trainings are short-term programmes with only limited benefits for the participants.

MOVING AGRICULTURAL TRAININGS FORWARD

Moving agricultural trainings forward for the young generation in Cambodia will require a comprehensive and context-specific approach. But there is also a great opportunity for improvement through the implementation of even moderate changes. Generally, youth-tailored agricultural trainings require not only the improvement of training quality, but also easier access and adequate training content.

Following a study on non-formal education in Cambodia, TVET serves “vastly different clienteles including youth, those with low incomes, workers, women, disabled persons, unemployed persons, and migrants — each with their own characteristics, contexts, and constraints”. This applies not only to TVET, but also to any kind of agricultural training service. Therefore, it is important to clearly distinguish between potential trainee groups and to adapt the level of formality as well as the structure of skills development to their particular circumstances.

Institution-based training services through Provincial Training Centres, agricultural schools and agricultural extension services

are only one route of skills building. Moreover, non-governmental and private training initiatives provide a significant contribution, especially in remote areas. Although institutionalised training provision should be strengthened in order to be in line with the national vision to transform Cambodia's agriculture, the diverse nature of skills acquisition opportunities ought to be maintained. Some Cambodian and international NGOs already provide this kind of agricultural trainings for rural youth. Nevertheless, the country's lack of access to community-based agricultural trainings is one of the major challenges for rural youth.

YOUTH-TAILORED TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Reflecting current and future needs, rural youth need long-term training services at local level that enable them to professionalise family farms and to successfully run and own agricultural businesses. Thus, innovative self-employment-oriented training services, such as non-formal field and problem-based agricultural education like the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) developed by the FAO, could increasingly be considered a new type of vocational training.



Only three out of 150 interviewees stated working in agriculture as a career aspiration, and some others saw agriculture as an option to carry out while doing another job.

When designing and implementing training services which reflect the individual needs of youth, development practitioners and policy-makers should pay particular attention to the following issues:

- Knowledge and skills in promising agricultural products: To improve youth career options, training providers should strengthen knowledge and skills of young farmers in promising agricultural products where markets are available. Skills provided should also involve different stages of the value chain, which often lead to higher returns than primary farming. Therefore, training providers

JUNIOR FARMER FIELD AND LIFE SCHOOLS

The JFFLS after-school programme teaches vulnerable children and youth about farming and how to take care of themselves. The JFFLS methodology and curriculum combine both agricultural and life skills and teach the value of co-operation and collaboration through the establishment of farmer associations and other organisations.

Young people take part in training programmes that last 6-12 months and follow the local cropping cycle. They learn about local agro-ecological conditions, field preparation, sowing and transplanting, weeding, irrigation, integrated pest management, utilisation and conservation of available resources, utilisation and processing of food crops, harvesting, storage and marketing skills. Young trainees are also encouraged to initiate good agricultural practices within their households. The hands-on programme is accompanied by a training of trainers programme.

DECENT WORK / DECENT EMPLOYMENT

Based on the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) – employment creation, social protection, rights at work and social dialogue – which became integral elements of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, decent employment refers to work that provides a living income and reasonable working conditions. Work should be remunerative and dignified. It should enable people – whether through self-employment or wage labour – to provide for themselves and their families. Workers should be able to perform their work under safe and healthy conditions and have a voice in the workplace.

ought to offer courses on the processing skills for agricultural products such as pepper, cassava and coffee, which have the potential to add value in the market chain and improve the livelihoods of rural youth. However, it is essential to ensure that vocational education is holistic, not only addressing quickly changing technical skills, but also focusing on greater life and business skills.

- Practice in planning and running a micro-enterprise: Agricultural self-employment is often the only option for young people, but the limited foundation of business and entrepreneurial skills is a development constraint for them. They lack basic business knowledge, which is essential to reduce the risks of self-employment. Thus, trainings should involve practice in planning and running a micro-enterprise and include coaching from people who have business experience. Creativity is another essential part of entrepreneurship. As a result, trainings should encourage young people to reflect critically, to assess options and think outside of the box. Hence, life skills training components, focusing on self-esteem, problem-solving and decision-making, are key issues for young people. Many potential training beneficiaries in Cambodia come from vulnerable backgrounds and therefore often lack basic educations. Considering the lack of education, a potential approach could be to design learning modules that cover not only skills relevant to agricultural work and entrepreneurship, but also offer an opportunity for trainees to catch

up with basic education they have missed, such as functional literacy and numeracy skills.

- Post-training support: Youth must have opportunities to practise agricultural activities with limited consequences if they fail. They must be even encouraged to trial and error. Training participants in Cambodia have mostly been left alone after training, which has led to insufficient implementation of knowledge of new agricultural techniques. Hands-on learning experiences must play the important role of guiding youth through failure to minimise negative consequences. Thus it is essential to ensure post-training support for all public and private trainings, especially for young people. They must be supported by facilitating access to markets and credit. Also, trainees should receive regular post-training follow-up support to help them establish their farms as business units and to tackle initial challenges.

Heidi Feldt works as a freelance consultant in development co-operation and was the team leader of the study on skills and training needs assessment of rural youth in Cambodia.

Manuel Marx was a member of the research team on behalf of the Centre for Rural Development (SLE) of Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany. Contact: h.feldt@t-online.de

The research was a joint effort of the SLE and the FAO. The data was collected during a three-month research visit (August-October 2017) to Cambodia.



WHITE GOLD – BURKINA FASO'S FIGHT FOR QUALITY

Burkina Faso is Africa's biggest cotton producer. Monsanto, the US biotech giant, had its grip on cotton cultivation with its genetically modified seed contracts for almost ten years. But problems occurred and farmers demanded a return to traditional cotton. Whether they stay GM-free is doubtful.

By Christian Selbherr

Cotton is back! That's the message Wilfried Yaméogo wants to tell the world. Wilfried Yaméogo (photo on the right) is head of Sofitex, the largely state-owned cotton company that controls 80 per cent of the cotton industry in Burkina Faso. And business is booming. Never before have farmers been producing so much cotton. There was a particularly successful harvest in 2016–17 with a total yield of more than 600,000 tonnes. Burkina Faso has reasserted its position as Africa's number one in cotton production. "Thanks to our switch back to a hundred per cent conventional cotton cultivation," explains Yaméogo.

Burkina Faso took its landmark decision at the end of 2016: "We say no to genetically modified cotton. We say no to Monsanto." So has this small country in West Africa managed to chase away Monsanto? Has it forced out the giant corporation that, for many, is the very epitome of big business using its market power to deprive people in developing countries of any prospect of genuine development? "Doucement, doucement," as they say in Burkina Faso. Not so fast.

When, in 2008, farmers first began the extensive planting of cotton seeds developed in US laboratories, the deal with Monsanto appeared

to be their salvation. "White gold" production in West Africa had been in crisis since the 1990s. The archaic technology in Burkina Faso's ginning factories dated back to French colonial times. Even worse, farmers had been faced with new crop infestations every year. First came the caterpillars, stripping the leaves until fields were bare, then the Whiteflies, turning the white fibres black on the cotton plants.

So Monsanto came with its GM seeds and the promise of effective pest resistance – and less need for spraying pesticides. Monsanto's GM cotton is engineered to survive doses of Roundup, a herbicide based on the active ingredient glyphosate. The idea is that the herbicide kills off all harmful growth but leaves the GM crop intact. In theory, at least.

THE FIBRES BECAME SHORTER

Whether it really all happened in this way is, at least, hotly disputed. But, perhaps, it is ultimately not even so important. For, suddenly, a disturbing discovery was made by the cotton processors, i.e. people like Anselme Kaboré, who works in the testing lab at Sofitex – the place where a small sample is taken from ev-

ery bale of cotton and measured, weighed and classified to determine quality. And the better the quality, the higher the market price. The laboratory, certified under technical product documentation standard ISO 129, is a controlled environment: the air is cooled down to 21 centigrade, and humidity is kept at 65 per cent. Anselme Kaboré explains: "We found out that our cotton fibres had actually become too short." Fibre lengths had shrunk by a whole millimetre after adopting Monsanto's system.

Cotton produced in West Africa has long been renowned among industry experts for its longer fibres. "This meant losing our seal of quality," says the Sofitex boss. On the fiercely competitive world market, this amounts to a debacle. Cotton is a product grown in many countries of the Global South, from China and India to South America via Tanzania and Mali, and the high-tech cotton producers in the US are still important competitors, too.

In Burkina Faso, out on the cotton fields where the white fibres grow on knee-high plants, cultivation and harvesting still involves hard manual labour. Bognini Boyoun is a farmer from Koumbia, near Bobo-Dioulasso, who has 16 hectares under crop. He pays his harvesters

CFA 500 a day, and twelve are now at work. “They also get a hot meal,” he adds. Having used Monsanto’s product for a long time, he comments on the return to conventional cotton. “We heard that the world market was no longer happy with us.”

His own experience was mixed. On the one hand, he confirms that he had been able to reduce pesticide use. But, on the other, he had to pay much more for the seeds. “The conventional seed stock now costs around CFA 3,000 per hectare. I had been paying CFA 27,000 for the GM seeds,” Boyoun recalls while inspecting his field in the hot late-morning sunshine.

IS ORGANIC COTTON AN ALTERNATIVE?

“I can’t afford to do anything like that,” says Hélène Kabré (see left photo on page 41). She is a cotton farmer from a small village a ninety-minute drive from the capital, Ouagadougou. To buy the modern seeds she would have to take out a loan. “But I’d never earn enough from my yield to pay back the money.” She owns her own field but found herself getting deeper into debt after her husband died. The widow now has to look after her six children on her own. She is relieved that at least the oldest has just joined the army and can earn a living – which, she remarks, is great as long as the country stays peaceful.

Hélène Kabré, along with her neighbours, began working on the harvest before eight this morning, picking the woolly white fibres from the plants, and hoping she won’t cut their hands on the hard spikey branches. On many other farms we find chemicals being sprayed without protective clothing and without proper supervision. But no chemicals are deployed on her field. Hélène Kabré is cultivating her cotton in accordance with organic methods. Instead of chemical fertiliser and pesticides, she applies manure and mulch. She also does crop rotation to ensure that soil quality is maintained.

Hélène Kabré earns less than the conventional cotton farmers. This is why organic cotton remains only a small niche business, accounting for just one per cent of Burkina Faso’s total output. But on the plus side, “We have so far managed to sell all the cotton we produce organically,” points out David Nana, a young member of the national cotton farmers’ association, l’Union Nationale des Producteurs de Coton du Burkina Faso (UNPCB). In the UNPCB’s view, farmers could grow more organic cotton if they could rely on secure

RAY OF HOPE

Africa’s leading cotton producer – and yet a very poor country. Looking down the 188 countries in the Human Development Index, we find Burkina Faso in 185th position. The country’s roughly 19.5 million inhabitants are fighting the drought afflicting the Sahel region and face the spreading Sahara.

The great majority of village communities are completely dependent on agriculture. But crop yields from the small fields are often too meagre to secure the survival of families. Thousands try their luck in illegal goldmines, while others cross into Côte d’Ivoire as migrants seeking work on the harvest.

And yet there is typically a spirit of confidence and hope about the people of Burkina Faso, which means “The land of honest men”. This young democracy appears to have returned to stability after the recent upheavals of revolution, power shifts and an attempted coup.

purchase agreements. They also need organics-dedicated processing facilities to add value faster, since the existing ginning factories can only start on bio-cotton once all the conventional products have been processed. This leads to delays of up to six months. Fortunately, steps are being taken to change this. In a joint initiative run by the UNPCB, Sofitex and the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) from the US, a dedicated ginning factory is being built to handle organic cotton. The facility should be ready by 2019.

COMPENSATION DEMANDED

When Wilfried Yaméogo and Sofitex got Monsanto to leave, their case against the com-

pany included a hefty demand for compensation for the damage done: CFA 48 billion (76 million US dollars) for the broken promises of GM cotton. On the other hand, Monsanto were still owed several million in license fees for its seed stock and herbicide.

The two sides finally agreed an out-of-court settlement in March 2017. The people at Sofitex accepted CFA 11.3 billion – far less than their initial demand, but Sofitex’s director, Wilfried Yaméogo, took the view that a bad deal was better than a bad court ruling. A line had been drawn under the whole matter. “The Monsanto file is now closed,” he says. Really?

The problem is that another file remains open. “We’ve said goodbye to Monsanto,” adds



Cotton bales wrapped with an orange plastic cover are ready for export.

Photo: Jörg Böhling

Yaméogo, “but not to genetic engineering.” Contrary to what many think, the “no” to Monsanto is not automatically a “yes” to a traditional cotton industry. For Sofitex is looking for a new partner – this time one who can deliver the right length of fibre and thus the desired quality – along with the prospect of healthy profits on the world market.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Now the Germans have entered the arena. “We approached Bayer in December 2014, and Bayer are interested in principle,” says Yaméogo. Bayer of all companies. The group that began negotiations on a merger with its competitor Monsanto in 2016 and has since become a massive player in the agribusiness.

Yet merging the tradition-steeped German chemicals giant with the American seed king is proving more complicated than Bayer had anticipated. In summer 2018, a US court ruled against Monsanto, upholding the accusation that glyphosate products have caused cancer and ordering compensation to the terminally ill the plaintiff.

Even before this setback, the merger had been delayed due to all sorts of anti-trust obstacles – which is also why Burkina Faso’s Sofitex has had to hold back on any deal.

In February 2018, Sofitex’s boss said, “Bayer have promised to return to the negotiating

table in the near future.” Although this has not been confirmed by Bayer headquarters in Leverkusen, it is worth noting that the company has since taken a majority share in Monsanto Burkina Faso SARL, as a list of group holdings from August 2018 shows. In a parallel development, Burkina Faso’s harvests in the 2017–2018 season turned out to be something of a disappointment following a record year in 2016–2017. Sofitex has not yet published exact data but it confirms that yields remain below expectations. This, Sofitex argues, had nothing to do with the phasing-out of GM cotton. Rather, the fall-off is due entirely to an unfavourable rainy season – as other cotton growing countries in the region, like Mali and Benin, can confirm. Indeed, the target boldly set for the 2018–2019 season is 800,000 tonnes.

Nevertheless, Wilfried Yaméogo won’t rule out GM. Bayer, he says, remains the best candidate for Burkina Faso cotton production. He argues that the company already has experience with cotton production in Cameroon. The director of Sofitex thinks it might take as long as seven years for the two sides to agree a deal – and until then, the country’s industry wants to continue along the path of conventional cotton. So, yes, “Cotton is back!”, but before long we might be saying “Monsanto is back” in Burkina Faso.

Christian Selbherr is an editor and journalist with “missio magazin”, a journal published by the Catholic aid organisation missio, based in Munich.



Anselme Kaboré examining the quality of the cotton fibres in the testing lab.

Photo: Jörg Böthling

Imprint

Rural 21 –
The International Journal
for Rural Development

Published by:
DLG-Verlag GmbH
Frankfurt, Germany

Advisory council:
Ueli Mauderli, DEZA
Dr Reinhard Grandke, DLG
Martin Koppa, HELVETAS
Dr Stefan Schmitz, BMZ
Christel Weller-Molongua, GIZ

Editorial committee:
Dr Michael Brüntrup, DIE
Dr Manfred Denich, ZEF
Dorothea Hohengarten, GIZ
Karl-Martin Lüth, DLG
Prof Dr Matin Qaim,
University of Göttingen
Dr Detlef Virchow, Plan International

Editor in chief:
Daniela Böhm, d.boehm@dlg.org

Editorial staff:
Olive Bexten, o.bexten@dlg.org
Ines Lechner, i.lechner@dlg.org
Silvia Richter, s.richter@dlg.org
Angelika Wilcke, a.wilcke@dlg.org

Editorial assistance:
Mike Gardner

Translated by:
Christopher Hay
Tazir International Services

Cover:
The women’s movement Gulabi Gang campaigns
for women’s rights. (Photo: Jörg Böthling)

Design & Layout:
Andrea Trapani, DLG-Verlag

Editorial office, distribution, advertising:
DLG-Verlag GmbH
Eschborner Landstraße 122
60489 Frankfurt, Germany

Printed by:
Brühlsche Universitäts-
druckerei GmbH & Co KG
35396 Gießen, Germany



Rural 21 is published four times a year. The subscription rate is EUR 33.– (Germany), EUR 37.– (EU countries), EUR 51.– (non-EU countries) and EUR 8.30 per issue, plus postage. All rights reserved. The contents may not be translated, reproduced in whole or in part, nor may information be passed on to third parties without permission of the publisher. Please direct all correspondence to the editor-in-chief.

The opinions expressed by the authors are not necessarily those of the publisher or the editor. The editor retains the right to make editorial changes.

ClimatePartner^o
klimaneutral

Druck | ID 11599-1712-1001

STAY INFORMED

WITH OUR FORTNIGHTLY NEWSLETTER



Verlag

August 2018/2

RURAL21

The International Journal for Rural Development

News



Are we heading towards a "Hothouse Earth" climate?

The earth is at risk of heading towards an irreversible "Hothouse Earth" state, researchers warn. They point out that natural feedback processes could push the climate to a global average of 4-5° C higher than preindustrial...

[read more](#)



Fall Armyworm to spread across Asia

Fall Armyworm likely to spread from India to other parts of Asia with South East Asia and South China most at risk, according to FAO.

[read more](#)



Cash Crop Conference: Taking a look at agricultural development

Experts at the Cash Crop Conference in Beijing, China discussed agricultural development. They...

Follow us on

LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/rural-21

www.rural21.com