



F@RMLETTER

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EDITORIAL	1
FARMELANEOUS	3
BEST PRACTICE	10
FARMATORY	14
NEWS&EVENTS	17

EDITORIAL

Focusing on Women in Agriculture
Mr Jackson M'baya, NASFAM Chairperson.



I have read many articles and reports that have alluded to a considerable and growing involvement of women in the agricultural sector. Women are the key contributors to agriculture, and work in the sector on a daily basis.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has stated that women make up about 41% of total employment in agriculture globally. In Sub-Saharan Africa, women provide about 70% of all agricultural labor and produce about 90% of the food. In my country, Malawi, 95% of the women work in agriculture.

Whereas these statistics may appear compelling, they can never succeed in demonstrating the challenging environment in which women in agriculture work.

As I walk from my village to the next one, I see many women with children on their backs hoeing in their gardens in hot tropical conditions. Occasionally, I ask where their husbands are, and I am told that they have gone back home or have gone to the trading centre on different assignments.

Although I appreciate that men are also very involved in farming, I would like to highlight and agree with the statistics that women, despite all their other household chores and responsibilities, contribute significantly to agriculture.

I see it when they wake up early to go to the garden, when they go back to the garden after preparing lunch for the family, when they go and work on someone's farm in order to raise some cash or when they spend their afternoons shelling groundnuts or maize.

What makes all this complicated is the fact that they are able to do this even though they have limited access to required resources.

It is humbling to think of women's contributions to food production when they lack the very resources that they need in order to produce that food.

Land, labor and capital are all in short supply for most women. Even without quoting any statistics, it would not be difficult to convince anybody that when women own land, it is usually smaller or less fertile than that owned by men. Most women are the ones that sell their labor

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Women
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and work in the sector
on a daily basis



and provide the casual labor force for many farms.

On account of poverty they are unable to hire any labour. As a result of their failure to hire extra labor and also use their labor on other peoples' farms, the productivity on their own farms is compromised.

They also have problems in accessing agricultural credit both for short term and long term investments, have limited access to agricultural extension, and face many challenges in accessing markets for their produce. All of these are factors have not only been observed and continue to be observed by me in my village or district or country, but are also happening in our neighboring countries, in the rest of Africa, in Asia, in South America and in many parts of the world.

To the woman experiencing these hardships, the experience is real, it is not a statistic.

What is even more real is the fact that, in the event that Governments do not deliberately address the challenges that women in agriculture face, global food security and agricultural development will remain a mirage. It is necessary to ensure that agricultural policies and programs prioritize women. Targeting women in agriculture is not simply gender integration, it is actually logical and makes business sense.

In NASFAM, our members agree that targeting women with agricultural interventions makes good business sense because women are the ones involved in agriculture.

It would be illogical of anyone to design an intervention aimed at improving fish production and target farmers in general without specifically targeting fish farmers.

Addressing the challenges that women face in agriculture will not happen indirectly through targeting all smallholder farmers in general. It is necessary that women farmers' needs are identified and specifically addressed. Interventions targeted at all smallholder farmers usually leave out the women.

It is therefore the responsibility of all farmer organizations to ensure that women are included not only as members of the farmer groups, but also as leaders, so that they can become visible and accessible for Government intervention.

In light of the fact that farmer organisations are a conduit through which most of the challenges facing women farmers can be addressed, they need to be exemplary in this regard and ensure that within the organisations, women and women farmer issues are prioritized.

Governments need also to ensure that their interventions and policies are properly targeted: Before any donor can come up with gender targets, developing countries - most of whose economies depend on agriculture - must already be in the forefront of developing gender-sensitive programs that will have a higher chance of increasing agricultural production and food security.

I look forward not only to an increased commitment to gender integration in agriculture but, even more importantly, to practical solutions to issues affecting women farmers. The World Farmers Organisation is well placed to link farmers to global policy makers and development practitioners in order to facilitate the identification and implementation of these practical solutions.

OIE AND WFO ARE JOINING FORCES IN THE INTEREST OF WORLD FARMERS

Marco Marzano de Marinis,
*Executive Director,
World Farmers' Organisation*

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the World Farmers Organization (WFO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) on November 9, 2012 in Paris with the objective of aligning their activities so as to better serve the interests of farmers worldwide.

OIE is an intergovernmental organization with a total membership

in 2011 of 178 member states, with responsibility for improving animal health worldwide.

It is recognized by the World Trade Organization (WTO) as being a recognized leading Organization in such sector.

OIE maintains permanent relations with 45 other international and regional organizations and has regional and sub-regional of-

fices in every continent.

Its intergovernmental and decentralized nature makes it a unique gateway for all of WFO's members to access expertise on animal health issues.

OIE acts through various channels and thus has multiple objectives: First, it ensures that each member country reports animal diseases detected on its territory and is



then responsible for disseminating such information.

The organization collects and analyzes the latest and most up to date information on animal disease control and makes it available to member countries, thus helping them improve the methods to control and eradicate these diseases. OIE also provides technical support to member countries who request assistance in connection with animal disease control, as well as eradication operations, especially in cases of diseases that are transmittable to humans. Furthermore, OIE develops legal documents containing rules that member countries can apply in order to protect themselves against the introduction of diseases and pathogens.

OIE also helps veterinary services and laboratories in developing and transition economies by providing necessary infrastructure and capacities to enable them to benefit more fully from the WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary agreement. Lastly, OIE Member Countries have decided to provide better safety guarantees for animal-origin food by creating greater synergies between OIE activities and those of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

WFO represents an important partner for OIE in achieving its overall mandate to reduce food-borne risks to human health due to ha-

zards arising from animal-origin products.

This MoU is the latest in a series of partnership agreements signed by WFO in the framework of the **Partnership for Growth** program.

Through this partnership WFO aim to ensure to its members:

- An opportunity to speak and be listen during the OIE political debates and main fora, i.e. General Assembly and conferences;
- An opportunity to comment on the proposals from OIE and especially participating at the committee on animal welfare;
- Joint development, along with OIE, of awareness-raising programs, publications, regional and international Conferences, workshops, trainings and other initiatives that may benefit WFO's members;

- Timely access to the latest information on animal health, as well as expertise, services, and technical assistance on key issues relating to animal health.

A Memorandum of Understanding WAS SIGNED between the World Farmers Organization (WFO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) on November 9, 2012 in Paris.



ACCESS TO CREDIT FOR WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS IN OECD COUNTRIES AND IN THE NETHERLANDS

Willemien Koning, LTO Nederland, boardmember copa Women's committee

It is true that many countries around the world have made significant progress towards gender equality in education in recent decades.

Today girls outperform boys in some areas of education and are less likely to drop out of school than boys.

The glass is, however, still half-full: Women continue to earn less than men, are less likely to make it to the top of the career ladder and are more likely to end their lives in poverty.

The challenge of delivering long-term strong and sustainable economic growth that benefits everyone can only be met if the best use is made of all available resources. Leaving women behind means not only forsaking the important contributions women make to the economy but also wasting years of investment in the education of girls and young women.

Making the most of the talent pool ensures that men and women have an equal chance to contribute both at home and in the

workplace, thereby enhancing the well-being of both men and women, and more generally of society.

That is not only necessary in the city but also in rural areas!

OECD COUNTRIES

Despite women's increased participation in the Labor market over the past half-century, they remain substantially underrepresented as entrepreneurs in OECD-countries. (OECD is the organisation for economic Co-operation and Development: There are 34 member countries from Europe, America and the Asia-Pacific Region).

The rate of women-owned businesses is currently stuck at around 30% of the total in OECD countries. Overall women entrepreneurs earn 30 to 40% less than men.

Two key differences between male and female entrepreneurs help explain this relatively low returns.

Women start their enterprises with limited management experience and they devote less of their time to their business than men.

In OECD countries 22 % of self-employed women work less than 40 hours a week, while this is only 10 % for self-employed men. We also see, however, that 78% of the self-employed women work 40 hours or more in their business!

TURNOVER AND LOANS

The most remarkable differences between female and male-owned enterprises relate to the size of their business operation, as measured by sales or value-added.

The average turnover of individual enterprises owned by women compared with the percentage of firms owned by men was 18% in the Netherlands, 26% in Italy and 44% in Finland (in 2009).

When we look to the reasons for lower earnings we see that:

- Women are less willing to take risks;
- Women work in sectors which are different from those in which men work and which are less profitable;
- Women spend more time on



- family and housekeeping;
- Women are less likely to borrow money to finance their businesses;
- Women are less focused on business growth.

ACCESS TO CREDIT

The times are changing and the way our societies and economies function are also changing.

Men and women have to be able to find a work-life balance that suits them.

Sharing childcare responsibilities can also be difficult. It seems that mothers almost always spend more hours per day in unpaid work at home and childcare than men.

When we look to the Access to credit in OECD-countries we see that:

1. Women entrepreneurs rely less than men on loans. 27% Of wo-

men owned enterprises had no loans in the last two years versus 20 % of men-owned ones.

2. Conditions of access to finance have deteriorated for both women and men during the recent economic and financial crisis.

3. More analysis is needed to better understand whether women are discouraged by discriminatory treatment in capital markets.

When we look at the reasons why women might be treated differently we see that:

- A lack of significant assets valued by credit providers (like experience with entrepreneurship and collateral)
- There is a cultural bias reflecting a lack of confidence in the ability of women as business owners
- Some women feel more reluctant

to apply for credit and have difficulties in dealing with bank officials.

- Using data from 26 countries shows that women in some countries are charged higher interest rates than men (up to 0,6 %, for instance, in Italy and in Eastern Europe Countries).

HOWEVER

Many women entrepreneurs might not perceive financing as a major problem, simply because they start small and have a lower demand for credit.

It is important that the survival performance of women and men-owned enterprises with employees is similar in most countries!

Enterprises owned by women are as financially healthy as ones owned by men!

THE NETHERLANDS

When we look at the financing of women entrepreneurs in the Netherlands over the last 12 months, we see that 14% of the women entrepreneurs needed financing. 68% went to the credit market, 74% succeeded in getting loan and 26% credit were denied credit. What is the amount of credit that women entrepreneurs borrow in the Netherlands?

61% borrow less than 35.000 euro

17% borrow from 35.000 to 100.000 euro

10% borrow from 100.000 to 250.000 euro

12% borrow more than 250.000 euro

The origin of financial resources of women entrepreneurs in the Netherlands is the following: 75% borrow from one or more banks, 10% borrow from family and friends and 15% borrow from other financial sources like microcredit organisations, local government and the church.

MICROCREDIT

In the Netherlands there is one microcredit organisation called "Qredits".

It is not a bank.

It is a non-profit organisation.

50% of the people who get a loan from Qredits also get a coach to help them to set up or continue their business.

The main condition to get a loan is to have a good business plan and a financial plan with an estimate for exploitation and liquidity. The business also has to be profitable.

When we look at the portfolio of "Qredits" we see that the ave-

TACKLE DISCRIMINATION AND INCREASE THE CONFIDENCE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

rage loan amounts to 17.482,00 euro.

67% of the micro-credit recipients are men and 33 % women. When we look at the business sectors for which the microcredits are used, we see, for instance, that 23% go to the retail sector, 12% go to the care sector, 5,5 % go to the restaurant sector and only 3,5 % go to the agricultural and industrial sectors.

The reason why microcredit are hardly used in the agricultural sector is that interest rates are too high (9.75%). Bank interest rates are much lower.

A bottleneck in Holland for women starting up a business lies in the fact that there are a lot of rules, as well as difficult and unclear legislation. For instance, the rules for environmental planning are very strict in rural areas.

Sometimes it is very difficult to get the opportunity to build an office, shop or restaurant on the farm or next to the farm (as an ancillary business).

EFFECTS AND IMPACT

Entrepreneurship encourages the personal development of women. Women-owned businesses make a key contribution to household incomes, economic growth and livability in rural areas.

The primary drive for a lot of women to start their own business is

to be your own boss and have the freedom to follow your passions! Women entrepreneurs are proud of their businesses and proud to be financially independent. This is especially important when their husband dies or in case of divorce.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Lower interest rates, especially for microcredits
- Tackle discrimination and increase the confidence of women entrepreneurs in seeking funds to finance their growth by pairing financing schemes with support measures such as financial literacy, training and consultancy services.
- Ensure equal access to finance for male and female entrepreneurs
- Reduce tension between work and family life (i.e. affordable childcare and social assistance for sick family members and ageing parents)
- Better policies on environmental planning in rural areas in order to create opportunities
- Help capable women to follow their passions and set up their own business
- Let the world know we need women entrepreneurs in rural areas!

THE RATE OF WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES IS CURRENTLY STUCK AT AROUND 30% OF THE TOTAL IN OECD COUNTRIES

REPORT OF THE WORLD FARMERS ORGANISATION EVENT AT THE 2012

WTO PUBLIC FORUM

Shelby Owen Matthews,
Chief Policy Advisor,
Copa – Cogeca

The WTO Public Forum has firmly established itself as a major event at which governments, non-governmental organizations, academics, businesses and students can come together to discuss the latest issues relating to the multilateral trading system.

This year one of the important debates at the forum was initiated by the World Farmers Organisation and brought together four panellists to discuss Does the Multilateral System Address Farmers' Real Concerns, with WFO President, Robert Carlson, as moderator.

The first panellist was Ambassador John Adank, Permanent Representative to the WTO for New Zealand and Chair of the Doha Round negotiations on agriculture. He emphasized the fact that a legal framework for trade was important for all farmers but also recognized the fact that international trade brought opportunities for some farmers and challenges for others. A successful conclusion of the Doha Round would enable many in the developing world to be able to benefit from comparative advantages, but flexibility was necessary in order to enable countries to improve their food security.



He thought it unfortunate that food security was sometimes interpreted as food self-sufficiency. Pursuing food self-sufficiency would divert labor and capital from more productive to less productive areas, with a negative impact on global growth.

He called on farmers to make their views known to their governments so that a balance of interests could be achieved, both within

countries and within WTO.

Ms Shelby Matthews from Copa-Cogeca, which represents EU farmers and their cooperatives, said that EU farmers wanted fair trade rules and thought this best achieved multilaterally.

WTO could not, however, meet many of the challenges facing farmers today, as exemplified by their weak position in the food chain, accelerating cost increases, price





volatility and climate change. Ms. Matthews emphasized the fact that farmers' concerns were society's concerns: If farmers did not have a sound economic situation and future prospects, then it was the food on everyone's plate which was at risk.

Farmers need to increase their productivity and profitability if they are to meet future food demand in the face of dwindling land and water resources and climate changes.

Ms. Matthews also emphasized the fact that green growth was a means to achieve this.

The President of the Uganda National Farmers Federation, Mr Char-

les Ogang, said that WTO had not met the expectations of the majority of small-scale farmers who still faced difficulties competing fairly with developed countries. Farmers needed a level playing field in trade but there was little point in discussing trade if there was no production.

Farmers in many developing countries were under-producing. First and foremost, they needed better infrastructures, better tax regimes and land tenure, access to finance and technology, more irrigation and storage.

In WTO it is also necessary to tackle the issues African farmers encounter in complying with phyto-

sanitary measures and ensure that such measures are not, in fact, disguised protectionism.

Mr Enrique Dominguez Lucero, Agricultural Counsellor for the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations in Geneva, noted that Mexico has increased its focus on food security during its leadership of the G-20.

Adjustments needed to be made to public policy to encourage improved productivity and production, which in turn would improve the living standards of the rural population.

It was also important to incorporate technological advances in spheres such as genetics, irrigation, harvesting and storage.

He emphasized the fact that agriculture was not isolated from the rest of the economy and farming was a business which needed to be economically viable like any other. Trade was a source of development but it need to be fair and orderly. After a lively debate with many questions from the audience, Mr. Carlson concluded that WTO was particularly important in providing farmers with a level playing field. Above all, however, farmers the world over needed to be profitable in order to make their farms function and this was the best way to ensure food demand would be met in future.

CASE STUDIES & BEST PRACTICES

CHALLENGES OF AGRICULTURAL FINANCING; THE CASE OF UGANDA

Charles Ogang, President, Uganda National Farmers Federation (UNFFE)



Agricultural financing has, in recent times, become a topical issue and a serious concern not only in Uganda but also in most developing countries and all corners of society.

This is due to the importance of the agricultural sector in most developing countries' economies.

The agricultural sector in Uganda contributes to 30% of GDP and is the backbone of Uganda's industrial activity, employment, household incomes and food security. Lending to the sector constitutes, however, only 7% of total private sector credit.

Furthermore, even this low level of credit is mostly (i.e. 82.7%) constituted by short and medium (3 years or less) term loans.

The financial institutions have also not helped farmers because the terms and conditions for accessing loans are not conducive for small-scale farmers: There are collateral-related challenges, interest rates are high (in some cases over 100% per annum) and there is mistrust between banks and farmers, as well as many other obstacles

THE CASE OF MS. NAMUKOSE

ROBINA, A PEASANT FARMER IN EASTERN UGANDA

In April 2012, UNFFE staff visited a number of districts in the eastern part of Uganda and had the opportunity to interact with several farmers, including Ms. Namukose Robina, a peasant farmer with seven children who is a member of the Tusabe Women's Group.

She borrowed 200,000/=, of which she actually received 150,000 /= in cash, while 50,000/= was paid for bank charges and related costs. Her terms were that she pay 25,000/= every two weeks for a period of 4 months which, when translated into 400,000/=, was the equivalent of a 100% per annum interest rate or 25% per month interest rate.

Ms Namukose managed to pay 55,000/= and then defaulted on her subsequent payments.

She was imprisoned together with six other group members for one month, leaving behind her young one year old twins with nobody to look after them, even though one neighbor eventually decided to look after them.

Her piece of land was sold off to rescue her from prison by paying 500,000/=, with a balance of 570,000/= to be paid in order to completely drop any charges against her.

On top of this she was charged 60,000/= by the prison authorities for the 30 days she was remanded at the facility.

FINCA bank brought charges against the group on the account of the fact that some of their members had defaulted.

Even those that had completed

their loans were taken in.

She was now helpless and had nothing left to and could not take care of her children.

Amazingly, no-one (not even the local authorities) had tried to look into the plight of these poor farmers.

During our visit we also realized that there is need for farmers to have their own bank (Farmers bank): This came about after several revelations from bank staff who didn't know much about agriculture and confessed that, with banks, the main issue is how much profit one makes and the terms and conditions of the loans do not, for the most part, take into account farming issues such as seasonality.

STEPS TAKEN BY UGANDA

NATIONAL FARMERS FEDERATION (UNFFE)

UNFFE, in partnership with VECO-East Africa has conducted several consultative meetings with farmers, financial institutions and other stakeholders with a view to finding out about farmers experiences with regard to accessing credit for farming in Uganda and coming up with solutions.

Many issues, some of which have been mentioned above, were voiced by the farmers.

Consultations with financial Institutions and other players in agricultural financing were also conducted.

The findings indicated that commercial banks consider lending to agriculture very risky business because it's largely rain-fed (over 90% of agriculture in developing - popularly known as third world - countries, which include Uganda, is rain-fed and small-scale)



Upon analyzing these challenges, one major conclusion was reached: The lack of a Comprehensive Agricultural Financing Policy is the major reason why all of these challenges have persisted despite government intervention in most developing countries.

Financial Institutions and other players in the sub-sector have not coordinated guidelines for agricultural financial services.

This has created many gaps that have led to the exploitation of small scale farmers by some financial institutions, while at the same, direct government intervention has only been to the advantage of large-scale commercial farmers and businessmen.

The Uganda National Farmers Federation has been advocating the formulation of a National Agricultural Financing Policy and Strategy.

A DRAFT STRATEGY HAS BEEN DEVELOPED WHICH HAS YET TO BE PRESENTED TO GOVERNMENT FOR CONSIDERATION.

We are also promoting Village Savings and Loan Associations as an

intermediate measure while we continue to ask governments to ensure the prompt implementation of an agri-financing strategy and policy as a long term solution

CONCLUSION

Any attempts to improve agri-financing ought to take into account the business realities faced by small farmers, including the lack of farmers/



agricultural banks, low education levels, the dominance of subsistence farming and the lack of access to modern financial instruments.

These conditions mean that new and innovative institutions are required to reach small farmers.

Emerging communication technologies provide new opportunities for rural banking by reducing business costs and alleviating information asymmetries.

New financing instruments, such as weather index-based insurance and micro insurance, also have a great potential for managing the risks faced by small farmers.

Finally, an enabling policy environment and legal framework, enforcement of rules and regulations and a supportive rural infrastructure all contribute immensely to ensuring that the sustainable access to finance becomes a reality.

An agricultural/farmers bank with farmer-friendly tailored financial services would also go a long way in improving access to sustainable agri-financing in third world countries.

FOUNDING FARMERS

Jennifer Motruk Loy,
Director of Marketing,
Founding Farmers and The Farm
restaurant management company

In the Washington, DC area, one restaurant has established itself as a favorite among locals and tourists alike, becoming one of the most-often-reserved restaurants in the entire United States for over 24 months running. This restaurant is called *Founding Farmers*, an American family farmer-inspired concept owned by the North Dakota Farmers Union (NDFU).

With locations in downtown Washington, DC and Montgomery County, MD, *Founding Farmers* has built its success on the foundation of quality ingredients, environmental awareness, and guest satisfaction.

The inspiration for the restaurant's mantra, True Food & Drink, comes from the more than 40,000 American family farmers of the NDFU, some of whom supply products used in *Founding Farmers'* award-winning kitchens and bar. Since opening in 2008, *Founding Farmers* has focused on sustainability in all facets of its operations and design. Seasonal menus change regularly showcase the best and most abundant produce available at a given time of year. *Founding Farmers'* meat and eggs, used in signature scratch-made dishes like Chicken and Waffles and the Farmers Daughter Burger, are all natural and free of hormones and antibiotics.

The restaurant also offers eco-



conscious diners an extensive Meatless Menu of vegetarian and vegan dishes.

Founding Farmers' environmental awareness extends beyond its menu to the restaurants' design and buildings.

Both restaurant locations occupy a LEED-Certified commercial interior space designed with reclaimed materials, like razed barn wood, repurposed steel, recycled aluminum and fabrics and carpeting with more than 50% post-consumer content material.

Founding Farmers' Montgomery

County outpost is 100% wind-powered and both locations are carbon neutral by purchasing yearly offset credits.

All food and paper waste is either composted or recycled, successfully diverting over 100 tons of biodegradable waste from landfills every year.

We are constantly striving to serve the best food and drinks we can in the most responsible way possible, said Dan Simons, *Partner/Concept Developer, Founding Farmers restaurants and Principal, Vucurevich Simons Advi-*



tention from outlets like CNN, The Food Network, Martha Stewart’s Whole Living Magazine, Washingtonian Magazine and Everyday with Rachael Ray, among others. Robert Carlson was President of the NDFU when the restaurant was opened. He added, *When we opened this restaurant several years ago, we wanted to make sure that urban consumers would understand that their good food came from family farmers, and so the restaurant buys its raw food directly from farmers and their cooperatives. The restaurant has been spectacularly successful both in serving high quality food that consumers love, and in profitability for the farmers who own the restaurant. We know that consumers will pay for good healthy food and that they value the connection to the farmer. We have opened two more restaurants in the Washington, DC, area recently, and we hope to see more farmer owned restaurants feeding consumers directly in the future.*

sory Group. The farmers at the NDFU have been an integral part of Founding Farmers’ continued success and have helped to shape the restaurants’ identity in a very tangible way. Everything - from the menus, to the design, to the operations - is informed by the philosophy and spirit of the American family farmer. Founding Farmers’ dedication to quality has not gone unnoticed, as the recipient of more than four dozen different awards and honors, in addition to local, national, and international media at-

With all of this success, the NDFU isn’t slowing down. In November the farmers opened Farmers Fishers Bakers, their third restaurant in the DC area, located at The Washington Harbor in Georgetown. Farmers Fishers Bakers will offer a unique menu and ambiance distinct from its sister restaurants, with features including a Farmhouse Sushi Bar, regionally-inspired pizzas, breads baked onsite, tiki cocktails, and a year-round full service patio that overlooks the Potomac river.

ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN

In rural labor markets, women and men often work in a varied combination of employment, which may include self-employment, unpaid labor on family farms, temporary waged work, or subsistence farming.

However, gender inequalities continue to be widespread in rural labor markets, particularly due to the increasingly casual, temporary and seasonal nature of rural wage employment. Female agricultural workers comprise a large share of this casual workforce in many developing countries.

They are often rotated and employed on a short-term basis, even though they may be carrying out work that is continuous in nature.

In this way, agricultural laborers are often denied the benefits of full-time employment, including employment security, social protection, environmental standards and healthcare. In South Africa, for instance, rural women make up 69 percent of temporary and seasonal employees compared to 26 percent in long-term employment.

Similarly, in Chile, 52 percent of women are employed as temporary or seasonal workers, while only 5 percent have long-term contract positions (source: *A Row to Hoe, The Gender Impact of Trade Liberalisation on our Food System, Agriculture Markets and Women's Human Rights*, by A. Spielfoch, Geneva, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, pg 15). Regrettably, organized labor institutions such as trade unions also often fail to have adequate



female representation within their ranks and, therefore, reflect these gender inequalities. Rural producers' and workers' organizations can play a vital role in negotiating fairer employment conditions, but these objectives often fail to be achieved because most producer organizations, cooperatives and workers' unions are controlled or managed by men.

Yet, when women are empowered and involved in the decision-making process, the results can be outstanding, making families and communities more resilient to food insecurity and a range of other crises. In Burkina Faso, for example, the rural women's association Songtaab-Yalgré has been operating since 1990, grouping 1000 members and providing resources and support to over 3,100 women living in rural villages across the country (source: [http://www.](http://www.songtaaba.net/ENGLISH/songtaaba/association.html)

[songtaaba.net/ENGLISH/songtaaba/association.html](http://www.songtaaba.net/ENGLISH/songtaaba/association.html)).

Through the association, women have been successfully producing and commercializing cosmetic products from traditional Karipur shea butter to Karibio organic shea butter.

The income generated by the women through their work in the association is directly reinvested in the health, nutrition and wellbeing of their families.

Ensuring that rural women have a greater voice and more decision-making power is fundamental to fighting the plague of hunger and poverty.

One of the essential steps that need to be taken to achieve this is to provide them with greater access to leadership positions within rural organizations and labor institutions, both at the national and local level.

YOUTH TAKING A SIGNIFICANT PART INTO GCARD2

Marina Cherbonnier, *Web and Communications Officer, YPARD - Young Professionals' Platform for Agricultural Research for Development*

Agriculture is an ageing and undervalued profession in many countries and special attention must be given to encouraging young people to take up careers in all aspects of AR4D... It is important that young people themselves help express what changes are needed in agricultural education and incentives are given to make careers more attractive and valued, as well as better recognize the range of roles now required in AR4D..." GCARD Road Map

YPARD, with the collaboration of the co-organizers, worked on putting together a group of Young Professionals to take part in the

Second Global Conference for Agricultural Research for Development - GCARD2, held on October 29 –November 1 at Punta Del Este in Uruguay.

It provided opportunities for young professionals active in agricultural research for development to network, become more engaged with international AR4D and give their inputs to high level discussions, in which they rarely have the opportunity to take part.

It also provided valuable feedback to the GCARD on youth empowerment.

YPARD particularly contributed

to the break out session on Learning and empowering women and youth C2.2.

YPARD aimed to provide clear and tangible ways to engage with youth and obtain the buy-in from the ARD community during the plenary session, as well as commitments from individual organisations.

YPARD engaged its members in pre-consultations on the YPARD online forum on three topics related to youth capacity building. One member from each group developed a summary of the e-discussion, that set the basis for the interventions of the full-day



YPARD pre-conference session held at the GCARD2 on October 28.

20 young professionals active in AR4D were selected to attend the YPARD session.

YPARD mainly focused its discussions on:

- Identifying value and reward systems that can have an impact in drawing young people into ARD
- Identifying key ways that young people can contribute to AIS (Agricultural Innovation Systems), as well as the specific steps that those involved in AIS can take to engage youth
- Identifying key areas required for curriculum reform, as identified by YPs, as well as moving towards an inclusive curriculum reform process, involving a wide range of stakeholders (including YPs).

Key messages of the e-discussions were a call for assertion and involvement:

Young people should be engaged both as innovators and implementers. How can we give young people a greater innovative role? What programs can they be involved in and how can we specifically target them for greater involvement?

Young people say they need more soft skills such as ICT skills, communication and entrepreneurship skills. We need to change agricultural curriculums in order to meet the needs of our future professionals.

Young people need work experience and want their educational institutions to help broker internships. The combination of

theory and practice is very important!

Young people want to engage in entrepreneurship in ARD, but they need access to land and to finance.

How will your work contribute to improving this?

What brought you into the agricultural sector? What new opportunities are available to young people in agriculture? What new and exciting career paths can we share with them?

Some YPARD representatives attended the Saturday, October 27th session: [Building Capacities in Agriculture Based on Needs](#) organized by AGRINATURA in collaboration with other institutions/organizations, with a view to linking up on capacity-building needs for young people in ARD. Additionally, on Sunday morning experienced professionals from the Saturday session joined the YPARD meeting to see how young people can be better represented in their initiatives, identifying areas of collaboration and joint actions.

We also considered collective action with other youth-based networks, such as ARDYIS, E-agriculture, GYIN, YPLD, etc.

YPs brainstormed on YPARD and its role in engaging YPs in ARD and its impact upon the professional lives of YPs.

This session focused on the experiences of members with YPARD : What they find useful and what they don't find useful, as well as how they feel YPARD can become more useful for young people in ARD.

YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD BE ENGAGED BOTH AS INNOVATORS AND IMPLEMENTERS. HOW CAN WE GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE A GREATER INNOVATIVE ROLE?

In addition, YPARD was involved in putting together a group of young social reporters for GCARD2.

12 people from all around the world were selected as trainees. They participated in a 2-day training session on Social Media and Social Reporting and then covered the whole event through Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Blogs.

This session enabled young people to build capacities but also involved those who were unable to travel to the conference and get them to take part in the discussions.

It was, furthermore, about spreading the key messages coming out from GCARD2 discussions.

I see GCARD2 as a mirror ball: Everyone involved in agriculture for development should see themselves reflected in it no matter what angle they come from!

Mark Holderness, GFAR Executive Secretary.

NEWS&EVENTS

1ST WFO RURAL WOMEN DAY

WFO organized, in the framework of the International Food Week at FAO, a side event, held on 19th October in Rome, to discuss the Role of Women in Agriculture in developed and in developing countries.

The objective of the meeting was to debate the current situation of women's agricultural work and to broaden and deepen the discussion in order to reason over policies that can facilitate and strengthen the role of women in agriculture.

More than half of the agricultural population is female but, despite this, women still do not enjoy the same rights as men, giving rise to food safety-related problems. They face significant difficulties in accessing natural resources, knowledge, services and markets, thus hindering their productive capacity.

Achieving gender equality and empowerment of women in agriculture is a crucial issue for agricultural development and food security.

The event gathered women and

representatives of farmers' organizations from different continents (Latin America, Europe, Asia, Africa) in order to provide a global overview of the role of women in agriculture.

About 100 participants took part in the event, animating the debate.

This first experience will become an annual exercise aimed at celebrating the role of rural women worldwide.

WFO would like to take this opportunity to thank all those people who have worked on making this Rural Women Day possible, and in particular Simona Mazzuca, Amedeo Leone, Nora Ourabah Haddad, Cristina Chirico and Carina Hirsch.

A special thanks goes to Mrs Sue Carlson, Chair Person of the WFO women committee, who despite her personal challenges, has constantly and philanthropically helped all WFO activities concerning rural women.

For more informations and to consult the program and the presentations <http://worldfarmersorganisation.com/Events.aspx>

MALAYSIA CONFERENCE PIN-POINTS NEED TO ADDRESS GENDER GAP IN AGRICULTURE.

Scientists and researchers call for action after identifying inequalities in the access to resources, markets and technologies

Productivity losses due to agriculture gender gaps are straining global economies.

As a matter of facts, there was a general consensus in this sense among gender scientists and agricultural researchers at a workshop held in Malaysia which aimed to develop an agenda for



gender transformative research for the agricultural sector.

Paola Kantor, Senior Gender Scientist at the Malaysia-based World Fish Centre, stated that Gender disparities persist in ac-



cess to resources, *markets and technologies, even after decades of research and interventions on gender.* All in all, there must be a shared vision of a gender-balanced society that should improve the understanding of female empowerment. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2012/oct/23/malaysia-conference-gender-gap-agriculture>

BRAZIL-FAO SIGN AGREEMENT FOR COTTON EXPERTISE TRANSFER TO SMALL FARMERS IN AFRICA

A 20 million dollar agreement signed on Wednesday October 17 by the United Nations and Brazil will seek to transfer the expertise of the South American country with



a view to supporting cotton farmers in developing economies. The Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), José Graziano da Silva, stated that *This agreement represents an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of South-South cooperation between developing world partners as a vehicle for sustainable economic growth.*

As a matter of fact, Cotton is fundamental to the economies of many developing nations, parti-

cularly in West and Central Africa, where around 10 million small farmers depend on the sector for their income.

The four year project will target participating countries with technical assistance and training in best practice cotton cultivation and marketing. <http://en.mercopress.com/2012/10/18/brazil-fao-sign-agreement-for-cotton-expertise-transfer-to-small-farmers-in-africa>

UN WARNS OF LOOMING WORLDWIDE FOOD CRISIS IN 2013

Failing harvests in the US, Ukraine and other countries this year have eroded reserves to their lowest level since 1974.

The prices of the main food crops such as wheat and maize are now close to those that sparked riots in 25 countries in 2008. Wheat production this year is expected to be 5.2% below 2011, with yields of most other crops, except rice, also falling, says the UN.

Lester Brown, president of the Earth policy research centre in Washington, says that the climate is no longer reliable and the demands for food are growing so fast that a breakdown is inevitable, unless urgent action is taken. All in all, Brown says that *Armed aggression is no longer the principal threat to our future. The overriding threats to this century are climate change, population growth, spreading water shortages and rising food prices.*

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2012/oct/14/un-global-food-crisis-warning>



“FREE HUMANITY FROM HUNGER! HOW TO INTEGRATE THE RIGHT TO FOOD IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK”

Jointly organised by Caritas Belgium/Caritas Europe and CISDE

The eradication of hunger in the world it is one of the eight main development objectives of the New Millennium to be achieved by 2015.

Official reports by UN agencies have presented encouraging forecasts about the achievement of this objective, especially in developing countries.

However, many developing countries are still far away from achieving this.

This has been exacerbated by the recent economic global crisis as well as by the food global crisis.

The recognition of the right to food has to be converted into specific policies which should involve civil society at all levels.

Cooperation and the sharing of experiences and technologies are moves in the right direction, with a view not only to guaranteeing but also to achieving food security (which is essential all over the world, but most notably in developing countries).

For more information please visit <http://eudevdays.eu> ◇◇◇