

AGRI DEAL

Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network
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FANRPAN
No Agriculture!
No Deal!
www.fanrpan.org

Women WARMing Africa



Market access
Women farmers
Policy advocacy
Community theatre

WOMEN ACCESSING REALIGNED MARKETS – WARM



FANRPAN



Who are we?

The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) is a multi-stakeholder, multi-national policy network that supports the development and implementation of better food, agriculture and natural resources (FANR) policies in Africa.

Its members include universities, research institutes, the business sector, farmer groups and other civil society organisations that have a stake in FANR policies. FANRPAN's membership is organised into national nodes in 16 countries, with a national secretariat hosted by an existing national institution that has a mandate for agricultural policy research and advocacy.

Thematic thrusts

Our work is guided by five thematic thrusts:

1. Food systems and CAADP
2. Agricultural productivity and markets
3. Natural resources and environment
4. Institutional strengthening
5. Social protection and livelihoods



Vision

A food-secure Africa free from hunger and poverty.

Mission

To promote effective Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) policies by:

- Facilitating linkages and partnerships between government and civil society.
- Building the capacity for policy analysis and policy dialogue in Africa, and
- Supporting demand-driven policy research and analysis.

www.fanrpan.org

FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY ANALYSIS NETWORK

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Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)



Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda,
chief executive officer and
head of mission at FANRPAN.

*Last year we marked the **100th** anniversary of International Women's Day, a global day celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women. It is unfortunate that it is only those women who enjoy space and platforms in academics and politics who were celebrated in Africa. The unsung heroines were female farmers who produce up to 90% of the food that we eat.*

Women farmers are the pillars of African agriculture. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation over two thirds of all women in Africa are employed in the agricultural sector and produce nearly 90% of food on the continent.

They are responsible for growing, selling, buying and preparing food for their families. Yet even as the guardians of food security, they are still marginalised in business relations and have minimal control over access to resources such as land, inputs such as improved seeds and fertiliser, credit and technology.

A combination of logistical, cultural, and economic factors, coupled with a lack of gender statistics in the agricultural sector, mean that agricultural programs are rarely designed with women's needs in mind. As a result, African women farmers have no voice in the development of agricultural policies designed to improve their productivity. Engagement in policy processes is reserved for government and the literate, but literacy levels are as low as 40% in some African countries. In Malawi

female literacy is at a low of 49,8% and in Mozambique it is even lower at 32,7%.

Africa has an oral culture and yet we do not talk enough – at local, national or regional levels. The dialogue concerning agricultural issues is happening at the international level, where a few speak for the majority, and not on behalf of the majority.

The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) is working to change this. Recognising the critical role that women farmers play in ensuring household food security, in July 2009 FANRPAN launched Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM), a three-year pilot project supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which seeks to strengthen women farmers' ability to advocate for appropriate agricultural policies and programmes in Malawi and Mozambique through an innovative tool, Theatre for Policy Advocacy (TPA).

This message is dedicated to all the women farmers in Africa. ■

*Dr Lindiwe
Majele Sibanda*

THE FEMALE FACE *of farming*

An infographic story by Farming First and FAO

Women are the backbone of the rural economy, especially in the developing world. Yet they receive only a fraction of the land, credit, inputs (such as improved seeds and fertilisers), resources and agricultural training and information compared to men.

Empowering and investing in rural women has been shown to significantly increase productivity, reduce hunger and malnutrition and improve rural livelihoods. And not only for women, but for everyone.



View the infographic online at:
www.farmingfirst.org/women
www.fao.org/gender/infographic



What are the impacts of the gender gap in agriculture?



Why are women so important to agriculture?



Where does a gender gap in agriculture exist?





Hon Sindiso Ngwenya, chairman
of the FANRPAN Board &
COMESA Secretary-General.

Women form the backbone of the agricultural sector in Africa. They toil the fields and are exemplary role models and caregivers, ensuring that there is always food on the table. However, they also remain the unsung heroines in spite of their significant contribution to food security on the continent.

FANRPAN, true to its mission, as an advocacy network has taken the first step to give those heroines a voice by embarking on an ambitious publication series whereby its projects are showcased. The first in this series of the publication, appropriately titled *Agri Deal*, will see FANRPAN highlighting the milestones of the Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) project, a project that focuses on the plight of women farmers and how they use theatre to rise above their circumstances.

The project in two pilot countries, Mozambique and Malawi, presents some fascinating case studies and obliterates the myth that theatre is superficial by nature. In fact, as you peruse these pages, you will see that Theatre for Policy Advocacy (TPA) makes the proverbial pen far mightier than the sword. As the scriptwriters craft true-to-life stories and animate them with theatre performances, one is able to witness almost first-hand the challenges that women face.

As you read the testimonies, think about the implications. What success can be achieved if the pilots were to be extrapolated

to other countries? What will policymakers do when they witness the challenges that women face? How will food and nutrition security change in Africa if women are empowered further? What contribution can you make to make a difference? This is exactly what a publication of this nature is intended to achieve! It is to broaden horizons, create awareness and to initiate more projects of this nature.

In order to address challenges that may act as stumbling blocks to food security on the African continent, FANRPAN is planning on generating further publications of this nature to showcase projects and, in doing so, promote policy dialogue and harness individuals and organisations to get involved in addressing food and nutrition in security on the continent.

Allow me to wish FANRPAN all the best as it launches the first of many exciting *Agri Deal* publications. I would like to thank our sponsors, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, USAID and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). ■

*Hon Sindiso
Ngwenya*



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Sithembile Mwamakamba

When I committed to take up the challenge to manage the Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) project, little did I realise the power of women and the importance of seeds as well as markets. Three years later, I am a convert and self-confessed ambassador for rural women. I believe women farmers are the engines and fuel for a food-secure Africa.

In this magazine we have a unique opportunity to share with you the amazing life stories of some of the extraordinary women farmers we came across, as well as lessons learnt during our three-year journey. The WARM project leveraged on FANRPAN's experience as a multi-stakeholder policy network to bridge the gaps between women farmers and policy processes.

Women farmers at selected sites in Malawi and Mozambique were equipped with information, evidence-based messages, and training in using community theatre as a platform to advocate for policies and institutional arrangements to facilitate their access to input markets. Women farmers and other community champions were trained and encouraged to communicate these solutions to decision-makers and service providers.

The challenges and solutions identified in these community platforms were used to enrich the formal "shelf" knowledge that informs policy debates at an international level, but is rarely incorporated into policies at national and regional levels. The WARM project has proved that policy development is not out of reach for women farmers. In this issue of *Agri Deal* we share how these farmers and policy champions have acquired skills and invaluable knowledge.

The magazine also highlights that, despite all the positive results, it was not a smooth ride for the WARM project. We experienced some challenges and a number of important lessons were learnt. There is no doubt in my mind that the WARM project should be expanded to reach a greater number of women farmers.

We are excited that today there is a growing realisation and commitment by our African leaders to achieve agricultural growth by addressing gender-related issues. In July 2012 African leaders championed women's empowerment as the key to unlocking the continent's agricultural potential by launching the Empower Women in Agriculture Initiative, which recognises women as the unsung heroines of African agriculture.

The stage has been set and all the players are lined up – it is time that we transform the agricultural sector by addressing the structural inequalities that prevent women from realising their potential as producers and champions for change in the fight against food insecurity. ■

*Sithembile
Mwakamba*



Fidelis Zvomuya

A looming drought is manageable. Long-term changes to isolate women farmers might be catastrophic. The issue of balancing risks and benefits for our agricultural sector on the continent is at the crux of most government decisions. Although there is a growing interest in farming, we still lack high-quality data on the largest group of farmers in practice – women.

A meta-analysis done by the Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) on women farmers found a marginalised entity with very insignificant input and policy support, as well as poor market access.

In this first issue of *Agri Deal* we look at the challenges faced by women farmers as revealed by FANRPAN's three-year Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) pilot project. Accompanying commentary and stories highlight the challenges faced by women farmers and what must be done to improve the farming field.

The WARM project shows that feeding people isn't easy. A few years ago, Mozambique saw food riots when food prices spiked and left many people hungry. Globally food prices grew three times as fast as inflation over the past decade, but the support for women was nose-diving.

The countries under the pilot project, Malawi and Mozambique, remain predominantly rural, with more than 80% of the populations relying directly on farming. Nearly two-thirds of the two countries' fields are fed only by rain, making it a challenge to farm during natural disasters such as droughts.

As I paged through the voluminous research papers and conference documents, trying to choose among the plethora of offerings, I was struck by what seemed to me as an unprecedented number of papers and panels devoted specifically to the history and experiences of women farmers in rural Africa. The commitment by the mothers ensures that their families have money and don't go to bed on an empty stomach.

We bring in stories that encourage us to think broadly and comparatively about how we can best support real farmers. Our lead story takes us through a WARM journey from the build-up, up-scaling and then outputs. It offers an introductory essay in which we examine the female life course in two strikingly different contexts, namely as a farmer and mother. In both these, farming, motherhood and domestic labour dominated the adult lives of most women farmers.

A warm regards to all of you. We would love to hear your feedback as well as your editorial contributions. ■

Fidelis Zvomuya

FANRPAN celebrates Africa-wide mandate

The 4th annual FANRPAN Partners Meeting, which was held at the CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria on 31 May 2012, saw FANRPAN celebrating Africa Day and its Africa-wide mandate. This follows a resolution by the 2010 FANRPAN annual general meeting to amend the constitution and draw membership of the Network from across the entire African continent.

Originally starting with eight member states when FANRPAN was established in 1997, the organisation currently works in 16 countries in East and Southern Africa, namely Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The chairman of the FANRPAN Board of Governors, Hon. Sindiso Ngwenya, officially launched

FANRPAN is ready to take up the challenge and pull the continent out of poverty.

the Africa-wide mandate during the meeting. The meeting was attended by the FANRPAN Board of Governors, 78 representatives of the Network's development partners and the FANRPAN regional secretariat staff. In his address to the meeting, Hon. Ngwenya stated: "The call for FANRPAN to go Africa-wide was made not by Ministers of Agriculture, but by farmers from Burkina Faso who paid their way to make the submission at the 2010 FANRPAN Regional Policy Dialogue and AGM held in Namibia." The chairman pointed out that FANRPAN is ready to take up the challenge and pull the continent out of poverty. "It is time for Africa, it is time for FANRPAN," he said. – www.fanrpan.org/documents/d01338/



Photo by Siphokazi Phillip

Participants at the FANRPAN 2012 Partners Meeting held in Pretoria, South Africa.



Dr Bella Mpofu, HaSSP programme manager, second from left, with farmers during a field day in Zimbabwe's Zaka district.

HaSSP field days attract large crowds

The Harmonised Seed Security Project (HaSSP) showcases and celebrates good work done by smallholder seed producers in the four pilot countries (Malawi, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe). The field days attract large crowds from different stakeholder groups, ranging from government officials to farmers, researchers, NGOs, private seed companies, media and agro-dealers.

This year, the Zambia Field Day was hosted by Gertrude Zulu Chomba. Her farm, tucked away in the Likumbi Forest in Kipiri Mposhi, Central Zambia, boasts 0,5ha of seed maize (MMV 515), 0,25ha of bean seed (Lyambai and Kabulangeti) and 0,25ha of groundnuts (MGV 4).

Malawi also hosted an open day, where seed producers showcased their seed produce that is ready for packaging. This year the smallholder seed producers produced the following: open pollinated maize (12 tons), sugar beans (15 tons), soy bean (15 tons) and groundnut (30 tons).

In Swaziland the field day was hosted by Imbali YaMadlenya Farming Scheme, a group of farmers from Siphofaneni in the Highveld. The scheme showcased their 6ha of sugar beans, with an expected yield of 12 tons.

In Zimbabwe the field day was hosted by Zaka Seed Growers Association. The association also showcased its new seed production and packaging equipment donated by the Swiss Development Cooperation.

FANRPAN and ECDPM partnership

FANRPAN and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) are currently operationalising a partnership agreement signed on 3 November 2011. This follows a visit to the FANRPAN Regional Secretariat in Pretoria by the ECDPM director, Dr Paul Engel, on Monday 20 February 2012 to officially launch the partnership agreement. FANRPAN and the ECDPM have agreed to collaborate in supporting multi-stakeholder dialogue on regional Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) processes, and to conduct a study on the reality of regional trade facilitation in the agricultural

sector along the Maputo and Southern Tanzania Corridors. ECDPM (www.ecdpm.org) is an independent foundation constituted in the Netherlands in 1986. Its mission is to facilitate international cooperation between developed and developing countries, with a focus on EU-ACP relations, through strengthening institutional capacities in developing countries, supporting reform of EU development cooperation policies and fostering regional integration for more effective partnerships. Its work is organised around three policy areas: development policy and international relations, trade and economic development, and governance.



Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda with the National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM) CEO, Dyborn Chibonga (right), and Francois Pythoud of the Swiss Office for Agriculture (left) in Rio for the ARDD 2012.

FANRPAN at Rio+20

FANRPAN participated in the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development from 10 to 20 June 2012. With support from the Rockefeller Foundation, the organisation was represented by the FANRPAN CEO, Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, and programme manager, Sithembile Mwamakamba. They participated in more than 12 events at Rio+20. The Youth Blast saw a gathering of more than 1 000 people from over 112 countries and they gave a good insight as to how the youth perceived green issues.

Dr Sibanda led and chaired nine sessions including the forum on science, technology and innovation for sustainable development, innovations and uptake of best practices for sustainable agriculture, feeding the world: sustainable agriculture and innovation in the 21st century, fair ideas: sharing solutions for a sustainable planet, empowering rural women, Agriculture and Rural Development Day (ARDD) and poverty in focus.

The highlight was FANRPAN's participation in ARDD, where the CEO moderated one of two high-level panel discussions, chaired the press conference and moderated the question-and-answer session. Ms Mwamakamba participated in

a learning event at ARDD where the plight of women farmers in Africa was highlighted. FANRPAN also exhibited knowledge products at this key event.

AfriCAN Climate Change Portal

FANRPAN is a member of the AfriCAN Climate Change Portal, an innovative web-based knowledge platform for the effective dissemination of climate change research and good practices. The AfriCAN Climate Portal provides contact information and links to a wide range of existing African and European Union climate change networks, as well as to individual knowledge experts. Online groups form various dissemination partnerships, facilitating knowledge sharing and maximising networking opportunities. The AfriCAN Climate Platform is an open public forum and requires your support and contribution. As a member of the consortium, FANRPAN contributes to the web portal development on policy tools, publications and the development of a database on African institutions working on climate change policies. – <http://africanclimate.net/en/about/>

Financial and Fiscal Commission partnership

FANRPAN signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Financial and Fiscal Commission (FFC) on 21 November 2011. To operationalise the MoU, the FFC, FANRPAN and the National Agricultural Marketing Council (NAMC) undertook to collaborate on a household vulnerability assessment study over selected areas in three provinces: the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. The study will use the Household Vulnerability Index (HVI) developed by FANRPAN.

The FFC is an independent, objective, impartial and unbiased constitutional advisory institution. The Commission has the responsibility to advise and make recommendations to Parliament, provincial legislatures, organised local government and other organs of state on financial and fiscal matters. Its primary role is to ensure the creation and maintenance of an effective, equitable and sustainable system of inter-governmental fiscal relations in South Africa.

– <http://www.ffc.co.za> ■



FANRPAN CEO Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda and Financial Fiscal Commission acting CEO, Bongani Khumalo, at the signing ceremony of the Memorandum Of Understanding.



INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

To achieve policy impact, FANRPAN invests in strengthening its network and building members' capacity, from identification of national priorities, through broad-based dialogue, to stakeholder advocacy for preferred policies.

Current FANRPAN projects:

- Strengthening policy advocacy and research capacity for enhanced food security in SADC and COMESA member states.
- Strengthening evidence-based agricultural policy advocacy and harmonisation in Southern Africa.
- Partner Institutional Viability Assessment.



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Compiled by Sithembile Mwamakamba
WARM project manager

Bill Gates responds to G8 food security commitment

On 18 May 2012 Bill Gates commended the announcement by President Barack Obama of investment in Africa's agriculture to help millions of people lift themselves out of hunger and poverty. President Obama, as chair of the G8, announced support for a range of efforts to increase the productivity and nutrition of smallholder farmers. He also launched the New Alliance for Nutrition and Food Security, an agricultural development programme partnering donors with African countries and the private sector. "I welcome President Obama's commitment to help ensure coordinated global attention to the critical issue of agricultural development," said Gates. "These are exactly the kind of smart, innovative partnerships with African governments that we need to accelerate progress and I hope that the G8 will put in place clear, actionable targets and accountability mechanisms to ensure these efforts are meaningful. Unless we measure, we can't see if we are succeeding."

The announcement also called for continued support for the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP), which was launched two years ago by the United States, Spain, Canada, South Korea and the foundation.

By combining strong partnerships, smart investments and innovative thinking, the foundation believes the global community can enable hard-working smallholder farmers to become self-sufficient and build better lives. – <http://www.gates-foundation.org/press-releases/pages/g8-foods-security-commitment-12-05-18.aspx>



Bill Gates

Empowerment in agriculture through the eyes of women

On 13-15 March 2012, 760 participants from 50 countries gathered at the NASC Complex, New Delhi, India, for the first global conference addressing the gender gap in agriculture and how women can be sustainably empowered in this sector. The Global Conference on Women in Agriculture (GCWA) was co-organised by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), in the context of a two-year old initiative of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR), known as the Gender in Agriculture Partnerships (GAP), implementing one of the major themes for action identified by the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD) Roadmap in 2010. Supported by a number of leading international agencies in this domain and attended by NGO/CSO networks as well as policymakers, ministers, scientists, farmers and women organisations from different regions of the world, the GCWA provided an exceptional opportunity for sharing experiences and discussing policies.

– <http://www.gcwa.in/index.htm>

WARM team in Austria to discuss transformation in Africa

FANRPAN's WARM programme manager, Sithembile Mwamakamba, and the Malawi WARM project coordinator, Beatrice Makwenda, joined over 50 experts from more than 20 countries in Salzburg, Austria, on 13-17 November 2011 for a special "dialogue for action" seminar on "Transforming

agricultural development and production in Africa: closing gender gaps and empowering rural women in policy and practice”.

The seminar was organised by the Salzburg Global Seminar (SGS) with support from the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Belgian Fund for Food Security Joint Programme. Presentations by representatives of IFAD, the International Food Policy Research Institute, International Livestock Research Institute and International Centre for Research on Women set the stage for participants to share experiences and also offered a theory of change to help participants achieve actionable goals by the completion of the workshop. – http://www.salzburgglobal.org/current/sessions-b.cfm?IDSpecial_Event=3024

WARM advocates attend global conference

Five WARM women advocates from Malawi joined

500 rural women from across Africa for the 2012 Southern Africa Rural Women's Assembly (RWA) on 1-5 December 2011 in Durban, South Africa. The RWA was held on the sideline of the 17th conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Durban.

For the duration of the official conference, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) hosted an alternative, a “People's Space”, where activists, environmental justice organisations and social movements converged to build solidarity at the grassroots level and pressure governments to take a tougher stance on causes of climate change.

The Rural Women's Assembly, a network of women's groups from more than 10 African countries, including Mozambique, Swaziland, Lesotho, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Burundi, came together in Durban, joining the civil society meetings outside the conference seeking to raise awareness about the impact climate change will have at grassroots level.



Representatives from all over the world attended the seminar in Salzburg, Austria, on the transformation of agricultural development and production in Africa.

*Environmental
justice organisations
and social movements
converged to build
solidarity at the
grassroots level.*

Ground-breaking index launched to empower women and fight hunger

On 27 February 2012 a significant new breakthrough in the measurement of women's empowerment in developing countries was launched. The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) is the first measure to directly capture women's empowerment and inclusion levels in the agricultural sector. The WEAI focuses on five areas: decisions over agricultural production, power over productive resources such as land and livestock, decisions over income, leadership in the community and time use.

Women are considered to be empowered if they have adequate achievements in four of the five areas. The index is a partnership between the US Government's Feed the Future Initiative, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) of Oxford University.

The index focuses on women because they play a critical role in agricultural growth in developing countries, yet face persistent obstacles and economic constraints, limiting further inclusion in the sector.

– <http://www.ifpri.org/pressrelease/groundbreaking-index-launched-empower-women-and-fight-hunger>

Commission on the Status of Women 2012

The 56th session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 27 February to 9 March 2012. The 2012 session focused on key areas such as the priority theme, which was "The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges", the review theme "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women" and the emerging issue of "Engaging young women and men, girls and boys, to advance gender equality". – <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/56sess.htm>

World Development Report 2012 highlights gender equality

For the first time, the World Bank uses one of its most influential publications, the *World Development Report 2012*, to highlight the issue of gender equality. Based on studies of profound quality, the *World Development Report (WDR) 2012* begins by documenting progress, e.g. the improved access of girls and women to education, and obstacles, like massive inequality in the areas of socio-political participation, on the road to increased gender equality. In addition, and for the first time, gender equality is recognised as a development goal in its own right. In the form of references to the normative and legal reference framework of the United Nations, i.e. the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), there is also a clear-cut politicisation of the gender issue. – <http://econ.worldbank.org> ■

The FANRPAN Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) project has been well profiled in a number of regional and international publications. Below are snippets of some of the WARM-related stories that made headlines.

Linking community theatre and rural development for women

Published on the Farming First website
13 September 2009

The launch of the Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) project was reported on by three African journalists (Charles Mushizi, Patrick Chitumba and Vusumuzi Sifile), following journalist training conducted by Inter Press Service in partnership with FANRPAN.

What works: increasing food sovereignty

Published on We Blog the World website,
18 February 2011
By Amanda Stone

In 1996 members of La Via Campesina, an organisation that defends the values and basic interests of agricultural workers, coined the term “food sovereignty” to bring attention to the growing distance between farmers and the food they grow. Small farmers often suffer from unfair agricultural policies and the idea behind food sovereignty is to provide them with more opportunities to participate in the decision-making process. Fast forward almost 15 years later, and small farmers still have limited bargaining power, even though they represent 80% of farmers in the developing world. The WARM project profiled as connecting farmers with policymakers by enabling discussions between farmers, researchers and policymakers throughout Africa and has also helped women farmers’ to access markets.

Innovative ways of hearing farmers’ voices

Published in the Huffington Post online newspaper, 6 June 2010
By Danielle Nierenberg

The WARM project showcased as strengthening the capacity of women farmers’ influence in agriculture policy development and programmes in Southern Africa, using Theatre for Policy Advocacy to engage leaders, service providers and policymakers, encourage community participation and research the needs of women farmers. Essentially, theatre is being used to explain agricultural policy to people in rural areas and to carry voices from the countryside back to government.

From ambition to action: How to empower women in agriculture

But what does empowerment mean exactly? Empowering women, while an aspirational and ambitious goal, is hard to define in practical terms. But that is exactly what many NGOs are doing, and successfully too. The WARM project focuses on working to enhance women’s working in order to enhance women’s abilities at advocating for agricultural policies. Through moderated discussion, theatre can give a voice to those women typically marginalised, facilitate discussion about their needs and concerns, and give those women access to policymakers so that they can vent their grievances.

Africa: International Women's Day 2012 – African women: champions of climate-smart agriculture

Published on Make Every Woman Count website, 7 March 2012

Results of the WARM project were highlighted as showing that, amongst other things, women farmers need to easily access affordable, good quality seeds. A trained policy advocate, Teresa Sumbane, a smallholder farmer from Mozambique, discussed her involvement in the WARM project as well as the challenges posed by climate change in her community.

Worldwatch Institute's State of the World 2011 shows agriculture innovation is key to reducing poverty, stabilising climate

Published on Worldwatch Institute website, 12 January 2011
By Amanda Stone

Worldwatch Institute released its report, *State of the World 2011: Innovations that Nourish the Planet*, which spotlights successful agricultural innovations and unearths major successes in preventing food waste, building resilience to climate change and strengthening farming in cities. The report provides a road map for increased agricultural investment and more efficient ways to alleviate global hunger and poverty. The FANRPAN WARM project was profiled as using interactive community theatre to engage women farmers, community leaders and policymakers in an open dialogue about gender equity, food security, land tenure and access to resources.

Research has shown that women may play a key role in the fight against global hunger and poverty.



Children enjoying TPA performances in Malawi's Tadi Village.

Five innovations that are working to empower women

Published on Eco Watch website, January 2012
By Dana Drugmand

At a time when world resources are dwindling and global population is growing rapidly, finding sustainable solutions to nourish people and the planet is more important than ever. Research has shown that women may play a key role in the fight against global hunger and poverty.

Worldwide, roughly 1,6-billion women rely on farming for their livelihoods, and women farmers produce more than half of the world's food. The Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) project was highlighted by *Nourishing the Planet* as one of five innovations that are helping to empower women farmers around the world.

Women are central to feeding Africa

Published by BBC Business Online News,
12 April 2011
By Pamela Whitby

In developing countries, more than 60% of women are directly involved in agricultural work, but very few gain access to information, training or supplies. More action and less rhetoric on this issue could put more food on the world's table and help to drive economic growth. The WARM project is profiled as using community theatre to overcome the challenge of illiteracy and helps women farmers to vocalise the issues they face. It empowers women to engage policymakers and development organisations in generating innovative solutions.

“Theatre is being used to explain agricultural policy to people in rural areas.”

Theatre giving African women farmers greater voice

Published in New Agriculturalist Online Magazine, December 2010

The WARM project showcased as empowering and encouraging African women farmers to speak out and influence national and regional agricultural policies using community theatre. Highlights of Theatre for Policy Advocacy performances in villages near Kasungu and Lilongwe in Malawi were shared where challenges highlighted during these performances included a widow struggling to support her family after her husband's relatives seized her farmland, and a woman arguing with her husband about using farm profits to buy him beer. ■

FOOD SYSTEMS

The thematic area encompasses activities related to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food and how all these activities contribute to food security.

Current FANRPAN projects:

Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) – Promoting the active involvement of non-state actors in CAADP.

Platform for African – European Partnership in Agricultural Research for Development (PAEPARD)



Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)
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A woman with a warm smile, wearing a red short-sleeved shirt and an orange patterned headwrap, is pouring white, puffed grain from her hands into a large, dark metal pot. She is wearing a colorful patterned apron over her red shirt. In the background, a dusty outdoor setting with other people and simple structures is visible.

WARMing AFRICA

By Fidelis Zvomuya and Sithembile Mwamakamba

Chotsani Abikanile Nkhoma from Choyo Village in Malawi's Kasungu district prepares her grain for sale at a market in Lilongwe.

A splash of green cassava plants on a clear horizon can be witnessed in every field in the small village of Tidi, which is a few kilometres from Malawi's capital city, Lilongwe. This poor area is characterised by rocky soil.

Modest farms of one to three hectares each cover the area, most have a few stalks of maize and vegetables. On some a few goats, donkeys, free-range chickens and an occasional cow can be seen. A few years back soya bean – also known among residents as “the yellow invasion” – appeared in the area.

Mary Chiwamba (65) is working in the field, cutting dry maize plants, standing ankle-deep in dry and dead weeds, holding thin dry maize plants that she deftly stake together in an artistic round shape to dry the corn before harvesting. “It is hard work under the blazing sun,” says the widow and mother of seven children. But for her this seemingly mundane task is a significant development that can help rural Malawians to improve their lives.

Under the unyielding heat that sucks the earth dry and churns up the fearsome dry wind, Chiwamba, with the hope of cashing in soon after harvesting, works hard. But the markets are unpredictable.

Her biggest worry is the market, not the hard labour. “Poorly regulated markets are the biggest challenge we are facing as women farmers. At the market we get miserable prices offered by exploitive vendors. This is after the closure of the Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC), which was a statutory body providing the main marketing channel and storage facility of agricultural products and inputs,” Chiwamba says.

“Farmers now have to negotiate with vendors every week,” she adds. For agricultural vendors and merchants in Malawi deregulation of markets and the demise of ADMARC was the long-awaited opportunity to exploit the farmers.

Unreliable markets

Malawi farmers are not alone when it comes to market problems and other challenges faced by women farmers. At the Maputo market in Mozambique, a maze of stands stacked with a variety of agricultural products is marred by a mood that is characteristically downbeat. Grey-haired farmers in battered waxed jackets complain about the prices.

“As farmers we are a miserable lot,” says Anisia Menete (56), a farmer from Marracuane district who is there to sell her maize and green vegetables. “After sweating for almost six months, the prices that we are getting barely cover our labour and input costs.”

Menete says she travels long distances to come to the market and at the same time faces competition from those who are closer to Maputo. “The market prices are not related to input costs and on top of that I don't make any profit as most of my money goes towards transport,” she explains.

Teresa Sumbane, a woman farmer from Boane, says transport costs are prohibitively high. Sumbane says farmers could pay up to two thirds of the total marketing costs on transport. “We have limited capital, so we do mostly short distance, averaging just 53km. This practice increases expenses because it costs more per kilometre to transport our produce over short distances than long distances,” she says.

According to Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, CEO of the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN), functioning markets are crucial for smallholder women farmers who constitute 80% of the producers in many African countries.



Women farmers travel long distances to the market, only to get very low prices for their products.

“Small-scale farmers need access to markets to purchase agricultural inputs, such as seeds and fertilisers, and to sell their produce. For most, their own produce barely provide for two months of the family food need.”

Dr Sibanda says women are a significant economic entrepreneurial force whose contributions to local, national and global economies are far-reaching.

Smallholder farmers

In Malawi smallholder farmers comprise 80% of the country's population and 90% of the country's poor. Research shows that women farmers in Malawi own between 0,8 to one hectare of land which produces average yields of about 500kg/ha whilst their Mozambique counterparts can own up to 12ha of land but produce a meagre 511kg/ha.

Only 58% of women farmers in Malawi use fertiliser, but in Mozambique fertiliser usage by women farmers is even lower with only 25% of the farmers applying it to crops such as maize, cassava and beans.

Some smallholder farmers in Malawi have benefited from the farm input subsidy programmes, but mostly they have been exploited. Not only are they victims of the private traders, but they have also suffered the consequences of malfunctioning government-run markets.

“Many farmers in Malawi feel worse off,” says Beatrice Makwenda, the National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM) policy coordinator who is also the Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) project coordinator. Makwenda says the majority of farmers feel worse off since the reforms of 1995, when input subsidies were totally removed. “However, market reforms have provided opportunities for a minority of market-orientated farmers,” she adds.

The birth of WARM

WARM was born out of the realisation that although women farmers produce more than 90% of the food on the African continent by providing agricultural labour, processing and storage, they have very limited access to credit, labour, fertiliser, seed and other production inputs.

In July 2009, FANRPAN received funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to implement the 36-month pilot project in Mozambique and Malawi.

Dr Sibanda says: “The goal of the project was to increase women farmers' access to appropriate agricultural inputs by empowering them to



Mary Chiwamba, a farmer in the Lilongwe district of Malawi, is working hard, but she is not sure how much she is going to get for her products on the market.

express their needs and to generate evidence that is used to align policy research agendas and service institutions to meet women farmers' needs."

The WARM project objectives were compatible with FANRPAN's vision for "a food-secure Africa free from hunger and poverty" and its mission to promote effective food, agriculture and natural resources (FANR) policies. Furthermore, the objectives of the project were aligned to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)'s Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme's (CAADP) Pillar II on rural infrastructure and trade-related capacities for market access, as well as Pillar III focusing on food and nutrition security.

The partnerships

The need to enhance participatory agricultural research, problem diagnosis and implementation capabilities, and dissemination through policy dialogues at local, national, regional and international platforms found FANRPAN collaborating with development organisations active at community level, research institutions and universities, organisations with expertise in theatre for development as well as various regional and international organisations.

In Malawi, the implementing partners included the FANRPAN node hosting institution, the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET), the National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM), the University of Malawi's Bunda College of Agriculture and Story Workshop. The Mozambique implementing team was led by the Graca Machel Foundation for Community Development (FDC) and included researchers from the University of Eduardo Mondlane's Faculty of Agronomy and Forest Engineering (FAEF/UEM) and the School of Communication Arts (ECA/UEM).



Women farmers bring their products to this market, but it is very difficult to sell products when there is an oversupply. This results in very low prices.

The choice of countries

Mozambique and Malawi offer very different challenges and situations but are, in many ways, representative of other countries in the region which share a similar history, culture and strong economic ties.

In both countries, agriculture is the engine for economic growth and food security, and this engine is largely driven by smallholder production.

The infrastructure is ill-developed – Malawi is land-locked, while Mozambique has poor linkages between the northern and southern provinces, thereby creating major challenges in realising a fully functional market economy.

In both countries there is movement towards promoting and protecting the rights and interests of women farmers. These initiatives augured well with the objectives of the WARM project.

Six communities were selected in the Kasungu and Lilongwe districts in Malawi and 18 communities were selected in the Boane and Marracuane Districts in Mozambique.

Theatre as a tool

The WARM project used Theatre for Policy Advocacy (TPA) to inform, empower and mobilise women farmers to express their needs through a culturally appropriate medium and engage their communities in developing solutions to their problems. TPA is a form of participatory theatre that allows women farmers to engage their communities in developing solutions to their problems.

After sweating for almost six months, the prices that we are getting here is not what we were hoping for.

In Africa, theatre is used as a medium of education, problem-solving, dialogue and as a mobilisation tool on developmental issues such as literacy, health, sanitation and agriculture. Cont Mhlanga, a renowned African playwright and actor once said: "Theatre can be a tool to exchange and impart knowledge, serving as a mechanism for conscientisation. It can also be used for the mobilisation of people and for communication purposes."

Dr Sibanda adds: "TPA has empowered women farmers to speak out about their challenges. They now have the confidence and visibility to engage policymakers and provide information



Women heading to a market in Maputo. Transport remains a big challenge, as many end up using unsafe means of transport such as trucks and bakkies.

and knowledge that support their quest for an improved livelihood. "Essentially theatre was used to explain agricultural policy to people in rural areas and to carry voices from the countryside back to government."

By empowering women farmers to advocate for their concerns, the WARM project ensured that women farmers have the confidence and credibility to articulate their challenges and call for agriculture policy change.

Capacity building

Sithembile Mwamakamba, the WARM project manager, says one of the strongest components of the project was capacity building. A total of 32 farmers, of which 21 were women, have been trained to be policy advocates. These farmers have been taught how policies are made and how to engage policymakers in order to address short-comings in existing policies and programmes.

"We also trained 13 researchers in community action research," Mwamakamba adds. By training researchers in community action research, the WARM project has empowered researchers to be more sensitive to community needs, especially these of women farmers.

Moreover, the project has developed a two-way interaction platform between communities and researchers, whereby the research agenda is informed by the community, and the research outputs provide evidence and policy options



Sithembile Mwamakamba, WARM project manager, and Marta Cumbi, director of the Gender, Development and Cooperation Unit at the Foundation for Community Development in Mozambique.

to the communities, enabling them to advocate for changes that benefit them. Furthermore, six community theatre groups have been formed and trained in Malawi, consisting of 79 women and 54 men. In Mozambique, two district theatre groups were formed and trained, consisting of 24 women

farmers. “By forming and training these groups in the community to articulate their needs and use evidence to support their case, the WARM project has built social capital and capacity that can be applied to a variety of policy issues in the future,” says Mwamakamba.

Helping women farmers

Dr Marta Cumbi, director of the Gender, Development and Cooperation Unit at FDC, says: “The WARM project can also be a foundation to strengthen women’s participation in the entire agricultural value chain, from land and seeds to farm management, value addition and market access. This will ensure that the problem of food insecurity and poverty is dealt with once and for all.”

In most African countries women produce and market the products and also feed their

families. They are actively involved in the whole agricultural value chain. Women farmers have welcomed the pilot project and are very hopeful that the project will be up-scaled.

“We now see some changes in many areas as not only agriculture and market issues are being covered. We are covering issues such as HIV/Aids, domestic violence and crime,” says Cumbi. She says they hope that development partners will see the changes, extend this project and also implement it in other parts of the country. ■



Theatre goes rural

By Fidelis Zvomuya

For a craft mostly driven by speech, theatre lends itself surprisingly well to the illiterate and political leadership, particularly when it is in the hands of a group of rural women. These women, who are farmers, workers, caregivers, breadwinners, mothers, wives and daughters, radiate hard evidence-based facts about their life struggles through theatre.

It is against this background that the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) chose to use Theatre for Policy Advocacy (TPA) as a tool for empowering women farmers to articulate their challenges under the three-year pilot Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) project.

Theatre for Policy Advocacy

Africa has a long history of sending messages through storytelling, drama and plays. Through theatre performances, the work of African poets and actors, apart from being expressive, has challenged policies and human rights abuses. Theatre, by its nature, is cultural as it involves narrative, song and dance, ceremonial rituals, the society and people. Theatre therefore becomes a way of life and defines people.

Sithembile Mwamakamba, the WARM project manager, says: "The project was designed to strengthen women farmers' ability to advocate for appropriate agricultural policies and programmes in Africa through the use of an innovative tool, Theatre for Policy Advocacy (TPA)." The WARM project used TPA to mobilise and empower women

farmers to express their needs through a culturally appropriate medium which allowed them to engage their communities, service providers and policy makers in generating solutions to overcome the challenges that they face.

"We structured TPA performances around market policy issues that are pertinent to a particular community and its unique problems. A script is written and the scenes are aimed at sensitising the community to their inherent problems. This is then followed by a series of facilitated dialogues where various members of the community, including the youth, men, women, community leaders, NGOs and the elderly, articulate their challenges and also form part of the proposals for solutions," Mwamakamba adds.

She says these theatre performances act as mirrors to community problems and can be harnessed in a number of ways. Trained community facilitators engage the audience in dialogue, because the story doesn't end "when the fat lady sings", but the "conversation" continues in the community in the form of informal and facilitated discussions.



Sithembile Mwamakamba, the WARM project manager, watches a play during a project visit to Tidi Village in Malawi.

Theatre in Malawi

Working with Story Workshop, the University of Malawi's Bunda College of Agriculture, the National Association of Smallholder Farmers (NASFAM) and the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET), FANRPAN held the first community theatre performances in October 2010 in Sokelele Village in the Lilongwe district, Malawi. Surprisingly, with little professional training, women farmers took to the stage and delivered sterling performances.

"We were taught through WARM how to make our messages crisp and simple in such a way that any audience can understand the information and knowledge we are imparting," says Nevalisi Malizeni, an actor and WARM policy advocate in Malawi.

Malizeni is one of many women farmers who have taken to theatre to share experiences with fellow women farmers and to take policy makers to task regarding challenges faced by them.

Collaborative effort

"Being part of a theatre group has many benefits," she adds. "During the past three years, we have realised as a community that theatre brings communities together. There tends to be a great deal of camaraderie. For us, it's like having a second family. It's also a chance to share the emotional experien-

ces we are facing as farmers, mothers and members of the community. And it can teach you a lot about yourself."

The Malawi TPA message

The Malawi script was based on two prominent issues faced by women farmers, namely access to input and output markets and lack of land ownership.

The script tells the story of two female farmers. The first woman is a widow facing challenges supporting her family of five while her late husband's relatives have seized her best farmlands. The second woman is married and is always fighting with her husband, who does not support her in producing food for the family. He squanders money from produce sales and disregards the family needs. Furthermore he sells the coupons for subsidised inputs that his family receives from the government's Input Subsidy Programme and buys beer with the money.

The play offers a calculatedly neutral but mourning voice, offering a riveting journey into the available exploitative markets after the closure of the government-sponsored Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC).

Through theatre performances, the work of African poets and actors has challenged policies and human rights abuses.

The play uses comedy to focus on farming, neighbourhood problems, traditional out-dated cultural norms and the general position of women in society.

Growth in number of theatre groups

Story Workshop, which led the theatre component of the WARM project, facilitated six performances in the villages of Kasungu and Lilongwe districts. The performances were attended by over 10 000 people from the six communities, as well as by officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, traditional authorities of district assemblies, district

commissioners, members of Parliament and representatives from farmers organisations, community-based organisations and NGOs.

According to Andrew Samati, a community mobiliser with Story Workshop, who mentored the actors, the number of theatre groups in Malawi has grown.

In Kasungu district, three community theatre groups were formed. The first is in Nyamayajiwa Village, comprising of 13 women and seven men, the second in Mduka Village with 12 women and 18 men and the third in Kankowa Village with 16 women and 12 men.

In Lilongwe district, three community theatre groups were also formed in Chimphedzu Village with 12 women and five men, in Tidi Village with 16 women and four men and in Sokelele Village with 10 women and eight men.

In Sokelele Village, where Story Workshop spent a week with the community, the main character in the play, a woman farmer, grows her soybean with the hope of cashing in on the high demand as per advice from the government extension services. Most of these performances could easily assume the byline “based on true events”. Such is the alignment between the theatre performances and real-life situation. Samati says it is from stories like these that community leaders and government officials get to hear first-hand deep seated challenges that women farmers face. “The performances stimulate dialogue with local leaders,” he adds.

Attention of leaders

As a result of FANRPAN's work, TPA is getting a serious nod from the academic world, politicians, civil society as well as the private sector. These performances captured the attention of the communities, leaders and policymakers because the actors spoke directly to the audience.

One of the TPA performances in Mnduka Village in the Kasungu district was attended by more than 3 000 people. The area's parliamentary representative and the Finance Minister, Ken Kandodo Banda, also attended.



Men in Tidi Village, Malawi, being part of the act in support of women's issues.

Mozambique case study

In Mozambique, TPA performances were conducted in 18 villages in the Boane and Marracuane districts of the Maputo province. The performances were attended by community members, more than 2 500 female farmers, more than 1 500 men and children, local government officials and community leaders.

The performances were facilitated by Escola de Comunicacao e Artes (ECA) of Eduardo Mondlane University in partnership with the Foundation for Community Development (FDC) and the Faculdade de Agronomia e Engenharia Florestal of Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM/ FAEF).

According to Dadivo Jose Combane, a theatre expert from ECA, the key themes of the Mozambique script were agricultural inputs, the role of agro-dealers, market access with a look at transport and infrastructure, and market prices. Jose Combane says the script tells the story of the daily struggle of rural women farmers trying to access markets to sell their crops for a better price in order to make a living. “We identified seven women in Boane who we trained in theatre and community dialogue.

After the training, these women farmers conducted TPA performances in Bairro 25 de Junho, Chitevele, Txonissa, Marien Ngouabi (Bairro 3), Eduardo Mondlane, Massaca 2, Gumbane and Mulotana,” he says. In Marracuene six women farmers were identified and also trained in theatre and dialogue facilitation. They conducted

performances in their areas and neighbouring communities which include Samora Machel, Segundo, Bairro, Xipungana or Terceiro Bairro, Ngalunde, Primeiro, Bairro, Massinga, Painsi and Sibakusi.

Community theatre is an especially powerful medium for communicating ideas in areas where literacy rates are low.

Combane says: "During the TPA performances many community members could identify with the characters portrayed by the women farmers." He says in the post-performance dialogue in Primeiro Village a woman farmer stood up and identified herself with one of the characters,

saying she experienced the depicted challenges on a daily basis.

Some of the recommendations that came out of these community dialogues included the promotion of farming as a business in rural communities as well as the empowerment of women. The creation of effective local markets with regulated prices that serve women farmers better was also suggested.

Other recommendations included improving access to rural finance, equipping women with knowledge and new farming technologies. Also of high importance was the issue of the development of infrastructure such as roads linking



The message from Mozambique

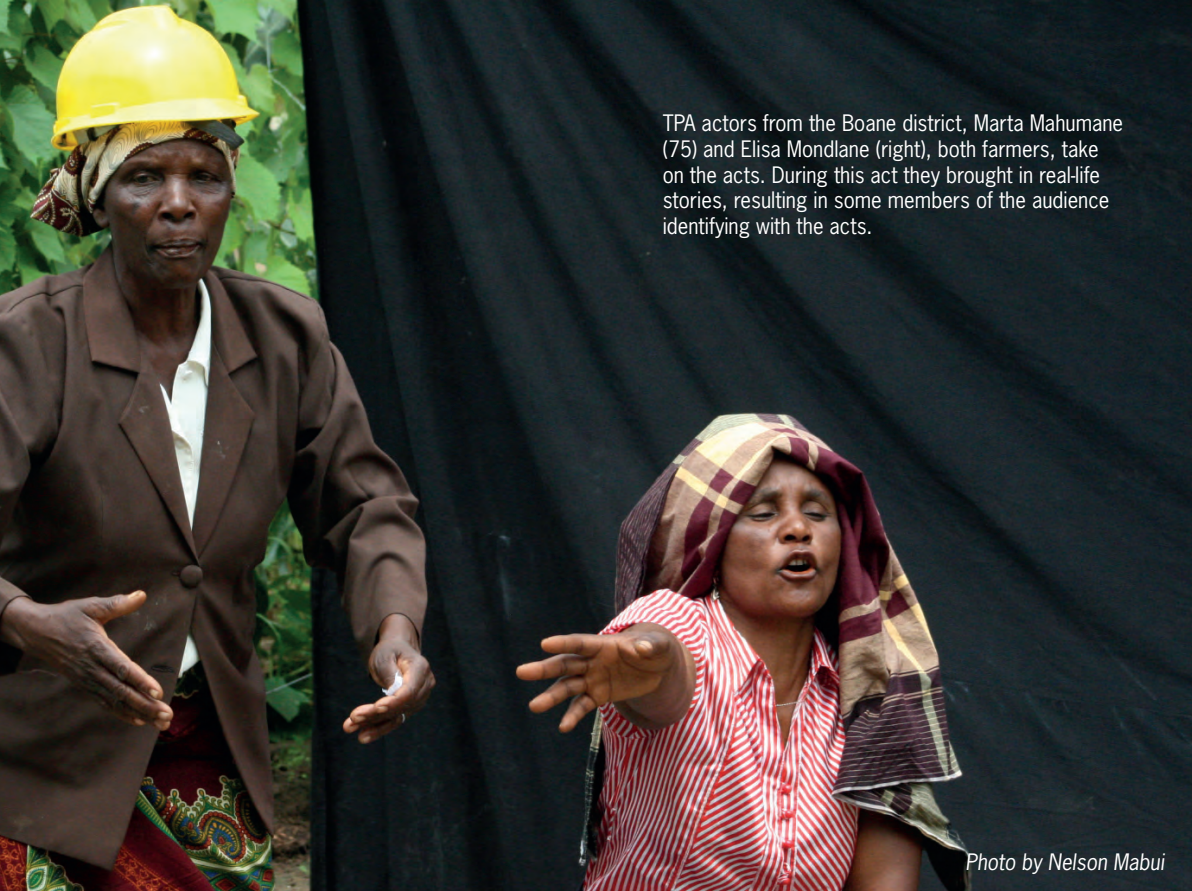
The scripts performed in Mozambique are based on Marieta, Safira and Joaninha, who wakes up early each morning to walk a long distance to reach the bus stop, where they take a bus to reach markets that pay them fairly for their produce. They carry baskets, boxes and bags on their heads. Safira is a victim of domestic violence. She has been badly beaten by her husband to a point where she is now lame. Whenever she manages to sell some of her produce, she must give the money to her husband, who spends it all on alcohol.

At the market, Marieta is selling poor quality products because she does not use fertiliser and she does not have enough money to buy pesticides. When the dealers arrive, they offer the women low prices for their produce and the women refuse to sell. If they do not sell everything, they have to take their products back home, risking spoilage and rotting. Joaninha is under pressure to sell her products

because she desperately needs the money, so she decides to sell at the offered low price. Her fellow women are angry with her because they had agreed not to accept the low prices. But even so, Joaninha has to give all the money that she gets to the people who she owes money and also uses some for bus fare going home. In the end, she has nothing but empty pockets.

The women spend all day at the market and when the sun is setting, they decide to go back home without selling anything. To go back home, they struggle to find transport as the last bus has already gone. When they see the district administrator's car approach, they decide to flag him down and engage him to present their challenges.

The administrator will be challenged to take concrete action to solve the challenge being faced by women farmers. The community dialogue which is always held after the performances also provides potential solutions.



TPA actors from the Boane district, Marta Mahumane (75) and Elisa Mondlane (right), both farmers, take on the acts. During this act they brought in real-life stories, resulting in some members of the audience identifying with the acts.

Photo by Nelson Mabui

rural areas to markets and storage facilities to avert post-harvest losses.

After the first Theatre for Policy Advocacy (TPA) performance in 2010, which was attended by 400 people in Marracuane, Mozambique, audience members highlighted the struggle faced by women to sell their surplus produce at markets. In response, the administrator of Manica and a representative of the Mozambican Forum of Rural Women pledged their support to help rural women get access to production inputs and fair markets.

Marta Machava (74) applauds the TPA model for creating a platform for policy dialogue as “the perfect way to share experiences and challenges between women farmers”.

The use of theatre

The use of theatre and the accompanying voices was meant to infuse the project’s goal of strengthening the capacity of women farmers to influence agricultural policy development. “It’s especially important that FANRPAN gets creative in its methods because women farmers throughout

the continent are often more disadvantaged than their male counterparts because of illiteracy and cultural norms,” Mwamakamba says.

Community theatre is an especially powerful medium for communicating ideas in areas where literacy rates are low and shared conceptions of what is and what should be are primarily cultivated through social interactions and traditions. It is also a way of levelling the field, breaking social barriers and addressing topics that are deemed taboo.

Steps in the TPA process

FANRPAN worked with well-known professional theatre groups in both Mozambique and Malawi to mobilise communities and introduce the concept of TPA. These groups were invited to perform highly rated theatre pieces for rural audiences. Typically, these performances were very well attended and it was easy to secure the community’s buy-in for developing their own theatrical performances. Appropriate performers, stakeholders and influencers were also identified at the events.

A theatre performance in the Boane district, Mozambique, during a WARM project evaluation visit.



community performers with the skills to tell their own livelihood stories and mobilise their communities towards a solution. The articulation of women's issues into a compelling theatre script was undertaken jointly by the professional group, trained local talent, researchers and policy analysts and the development experts. The local talent was then trained to perform the script to community audiences and to facilitate post-performance dialogue.

Platform for dialogue

Selected members from the community then started working with the professional theatre company and policy researchers to develop a script that captures key issues with regards to women's access to input markets. The engagement of policy researchers was vital at the entry point as they provided the "expert" knowledge and broader policy framework to help craft the main messages of the performances. At the same time, they gained practical community knowledge, that only the villagers and farmers have and which is not normally revealed to outsiders.

Building on local communities' tradition of communication through dance, song and theatre, the professional group and researchers equipped

These performances provided an excellent platform and a conducive environment for researchers and policy analysts to engage in dialogue with different community groups. Following the performance, which served as an ice-breaker and sensitiser, facilitated discussions were conducted to develop community-based and community-supported solutions to women's challenges.

Through these meetings, community champions were identified and they became advocates on specific interventions. The work of these advocates is supported by the community as a whole, and together with trained local talent they became a permanent community voice advocating for desired change. ■



Women in agriculture – A HARD LIFE

By Fidelis Zvomuya

“Women farmers in Africa may be poor and illiterate, but at the same time we are the principal force in the struggle against misery, backwardness and dependency,” says Celina Cossa, president of the National Farmers Union in Mozambique.

Celina Cossa is the founder and leader of the General Union of Agricultural Cooperatives, an organisation of 10 000 peasants, of whom 95% are women. The 200 cooperatives produce food for members and their families, and are generating a surplus that enables them to supply the markets in Maputo.

She says the spotlight is increasingly focused on smallholder farmers as support for agriculture climbs up the policy agenda. “One dimension of this is still being regularly overlooked – the role of women on smallholder farms. Markets for agricultural commodities are increasingly linked to the value chains of large food manufacturers and retailers.”

Gender inequality

The majority of farmers in Africa are women, and capacitating them will go a long way in reversing gender inequality. The Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)

found in their Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) pilot project that women are not only at a disadvantage in terms of economic opportunities, access to inputs, capital and credit, education and skills, and land ownership, but they are also benefitting less proportionately from government policies and programmes.

Cossa says: “If you break down the division of labour between men and women, women spend more time planting, weeding, processing, preserving, bagging and selling, while men are primarily involved in harvesting, preparing the land and ‘budgeting’ the money.”

Teresa Sumbane, a WARM advocate in Mozambique, says: “Farming has changed greatly – it’s not enough to just drive the tractor anymore or drive the oxen.” Sumbane says the tasks that are traditionally undertaken by women are not only labour-intensive, but also unnecessarily time-consuming given the absence of mechanisation. “In the absence of harvesters, tractors, pounders and



Celco Matola gathers some relish from a field in Mozambique to feed her family.

grinders, women spend hours manually pounding and grinding grains and other agricultural produce. In the absence of good road networks and reliable transportation, women have to walk up to 5km to access markets. And to make up for the lack of irrigation pumps and pipe-borne water on the farms, women have to make several rounds to nearby streams to fetch water,” she adds.

Sumbane says empowering women farmers, economically as well as politically, can help to raise productivity.

A WARM policy advocate in Malawi, Nevelesi Maliseni, says one of the challenges in the empowerment of women smallholder farmers is access to land and land ownership. Maliseni says land ownership is usually enjoyed by men because of cultural, traditional and other practices, leaving women as paid labourers or rental farmers with less leeway to alter their production patterns significantly.

“Having no real assets which can be used as collateral, women are unable to acquire loans from financial institutions to enable them to purchase relevant inputs. A reversal of this practice that

has entrenched gender inequality would entail a revision of land rights and policy, as well as inheritance customs to enable women to have greater access to capital,” Maliseni adds.

Efforts wasted

Another challenge that women farmers face is a lack of proper storage facilities for their produce. If women don’t have access to storage facilities, all their farming efforts will be undermined. Given the high prevalence of post-harvest losses, many of the gains from increased output and productivity will be eroded if farm produce rot before they reach the markets.

With all the challenges women farmers are facing, the solutions will not come from the government policies alone, but instead from the community leaders who would ensure that women are not deprived of land that is rightfully theirs. Solutions must come from private sector operators and vendors through corporate social responsibility projects or through private public partnerships.

- Women grow **80%-90%** of the food in sub-Saharan Africa, but own less than 2% of all the land.
- Women comprise over 50% of the agricultural labour force in Africa.
- Women receive less than 10% of all credit going to smallholder farmers and have access to only 5% of the resources provided through extension services.
- Giving women the same access as men to agricultural inputs could increase yields by 20% to 30%, reducing the number of hungry people in the world by **100-150** million.

Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2011



Women in Malawi fetch the water for watering crops where there is no irrigation.

Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, FANRPAN CEO, says empowering women and giving them access to more opportunities is in the interest of not only women but also men, smallholder farmers, as well as the agricultural sector and national economy. "Putting it differently, gender equality is a vital part of economic growth and prosperity. We would thus do well to start looking at this segment of our population and harnessing untapped potential," Dr Sibanda says.

Most farmers in Africa are women

Women make up 80% of the farmers in Africa. According to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), more than 70% of agricultural work is now run primarily by women, a drastic change from the 1900s.

According to the FAO, women in African countries provide 60-80% of the labour to produce food for household consumption and sale. "Women are also responsible for 100% of the processing of basic foodstuffs, 80% of food storage and transport from field to village, 90%

of the hoeing and weeding work, and 60% of the harvesting and marketing activities.

"However, women still lack access to critical production factors such as fertiliser, improved seed varieties, farming equipment, credit and extension services that can help them to improve and increase their agricultural productivity," the FAO says. The FAO estimates that if women had the same access to resources as men, they would be able to increase their farm yields by 20-30%



Women work hard in Africa, feeding and taking care of their families as well as doing agricultural chores.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

AGRICULTURE

per household. "This could raise the total agricultural production in developing countries by 2,5-4%, which could in turn reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17%."

The WARM project, which ended on 31 May 2012, was implemented by FANRPAN as a three-year pilot project in Mozambique and Malawi since 2009. It sought to mobilise, inform, empower and strengthen women farmers' ability to advocate for agricultural policies and programmes that positively influence input and output markets so that the women's needs are met.

Policies

The WARM project manager, Sithembile Mwachema, says: "Development policies have paid too little attention to how gender roles affect agricultural productivity and rural economic growth."

Mwachema says without a specific focus on gender, the policies and programmes on technology and market access, as well as extension services, are prone to reinforce and even exacerbate social and economic inequalities between women

- About 2,4-billion more people need to be fed by 2050.
- About 79% of Africa's arable land remains uncultivated.
- There will be 1,2 billion more African citizens by 2050.
- A total of 27 African countries have signed the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).
- The annual post-harvest grain losses in Africa average US\$4 billion.
- About 40% of the unemployed people in Africa are young people.
- About 16% of Africa's land is arable, the largest share in the world.
- Only nine African countries have reached the Maputo target.
- A total of 3,5 million more tractors are needed to put Africa on par with other regions.
- About 60-million hectares of land was purchased or leased in Africa in 2009.
- A total of 80% of smallholder farmers in Africa own less than two hectares of land.
- Small-scale farmers contribute over 90% of Africa's agricultural production.

Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation

and men. "Women farmers face obstacles in accessing markets, and lack appropriate knowledge and information," she adds.

Maliseni says women play a crucial role in many aspects of crop production. "While men are often responsible for land clearing, burning and ploughing, women specialise in weeding, transplanting, post-harvest work and, in some areas, land preparation. In some cases, both men and women take part in seeding and harvesting. But when it comes to spending money, men are ahead," she says.

During the three years that the WARM project has been piloted, it has seen that women play a major role in the household agricultural value chain, from farm-gate to the table. In animal produc-

tion they tend to have the primary responsibility for the husbandry of small animals and ruminants.

In all types of animal-production systems, women have a predominant role in processing, particularly of milk products, and are commonly responsible for marketing. ■

A wealth of community research experience



The Faculty of Agronomy and Forest Engineering (FEAF) at the Eduardo Mondlane University is a higher education institution involved in teaching Bachelor of Science (BSc) degrees in the fields of agriculture (crop production and crop protection, rural engineering and rural extension, agricultural economics) and forestry (forest engineering and natural resources).

FEAF also offers Masters of Science (MSc) degrees in agricultural development in the fields of economy and policy analysis, natural resources management, communication and rural transformation, soil, water and rural development. FEAF has 61 staff members and about 80 supporting staff members. The faculty has more than 700 BSc and 200 MSc students.

The university was founded in 1962 and FEAF started its operations in 1963. Besides teaching, the faculty is also deeply involved in research covering engineering, biological and socio-economical fields, among others.

Some of the topics covered include:

- Population increase and its effects on natural resources due to bad land-use practices and management.
- Climate change and natural disasters (floods, droughts, wildfires, cyclones, pests and diseases).
- The development of new and alternative technologies, techniques and methods for production (agricultural and forest) and sustainable use of the natural resources.
- Poverty in rural areas and food security.

In its research activities the faculty uses a holistic, multidisciplinary and participative approach. FEAF has established strong links with local, national and



Agricultural education of a high standard is offered at the Eduardo Mondlane University.

international research and educational institutions, non-governmental organisations, civil society and others.

FEAF is also heavily involved in outreach activities through its Technical Assistance Centre for Agriculture and Natural Resources. This centre is committed to developing activities and services in research, training and extension in the fields of natural resources and biodiversity towards sustainable development.

The centre acts as a window between the faculty and society by interacting, participating and in some cases leading developmental activities within the country.



Universidade Eduardo Mondlane
Faculdade de Agrademania e Engenharia Floreoreal

A wealth of community research experience (UEM/FAEF)
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Tel: +258 21 492 178/9 ; Fax: + 258 214 92176
E-mail: dir.faeaf@gmail.com ; direccao_faef@uem.mz

What is Story Workshop?

Story Workshop is a Malawian non-government organisation that uses entertainment and mass media creatively to share development messages for positive social change in the areas of food security, environment, health, HIV/Aids, gender, human rights and democracy.

Their vision is to create a well-informed, healthy, self-reliant, food-secure rural Malawian population practising democratic values.

The organisation is guided by the following values:

- Passion
- Professionalism
- Teamwork
- Accountability
- Transparency

They focus their programmes on civic education, human rights, gender equality, HIV/Aids, health and nutrition, food security, sustainable agriculture and the environment. They have a talented, innovative team of writers, radio and film producers, musicians and actors who are supported by some of the most knowledgeable programme managers and researchers in the country.

The interventions are categorised into three main strategies: mass media through radio programmes and films, traditional media through interactive drama, village debates, poetry, song and dance, and interpersonal media through individual advice, talks, encouragement, mentoring and counselling with door-to-door visits.

With over 12 years of experience, they have built a brand that is well respected and trusted. Story Workshop is internationally known for quality productions and innovative communication strategies.

They have received funding from a wide range of donors, including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the European Union (EU), the Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development (Cordaid), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through Johns Hopkins (BRIDGE II Project), FANPARN, Comic Relief and many others. They also pride themselves on working closely with all stakeholders, forming mutually beneficial partnerships that strengthen programmes and enhance results.



One of the actors trained by Story Workshop performing during a meeting.



One of the actors trained under TPA.



Andrew Samati from Story Workshop was leading the TPA training in Malawi.

Their approach

Story Workshop strives to bridge the gap between what people know and what people do. Their programmes and campaigns incorporate extensive content research, professional production and continuous organised feedback, which allow them to constantly adjust and measure the effectiveness of their messages.

Most importantly, their stories – whether radio shows, village theatre, print materials, public debates or music – are based upon the belief that it is more important to facilitate communication among people than to simply convey messages, that listening to people's problems and the obstacles they are confronted with is the most effective strategy for helping Malawians to improve their lives.

Awards

- Commonwealth Award for Action Against HIV/Aids, 2001, for the radio programme *Zimachitika*.
- *Zimachitika* was rated as the most popular radio programme in Malawi in 2003, 2004 and 2005.
- George Atkins Award – Farm Radio International, 2009, for the radio programme *Mwana Alirenji*.
- Agricultural, Learning and Impacts Network (ALINe) Farmer Voice Award, 2010, for *Mwana Alirenji*.
- New York Festivals Awards – World's best radio programmes, finalist 2011.

For more information, contact Kent Mphepo at KentMphepo@Storyworkshop.org, Thoko Mwapasa at ThokoMwapasa@Storyworkshop.org or phone 265 1824 122.



HEART- warming

Accolades & Testimonials

FANRPAN received many positive comments on its activities to uplift women farmers in Africa and specifically the WARM project from different stakeholders.

“Lindiwe Sibanda of FANRPAN has been very active, most recently at the Durban Summit on Climate Change. She is a powerful voice for smallholders throughout Africa and in supporting women to demand better services. We are investing in her and her organisation so that she gets the platform and visibility she needs to really speak out on behalf of women.” – *Haven Ley, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, January 2012, New Agriculturist*

“One example of a gender-focused approach that should be brought to scale is the work of FANRPAN and the Gates Foundation to strengthen women farmers’ ability to advocate for appropriate agricultural policies and programmes. The goal is to give women farmers access to the tools that help them to farm more successfully. These tools include access to credit, better farm inputs and outputs markets (seeds and fertilisers), access to extension services



Haven Ley from the
Bill and Melinda Gates
Foundation.

and markets, and access to technologies by ensuring that local and national policies and services address their needs.” – *US Government Feed the Future Southern Africa FY 2010 Implementation Plan.*

“Congratulations on this innovative project.” – *Carlos Seré, director-general, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI).*

“Well done! Sounds like an excellent intervention. It should ‘warm’ up the sector considerably.” – *Bruno van Dyk, executive director, University of KwaZulu-Natal Foundation.*

“We strongly support this initiative. We will share this information with our constituency and see how we can add value to your initiative. We salute you! We are

available to input as a CAADP pillar lead institution.” – *Dr Elijah Phiri, University of Zambia, AU-NEPAD, CAADP Pillar.*

“This is very interesting and innovative. We will try to keep track of what happens so that we can learn from the lessons of the two pilot countries.” – *Marcelius Moyo, grants team leader, World Vision Lesotho.*

“Congratulations, this is indeed great news. The potential for this project making a significant impact on women’s contribution to agriculture is very high.” – *Joyce Mulila Mitti, FAO Sub-regional Office for Southern Africa.*

“The WARM project seems to be an answer to the issues we have been trying to address. What will be the way forward for us since you are only in Mozambique and Malawi? Will other countries be

involved, even for a study tour?” – *Lydia Ndulu, provincial agricultural coordinator, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Zambia.*

“Congratulations! This is a wonderful initiative and I am sure it is going to alleviate poverty and move Southern African women to the next level. I always believe that empowering women is the only solution that will bring our continent out of the doldrums!” – *Abigail Togwe, United Nations (UN) Headquarters.*

“I look forward to seeing more women involved in research and being supported by such an initiative.” – *Prof Barthelemy Nyasse, University of Yaounde, Cameroon.*

“With the WARM project we found out that the use of innovative tools such as TPA to engage leaders, service providers and policyma-

kers encourage community participation and research the needs of women farmers.” – *Marta Cumbi, director of the Gender, Development and Cooperation Unit at FDC.*

“It’s about farmers speaking to farmers, they know the language. The TPA performances teach them how to present their challenges in both action and words.” – *Dadivo Jose, School of Communication Arts, Eduardo Mondlane University.*



Dadivo Jose from the School of Communication Arts at Eduardo Mondlane University.

What the farmers say about WARM:

“I have always wanted this kind of forum to raise my issues.” – *Lezinathi Daniel, a woman farmer from Sekolele Village, Lilongwe District, Malawi, 2011*

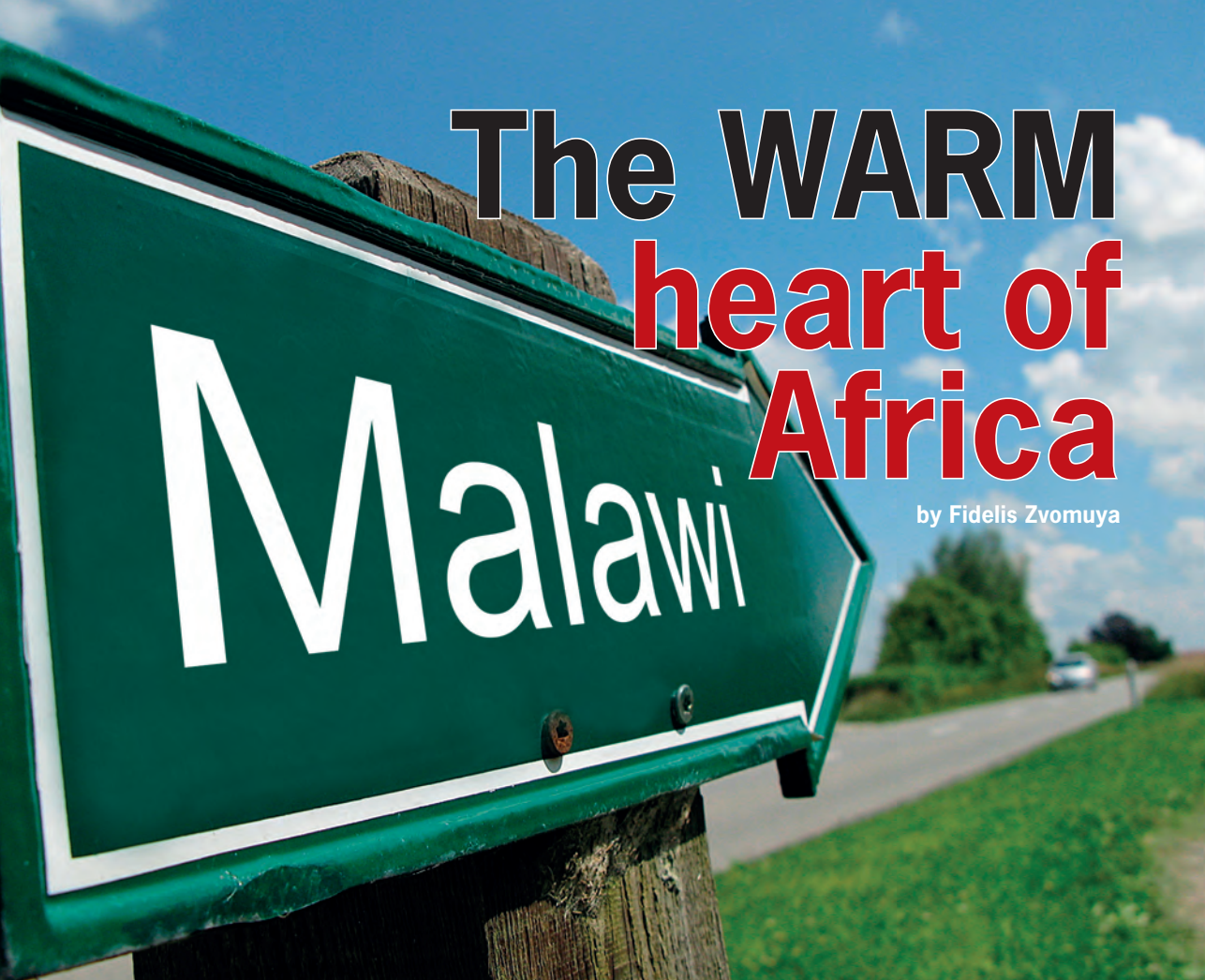
“We have too many difficulties because the seeds are very expensive. Once everything is ready in the field, agro dealers want to buy our produce at low prices. Everything we are using to produce is very expensive, but we can’t see the returns.” – *Woman farmer from Estevelle Village in Mozambique, 2011*

“I really enjoyed the performance. I would like to comment about the scene where the women blocked the street. This is the way to show our government that we exist too. All the conflict in the play is the result of transport difficulties.” – *Community leader, Massaca 2 Village in Mozambique, 2011*

“I seem like a person without a home because at my husband’s village they said I belong here and have no land there. Back here they say I do not have land

either because I am supposed to be at my husband’s village, so where do I really belong?” – *Ida Pofera, a woman farmer in Sekolele Village, Lilongwe District, Malawi, 2011*

“As farmers we are a miserable lot,” says *Anisia Menete, a 56-year-old Marracuane district farmer* who is here to sell her maize and green vegetables. “After sweating for almost six months, the income we are getting here is not what we were hoping for.” ■



The WARM heart of Africa

by Fidelis Zvomuya

The warm smiles and greetings – Takulandilani, Muli bwanji (Welcome, how are you?) is testimony to the fact that you are now in Malawi, the warm heart of Africa.

Malawi is a developing landlocked country in Southern Africa with a population of 15 million and a total area of 118 480 square kilometres. The country has one of the lowest levels per capita incomes in the world. Malawi has a gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$13 billion. Ranked 171st out of 187 countries on the 2011 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Human Development Index, Malawi has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, while 12% of the working population is HIV-positive. Due to poverty and a shortage of adult labour resulting from migration and HIV/Aids-related deaths, Malawi has one of the highest numbers of child labourers in Africa. Green tobacco sickness, a type of nicotine poisoning, is not uncommon among Malawi's estimated 80 000 child tobacco workers.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Country: Republic of Malawi

Capital: Lilongwe

Area: 118 484 square kilometres

Population: 15 879 252
(July 2011 est.)

Population growth rate:

2,8%

(2011 est.)

Life expectancy: 52
(2011 est.)

Inflation: 7,4% (2010 est.)

Access to land: Size:
Average of 0.8 - 1 ha;
62% have title to their land

GDP per capita: US\$800
(2010 est.)

GDP composition by sector:
agriculture 38%, industry
16,3%, services 53,5%
(2010 est.)

Land use: arable land 20,68%,
permanent crops 1,18%, other
78,14% (2005)

Access to Agricultural Extension: Malawi has a total of 1,887 extension workers against 2,880 established posts, leaving 993 positions vacant (35%)



The agricultural revolution in Malawi has changed the country's poverty images to that of hope and health.

However, it is characterised by widespread poverty, ranking amongst the top 20 poor countries in the world. Over 40% of the population lives on less than US\$1 per day. Other challenges the country endures include rapid population growth, increasing pressure on limited agricultural land and corruption.

It also ranks among the world's most densely populated and least developed countries. Agriculture is the foundation of Malawi's economy. The sector contributes about 38% of the GDP, 80% of the export earnings and employs 80% of the country's workforce. Tobacco, sugar, coffee and tea are important cash crops. Maize is the dominant food staple and smallholders devote 85% of their land area to maize production. The total cultivated area in Malawi is 2,7-million hectares and about 1,7- to 2-million hectares of that is cultivated by smallholders.

Land pressure

Malawi faces severe land pressures. The average size of smallholder farms is less than one hectare. Consequently, most smallholder land is continuously cropped, with little replenishment of the nutrients, resulting in soil mining and low productivity. Fertilisers, improved seed and better crop management are essential for raising farm productivity in Malawi. Without fertilisers yields will remain low, and farm households will remain food-insecure and impoverished.

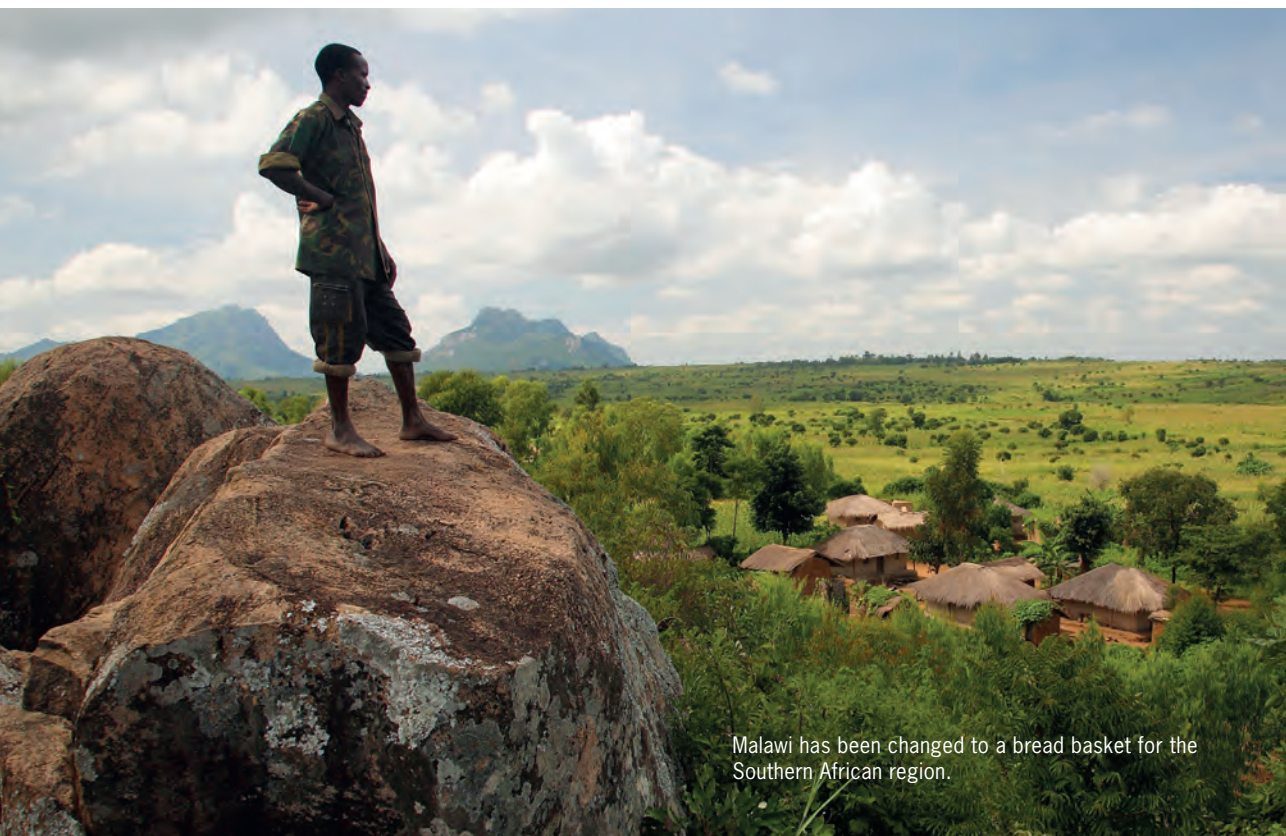
According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Malawi Food Insecurity Situation Report Number 1 of 2006, poor rainfall across Malawi's southern, central and northern regions during the critical maize development and maturation period in February and March 2005, combined with inadequate supplies of

fertilisers and seed, adversely affected the country's 2004/2005 maize crop, the primary staple food. As a result, Malawi produced approximately 1,2-million tons, well below its national demand.

According to government crop estimates, deep fertiliser subsidies and lesser ones for seed, combined with good rains, helped farmers in this country to produce record-breaking maize harvests in 2006 and 2007. The government says maize production leapt from 2,7-million tons in 2006 and 3,4-million tons in 2007 from 1,2-million tons in 2005.

Women still lack access to inputs

The livelihoods of women farmers are often constrained by poor access to markets and limited entrepreneurial skills, which are key components to adding value to produce. Rapid urbanisation is,



Malawi has been changed to a bread basket for the Southern African region.

Agricultural products:

tobacco, sugarcane, cotton, tea, maize, potatoes, cassava, sorghum, pulses, groundnuts, macadamia nuts, cattle, goats

Natural resources:

limestone, arable land, hydropower, unexploited deposits of uranium, coal and bauxite

Export commodities:

tobacco, tea, sugar, cotton, coffee, peanuts, wood products, apparel

Export partners:

India 10,4%, Germany 9,7%, South Africa 7,5%, Russia 7,4%, Zimbabwe 7,4%, Canada 6,4%, US 6,3%, Netherlands 4,7% (2010)

Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation 2011



The Lilongwe market is full of fresh and healthy products and this has also resulted in commodities being affordable by many.



however, opening up domestic and regional markets and offering new market opportunities for smallholder farmers to supply higher value produce.

Supplying these markets offers both a higher income and improved business relations for farmers, but accessing these markets also requires significant upgrading in terms of product quality and quantities.

Although the country still faces rampant poverty, its strategies for reducing this burden through sustainable growth is the highest priority on the national agenda. ■



Mozambique

Singing a song of change

By Fidelis Zvomuya and Sithembile Mwamakamba

Rural Mozambique endures illiteracy levels of more than 40% and has more female-headed households than most African countries.

Mozambique has an agricultural-based economy, a sector that is almost entirely dominated by smallholder farmers. It accounts for one fifth of the gross domestic product (GDP) and four fifths of exports, comprising mainly of sugar, cotton, cashew nuts, timber and prawns. Agriculture in the country is the bread and butter of more than 80% of the population, the majority of which are in the rural areas.

In these rural areas women tend to work predominantly in the agricultural sector and make up about two-thirds of the total agricultural labour

force. Therefore, understanding the specific needs of women farmers is critical to reduce hunger and poverty in Mozambique.



Mozambican President Armando Guebuza was awarded the 2009 FANRPAN Food Security Policy Leadership Award.

Between 2000 and 2008, Mozambique was ranked number six amongst the African countries with the highest growth in agriculture, with an increment of 7,8%. This was due to the Land Act of 1997, which affirms that women should enjoy equal access to land. In practice many women are unaware of their legal rights and these rights are not enforced.

Within rural communities, women are particularly disadvantaged. They have considerably less access to education than men and therefore possess fewer skills. Healthcare is inadequate and the number of women who die during childbirth is high.

Benchmarks

As part of the food security leadership policy award it sets benchmarks against which the Mozambican government would be evaluated. These include:

- Increase investment in agriculture from the current 8% to 10%.
- Increase the area under irrigation from the current 50 000 hectares (3,3-million hectares potential).
- Increase the use of fertiliser per hectare.
- Increase productivity and overall production across all commodities, including livestock.
- Increase the income of women farmers.

Visionary leadership

Under the leadership of President Armando Guebuza, the Mozambican government has taken major strides in ensuring that the country is food-secure. Mozambique has put in place strong agriculture policies such as the Food Security and Nutrition Strategy (ESAN II), which includes food security as a human right, and the Action Plan for Food Production, which was instrumental in reducing the food deficit of main staple foods in Mozambique from 2008 to 2011.

In 2009 FANRPAN recognised the excellent work done by President Guebuza in spearheading his country's green revolution by presenting him with the FANRPAN Food Security Policy

Leadership Award. The award is given annually to an organisation or person demonstrating excellence in promoting food security in Africa through visionary leadership, focused policies and personal initiative.

In December 2011, the country became the 28th country to sign the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

Mozambique has made huge progress on establishing the political, social and economic environment to eliminate poverty and hunger. In the last five years, the level of poverty decreased by 15%, testifying of President Guebuza's efforts to address hunger and malnutrition in his country.

Women moving up

A lot has been done in order to improve women farmers' lives. In 2009 President Guebuza received the African Gender Award by the Femmes Africa Solidarite, a statuette showing the story of an African woman facing social, political and economic challenges.

President Guebuza was honoured by the Femmes Africa Solidarité for his efforts in championing wider participation of women in his government. He became the fourth African political leader to be awarded the African Gender Award after President Paul Kagame of Rwanda in 2007, and former South African President Thabo Mbeki and Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade, who shared the award in 2006.

While still ranked at the bottom of the United Nations' Human Development Index, Mozambique has produced one of the largest numbers of women in leadership positions in Africa. In January 2010, Mozambique's parliament comprised 39,2% women, the second highest number in Africa after Rwanda and the ninth highest in the world.

Mozambique's commitment to promoting the status of women was confirmed with the revision of the constitution in 2004, which included clauses for promoting and protecting women. Guebuza's gender successes have not only been limited to the political sphere. He also signed into law legal instruments such as the Domestic Violence Act and the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, a move to help enhance the protection of women's rights in the country.

Women lack access to inputs

A significant number of women farmers in Mozambique are unable to access fertilisers, cash assistance and government subsidies intended for farmers because the land they work on is registered in their husbands' names.

Most rural women work in agriculture and are primarily responsible for food crops. Their work loads are heavy and they generally play a crucial role in generating food and income for the family. Yet, they have little access to or control over productive resources.

Low agricultural productivity

Low agricultural productivity is the result of a lack of appropriate technologies and support services. It can also be attributed to the fact that produce markets are distant, unreliable and uncompetitive. Smallholder farmers depend on traditional farming methods, low-yield seed varieties and manual cultivation techniques.

Most rural women work in agriculture and are primarily responsible for food crops.

Alternative sources of income outside agriculture are very few and this increases the vulnerability of rural poor people to natural disasters. In times of scarcity they have little to buffer them from food insecurity.



They do most of the work and they lead in numbers, but women farmers still lag behind in terms of land rights.

Agricultural transformation

According to Dr Shenggen Fan, director-general of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), in order to transform its agriculture sector, Mozambique will need to invest in research and technology. Dr Fan says it will help to develop crops that are resistant to extreme conditions and that are more nutritious.

"Farmers will need a genetically diverse portfolio of improved crop varieties that are suited to a range of agroecosystems and farming practices, and resilient to climate change. "Policymakers should encourage conservation agriculture, mixed crop-livestock and agroforestry systems that enhance soil fertility in order to increase productivity in a sustainable manner," he says.

All actors within the agricultural sector must focus on increasing the availability of biofortified crops, creating nutrition-sensitive value chains and fostering integrated agriculture, health and nutrition programmes in order to exploit the synergies between these three factors.

Dr Fan says market integration through rural infrastructure and improved supply-chain management must be improved. “Farmers need to be able to participate profitably in markets at local, national, regional and international levels.

“Linking smallholders to supply chains and markets requires both innovative institutional arrangements and investments in rural transportation and communication.” Investments in rural roads, storage infrastructure,

transportation and logistics are key in order to link farmers to markets, reduce post-harvest waste, and increase supply chain efficiency and profitability. ■



Women are the dominant farmers in Mozambique, but they still don't get enough input support as well as credit to improve their productivity.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AND MARKETS

The thematic area focuses on increasing access to existing improved technologies for smallholder farmers. It also highlights critical areas of investment with high impact potential.

Current FANRPAN projects:

- Harmonised Seed Security Project (HaSSP)
- Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM)



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Mother, daughter legacy

The special relationship between a mother and her daughter can only truly be understood by women. One minute they will be smiling, laughing and in a matter of seconds they can be fighting and in tears, but one thing is certain, their love for one another remains unconditional.



Ninita Armando Machava (mother) and Alice Antonio Nicolau (daughter), a true case of the saying like mother like daughter, have both a passion for agriculture and have proven it by eliminating hunger within their family.

The special relationship between a mother and her daughter can only truly be understood by women. One minute they will be smiling, laughing and in a matter of seconds they can be fighting and in tears, but one thing is certain, their love for one another remains unconditional.

As the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Network (FANRPAN) closes the chapter on the three-year-pilot phase of the Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) project, I find myself reflecting on a special relationship that warmed my heart in Mozambique.

Ninita Armando Machava (54) and her daughter, Alice António Nicolau (23), prove that the special relationship between a mother and her daughter can be an advantage when it comes to securing a livelihood for your family. They have learnt to complement each other's strengths by working side-by-side and hand-in-hand to produce food and provide for their family.

I first met this unique farming team in May 2011, two years into the WARM project. Ninita is a single mother of four and for her, farming and her family are the two most important things that she values in her life. Like most women in her community, life is a daily struggle as she is not producing enough food to feed her family. Ninita is looking to generate cash income in order for her children to have access to education, healthcare and a better quality life. She owns a one-hectare plot where she produces cassava, sweet potatoes, peppers, cucumbers, maize and carrots.

Alice a new age of future farmers

Alice, Ninita's daughter, represents the next generation of women farmers in her district of Maraccuane, some 23km from the capital, Maputo. She is a single mother herself and is also struggling to finish grade 10. It is her belief that education is the key to women farmers' entry into the more productive farming business and it also enables them to engage seriously with unscrupulous middlemen at the market.

"The problem is that most farmers are illiterate and are therefore exploited at the markets. They also cannot read the instructions on the fertiliser packs," says Alice.

"There is no dignity for a mother when her children go to bed hungry," Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda said at the Rio+20 in Brazil.

To right this wrong, Alice has managed to bring together a group of women farmers to teach them basic reading and writing skills in mathematics and Portuguese language competency, as well as problem-solving. "My engagement with these women enables me to learn more about agriculture and their life stories," she says. "This is a win-win situation where both my students and I are on a learning curve," says Alice.

Alice has been working with her mother since the age of 13 years. She has a natural love and passion for the land and agriculture in general. When her grandmother passed away a few years ago, Alice was pronounced heir to the two plots her grandmother left behind. She then combined her plots with her mother's one-hectare plot to grow cassava, sweet potatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, garlic, onions, beans, lettuce and peppers.

She sells her surplus at the market in Maputo, but not everything gets sold every time she goes there. She has managed to use the little money that she gets to pay for her schooling, with the hope and dream of making it to university one day.

Proud of her daughter

Ninita is proud of what her daughter has achieved. "Alice is doing remarkable things. Most women who are part of our project are now able to read, thanks to Alice. It is our wish as a cooperative to one day own a resource centre where my daughter can continue to teach these women farmers. And we would also like to use the centre for workshops and sharing knowledge among ourselves on how to improve our farming skills as well as marketing our produce," says Ninita.

Both mother and daughter have been actively involved in the WARM project. Ninita is one of the 18 trained policy advocates from Mozambique and together with Alice they are part of the Marracuane theatre group.



Caught in action, both mother and daughter are members of the Marracuane theatre group.

“The WARM project has enriched my life,” says Ninita. “The policy advocacy training has helped me to understand the need to strategise and build alliances for better results when we want changes in agriculture policies,” she adds.

Alice leads in theatre

Alice has a leading role in one of the stories that the Marracuane theatre group created. She portrays a woman farmer who goes to the market late and finds other women already struggling to sell their produce because they will not give in to low prices offered by dealers.

Empowering women farmers in Africa is not only an idea worth spreading, but a revolution well worth sparking.

After being at the market for only a few minutes, Alice’s character sells out and takes the low price from the dealers so that she does not go back home with her produce. “I too have learnt a lot

from my participation in the WARM project,” says Alice. “I saw that the struggles that my mother and I go through are the same struggles experienced by women farmers across our community, if not the whole country. More importantly, the character that I play has made me more mindful of the need to be united as women farmers when we go to the market, so that we all get a fair profit from our work.”

Ninita wants her daughter to have a better life. She says: “As a mother I would like to see Alice better off than me. I would like to see her making a profit from her farming so that she will be able to support herself and me because I am getting old and unless she is able to take care of herself, she will not be able to take care of me.”

The struggle of women farmers can continue to be passed on from one generation to the next, but it doesn’t have to be. Women farmers in Africa have the potential to literally transform the entire continent from one haunted by food insecurity into an economic bread basket.

Dr Judith Rodin, president of the Rockefeller Foundation, said during the 2010 African Green Revolution Forum: “Empowering women farmers in Africa is not only an idea worth spreading, but a revolution well worth sparking.” ■

Agricultural development

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

» **Our goal:** to reduce hunger and poverty for millions of poor farm families in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Our mission

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives.

In developing countries, we focus on problems that have a major impact on people, but get too little attention and funding. We therefore advocate for policies and resources to increase opportunities for people living in the developing world.

The goal of the Agricultural Development Initiative, the largest initiative in the foundation's Global Development Programme and one of the largest at the foundation, is to reduce hunger and poverty for millions of poor farm families in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The foundation believes that the best way to do this is by helping small farmers to grow and sell more food so that they can improve their nutrition, become self-sufficient and build better lives.

Why agricultural development?

Three-quarters of the world's poorest people get their food and income from farming small plots of land, typically the size of a football field or smaller, and most of them work under difficult conditions. They grow a diversity of local crops and must deal with unique diseases, pests and drought, as well as unproductive soil. Their livestock are frequently weak or sick, resulting in reduced production of

eggs and milk to eat or sell. Reliable markets for their products and good information about pricing are hard to come by.

Most often, government policies do not adequately serve their interests. Women are a vital part of these farms – in addition to caring for and feeding their families, they do most of the farming, but often with limited support.

The need to improve agricultural productivity is clear:

- Severe hunger and poverty affects nearly one-billion people around the world.
- By 2050, it's estimated that the earth's population will reach nine billion. Global food production will need to jump by 70% to 100% to feed these people. Rising incomes, increasingly scarce resources and a changing climate are putting additional strains on agricultural productivity.
- Two-billion people in the developing world are malnourished. Malnutrition continues to be the world's most serious health problem and the single biggest contributor to child mortality.



Odetta Mukanyiko, a small-scale farmer in Rwanda, is selling her maize to the World Food Programme's Purchase for Progress Initiative, which is helping to link farmers to markets (Kirehe District, Rwanda, 2011).

The power of investing in agriculture is clear: Agricultural development is two to four times more effective at reducing hunger and poverty than any other sector. Helping farm families to grow more is the smartest way to fight hunger and poverty. It is essential in addressing the need to feed a growing population and improving their nutrition. When farmers can grow more food and earn more income, they can achieve self-sufficiency and live better lives.

Improvements in agricultural productivity create social and economic ripple effects. With increased incomes, small farmers can better feed their families, send their children to school, provide for their health and invest in their farms. This makes their communities economically stronger and more stable.

Why focus on women farmers?

In sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, women are vital contributors to farm work, and typically in

charge of selecting food for and feeding their families. Yet compared to their male counterparts, women farmers are less productive and unable to reach their full potential. Yields on women's plots are typically 20% to 40% less than men's, putting rural families and communities at risk of not having enough nutritious food to eat or any extra to sell at the market.

The reason for this gender gap is that women have less access to improved seeds and other inputs, training and markets. This gap has real consequences: households are less productive, new approaches and technologies that could increase the amount of food they grow are less likely to be adopted by women, and children in poor households are undernourished. We believe agricultural development programmes must understand and be designed for women farmers in order to effectively reduce hunger and poverty. ■

TO LEARN MORE

Global Development Programme: www.gatesfoundation.org/global-development

Agricultural development: www.gatesfoundation.org/agriculturaldevelopment



These are some of the products so far produced by the HaSSP.

SEEKING BETTER SEED

Seed security for African women farmers

By Sithembile Mwamakamba

A combination of logistical, cultural and economic factors, coupled with a lack of gender-disaggregated statistics in the agricultural sector, has resulted in the formulation of agricultural programmes that are seldom suitable to address the specific needs of women, who are the majority in Africa.

The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) has highlighted, amongst other things, that women farmers need to easily access affordable, good-quality seeds.

Teresa Sumbane, a smallholder farmer from Mozambique, who is also an advocate in one of FANRPAN's projects, Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM), said besides challenges posed by climate change in her community, an important step must be taken to ensure that farmers, both male and female, have access to improved seeds.

Ensuring seed security

In January 2010, FANRPAN launched the Harmonised Seed Security project (HaSSP) with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The project seeks to address disparities in seed policy and regulatory frameworks and to improve access to good quality and affordable seed by engaging more women farmers in seed production, processing and marketing at a community level. High-quality seed is crucial to rural livelihoods and global food production,

especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where over 60% of the people depend on farming for their food and incomes.

In many developing countries, farmers' access to a diverse range of quality seed has been hindered by factors such as inadequate seed production and distribution systems, a lack of information about proper seed selection at markets, intra-regional disparities in policy and regulatory frameworks, and a lack of access to credit.

The unfortunate reality is that these factors are resulting in persistent food shortages and an over-reliance on donations of often poor-quality relief seed and food aid. In the future, farmers will need access to improved seed and new varieties of crops to ensure that they produce enough food to support their livelihoods and to boost their yields.

Creating a secure supply of seeds

The HaSSP project is already showing high potential to improve the flow of seed between countries, providing smallholder farmers with better access to higher-yielding, disease- and drought-resistant seeds. Results to date show that in Malawi and Zambia, 58% and 50% of

community seed growers are women respectively, and that empowered women can uplift not only their households but a whole community.

To enable farmers' access to a variety of seeds and ensure sustainable increases in food production, investment and research in seed production and supply systems are critical, as well as adequate seed policies.

Speaking at the project's Mid-Term Review (MTR) Findings, Validation and Dissemination Workshop, held in May 2012, Francois Droz, resident director of SDC in Southern Africa, said: "Research is necessary to develop new seed varieties adapted to local conditions and improve yields.

"Linkages with the private sector are compulsory. Only professionals can guarantee multiplication and dissemination in a sustainable way, but for this to happen it is necessary to have a conducive policy environment."

Droz also stressed the importance of concrete, documented results in terms of farmer participation and success. He applauded the HaSSP's initiative of training farmers at a community level, on the proper productive use and storage of seeds.



Dr Elizabeth Minofu-Sibale is providing strategic guidance to the HaSSP through her leadership role of the seed elders.



Dr Bellah Mpofu is the HaSSP's project manager.



Francois Droz, resident director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in Southern Africa, says research is necessary for the improvement of seed varieties.



Some of the farmers resort to using traditional seeds that produce very little results.

Dr Bellah Mpofu, the HaSSP programme manager at FANRPAN, says: The project will build capacity and improve seed and marketing for farmers, researchers and input suppliers.” At a national level, seed systems in each of the four countries are being strengthened to make them more resilient, helping to improve food security.

To enable farmers’ access to a variety of seeds and ensure sustainable increases in food production, investment and research in seed production and supply systems is critical.

What is clear, is that for a country to be food-secure, it needs to be seed-secure. As women become seed-secure and earn more income from increased production, the power regarding policy development may shift, resulting in more development programmes that have a positive impact. Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, chief executive officer of FANRPAN, says: “If policies do not meet

the needs of women smallholder farmers, then market-led growth across the food production chain will not be successful.”

The seed elders providing guidance

The HaSSP project has a regional committee of seed elders who provide strategic guidance and counsel on the implementation of the project. One exceptional woman who is part of this distinguished committee is Dr Elizabeth Minofu-Sibale. Dr Minofu-Sibale is renowned for her work on breeding hybrid maize varieties as well as open pollinated varieties (OPVs) of maize. These are affordable, high-yielding and can be recycled for up to three years, thus relieving the smallholder farmers from the burden of buying seeds every year. In 2000 she won the World Bank Group and IMF Africa Club Award.

According to Dr Minofu-Sibale, a major problem in agriculture remains the availability of the right seeds at the right price. The most discouraging thing is that the cost of improved seeds is growing by the day, which is not only disadvantageous to smallholders. It is also a stumbling block to any country seeking to achieve food security for all its citizens.

She says: “All in all, I would define the major challenges in food security as strengthening the seed system and intensifying farmer training on good crop production practices for maximum benefits.” ■



Through theatre, women have managed to drive their point as far as gender inequality is concerned.

Facing the challenges of **MOZAMBIQUE**

By Fidelis Zvomuya

A recent study reveals that with 80% of Mozambicans depending on agriculture for both food supply and employment, the government has put in place policies and input distribution systems to improve productivity.

A study undertaken by researchers from the University of Eduardo Mondlane's Faculty of Agronomy and Forestry Engineering revealed that in the 1980s and 1990s agriculture in Mozambique faced a lot of setbacks. This was due to severe droughts and the civil war that wreaked havoc in the countryside. The study, which was commissioned

by the Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) to analyse the input distribution systems and agricultural policies in the country, reveals that since then the Mozambican government has not been sitting idle.

The study, undertaken by João Mutondo, Bruno Araújo and Meizal Popat, reports of considerable investment in the country's agricultural sector over

the years. “From 1993 a new sector-wide development approach known as the National Programme for Agricultural Development (PROAGRI) was developed with an initial phase running from 1999 to 2004,” the study reveals.

Agriculture policies

PROAGRI emerged in a context where levels of food and cash crop production in the country were in a degree of recovery. However, they were still below the needs of the population and the existing infrastructure capacity.

A second phase, PROAGRI-II (2005-2009) was developed with the objective to “contribute to improved food security and poverty reduction through supporting the efforts of all stakeholders. The programme also had a strong emphasis on the sustainable exploitation of natural resources.”

Currently the Mozambican government is implementing a ten-year Strategic Plan for Agricultural Development (PEDSA). PEDSA aims to contribute to food security and incomes of farmers in a competitive manner and ensuring sustainable social and gender equity. Regarding gender, PEDSA suggests the integration of gender issues in policies and programmes related

to agriculture and food security. Additionally, PEDSA recommends improvement in access and ownership of land for women-headed households.

Gender strategy

According to the study, in order to understand the specific needs of women and ensure that they are properly taken into account in agricultural policies, the government of Mozambique has set up a Gender Unit within the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG). In 2005, the Gender Strategy for the Agriculture Sector was developed with the objective to promote greater gender equity, particularly in matters relating to access and control of productive resources and the sharing of benefits arising from land development.

Over the years the Gender Unit has focused on activities related to gender training and the incorporation of gender in the planning process. However, these gender mainstreaming activities have been carried out on a limited scale and without substantial institutional support, and as a result very little has changed.

The study reveals a lack of formal legal status, the Gender Unit does not have sufficient authority to make autonomous decisions. Furthermore,



In Mozambique, like most of the developing world, women are the providers for their families. They farm, feed and market their products to make sure their families survive.

there is a tendency to undervalue the importance of social issues in the agricultural sector, which leads to little attention being paid to socio-economic, gender and power relationships among the actors involved in agriculture. It is these dynamics that determine different interests and livelihood choices, and influence the capacity to access resources and take advantage of the existing opportunities.

However, the study is not all doom and gloom. Despite the fact that the Gender Unit has failed to deliver on its mandate, the study reports there is a general awareness of gender issues at a local level which can be utilised. The challenge is to translate such awareness into concrete actions.

The limited representation of seed agents in the country may be the result of weak infrastructure systems such as roads and markets and limited effective demand among other factors.

The study reveals that the formation of the Gender Unit, though still weak and ineffective, is a good starting point. It puts forward recommendations for strengthening the capacity of the unit to intensify gender training activities, particularly at the central level, on how to incorporate gender issues in planning and budgeting.

Input distribution systems

The study also looked at input distribution systems in Mozambique and reveals that there are two main input distribution systems in Mozambique: the formal and the informal systems. Under these two input distribution systems, the relief system has an important role.

Seed provided by the relief system is purchased both from the formal and informal sector. The formal input distribution system is mainly dominated by private companies, which produce,

import and distribute pesticides, fertilisers and seeds. Currently the big players in the formal input distribution system include the Ministry of Agriculture, international research centres and private commercial agri-business companies such as MozFoods, PANNAR and SEMOC.

Interestingly enough, the study found that the formal sector supplies only 10% (9 000 tons) of the seed requirement in Mozambique. Although commercial agri-business companies have established agents in different parts of the country, responsible for retailing agricultural inputs, the existing distributors are not represented in all provinces and districts.

The limited representation of seed agents in the country may be the result of weak infrastructure systems such as roads and markets and limited effective demand among other factors.

Not surprisingly, the study found that the informal input distribution system is populated by smallholder farmers, mainly women farmers and grain traders. The smallholder farmers provide grains saved from their own crop harvest and together with local traders make them available as seed to other farmers.

This distribution system is the major source of seeds and it contributes 90% of the seed requirements of the country. The study says that farm-saved seed is favoured by smallholder farmers because of its high adaptability to local conditions, and the fact that it is easily available and affordable.

Furthermore, the study found that the government of Mozambique, through non-government organisations (NGOs), provides seeds to farmers



Access to land for women remains a challenge in Mozambique.



affected by disasters as a relief response to the emergency situation through direct distribution, seed vouchers and fairs.

At the input trade fairs, smallholder farmers receive vouchers to buy kits of seed and fertilisers. The voucher covers 70% of the kit price and the small-scale farmer pays only 30%. Quite a number of rural women participate in these fairs. The study quotes a 2007 survey conducted in the districts of Matola-Gare, Congolote, Magude and Manhiça in the Maputo province, which found that the majority of vendors at the fairs are female grain traders (30 out of 39 seed suppliers interviewed were female).

According to the study, Mozambican agriculture has a potential to grow. Mozambique is endowed with about 36-million hectares of arable land of which only 9-million hectares are actually used. The growth of the Mozambican agricultural sector depends heavily on the use of improved agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilisers. ■



SOCIAL PROTECTION AND LIVELIHOODS

FANRPAN has developed the Household Vulnerability Index (HVI) tool to assess household assets and categorise them according to three levels: high, moderate and low vulnerability. Information gathered is used to develop social protection policies for vulnerable households under different categories.



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The use of hybrid seed and fertiliser has seen crop improvement in Malawi. Here Amos Banda shows some of his products.



A harvest of hope for Malawi farmers

By Fidelis Zvomuya

The Agricultural Input Subsidy Programme (AISP) began in response to the dust bowl and the depression among smallholder farmers. AISP has since seen Malawi improving its harvest. Thanks to low-priced fertiliser and other farming inputs that were brought up by this government's intervention, the country's maize harvests have been bountiful.



In 2008 the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Network (FANRPAN) awarded the inaugural Food Security Policy Leadership Award to His Excellence, State President Ngwazi Bingu wa Mutharika, for his exceptional leadership and steering Malawi out of food insecurity within a short period of time. The implementation of a large-scale agricultural input subsidy programme in 2005/06 and subsequent years has attracted significant international interest. President Mutharika had actually engineered an agriculture-led boom in one of the world's poorest countries, an intervention that pointed a way for Africa to overcome its chronic hunger, food insecurity and periodic extreme famines.

The programme was first revitalised following a poor-harvest season and a high maize import bill to augment domestic supply in the 2004/05 agricultural season.

In 2008/09, the programme was in its fourth year of implementation, with changes in the scale, scope and ways of implementation.

For years fertiliser – a basic input – was simply beyond most smallholder farmers' reach, costing the equivalent of about US\$50 a bag. Buying it on credit was too much of a risk for farmers at the mercy of unreliable rains and poor quality seeds. In 2005 the government began subsidising fertilisers and high-yielding seeds for smallholder farmers. The action cut fertiliser prices by 80% and slashed the cost of hybrid maize seeds from US\$2,17 to US\$0,11 per bag.

The impact was dramatic. The following year Malawi's maize harvest more than doubled to 2,7-million tons. It rose again in 2007 to 3,4-million tons, enough to feed the nation and sold 400 000 tons to the UN's World Food Programme (WFP). The formerly aid-dependent country even donated 10 000 tons of maize to the WFP's nutrition programme for people living with HIV/Aids.

Inputs distribution systems study

According to a study conducted by the University of Malawi's Bunda College of Agriculture, there is little doubt that the decision to make high-quality seeds and fertilisers affordable for smallholder farmers has been the key to Malawi's success. The research revealed the subsidy programme is already being seen as a model by a growing number of African governments as well as international development and agriculture agencies.

FANRPAN commissioned Bunda College to undertake an analysis study on the Input Subsidy Programme for the 2009/10 growing season.

The research found that most Malawian farmers were too poor to pay commercial rates for fertiliser and seeds. "As a result, maize yields plunged. When drought struck in 2001, neither farmers nor the government had adequate grain stores to see them through," the study revealed.

More than a thousand people are estimated to have died. Then, after the failed 2005 harvest left five million of Malawi's 13-million people on the brink of starvation, the then newly elected government of President Mutharika defied the donors and launched the subsidy scheme.

Largely financed by government, the subsidy programme was targeted at smallholder farmers with land who could not afford to purchase inputs at market rates.

It targeted 2,8-million out of an estimated 3,4-million farming households. The size of the programme increased from 132 000 tons in 2005/06 to 216 000 tons in 2007/08. This saw the cost of the subsidy escalating from US\$5,4



Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, FANRPAN CEO (right), interviewing the former Malawian president, Bingu wa Mutharika.

million, which is about 2% of the gross domestic product (GDP), in 2005/6 to US\$59 million, which is 3,4% of the GDP, in 2007/08 and to US\$112 million, which is 5,5% of the GDP, in 2008/09. The fertiliser subsidy per farmer increased from 64% to 79% of the commercial price in 2005/06 and 2007/08 respectively.

According to the study, 70% of the farmers in Malawi are women. These women have a commitment to ensure household food security.

Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, FANRPAN CEO, says neither subsidies nor fertiliser is by itself a solution to Africa's complex agricultural problems.

Dr Sibanda says making African farming profitable, sustainable and productive will require political empowerment of rural communities, access to local, national and global markets and long-term investments in irrigation, sustainable fertiliser use and soil management, health and education, modern farm technology and extension services, and effective transport and communications systems.

"These strategic investments are detailed in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) of the continent's development blueprint, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)," Dr Sibanda says.

But have the global food price shock of 2008, recognition of the economic importance of African agriculture and the Malawi success story brought the era of "sink or swim" policies to an end? Have they prompted a generous helping hand to Africa's hard-pressed, mostly female family farmers? Not quite.

Objectives of the WARM study and findings

The objective of the study was to establish to what extent agricultural input distribution systems in Malawi are servicing the needs of rural women



The Malawian president, Bingu wa Mutharika, receives drought-tolerant maize seed from Wilfred Mwangi, associate director of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT)'s Global Maize Programme and leader of the Drought-Tolerant Maize for Africa (DTMA) Project (left).



Farmers experience joy after receiving their inputs supply.



Dr Stanley Khaila, the dean of development studies at Bunda College of Agriculture.

The research also recorded an increase of

6,2%

in the number of AISP beneficiaries from 2008/2009 to 2009/2010.

86%

of the selected farmers received AISP benefits in both seasons. Of the 243 respondents **71%** received fertilisers and **57%** received seeds under AISP in the 2009/10 agricultural season," it says.

farmers and to identify areas where there are gaps in order to make recommendations on improving women farmers' access to agricultural inputs.

"Most policies and programmes in rural areas don't respond to women's needs. This is due to planners and policymakers not often being aware of the fact that women farmers face special and specific challenges, and programmes need to be developed with this in mind."

The study found that the programme has ensured food security in both those targeted and also the non-beneficiary households. The research reveals that maize is regarded as a female crop in comparison to cash crops like tobacco and soy beans. "The 78% households which are female-headed confirmed the urge that women farmers have for ensuring household food security," the study found.

AISP coupon distribution was mainly carried out through the traditional authority, the village headman. The study found that over 50% of the total coupons were distributed by chiefs, while 32,5% were distributed by the village headman.

Challenges faced by the programme

The late distribution of the majority of input coupons, mainly in November, has resulted in some of the intended results not being achieved. The study recommends the early distribution of coupons to

beneficiaries. Poor infrastructure in rural areas makes the transportation of goods and services difficult and costly and limits the supply of much-needed inputs.

Policy uncertainty on the market side is also one of the issues, as well as inadequate human capital and market information, a lack of affordable finance and poor implementation of regulatory frameworks.

Although the country has laws on seed and fertilisers, the implementation of these laws has been far from satisfactory. The regulatory agencies are also constrained by the lack of human and financial resources needed for implementing laws and regulations.

Positive developments

The researchers found that out of 243 farmers who were part of the survey, 33% sold their surplus from harvest. About 27% of the farm produce were sold at the local markets and 5% to well-established markets such as the National Association of Smallholder Farmers (NASFAM) and Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC).

The surplus farm produce was sold by varied people. Vendors sold the majority of the produce accounting for 16%, whilst middlemen sold 6%, with fellow village members and companies selling 5% of the produce each. ■

Dr Marta Cumbi

– Healing poverty in Mozambique



Dr Marta Cumbi leads the WARM project in Mozambique.

Dr Marta Cumbi is an economist with a masters degree in national development and project planning from Bradford University, UK. She joined the Foundation for Community Development (FDC), a Mozambican non-profit foundation, in 1994.

Since then she played different roles in this organisation and currently she is the director of the Gender, Development and Cooperation Unit.

She is a member of the governing boards of the Mozambican Debt Group, Mozambican Education Network, and G20 (a national civil society platform advocating for poverty eradication).

She is also one of the vice-coordinators of the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

National Commission for Human Development and Special Programmes Committee.

At regional and international levels, she is a board member of World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS) and the African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD), a council member of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union and a prominent educationalist at the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE).

Dr Cumbi has been responsible for coordinating the team implementing the FANRPAN Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) project in Mozambique. She has been instrumental in mobilising and training women farmers to be policy advocates and facilitating the participation of these policy advocates in high-level policy foras. ■

Meet Beatrice Makwenda

– Malawi's WARM lioness

Beatrice Makwenda is the programme coordinator of the National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM). She has served in this role since 2006 and is working with a network of 100 000 smallholder farmers.

As a farmer organisation, NASFAM aims to promote farming as a business, producing economic and social benefits for farmer members, their communities and the country in a conducive policy environment. In her experience with NASFAM, she has tackled issues of access to financial services, marketing systems, rural business development and rural infrastructure.

More specifically, she has been involved in policy analysis, advocacy and lobbying nationally, regionally and internationally in the areas of climate change, food sovereignty and security, trade liberalisation, land access and ownership. Through NASFAM, she is a member of the Peoples' Dialogue Reference Group and vice-chairperson of the Farmers Union Policy Technical Working Group.

She has worked several times with the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET) in developing position statements on the commercialisation of the Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC) and Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) in dealing with issues of trade like economic partnership agreements.

Internationally, she has participated in networks like the Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development (CORDAID), La via Campessina, the Southern African Regional Poverty Network (SARPN), the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU), the Common Market

for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

She was responsible for coordinating the team implementing the FANRPAN Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) project in Malawi. She has been instrumental in mobilising and training women farmers to be policy advocates and facilitating the participation of these policy advocates in high level policy fora such as the 2011 Southern Africa Rural Women's Assembly. ■



Beatrice Makwenda addressing a community meeting in Tidi Village.

Ronnie Timpuza Mvula

– WARM Malawi's still water that runs deep



Ronnie Timpuza Mvula boasts several international qualifications and experience in research methodologies.

Ronnie Timpuza Mvula has academic and practical skills in research methodologies, including using participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools. He is currently a lecturer in human resource management, entrepreneurship, business organisations and public policy in the Agribusiness Management Department at Bunda College, a constituent college of the University of Malawi.

His areas of experience include business planning, teaching, entrepreneurship, strategic management, business organisations and administration. In the WARM project he has been responsible for data collection and the evaluation of farm input subsidies in Malawi. ■

Bonet Kamwana

– Meet researcher Kamwana

Bonet Kamwana is a researcher who works with Bunda College of Agriculture where he teaches agribusiness, accounting and agricultural finances.

He has an interest in rural livelihoods and in 2010 he joined a team of researchers from Bunda College of Agriculture to work on two FANRPAN projects: (i) the Malawi Agricultural Input Subsidy (AISP) Follow-up Study (ii) the Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) Project. ■



Bonet Kamwana has an interest in rural livelihoods.

Mário Chilundo

– One of WARM Mozambique's star researchers

Mário Chilundo is an agricultural engineer and full-time lecturer at the Faculty of Agronomy and Forestry Engineering, Department of Rural Engineering, Eduardo Mondlane University.

His academic experience also grew through participation in cooperation activities with the Savonia University of Applied Sciences and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's International Institute for Infrastructural, Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering (UNESCO-IHE).

Currently he is involved in research programmes that are coordinated regionally and internationally, including the WARM Project (by FANRPAN). ■



Mário Chilundo has expanded experience in environmental science.

Paiva Munguambe

– WARM Mozambique's researcher par excellence

Paiva Munguambe holds an MSc degree in rural development and is currently finalising his PhD studies at the University of Pretoria in soil and water management. He is a full-time lecturer at the Faculty of Agronomy and Forestry Engineering, Department of Rural Engineering (soil and water division), Eduardo Mondlane University, since 2001.

Currently he is involved in research programmes that are coordinated regionally and internationally, including the WARM Project (by FANRPAN). ■



Researcher Paiva Munguambe is an expert in soil and water management.

Connex Masankhidwe

– Fifteen years of field work



Connex Masankhidwe has a passion to work with communities.

Connex Masankhidwe has 15 years of experience working in project management, agricultural extension, community mobilisation, capacity building, facilitation and the organisation of training. He has also worked in socio-economic research, agribusiness management, sustainable land and water management, policy analysis and advocacy.

He is currently a programme officer who is responsible for agribusiness, marketing policy and advocacy with the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET), the FANRPAN node hosting institution in Malawi. ■

Bruno Lopes de Araujo

– Meet the Mozambique FANRPAN node coordinator



Bruno Lopes de Araujo serves on several important agricultural committees.

Bruno Lopes de Araujo is an economics lecturer at the Faculty of Agronomy and Forestry Engineering at the University of Eduardo Mondlane. Lopes de Araujo is the node coordinator for the Food Agriculture Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) in Mozambique.

He is a member of the World Trade Organisation's Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme Inter-Institutional Committee, the World Trade Organisation Reference Centre for the Mozambican Academia, the Engineers Council, the Steering Committee of the Cluster Initiative, the Cassava Cluster Initiative and the Cassava Task Group for the Cassava National Strategy Evaluation. He is also a member of the Installation Committee of the National Forum for Agriculture. Lopes de Araujo has a particular interest in cassava, entrepreneurship, food security and natural resources management. ■

Dadivo José Combane

– Theatre is his passion



Dadivo José Combane's artistic abilities include all aspects of dramatic arts, theatre and acting.

Dadivo José Combane teaches theatre courses at the Eduardo Mondlane University. He has been involved in various activities which include training, consultancy and community education through dramatic arts. He is also a specialist in cultural management and events production. Combane's artistic abilities include playwriting, directing, choreography, dancing and acting. These have enabled him to participate in various national and international arts festivals.

Recently, Combane participated in the BIG5 Festival in Holland, following an invitation from De Appel Theatre Company. He also wrote, directed and performed in *Not enough to be arrested*, which was performed during the 2010 Drama For Life Festival. In October 2011 he attended the Festival Internacional de Teatro de Animação in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, exhibiting his play *Culpado*. ■

Andrew Samati

– Actor, development advisor and manager

Andrew Samati has worked with Story Workshop Education Trust as a community facilitator, theatre for development trainer, and an outreach and community mobilisation manager in projects that tackle issues such as HIV/Aids, gender-based violence, food security and policy advocacy.

He has experience in community mobilisation, community interactive theatre, policy advocacy and communication for development. Andrew is a highly motivated and enthusiastic communication expert with a strong vision of achieving successful outcomes. ■



Andrew Samati is the acting head of programmes at Story Workshop Educational Trust.



Researchers must focus on improving women farmers' productivity, technology as well as the product.

Researchers **BACK IN CLASS**

By Fidelis Zvomuya and Sithembile Mwamakamba

FANRPAN STUDIES – FACTS AND FIGURES

Mozambique:

Access to land:

Size: Average of 0,6 ha
to 12 ha
62% have title to their land

Access to credit:

90% have no access to
credit schemes

Access to agricultural extension:

70% have no access to
extension services

Access to technology:

38% use animal power
or tractors
25% use pesticides
and fertiliser
95% use recycled seeds

Farming implements used:

Hand hoe, axe, plough

Access to markets:

Average distance to nearest
market is 25km

General information:

63% of women are widowed
60% of women farmers
are literate
Average of six people
per household
Distance to the fields – 4km
Main crops: maize, cassava
and beans
Yields: maize 511kg/ha

The apparent void in relevant and up-to-date data and information concerning women in agriculture often gives a distorted view of the real situation of rural women farmers.

Less than 20% of all landholders are women because of legal and cultural constraints in land inheritance, ownership and use.

Policymakers lack the right information needed to inform policy development and more analytical statistics (e.g. gender disaggregated impact data), which can be used to fine-tune programmes and policies to reach the most vulnerable and needy segments of the population.

More participatory, people-centered research is needed to evaluate how existing policies play out in the field, who really benefit from it, and how it can be refined to help the maximum number of people and increase overall productivity and incomes.

Collaboration with university researchers

In order to ensure that relevant information about women farmers' needs is communicated to policymakers and to inspire the development of appropriate methodologies for collecting and sharing such information, the Food Agriculture Natural Resource Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) partnered with national research institutions in the Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) project.

In Malawi, FANRPAN worked with researchers from the University of Malawi's Bunda College of Agriculture, and in Mozambique FANRPAN partnered with researchers from Eduardo Mondlane University's Faculty of Agronomy and Forestry Engineering.

The WARM project provided an opportunity for university researchers to communicate "shelf" knowledge, which is found in university libraries and in international journals, to local and community decision-makers so that it could be used to help frame their problems and develop solutions. The project also enabled researchers to capture community voices to refine their knowledge and research agenda.

Training researchers and development experts to be more sensitive to community needs, especially these of women farmers, was an important part of the project. Two key training workshops to equip researchers with the appropriate people-centered skills were conducted.

Researchers must change their mindset

A researchers' orientation workshop was conducted in September 2009, prior to the launch of the WARM project. A total of 13 researchers representing research institutions in Malawi, Mozam-

bique and South Africa participated in the training workshop, which was held in Maputo, Mozambique.

The objective of the training workshop was to create a platform for researchers to discuss the project and define the specific roles of the research team within the project. In addition, the workshop developed a road map for implementing the project's research agenda.

The workshop was facilitated by Professor Joseph Francis, who is leading the Amplifying Community Voices in Vhembe District Initiative of the Centre for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation (CRDPA) at the University of Venda, South Africa.

Researchers highlighted the need to document and share community action research methods, as these are never properly documented. In addition, it was noted that there is a need for researchers to change their mindset and approach to research.

"Researchers must leave their comfort zones and embrace new tools such as Theatre for Policy Advocacy (TPA)," says Prof Francis in the report. In essence, researchers should change their mindset if they want to make a positive impact on the development agenda.

Key to the TPA process is the acceptance and documentation of testimonial evidence (verbatim). According to Prof Francis, researchers need to be open and flexible, adjusting to the situation and not going with a blueprint. "There is a need for innovative ways of engaging in development research. The research has to be underpinned by respecting the way people view things from their disciplinary perspectives. We see it as an opportunity for promoting co-learning among researchers, communities and other stakeholders," Prof Francis says.

Malawi:

Access to land:

Size: Average of 0,8 to 1 ha
62% have title to their land

Access to agricultural extension:

Malawi has a total of 1 887 extension workers against 2 880 established posts, leaving 993 positions vacant (35%)

Access to technology:

58% of women farmers use fertiliser

Farming implements used:

Plough, ridger and ox cart

Access to markets:

Average distance to nearest market is 35km

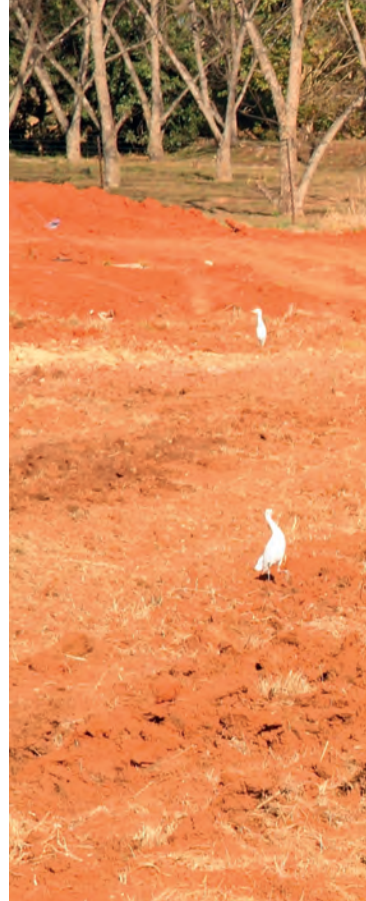
General information:

82% of households are female-headed

73% literacy levels

Main crops: Maize, tobacco

Yields: Maize 500kg/ha



The resounding message from the orientation workshop was the need to respect cultural imperatives, in particular norms and values of communities, all of which define ethical development practices. The workshop recommendations also highlighted the need to invest time to ensure that the project is successful.

Measuring vulnerability

The majority of rural households in Africa lack the necessary capacity to adapt to the negative impacts of external vulnerabilities. Policy response is limited, institutional arrangements are weak and interventions are not carefully matched to the needs.

A key component of the WARM project research agenda was assessing household livelihood strategies, access to inputs and services, and mechanisms to cope for women farmers in the project's focus area.

A total of 13 young researchers from Bunda College of Agriculture were trained on how to use the Household Vulnerability Index (HVI) in their research activities. The HVI is a tool developed by FANRPAN



Research must start from the farm to the table.

to measure the vulnerability of households and communities to the impact of internal and external shocks, such as HIV/Aids and poverty.

The chief executive officer of FANRPAN, Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, says the index classifies vulnerability into three levels. "Level one defines a household that is vulnerable, but is still able to cope with external shocks. At level two a household has been hit so hard that it desperately needs assistance, like acute healthcare in a hospital. If rapid response assistance is provided, the family may be resuscitated," Dr Sibanda says.

She says at level three households have reached an intensive care situation and can only be resuscitated with the best possible expertise.

Dr Sibanda says: "Preliminary work on the use of the HVI was undertaken to establish the levels of vulnerability that the impact of HIV/Aids has on agriculture and food security. The index's comparative advantage lies in the fact that it can provide development organisations and governments with a clear picture of different household vulnerability levels, thereby insuring that interventions are targeted as per need."

The training workshop was facilitated by Tendayi Kureya from Development Data, a leading Southern African regional organisation, which provides technical support to governments, civil society and private sector entities in data analysis and information management for development projects.

During the workshop, issues related to the successful development of a widely accepted approach to quantifying vulnerability were discussed. These included the identification and recognition of the existence of a gap in the implementation of vulnerability assessments, food security and livelihoods programmes, the common sharing of the benefits that could arise from the use of the HVI tool, as well as the challenges that exist in terms of appropriate indicators to be used in the HVI computations.

Kureya told the participants that there was a need to ask questions and attach a value to each question, depending on the context. The workshop was participatory in nature, with the participants exploring concepts and exchanging ideas. At the end of the training workshop, the researchers developed and endorsed a programme for the data-collection exercise.



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WARM Team Malawi is, back row from the left, Andrew Samati from Story Workshop, Connex Masankhidwe from the Civil Society Agriculture Network, Ronnie Mvula from Bunda College, Dr Stanley Khaila, dean of development studies at Bunda College, and Munhamo Chisvo, a consultant. In the front are Sithembile Mwamakamba, WARM project manager, and Beatrice Makwenda from the National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi.

Aligning development agenda

Building the capacity of local research institutions to collect community-level data and linking it with policy analyses, has been an important outcome of the WARM project. Partnering with universities ensured that development researchers were able to connect with local communities and women farmers, and increase their access to unbiased and unfiltered community opinion.

In addition to conducting studies and agricultural surveys, the research institutions and universities were able to engage in the community level TPA process. It was found that this type of engagement was useful in breaking down some of the barriers between researchers and women farmers. Issues such as encouraged development and the use of participatory methodologies, as well as allowing researchers to apply their knowledge and expertise to help bring about real changes in the communities, were faced.

By basing policy interventions on evidence generated through research, the WARM project has inculcated a learning culture and linked national research institutions to rural communities, particularly to women farmers. It created opportunities for the partner universities to continue working more closely with rural communities. As university researchers begin to generate more fine-grained, credible and practical data, their ties with local and national policymakers will be strengthened and government agencies will begin to use their outputs more.

WOMEN DEVELOPMENT

Women comprise on average 43% of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, ranging from 20% in Latin America to 50% in Eastern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 60% of the employed women work in agriculture.

Across diverse regions and contexts, women engaged in agriculture face gender-specific constraints that limit their access to productive inputs, assets and services. Gender gaps are observed for land, livestock, farm labour, education, extension services, financial services and technology.

If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30%. This could raise the total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5-4%, which could in turn reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17%.

Recent estimates show that gender issues are incorporated into less than 10% of the official development assistance to agriculture. Of US\$12.9bn in agricultural aid from 2002 to 2007, only 13% was reported by donors as including a focus on gender.

Globally, men's landholdings average three times these of women. Women make up less than 5% of agricultural landholders in North Africa and Western Asia, and approximately 15% in sub-Saharan Africa.

Of the world's more than 800-million illiterates, some 60% are women, a major handicap given the increased level of technical competence required of farmers in poor countries to double their production over the next four decades.

Source: Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2011. ■

BUNDA COLLEGE

has an agricultural focus

Bunda College of Agriculture is one of five colleges at the University of Malawi. The other colleges are College of Medicine, Chancellor College, Kamuzu College of Nursing and The Polytechnic. It is situated in the central region of Malawi in the Lilongwe district, 35,2km from the capital city. Nearby is the college farm that serves commercial, practical, academic and research purposes. Bunda College has three faculties, which are

the Faculties of Agriculture, Development Studies and Environmental Sciences.

The Faculty of Agriculture has five departments: agricultural engineering, animal science, basic sciences, crops and soil sciences, as well as home economics and human nutrition.

The Faculty of Development Studies has four departments: agribusiness management, agricultural and applied economics, extension, as well as agricultural education and development communications.





A theatre group in Lilongwe performing during the WARM project research results dissemination.



Taking the university to the people: Ronnie Timpuza Mvula addresses community members.

The Faculty of Environmental Sciences has three departments: aquaculture and fisheries sciences, forestry and horticulture, and natural resources management.

In addition to these faculties and departments, the college has a Centre for Agricultural Research and Development (CARD), a programmes coordinating office and a library.

More details on undergraduate and post-graduate programmes can be obtained on the college's website at www.bunda.unima.mw.

Bunda College's academic calendar starts in August/September each year for all undergraduate, Masters and PhD programmes.

In 2011 an Act of Parliament was implemented delinking Bunda College of Agriculture from the University of Malawi to establish a new university called Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR). The new university assimilates other institutions like Natural Resources College, which offers diploma courses, Chitedze Research Station and Agricultural Research and Extension Trust (ARET).



Communities have a chance to interact with researchers and ask questions.



Bunda College has been involved in a number of regional policy dialogues organised by FANRPAN and this has allowed the college to develop more networks.

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Advocacy training empowers women

By Fidelis Zvomuya

As part of the Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) Project, the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN), in partnership with the National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM) and CropLife Africa Middle East, conducted a three-day policy advocacy training workshop in Nathonje, Lilongwe South, in September 2010.

NASFAM selected 15 women farmers with strong leadership skills to be trained on policy advocacy issues and how they can actively participate in policy formulation. During the process they shared case studies, led debates and discussions as part of the training and learning process.

The purpose of the advocacy training workshop was to equip women farmers with skills that they can use to participate in agricultural decision-making processes. The policy advocacy sessions of the training workshop were facilitated by Beatrice Makwenda, NASFAM programme coordinator and the WARM project coordinator for Malawi.

Makwenda says it was also meant to empower women farmers to play a more active role in driving the development agenda.

"We aimed at having a cadre of women advocates, more women taking up leadership roles and for them to be heard in their communities, decision-making organisations and foras. We also aimed at them communicating with policymakers in order to make the policymakers aware of issues affecting women farmers," she says.

The advocates were expected to actively engage in the Theatre for Policy Advocacy (TPA) initiative at a community level.

Specifically, the training workshop was aimed at bringing understanding of policy formulation, its facets, soliciting policy issues in the depth of identification, the description of problems, the extent of effect, as well as to outline effective and possible community advocacy initiatives.

Selection of farmers

Participants were selected based on the leadership positions they held in their communities and other initiatives, such as farming organisations. The organisers also looked at the potential to mobilise other farmers, as well as commitment



Some of the trained advocates took a leading role in TPA performances.

Advocating for change, Nevelesi Maliseni has used her skills to make sure that change comes to Malawi's women-farming community.



to being champions of the WARM project. The participants were also members of NASFAM.

In order to ensure that the participants acquired both theoretical and practical experiences in policy advocacy and especially in articulating policy issues, the workshop used peer training, or lectures, discussions and case studies. "We developed a concise and simplified training guide for the training workshop. We agreed from the beginning that we would be using English and Chichewa throughout the workshop," Makwenda says. This was done in order to put the participants at ease and to allow them to actively engage in the training in a language they were most comfortable with.

The training centred on strengthening the participants' understanding of policy and differentiating policy issues from operational issues. This was then followed by policy advocacy tools, the creation of advocacy messages and identifying the right audiences.

Introduction to policy and advocacy

Day one of the workshop defined policy as being a statement of intent, or rather as a combination of all factors that communicate the intentions of government or institutions. These may include statements, measures, laws, regulations and programmes. The participants were asked to cite examples of policies they knew.

Some of the cited policies included the Malawi Input Subsidy Programme (MISP), the Government Minimum Prices and the Green Belt Initiative. To try and simplify and give the participants a clear picture of what policy is, an illustration saying "Policy is like an elephant, you can't define it but you can tell it when you see it" was used.

"Following a brief discussion on what the illustration meant and a number of examples of what policy is, the group understood the concept and cited more examples of policies that they knew. In addition to describing what policy is, the workshop discussed advocacy and the policy-formulation process. Whilst theoretical definitions of these policy facets were made, the workshop focused more on practical scenarios," Makwenda says.

Policy issues identification

Whilst it is a well-known fact that women farmers face a myriad of challenges, including access to input and output markets and extension services, it was still necessary for the participants to identify critical policy issues currently impeding their agricultural growth and progress. The process of issue identification was rigorous and mainly in focus-group discussions. This process went beyond a mere listing of challenges or issues, as a rigorous analysis of the problems was done. Participants acknowledged the relevance of the workshop and indicated how beneficial it was in terms of knowledge acquisition and skills enhancement. ■

Training for change

By Fidelis Zvomuya

In March 2011, 27 farmers from the Marracuene and Boane districts of Mozambique's Maputo province were trained as policy advocates. In total, 18 of the trainees were women farmers.

The training was organised by the Foundation for Community Development (FDC), the coordinating institution for the implementation of the Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) project in Mozambique. The training was facilitated by Dr Marta Cumbi, Valuarda Monjane and Albino Francisco, all from FDC.

The training started by clarifying basic concepts about advocacy in order to make sure that all the participants understood the steps of advocacy work.

Given that the participants came from different backgrounds with different levels of knowledge, the facilitators held a brainstorming session on the meaning and importance of advocacy as well as the planning cycle of work.

Advocacy can be defined as a process of engagement with a target group with the view to influence policy change in a given system. From this simple definition, it was stressed by the facilitators that there was a need to select an advocacy issue backed by credible evidence in the field. It was necessary to ensure that the issue identified affected a lot of people and therefore deserved the attention of the government.

Women absent in decision-making

Another aspect discussed was the limited number of women in decision-making positions.

Participants viewed this in the context of high levels of illiteracy among women, and this is limiting their ability to obtain leadership positions within associations and communities. The cultural beliefs that women are not meant to lead was also a big impediment within society.

Results of the agricultural survey on women farmers in the Marracuene and Boane districts, which was undertaken by the University of Eduardo Mondlane's Faculty of Agronomy and Forestry Engineering, showed that about 48% of the women interviewed had only completed primary school.

But the participants said their experiences showed that when women are given a task, they do it perfectly. They also called on their male counterparts and society in general to start looking at women as equal partners in development. Dr Cumbi says: "Women should not wait to be given the opportunity to lead, but they should conquer their spaces in all spheres of activity. Of course, education and training are very important for their success."

During the training session the participants were divided into three working groups to start an advocacy campaign on three subjects. After a thorough discussion and brainstorming, the following issues were considered as most critical and requiring advocacy: access to land rights

BOANE DISTRICT:

30km southeast of Maputo

Area:
820km²

Population:
102 457
(2007 Census)

Population density:
124,9 inhabitants per km²

Population increased by about 81% from 56 703 inhabitants recorded in 1997 Census.

The district is predominantly agricultural.

The region's climate is predominantly sub-humid with a deficit of rainfall during the dry and cold season.

Average annual temperature:
23,7 degrees Celsius

Average annual rainfall:
750mm

Arable land:
43 200 ha

Dry-land production:
33 700 ha

Irrigated land:
9 500 ha

as well as the *direito de uso e aproveitamento da terra* (DUAT) or state-granted land rights, marketing and access to district development funds.

Access to DUAT complicated for women

Women farmers felt that access to DUAT was important to ensure that rural women associations develop their activities without a threat of land expropriation. "Whenever you speak to rural women, they always raise the DUAT issue. Although the government has instituted the right to use land, processes of getting this piece of paper are time-consuming and complicated for rural women. A lack of information on how to proceed makes it a huge challenge for rural women," says Dr Cumbi.

Marketing of the farmers' produce was also a burning issue raised at the training. The participants agreed that rural women, due to a lack of transport and locally available markets to sell their produce, often get unfair prices for their produce.

The distance that they travel to markets is unbelievable – on average, these women farmers travel up to 45km to the nearest market. Some wake up as early as 4:30am in the morning to go to the market and are only back at home late at night. Even when they are at the market, it is difficult for them to get stalls or places where they can sell their produce. The amount of money that they get after a hard day's work is often not enough to take them back home. To avoid post-harvest losses, they have to sell their produce at a give-away price.

Access to district development funds was another issue raised, as women find it difficult to qualify for funding. The fund, which is meant to benefit local income-generating projects, lacks proper guidelines for the selection criteria for beneficiaries.



Photo by Sithembile Mwamakamba

Dr Marta Cumbi (left) from the Foundation for Community Development, who coordinated the training, and Dadiwo Jose Combane from the School of Communication Arts at Eduardo Mondlane University.

MARRACUENE DISTRICT:

Located 30km north of Maputo City

Area: 703km²

Population: 157 642

Population density:
127,6 inhabitants/km

Annual average temperature:
Between 22 degrees Celsius
and 25 degrees Celsius

District families: 11 377

Average land area per family: 1,3 ha

Number of farmers organised into associations:
3 724 (2 589 are women)

At the end of the three days' training, all the participants took home the knowledge to undertake advocacy activities within their own districts. This was meant to make sure that they will use the knowledge from the training to solve some of the pressing issues faced by women farmers. ■



Team Mozambique: Some of the researchers and trainers who took part in the WARM project.



NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

The natural resources and environment thematic thrust seeks to identify innovative ways to safeguard Africa's natural resources and environment. Interdisciplinary research is done in the fields of agricultural water management and climate change – leading to a climate-smart agriculture document, anticipate, mitigate and wherever possible, help reverse the effects of climate change on Africa and its people.



Limpopo Basin Development Challenge (LBDC)



Strengthening Evidence-Based Climate Change Adaptation Policies in Agriculture (SECCAP)



Learning, communicating and advocating for climate-smart agriculture

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School of Communication and Arts

Escola De Comunicacao E Artes (ECA), or the School of Communication and Arts, is part of University Eduardo Mondlane (UEM). ECA is for students who want to discover and pursue their true passion.

ECA has four main academic programmes: journalism, music, theatre and communication science. The school aims to maximise students' employability by giving them hands-on skills, professional placement experiences and a solid theoretical background. Multi-skilling is expected in many arts and communications industries and ECA's course structures allow students to gain expertise in multiple areas.

This school was set up in response to demand by the Mozambican society for an independent communications and arts development academy. With more than 85 lecturers, the school is home to 400 students undertaking the four programmes on offer.

The first course to be offered at the school was journalism, which was introduced in 2004, followed by music in 2006, then theatre in 2008 and information science in 2009. In August 2011 ECA launched the course "Children's rights and journalism practice: a rights-based perspective", which has been supported by UNICEF and developed in association with the Dublin Institute of Technology. The course aims to provide

journalism students with an understanding of human rights, child rights in particular, and equip them with reporting skills that consider and respect children's rights in the media.

The school works in partnership with other universities across Africa and globally, offering excellent exchange programmes. ECA connects teaching and research programmes to local and global communities through a range of active projects, exhibitions and creative collaborations. This unique interaction has enabled ECA to establish professional affiliations with a number of partners within the growing creative industries. This gives students the opportunity to engage with industry across a range of disciplines and professions.

The faculty's dean is Professor Nataniel Ngomane and its pedagogic director is Professor Joao Miguel.



Universidade Eduarde Mendlane
Faculdade de Agrenemia e Engenharia Floresea

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Advocacy, old concept with **NEW IDEAS**

By Fidelis Zvomuya

Women farmers in rural communities face many challenges to grow their crops and market their produce. In addition, the patriarchal society causes many women to be subordinate to their husbands, who in return are not in favour of their wives being farmers.

"My husband almost divorced me when he discovered that I had planted a field of tobacco at my parents' village," Elizabeth Chigamba from Sonjera village explained.

As a woman farmer, Chigamba did not have control of her agricultural production. "I am dependent on my husband for all my personal and family needs. To be honest, I am economically disabled and can't decide what to do with the money we make," she said.

Faced with this challenge, Chigamba decided to plant tobacco in a field owned by her parents four years ago. By doing this, she wanted to raise money for her personal needs as she felt she wasn't being consulted by her husband when it comes to the use of money at her home. "My husband knew that I had farmed back home, but didn't know that it was tobacco, a cash crop, instead of maize, a food crop. When my husband discovered it, he was so furious that he sent me back to my parents' home and threatened to divorce me," she added.

The issue was resolved after Chigamba agreed to hand over all the money she was going to make from the tobacco sales to her husband. "I have

never tried to take a risk like this again. As a result, I realised that as women farmers we can never have the power to control produce at our homes as long as we are married," she said.

It is sad stories like this that inspired the Food Agriculture Natural Resources and Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) to launch the Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) project.

The aim is to empower and mobilise women farmers to express their needs through a culturally appropriate medium and engage their communities in developing solutions to their problems. Theatre for Policy Advocacy (TPA), a form of participatory theatre that encourages

improvisation and allows for community participation, was chosen as a vehicle for accomplishing the project's objectives.

The birth of TPA in Malawi

It is against this background that WARM project partners, Story Workshop, facilitated TPA training in selected focus villages in the Lilongwe and Kasungu districts in Malawi over a three-week period in May 2011.

My husband almost divorced me when he discovered that I had planted a field of tobacco at my parents' village.

The training process started with a recap of the TPA performances that the groups held previously in October 2010. In the discussions, the performance was analysed in terms of the lessons learnt, challenges faced and the impact it had on communities and all stakeholders who attended.

Although development-related advocacy might seem like a new concept in Malawi, the idea is indigenous to the local traditions. Jailosi Nyembe from the Sokelele drama group gave an example of how traditionally, when people are negotiating marriage or resolving marriage conflicts, a team is normally selected to act as advocates for the two parties and they then engage in dialogue.

In Sokelele Village, 12 community members were trained to make up the community theatre group. Of the trained people, seven were women farmers and five were men. A total of six community theatre groups have been formed in Chimphedzu, Tidi, Kasiya, Kankowa in the Kasungu district and Mnduka. Each of the theatre groups has between 10-12 members, with women farmers being the majority of the members.



A trained TPA group performs at Tidi Village in Malawi.

TPA training in Mozambique

In Mozambique, the TPA component of the WARM project was facilitated by experts from Eduardo Mondlane University's School of Communication Arts (ECA). Two women-exclusive theatre groups were formed in the Marracuane and Boane districts, consisting of about eight women farmers per group. The training of these community theatre groups took place over a three-week



Story Workshop community mobiliser, Takondwa Kaliwo, explaining the storyline to the Chulu Community Theatre group in the Kasungu district.

Photo by Sithembile Mwamakamba



The actors from the Chulu Theatre group, who were part of the training.

period in January 2011. In Marracuene the training was conducted at the National Union of Farmers plot under shaded trees.

Members of the district theatre groups were selected from the Uniao Nacional de Camponeses (UNAC), a local farmers' organisation. According to Rogerio Manjante, one of the facilitators of the TPA training, they worked with women farmers who were members of UNAC because the women knew each other, which made working together easier as there was no group dynamics challenges. "But we were also guaranteed that once we leave the district, the group will continue working together as they belong to the same association."

The training was participatory

The training sessions in Malawi and Mozambique were structured in a way that took the different needs and dynamics of each group into consideration.

The training was implemented in an interactive session. Participants were first trained on the technical part of the project. Based on the challenges faced by women farmers, the interactive performances served as a platform for community discussions to develop action plans that would improve policies relating to women farmers.

The participants were then orientated in implementing partners and funding agencies to familiarise them with the project cycle and expected outputs.

During the training, each challenge faced by smallholder farmers was critically examined and discussed, citing relevant stakeholders, advocacy channels, target audiences and influential individuals to be involved.

Lastly the groups were trained in basic drama skills with the emphasis on participatory drama. Building on pre-existing knowledge, the groups were trained on the use of interactive drama in policy advocacy and its importance.

They were also taught effective research skills and how to plan for successful TPA performances.

The training process also involved games to break the ice between the facilitators and the women, and to introduce the group to the playfulness and creativity of theatre. Trainees were asked to tell their stories as farmers, and show the meaning of being a woman farmer using actions and song. They were also asked about the challenges they faced on a daily basis and asked to propose solutions for these challenges.

Through roleplaying and interactive sessions, the groups learnt to appreciate how participatory drama differs from comedy and why it is an effective tool in policy advocacy, especially at community level.

Feedback from performances

In Malawi, the main challenge facing women farmers was the unavailability of an Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC) depot to sell their produce and buy raw materials. During the discussions, the participants argued on how they can approach relevant stakeholders and ensure that the issue was resolved.

The drama group from Mnduka reported that unlike their usual performances, the TPA performance was more effective because issues portrayed were research-based and relevant to the audience. They cited the need to learn how to conduct research to discover pertinent issues in the community and how to incorporate these issues into entertaining performances.

In Kankowa in the Kasungu district, the initial TPA performance was attended by more than 3 000 people, including the local Member of Parliament. The group observed that the performance was well structured and produced its intended results. Based on this experience, the group suggested that a topic on interactive drama play development would be very relevant for them. This knowledge will improve the drama group's acting skills, while they will be able to transfer the knowledge they gained after the training to other projects.

Some groups wanted to know how they can learn to apply research and participatory skills before developing the scripts.

In Mozambique, the two theatre groups received raving reviews from the communities. The process itself generated a lot of agricultural learning and skills for the women themselves. The group members worked well together and it was clear that they valued their own and others' contributions. The women farmers understood the power of using theatre as a tool for solving problems in the community. They even suggested using the TPA model to stimulate discussions within their associations. The groups even suggested making plays talking about other social problems, like domestic violence.

Dadivo Jose Combane, one of the TPA facilitators, said: "The women came alive after the training. They needed little guidance from us in terms of the stories to share because the project and the performances were about their lives as women farmers."

After the training, each group was tasked to perform a TPA performance in a community of their choice. The ECA and Story Workshop facilitators supervised these performances and a post-performance analysis was conducted as part of the training.

The trainees motivated

Beatrice Makwenda from NASFAM says it became clear during the discussions that most group members were motivated to use their drama skills for development sensitisation.

Makwenda says some of the actors were motivated by the fact that their Members of Parliament attended their performances.

Based on the shared experiences after the initial TPA performances, the groups discussed their weaknesses to enable them to conduct similar performances in their community. The groups cited proper training in policy and advocacy as one of the major relevant topics.

The major achievement of the TPA process training was that communities were empowered with drama skills, which could be transferred to all the development situations.

By the end of the TPA training, the community realised the challenges women farmers face to access markets. ■



After each performance, the audience and theatre team are engaged in policy dialogue. Here Olone Sam Tidi gives a summary of what he has learnt from the performance.



Even children come to watch the TPA performances, not just for the fun part of it, but also to be educated about the importance of agricultural policies.



Though fun to watch, TPA is not comedy, but sends a message about real issues. Here an audience enjoys a TPA act.



Participants at the WARM Project national policy dialogue in Mozambique.

Photo by Mario Chilundo

GIVING VOICE to the voiceless

By Sithembile Mwamakamba

The work of women in agriculture has become more visible recently, thanks to the Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) 2009 Gender in Agriculture Source Book, which highlights the role of women in ensuring the survival of households and responding to economic opportunities in agricultural production.

However, even as women are the pillars of African agriculture, in some cases they remain marginalised as far as policy processes are concerned. “Women farmers do the lion’s share of agricultural work in Africa, yet they often have no means of voicing their concerns about effective agriculture policies the way their male counterparts do,” says the CEO of FANRPAN, Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda.

Africa’s complex policy environment

The policy terrain in Africa is littered with well-intentioned, top-down or externally induced policies that have not served smallholder farmers well, especially women farmers. Women farmers are not often consulted about policies, development interventions or awareness programmes that will influence their lives.

“Africa’s policy environment has been generally inconsistent and has failed to overcome the challenges faced by farmers,” Dr Sibanda says.

Traditionally, engagement in policy processes has been the preserve of the government, international organisations such as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), donors and the few elite. But fortunately this is fast changing. African policymakers are now eager to engage in dialogue at all levels.

Dr Sibanda says: “African governments – through the African Union’s New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) – have recognised the importance of agricultural and rural economic growth.” She adds that by adopting policies that support smallholder agriculture and by raising levels of investment in agriculture, countries such as Malawi, Ghana, Mozambique and Ethiopia are now on a growth path.

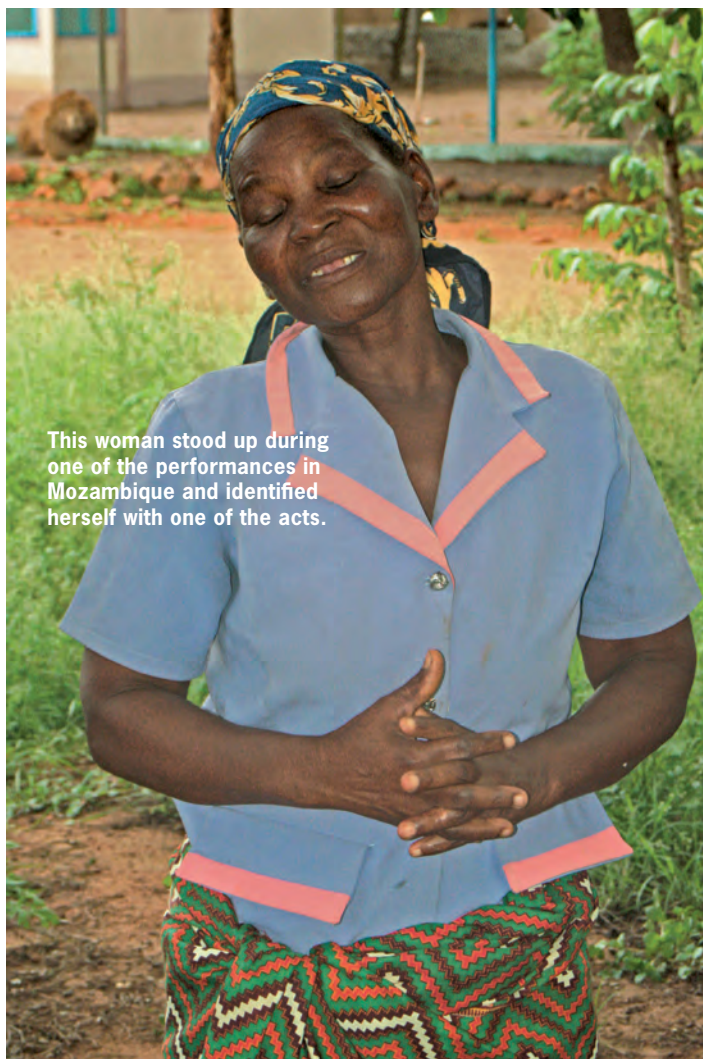
Policy is not out of reach

Participation of smallholder farmers in policy development is often complicated

by the intricacies of the policy processes. “The process of policymaking, particularly for multi-sectoral industries such as agriculture, is messy because everybody has a stake, from the input supplier to the consumer,” Dr Sibanda says.

According to Dr Marta Cumbi, director of the Foundation for Community Development’s Gender Unit, sometimes the greatest challenge is getting women to speak freely about their lives and the challenges they face in their everyday lives.

Dr Cumbi adds that in some rural communities, you may sometimes be lucky to meet a very vocal, confident and free woman who will explain the situation on behalf of other women in the community.



This woman stood up during one of the performances in Mozambique and identified herself with one of the acts.

Often the views of influential stakeholders dominate the policy development processes, while the voices of the farmers are ignored. This, however, does not mean that agriculture policy development is out of reach for ordinary farmers.

"Women farmers need to be empowered to speak up and express their needs and concerns," Dr Cumbi says. "They need to participate actively in developing solutions and advocating for

appropriate policies and programmes to ensure their voices are heard in the corridors of power where policies are made."

According to the 2012 World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development, engagement of women in policy processes is not only a way to provide women with means to enhance their participation and use of their potential, but also smart economics.

THE FANRPAN POLICY ADVOCACY MODEL

FANRPAN is a stakeholder-driven policy analysis and advocacy coordinating institution, designed to ensure that policymakers have access to well-researched and analysed policy advice that is representative of all stakeholders, including women farmers, at national and regional level.

"The absence of effective policy engagement has resulted in a flawed policy process on many occasions, which in turn has led to severely negative effects on development and the achievement of sustainable food security," Dr Sibanda explains.

As a regional policy analysis network, FANRPAN's mandate is to facilitate linkages and partnerships, build the capacity for policy analysis and dialogue, and provide opportunities for an exchange of skills and experiences.

Through the WARM project, FANRPAN has created community level platforms for ampli-

fying the voice of smallholder women farmers. The FANRPAN country nodes, the Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET) in Malawi and Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique have ensured that the voices of women farmers are heard at a national level.

"In the WARM project we are clear that giving women a voice is not merely to speak, but to be heard and to make a difference," says Beatrice Makwenda from the National Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi (NASFAM).

"Women farmers have been equipped with evidence from researchers, which they are now using to advocate for policy change at the highest ranks of government," she adds.

It is through advocacy that FANRPAN believes ordinary women farmers can engage in high-level dialogue with policymakers and other influential leaders on policy issues affecting them.

From training to action

Trained women policy advocates have started putting their training to good use by participating in various policy events. In Malawi, advocates participated in a national dialogue to disseminate WARM project results, organised by the FANRPAN node hosting institution CISANET on 7 December 2011. Women advocates engaged with four members of Parliament including Davie Luka, chair of the Parliamentary Committee on

Agriculture and Natural Resources, representatives from non-governmental organisations, farmer organisations and government.

Malawi advocates also participated in the Smallholder Marketing Arrangement Policy Forum held in December 2011 and March 2012, the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAP) and CAADP district-level policy dialogues held in April and June 2011.

In December 2011, nine trained women advocates participated in the 2011 Southern African Rural Women's Assembly, which was held on the sidelines of the Conference of Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Durban. In addition, from 27 February to 9 March 2012 a trained women policy advocate from Malawi, Alice Kachere, participated in a number of side events at the 56th session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Women advocates in Mozambique also participated in a national dialogue to disseminate WARM project results organised by the FANRPAN node hosting institution, Eduardo Mondlane University, on 26 April in Maputo. Advocates had a chance to engage with representatives from community-based organisations, research institutions, UN agencies, the donor community in Mozambique and representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG).

Renewed focus on agriculture as a means of ending poverty presents an excellent opportunity for a paradigm shift.

The permanent secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Daniel Miguel Clemente, was also present. He commended FANRPAN and its partners for mobilising women farmers and training them to be policy advocates. He said too often the process of policy development is restricted to technocrats, leaving out the very people who are the beneficiaries of these policies.

Clemente urged the trained women farmers to continue using the dialogue platforms established through the project to push their agendas through the local district councils and traditional structures. He also commented that the Ministry of Agriculture is always ready to listen and will continue to strive relentlessly towards translating

The permanent secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Daniel Miguel Clemente, was one of the VIPs who attended the WARM national dialogue held in Maputo, Mozambique, in April 2012.



Targeting women, WARM has seen many women farmers being able to communicate with policymakers and governmental officials, and demand their rights. Here a woman farmer poses a question to officials during a meeting in Boane.



the many progressive policies to advance the goals of women empowerment and gender equality in the agricultural sector.

In his closing remarks, Clemente urged FANRPAN and its partners to ensure that the successes of the WARM project, small and big, are brought to scale, as the project has the potential to change the lives of millions of women farmers across Africa.

An opportunity for a paradigm shift

Renewed focus on agriculture as a means of ending poverty presents an excellent opportunity for a paradigm shift. African leaders do not deliver on commitments mainly because the key stakeholders, the farmers, are silent.

But now that women farmers are beginning to claim their space in the policy arena, governments cannot afford to miss any opportunity to set in motion concrete actions and programmes to truly address rural women's needs. After all, women farmers are the architects of African rural livelihoods! ■

Meet the agricultural HEROINES

Mma Tshepo Khumbane



Mma Tshepo Khumbane (right) shares a joke with Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda and Sithembile Mwamakamba.

getting the poorest women in the village, Mma Khumbane carries out a village-scoping analysis to identify the most food-insecure households. She believes that if poor families can become food secure, it will be easier for the others to follow, and in doing so grow the success stories in a somewhat “ripple effect”. This process of self-analysis has also given poor women a sense of hope and control of their lives.

Mma Tshepo Khumbane, who farms in Cullinan, South Africa, is the recipient of the 2010 Women in Water Lifetime Achiever Award in South Africa. She has been teaching women to achieve food security for the last 40 years in very arid areas in South Africa by applying the “ten fingers” principle. The “ten fingers” principle is a strong statement of independence and determination that states: “If I have nothing else to plough or dig with, I have ten fingers to scratch the soil.”

Encouraging the poorest women to work through a process of mind mobilisation to build household food security safety nets, Mma Khumbane teaches women from food insecure households how to plant crops and maintain gardens using rainwater harvesting. Tar-

Mma Tshepo Khumbane of South Africa is the recipient of the 2010 Women in Water Lifetime Achiever Award in South Africa.

Cecilia Makota-Mahlangeni

Cecilia Makota-Mahlangeni calls herself a senior citizen (category a-1) in Zambia. She is the founder and chairperson of Zambia Women in Agriculture (ZWA), which has a membership of over 5 000 women farmers.

The association of women peasant farmers is working to build better transportation and marketing systems for agriculture.

The association gathers agricultural produce from its members in districts and brokers the best deals with buyers. ZWA sends their requests directly to the Ministry of Agriculture.



Cecilia Makota-Mahlangeni, a senior citizen (category a-1).

Cecilia also helps widows and divorced women to request the return of their land that has been taken over by their late husbands' or ex-husbands' family members.

Celina Cossa



Photo by Zahira Kharsany

Celina Cossa is a farmer and founder of the General Union of Agricultural Cooperatives.

Celina Cossa of Mozambique is the inaugural winner of the FANRPAN Civil Society Movers and Shakers Award, which was launched in 2009. She is the founder and leader of the General Union of Agricultural Cooperatives, an organisation of 10 000 peasants, 95% of whom are women, in Mozambique.

The 200 cooperatives produce food for members and their families, and are generating a surplus that enables them to supply the markets in Maputo, the Mozambican capital.

In 1980, this former primary school teacher had a vision that she translated to a reality. That is a two-fold vision: building a sustainable food supply for her war-ravaged country and empowering the poorest Mozambican peasants.

Like many revolutions, this one started in its infancy with a few co-operative groups of women raising patches of vegetables and selling them in Maputo for an extra income for the family. Few people took it seriously, few even counted its economic value. While most development planners focused on men, Cossa organised and unleashed the

overwhelming power of women, building the network from six cooperatives around Maputo to more than 224 spread over a wide area. Beginning with vegetable farming and expanding into a wide range of productive enterprises, such as poultry production and marketing, credit, insurance, industry and construction, the women

peasants of Mozambique have become an economic powerhouse. Cossa is a source of inspiration for everyone fighting for an African green revolution and an important role model for women in Africa.

Alice Kachere

Alice Kachere of Malawi has an extraordinary personal story. She holds only a junior secondary certificate and in 1999 she lost her husband. Due to a lack of marital land rights, once he died she lost all her land and her home, and was left homeless with three young children.

Despite the devastation, she now farms on a one-hectare piece of land and has begun renting some land in order to increase her production levels – thanks to a ten-fold increase in her maize yields due to a combination of better planting techniques, hybrid seeds, fertiliser and organic manure. She grows maize, tobacco, soya and groundnuts on her farm.

Alice, her children and her 79-year old mother now have their own two-room house.

In 2006 Alice was nominated to be a member of the National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM) board.



Photo by Sithembile Mwamakamba

Malawi's celebrated woman farmer, Alice Kachere.

In 2006 Alice was nominated to be a member of the National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM) board. She was the board's secretary from 2007 to 2008, and from 2008 to 2011 she was the NASFAM board's chairperson.

Alice has travelled worldwide to share her experiences and advocate for the empowerment of smallholder women farmers who are faced with many challenges. She is one of the policy advocates trained by the WARM project. ■



The Queen Mother of Swaziland was awarded the prestigious Food Security Policy Leadership Award in honour of the strides she made in alleviating poverty in the country. Here Dr Sindiso Ngwenya, FANRPAN Board chairperson, is handing the award to her.

Queen Mother

fights poverty in Swaziland

Her Majesty Indlovukazi Ntombi, the Queen Mother of Swaziland, has made significant strides in agriculture and food security issues of Swaziland. In 2011, she was awarded the Food Security Policy Leadership Award in honour of the strides she made in alleviating poverty in the country.

The Queen Mother has taken leadership in various agricultural innovations in Swaziland. These include the mushroom farming project, which was originated on her request, and which was run by the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) in cooperation with Thailand's Phra Dabos Foundation and Swaziland's Ministry of Agriculture. The project addresses food security, generates income for the country's farmers and creates jobs for local women. She also secured a goat market for Swazis in the Seychelles. As part of this initiative, Swazi goat breeders export their goats to the Seychelles.

The Queen Mother also initiated a project for the processing of marula fruit seed. These are crushed and the nuts harvested. Oil is then extracted from these, packaged in Swaziland and exported as cosmetic products. The Swazi indigenous products project produces the Swazi Secrets range of products under the patronage of the Queen Mother.

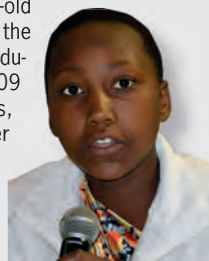
It helps poor, rural Swazi women to generate income from natural products. It is now owned by member groups of rural suppliers and also assists with social development by supporting self-help groups and a rural livelihoods programme. She has a dream for Swazi women to own a bank which will

empower women to venture into business in a more professional manner and with a more professional approach. Efforts to make this dream come true are underway.

The Queen Mother is in the league of other former recipients of the award such as the late Dr Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi, who received the inaugural award in 2008, President Armando Emilio Guebuza of Mozambique, who received the award in 2009, and Namibia's President, Hifikepunye Pohamba. ■

Emerging goat farmer

Nondumiso Vilakati is a 13-year-old goat farmer from Ngwazini in the Manzini region, Swaziland. Nondumiso started the project in 2009 with only seven Nguni goats, which she inherited from her grandmother. Her stock has since increased to 46. She is currently doing grade seven at Bhinkhosi Nazarene Primary School.



Meet Malawi's WARM ADVOCACY CHAMPIONS



Martha Nyirenda is a tobacco farmer and a farmer-to-farmer trainer.

Martha Nyirenda

Martha Nyirenda farms on a one-hectare plot in the Kasungu district. She grows maize, tobacco and groundnuts. She has a junior certificate and is a farmer-to-farmer trainer. She is a member of the Chulu Farmer Association.



Mary Mittawa is a maize and tobacco farmer.

Mary Mittawa

Mary Mittawa is a farmer in the Lilongwe North district. She farms on a six-hectare plot where she grows tobacco, maize, groundnuts, soya beans and is also involved with horticulture. She is currently the secretary of the Chigonthi Farmers Association.



Martha Chimutu from Lilongwe leads the Ukwé Farmers Association.

Martha Chimutu

Martha Chimutu farms on a 10-hectare plot. On her piece of land she grows tobacco, maize, groundnuts and soya beans. She holds a junior secondary certificate and she leads the Ukwé Farmers Association. She has been a member of NASFAM since 2002. She comes from a male-headed household consisting of seven people.



Gladys Kafantenganji is highly educated by most smallholder farmers' standards.

Gladys Kafantenganji

Gladys Kafantenganji is from the Kasungu district and she owns two hectares of land. She grows maize, tobacco, groundnuts and sweet potatoes. She is highly educated by most smallholder farmers' standards in Malawi, holding a senior secondary school certificate. She is part of the leadership of the Chamama Farmers Association.



Eunice Chipengule is a farmer, mother and community leader.

Eunice Chipengule

Eunice Chipengule is a farmer from the Kasungu district, where she grows maize, soya beans, groundnuts, Irish potatoes and keeps cattle and chickens. She uses her 3,5 hectares to grow the crops. With only primary school education, she is an active member of the community. She is a member of the Chamama Farmers Association and also chairperson of the Chisomo Club in Kasungu.



Esther Chirwa is a livestock farmer who is raising goats and chickens.

Esther Chirwa

Esther Chirwa from Kasungu grows maize, groundnuts and tobacco on her two-hectare plot. In addition she is into livestock production, which comprises of goats and chickens. She is a junior secondary level graduate and a member of the Chipala Farmers Association. She is a single mother of two children. ■

Meet Mozambique's WARM policy

Alice Francisco Matine

Alice Francisco Matine is a 48-year-old single mother of seven. She joined the Mata Fome Sibicusse Association so that she could have access to land and also to avoid losing the land she already has.

She owns a half-hectare plot where she grows cassava, beans, cabbage, maize and chilli. With the produce from her land she has managed to send her children to school.

She is one of the privileged few as she has access to improved seeds and fertilisers. However, she says the lack of policies to deal with land ownership is an impediment. "I risk losing my land if someone claims it," she says.

She says she has learnt a lot from the WARM project. "I am now aware of the struggles that my fellow women farmers face and of my rights as a seller at the markets. The WARM project taught me how to act in partnership with other women farmers so that we all profit from selling our produce," she adds.

I am now aware of the struggles that my fellow women farmers face and of my rights as a seller at the markets.

Ana Marcos Tuaia

Ana Marcos Tuaia is a widow and over the years she has lost four of her five children. Life has been tough for her. Her surviving child is also a farmer like her.

She joined the Bolaze B Association with the aim of improving her life. She owns two small plots where she grows lettuce, carrots, beans, cabbage, sweet potatoes, maize and cassava. She sells some of her products at the local market.

Ana says the WARM project has been very useful. "It has shown me the light, I will continue being part of the project and make a mark in coming up with solutions for problems," she says.

champions

Maria de Fátima Cha Cha

Maria de Fátima Cha Cha was born on 9 February 1984. As a single mother of three, she joined Cooperativa 29 de Setembro with the aim of fighting against the challenges that smallholder women farmers are facing from production to the market.

Farming on two plots totalling one hectare, Maria has managed to secure deeds for her land. She accesses improved seeds as well as fertilisers from the local market which can sometimes be very expensive. She grows maize, sweet potatoes, beans, cassava, car-

rots, cabbage, cucumbers and lettuce. She sells some of her products, but like other farmers she struggles to make a profit because of the poor prices they are offered at the market. "With the little that I am getting I have managed to send my children to school, and buy uniforms and other school materials for them," she adds.

"I am grateful for the WARM project, where I learnt how to engage in policy advocacy successfully and to be an actor. I will use the knowledge gained to strengthen my cooperative and community as well as to fight for the rights of women farmers," she adds.

Maria Luis Mavota

Maria Luis Mavota is a 49-year-old single mother of one. She joined the Cooperativa 1º de Maio hoping to improve her family's lives.

With no access to extension services, Maria managed to buy fertiliser and improved seeds from the local market that has seen her improve her productivity. She owns a plot of less than a hectare where she grows cassava, maize, carrots, tomatoes, beans, sweet potatoes, cabbage, lettuce and onions.

"I am happy to be part of the WARM project. We have set up a chicken project. Also being part of the project's advocacy group, I managed to participate in the identification of challenges and am also part of the group looking at solutions to these challenges. The WARM project has broadened my horizon on how to efficiently advocate for the rights of women farmers," she says.

She says her group's wish is to have a resource centre where they receive training and discuss issues affecting women in general. ■



Nevelesi, WARM's shining star

Nevelesi Maliseni is an extraordinary woman, mother and farmer whom the National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM) and the WARM project is proud to be associated with.



By Beatrice Makwenda, Malawi coordinator of the WARM project.

At the age of 36, Nevelesi Maliseni has experienced the highs and lows of life. In 2006 her husband passed away, leaving her with the responsibility of raising three children. But he also left her a field which would turn out to be her lifeline.

Nevelesi says: "I started farming long ago when my husband was still alive. We used to farm the fields together. When he passed away, I had to continue with planting a lot of crops on my field.

"I mostly have good yields, but in 2011 things were different. For instance, in 2011 tobacco did not do so well, so in the current planting season I replaced it with groundnuts. Through NASFAM I get extension support and access to certified seed. NASFAM also facilitates the marketing of my crops."

In 2011 Nevelesi also planted pigeon peas after she got 1kg of seeds from NASFAM. She managed to make MK 5 000 profit. "This money was much needed. I used it to invest in livestock," she says.

In 2008, Nevelesi received a cow from the European Union Farm Income Diversification Programme (FIDP) and another one from World Vision. "This cow have been a blessing to me and my family. I make between MK 70 000 and MK 80 000 per month from selling milk to the Dairy Board and other buyers," she adds.

In 2010 Nevelesi became one of the policy advocates in the WARM project who were trained with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Nevelesi is also part of a community group that communicates agricultural challenges through theatre. She was also part of the Malawi delegation to the 2011 Rural Women Assembly held on the sidelines of the United Nations Conference Of Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Durban, South Africa.

Looking around Nevelesi's homestead, you can tell that she faces many challenges and she is quick to point them out.

"The challenges I am faced with as a woman farmer are many. Nowadays we have been experiencing unpredictable weather patterns. Climate change is being felt by all farmers across the region and it has forced us to change our planting patterns as well as the seeds we use. Another challenge we are facing as farmers has to do with accessing markets. Finding markets is a struggle for us and because of this we are selling our produce at far lower prices to vendors," she points out.

But these are not the only challenges women experience. Nevelesi points out that there are many inaccurate perceptions regarding successful women farmers. For instance, people are quick to raise questions about how she, as a woman, is able to pay the extra workers on her land.

But through all this Nevelesi is very content with her life. A significant achievement is that she is able to send all her children to school. She is also amongst a group of women farmers in the village who are actively encouraging other women farmers to engage in livestock production.

"I will always be a farmer, growing maize, legumes and other cash crops in the future. NASFAM has taught me a lot and I will continue learning from them. If I could advise other women in Malawi, I would tell them that they need to learn how to survive independently and that no one should discourage them from achieving anything that a man is traditionally known to do," said Nevelesi. ■



Ronnie Timpuza Mvula from Bunda College, a WARM researcher, with Nevelesi.

A woman, Teresa, is watering a field of green plants with a green hose. She is wearing a light blue short-sleeved shirt with ruffles and a long, patterned skirt with green and brown designs. In the background, there are trees and another person standing near a wooden fence.

A love for **FARMING** in her blood

By Dr Marta Cumbi, Mozambique coordinator
of the WARM project

Hard worker Teresa working on her project.

Teresa Alexandre Sumbane was born on 6 October 1982 in the Marracuene district, Mozambique. She is a single mother of two girls and derives her livelihood from agriculture. She comes from a poor family and lost her mother when she was only 19 years old. At that time, she did not know how to farm and she was supported by her sister. She joined the Apostolic Church, where she became a part of this new family. There she got valuable advice on farming to sustain herself and her first baby.



She helped to establish the Alfredo Namitete Association, which joined the National Union of Peasants as a platform to fight for the rights of the peasants' movement in Mozambique and beyond.

Teresa has four plots of land totalling two hectares where she grows sweet potatoes, beans, lettuce, cabbage, beetroot, carrots, cucumber, onions and maize. She inherited one plot from her late mother and the other she was given by her association. She gets improved seeds and fertilisers from the local market. Her produce is primarily for household consumption and she sells the excess. According to Teresa, the main obstacle that women farmers face is unfair prices at the market. "We work hard every day, but get little from the sale of our produce. Buyers do not take into account all the investment in labour and inputs that we put into production. They just want to buy cheap products," says Teresa.

Despite all these constraints, Teresa has managed to build a house of four bedrooms with a dining room and she is able to send her daughter to school from the money that she makes.

"It has been very rewarding to be part of an organised association. My happiest moment was in 2006, when I managed to avoid the expropriation of 100 hectares of the association's land from a foreign investor. The local authorities wanted to give him our land and I fought for it and succeeded," says Teresa.

"However, as women farmers we still face many challenges, we are not visible enough and we have no voice in decision-making processes.

"We have been trained by the WARM project on how to advocate for better agricultural policies that are fair to us as women. We are planning to reinforce the capacity of all trained women advocates to implement a strong advocacy strategy at district level and multiply their knowledge of policy-makers within the district and beyond. In order for this to happen, we need partnerships at national and global levels."

Teresa is one of the women policy advocates who were trained by the WARM project in policy advocacy and community theatre. As a result of the training, Teresa has been able to participate in a high level regional policy dialogue. In April 2011 she participated in the *Presidência Aberta e Inclusiva – CSO Dialogue* with the president of Mozambique, Hon. President Armando E Guebuza, where she clearly presented rural women's concerns. She urged President Guebuza to take time to visit women farmers in their natural setting and to witness the reality on the ground in Marracuene. Teresa also attended the 2011 FANRPAN partners meeting where she shared her experiences as a woman farmer.

"I would like to thank the Foundation for Community Development (FDC) for bringing the WARM project to us and I would like to stress that there is a need for follow-up activities because we are already seeing benefits from the advocacy training and the theatre performance. We are ready to proceed with this work and to include fellow women farmers in other districts who were not part of the project," said Teresa. ■



This visit by former Rhodesian President Clifford Dupont (middle) inspired Elis Gamanje Cetshwayo (far right) to have an everlasting love for agriculture.

GROWING OLD beyond the fields

By Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda

Two large photos hang in the 104-year-old Elis Gamanje Cetshwayo's dining room at the successful Mkoba Irrigation Scheme, in Lower Gweru in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. They look fairly similar, one black and white, taken in 1968, with former Rhodesian President Clifford Dupont, and the other a colour photo taken in modern-day Zimbabwe, in 1998 with Elis receiving a trophy as one of the most successful smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe.



Elis Gamanje Cetshwayo is 104 years old, but still going strong.

Looking a little more closely at these photos, it's obvious that they both depict the same thing – a woman who has seen it all in farming. One of the photos, spanning some 44 years, shows Dupont visiting this amazing centenarian's plot. She has been doing wonders in transforming the Mkoba Irrigation Scheme some 40km northwest of the town of Gweru.

When farming as an industry is losing people fast, young people are moving into towns, and put plainly, older farmers are a dying breed. But Elis is a soldier, still working her fields, teaching and mentoring younger women on the trade that she knows best. "If agriculture is going to have a future in Africa, it can no longer be the preserve of the double-barrelled," says Elis.

Even at 104 years, Elis is full of drive and energy, and has remarkable agricultural and farming technical skills and creativity. She has been always keen to explore other crops on her plot, keeping busy and producing throughout the year.

On her tiny quarter-acre plot, which was given to her in 1968 by the then land development officer, Elis grows a wide variety of vegetables and green maize. The irrigation scheme falls in Natural Region IV, a region in which agriculture is severely limited by inadequate rainfall. This makes irrigation important in this region for any meaningful crop production. Annual rainfall for this region ranges from 650-800mm, mostly in the form of infrequent heavy storms, and rainfall is received between November and April. The scheme draws its water from the Insukamini Dam via a pick-up weir on Gwenjani River.



In 1998 Elis was recognised for her leadership at Mkoba Irrigation Scheme and given an award for her excellent and exemplary contribution to agricultural production and development.

Her mother an inspiration

"I remember when I was younger, my mother used to say: 'Farming is a way of life. You don't do it to get rich,'" says Elis of her mother, Piki Gamanje. "But now all you seem to do in farming is work, work, work, working the fields for 15 hours a day, seven days a week, trying to improve your economies of scale. And when it comes to the end of the year, your bank account says: 'Well, you have lost up to US\$10 000.' The dignity of farming has gone – we used to earn a decent livelihood in order to feed our children, send them to school and always have money in our pockets." The majority of farmers are now paupers, harvesting food for just two months and relying on food hand-outs for the rest of the year.

She says her mother taught her about farming before she could talk. "I have never been involved in any other profession than farming. All nine my children, now aged 43 to 75, are agricultural graduates, born and brought up through farming, and I am their professor," she says proudly, being as fit as a fiddle.



In 1998 Elis (middle) was recognised for her role in agriculture and also beyond the field.

Since 1968, Elis has been rising before dawn, putting on her boots and work shirt to work on her plot – hence her local nickname “Masika”, which means “the grass slasher”. For nearly 80 years, for an hour or so a day, she would trade community gossip, argue about politics and then drop casual remarks about crops and prices designed to find out what her fellow farmers are doing without asking them a direct question. Then off to the fields and spending her entire life doing what she loves most – farming.

She slogs up to 15 hours a day in all weather conditions for diminishing returns, but Elis says she is proud to continue her farming business.

She is not a person who will let age slow her down. Even in the grey light of winter, when a harsh wind pounds the flatland of central Zimbabwe, Elis relishes being outdoors attending to her crops. In a business known for its unforgiving hours and gruelling repetition, Elis stands out with her youthful look.

Together with more than a hundred other farmers, Elis experiences the struggle to get agricultural inputs and a reliable market.

“To be here today, I have weathered the years and have seen it all, from the droughts to unsupportive governments and also at times being forced to throw away my produce due to the unavailability of markets,” she says.

Mkoba Irrigation Scheme

The scheme utilises a canal-type of irrigation system, which sees the water being transmitted to the fields through a drag-hose sprinkler irrigation system with water being pumped from a pick-up weir.

The scheme is operated on more than 100 hectares in an area with more than 200 smallholders, each having about a quarter acre. The crops being grown under irrigation are grain, maize and beans in the summer, and wheat and green maize in the winter.

Elis became part of the irrigation scheme in 1968 with the help of her younger children, Albert and Merolyn, the then land development officer, Mr Colbert, and a government extension worker, Mr Dube.

Elis was inspired by the visit of Dupont, who was an officer administering the Government of Rhodesia from 1965 to 1970. He then went on to become the acting president of the Republic of Rhodesia from 1970 to 1975.

Despite challenges, Mkoba is still considered as a role model and pioneer irrigation scheme in the country, and is showcased as a success story of smallholder irrigation farming. In 1998, Elis was recognised for her leadership at the Mkoba Irrigation Scheme and given an award for her excellent and exemplary contribution to agricultural production and development.

"Without this irrigation system, Lower Gweru would be poor with no roads, no shopping centre and no high school with boarding and teacher-training facilities.

I couldn't make a living by just growing maize – it's about feeding my family first.

This area would be dry," Elis explains. "And we would have nothing." Elis says they demanded a tarred road from the local Member of Parliament

because their produce often reached the urban market bruised from the rugged 30km drive into Gweru.

"The school was built and expanded because we could use our bounty income to pay school fees and buy school uniforms. I boast grandchildren and great-grandchildren who are educated and employed as professionals all over the world in South Africa, England, Australia, Canada and the USA," she adds.

Elis says she is sad because things at Mkoba are deteriorating. "Due to old infrastructure, the irrigation has been dogged by frequent pump breakdowns, poor hydrant positioning and wrong lateral spacing, which has all contributed to the poor performance of the scheme," she says.

Age no barrier

Despite her age, Elis still wants to continue and she says she will do so even in her grave. "I couldn't make a living by just growing maize – it's about feeding my family a wholesome diet. I needed a variety of vegetables for nutrition security, I farmed well and was an excellent cook in my younger days," Elis says. "Either you have a large farm or you diversify, which was what I did."

Elis and other farmers are fully responsible for the operation and maintenance of the scheme. The Agricultural Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development provide the extension services required. She has trained and mentored more than 500 women farmers, and still remains a true champion and an inspiration to all women, young and old. "I want to give them a quality experience, not just a dip-in and dip-out," she explains.

"The agriculture of the future is very much female, as it has always been," she says.

According to Elis, the involvement of women in agriculture has helped society in important ways like food security, rural development, education, health and the safeguarding of the natural landscape.

She says a lack of inputs is currently worsening the situation. "Water shortages due to the current drought and siltation are going to affect our winter cropping as the dam won't be able to supply the water needed for irrigation," she adds.

The produce from the scheme has two major marketing channels, namely the local market at Lower Gweru Mission and the Gweru town wholesale market, which is in one of Zimbabwe's four major cities. Green mealies and some fresh vegetables are locally marketed.

"After a day's work, I treat myself to listening to the radio that I bought with my farm income. I enjoy the farming programmes, where farmers from all over Zimbabwe exchange experiences and experts give advice and market information," Elis says. ■

PILOT PERSPECTIVES

– Reflections on WARM successes and failures

By Sithembile Mwamakamba and Dr Tshilidzi Madzivhandila

When good interventions come to an end, a number of questions often crop up. Have we done enough? What will happen when we leave? How will we make sure that our efforts were not in vain?

As the Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) drops the curtain on the pilot phase of the Women Accessing Realigned Markets (WARM) project, the big question is: “Did we accomplish what we set out to do? Did we strengthen the capacity of women farmers to influence agricultural policy development in Africa?”

As a regional network, FANRPAN is obliged to be answerable for its actions, decisions and their implications both internally and externally to its stakeholders, and especially to the women farmers of Africa. Consequently, during the course of the WARM project, a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework was used to define systems and processes for meeting multi-stakeholder horizontal and vertical accountability needs, and to make provision for creating a credible and systematic knowledge base.

Regular monitoring reports were prepared by the project team and shared with stakeholders annually at the FANRPAN regional policy dialogues, country node coordinators' workshops and partners meetings. The funding partner, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, received annual pro-

gress reports from FANRPAN and the programme officer responsible for the project at the Foundation was given quarterly progress updates.

FANRPAN's monitoring and evaluation coordinator, Dr Tshilidzi Madzivhandila, says: “Evaluation in FANRPAN has two primary purposes, namely accountability to stakeholders and learning to improve efficacy.”

The monitoring and evaluation process

To facilitate learning, the WARM project team held a number of project-reflection meetings. But perhaps of significance are the two project-evaluation exercises that were conducted. The mid-term project evaluation happened in May 2011, a year and a half after the project commenced.

The mid-term review (MTR) exercise was an internal process, undertaken by FANRPAN's monitoring and evaluation team in order to assess progress of the WARM project towards outputs and objectives. It was also meant to make recommendations for the remaining implementation period. The MTR did not raise any red flags to indicate significant issues or shortfalls with regard to the project design and implementation process and progress.



The WARM project manager, Sithembile Mwamakamba, explaining the objectives and terms of reference at the end-of-project evaluation.



Elisa Mondlane sharing some of her experiences as a policy advocate with the project evaluators.

“As with all projects that come to an end, it is important for FANRPAN to take a step back and reflect on what worked well and what didn’t,” says the FANRPAN CEO, Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda.

In May 2012, at the end of the three-year project cycle, FANRPAN commissioned an end-of-project evaluation and learning exercise. Independent evaluators from Jimat Development Consultants spent a week meeting with project partners and visiting women farmers in Malawi and Mozambique.

These visits were meant to assess the extent to which WARM project objectives were consistent with the priorities of the smallholder women farmers and other stakeholders. It was also looking at how well the project performed in delivering against objectives and its effectiveness, as well as how economical resources have been converted into results and efficiency.

The consultants also had to identify key lessons and propose practical recommendations for consideration in up-scaling and out-scaling of the project in Malawi and Mozambique or other FANRPAN countries.

End-of-project evaluation results

According to Tom Mochal, a leading academic and author on project evaluation, project teams

often struggle to determine whether they were successful or not, and knowing how a project ended in terms of its deadlines, deliverables and budget tells only part of the story.

To help determine the success of the WARM project, FANRPAN used a scorecard taking into account the criteria that need to be met for the project to be a success. Five key project elements were identified by the evaluation team and the WARM project team. These are relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, outcomes and impact, and sustainability.

According to the end-of-project evaluation report, the WARM project achieved most of its objectives with a fair measure of success, with the exception of Project Objective 4: *Align input supply institutions and programmes to women farmers’ issues*. Dr Sibanda says: “The WARM project started from a point where women farmers were clouded with a plethora of challenges, and streamlining the project to solely focus on markets would have stifled communication and not given space to vent out issues.”

However, Dr Sibanda believes that now the women have aired out their challenges through the established community dialogue platforms, a second phase of the WARM project should focus on the market access challenge.

Results of an evaluation model administered on WARM by Jimat Development Consultants

PROJECT ELEMENT	FINDINGS	SCORE
Relevance	Project objectives were compatible with FANRPAN vision and mission and in line with development initiatives aimed at empowering women farmers.	
Effectiveness	Project objectives were largely achieved, key partnerships were developed and women farmers have been empowered to advocate for policy change.	
Efficiency	The project succeeded in accomplishing a lot with the means at its disposal. However, there were challenges with the circulation of funds and a poor allocation of the funds among budget lines.	
Outcomes and impact	The project has enabled women farmers to engage and communicate their challenges with decision-makers, policymakers and service providers. Stakeholders are now informed on input mechanisms, challenges faced by women farmers and potential solutions.	
Sustainability	FANRPAN and its wide network of partners have a long-term commitment to the issues addressed beyond the end of this project. However, given the reliance on donor funding for project activities, it is likely that some activities will end with the end of the project.	

The scores in the project scorecard are represented by a green colour for excellent and above-expectation performance, an amber colour for satisfactory performance with room for improvement on limited aspects and a red colour for unsatisfactory performance.

Three out of five project elements were rated as excellent and above-expectation performance, with the remaining two being satisfactory with room for improvement. The report highlights three key result areas where the WARM project performance was outstanding.

A platform for community dialogue

Through the TPA tool, the project has empowered women farmers to convene effective community dialogues, where they can voice their concerns and propose solutions to the challenges that they face. Community TPA platforms have become permanent community reflection points, both for sensitising the community on development-related issues as well as for communicating these issues to internal and external decision-makers.

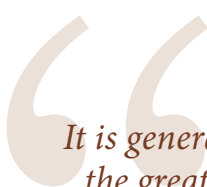
Lezinathi Daniel from Malawi's Sokelele Village in the Lilongwe district echoed the sentiments of many women when she said: "I have always wanted this kind of platform to raise issues plaguing my life."

The end-of-project evaluation report states that women farmers, policy champions and researchers who have been involved in the WARM project have acquired skills and invaluable knowledge that they will use in the foreseeable future. These acquired skills can be adapted to showcase a number of different issues at communities, regional and global platforms. According to Andrew Samati of Story Workshop, the established theatre groups have already started moving forward on their own initiative, staging new theatre performances that are addressing new marketing constraints experienced during the 2011/12 farming season.

Giving women the voice

The engagement trained policy champions in a number of high-level policy meetings, which is testimony that women farmers are no longer sitting quietly on the sidelines, but they are now playing a more active role in driving the development agenda.

“The WARM project has taught us as women farmers to make sure that we have the right message to communicate and also target the right audience,” Elisa Mondlane, a policy advocate from the Boane district in Mozambique, noted. “Change is possible and we can bring this change through a set of targeted actions,” she added.



It is generally accepted that the greatest potential for societal change exists when the broadest cross-section of a community participates.

Furthermore, women farmers are beginning to appreciate how policies are formulated. But what is more important, is that they now understand that policies will not change by banging drums and taking to the streets.

Action research

Researchers have been trained to be more sensitive to community needs, especially those of women farmers. Researchers from the University of Malawi's Bunda College of Agriculture and Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique have been equipped with participatory, people-centered research skills. The collaboration with university researchers in the WARM project enabled them to capture community voices to refine their knowledge and research agenda.

“We were honoured to be the lead research partner for WARM in Malawi,” stated Ronnie Mvula, a lecturer from Bunda College of Agriculture. “The outcomes of the project have been hugely encouraging and the learnings from this

experience will be interwoven within our approach to action research for many years to come.”

The project has managed to support two-way interaction between communities and researchers, whereby the research agenda is informed by the community, and the research outputs provide evidence and policy options to the communities, enabling them to advocate for changes that benefit them.

Challenges experienced

Despite all the positive results, it was not a smooth ride for the WARM project. The project experienced some challenges. Many of the early challenges that the project faced are common to all organisations upon inception.

In designing the project, there was an under-estimation of the time required for the partnership-building process and, as such, over six months were spent in trying to establish effective partnerships. The process of identifying and building partnerships should have been included as one of the major activities in year one with a timeframe of at least six months. Project activities were pushed back by the same period as a result of time spent on building partnerships.

One of the biggest challenges faced by research partners was accessing gender-disaggregated data. National statistics offices generally do not have this data and development organisations that have the data are not willing to share.

The withholding of data has become so commonplace in Africa that it is hindering progress as different researchers have to constantly collect data, which often leads to research fatigue with communities crying that they are over-researched.

Another challenge experienced had to do with supporting trained women policy advocates to engage in policy processes. There were a number of strategic opportunities identified where trained policy advocates could have participated in, but because this had not been properly planned for and given the limited resources, such opportunities were lost.

However, the persistence and dedication to the goals and objectives by the project team has proven to be the core strength of the WARM pi-



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Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)

lot project and a number of important lessons have been learned in the course of implementing the WARM project.

Effectiveness of TPA

From project inception, TPA was recognised as an important and effective tool for giving women farmers a voice. However, for most of the project partners TPA is a relatively new concept. Much needs to be done to support implementing non-governmental organisations in their own understanding of the concept.



FANRPAN's monitoring and evaluation coordinator, Dr Tshildzi Madzivhandila, talking to one of the male participants about his perception of the WARM project.

Partnerships take time

It is generally accepted that the greatest potential for societal change exists when the broadest cross-section of a community participates. Such multi-sectoral partnerships can require considerable time for the development of trust, the appreciation of alternative viewpoints and the participation in shared initiatives. The project should have set aside adequate time for partnership building.

Don't rush change

Changes take a long time and results can generally not be rushed. Applying a participatory and partnership approach requires time and patience, and this has to be accepted for good results to be achieved. Project duration of three years may not be sufficient to optimise the impact of project results and to ensure full sustainability.

Empowering women by not isolating men

In empowering women, it is important to be always mindful of the community dynamics and to ensure that men, the custodians of power in most African communities, are not left out of the process. Men have to be involved in innovative ways so that they cooperate and do not feel alienated.

The way forward

The project's contextual assumptions and objectives remain socio-economically valid. The broad challenges of rural poverty, the "gender gap" and specific challenges of women's lack of access to markets still remain. However, in only three years of piloting the project, tangible results are being seen.

There is a need to scale up the WARM project to consolidate its impact and to make sure that its success is not a one-time event, but the stepping stone towards a wider and sustainable impact. The WARM project should be expanded, replicated, adapted and sustained to reach a greater number of women farmers.

"Best practices need to be incorporated into policy and implemented at scale," says Dr Sibanda. "This project can be used as a blueprint and, with appropriate support, can be rolled out across Africa," she adds.

FANRPAN will share the project's results and findings across its 16 member countries and the organisation also plans to address the policy challenges raised so far in Malawi and Mozambique. This will be achieved through a combination of extensive media coverage and the use of national, regional and international policy dialogue platforms. ■



– The future belongs to the organised

The National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM) is the largest independent, smallholder-owned membership organisation in Malawi. It was founded on the principles of collective action and is democratically governed by its members.



All its operations are guided by its vision to be the leading smallholder-owned business and development organisation in Malawi, producing economic and social benefits for members, their communities and the country.

NASFAM's mission is to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers through a sustainable network of smallholder-owned business organisations. It promotes farming as a business in order to develop the commercial capacity of its members and delivers programmes which enhance member productivity.

The NASFAM concept grew out of a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded project to support and organise smallholder tobacco production. Since 1995, its focus has diversified production to other cash and food crops. NASFAM, as it is now, was legally registered under the Trustees Incorporation Act in February 1998.

NASFAM members

About 80% of Malawi's population depends on smallholder farming for their livelihood. Like most Malawian smallholder farmers, an average NASFAM

member farms on less than one hectare of land to support a family of six people. Membership is for both men and women, and NASFAM's gender programme ensures equitable participation of both sexes in farming and association leadership. Member crop production is typically a 60:40 split between cash and food crops.

NASFAM operates throughout Malawi, with field-based operations focused around offices in Karonga, Rumphi, South Mzimba, Kasungu, Ntchisi, Nkhotakota, Mchinji, Lilongwe North and South, Ntcheu, Balaka, Namwera, Zomba and Mulanje.

Services to members

NASFAM provides its members with support and guidance on how to organise themselves to farm as a business. This includes advice and technical support on crop selection and production, training on agronomic practices, access to inputs, field crop management, harvesting and post-harvest management.

In addition, NASFAM provides marketing support, facilitating the bulk of member crops to secure access to the most profitable markets

A total of 80% of Malawi's population depends on agriculture.



for reliable income. Members are also provided with community support to mitigate the impact of HIV/Aids, increase gender equality and food security, as well as ensuring that the voice of the smallholder is heard through policy lobbying and advocacy.



NASFAM promotes diversification away from dependency on maize and tobacco, and thus supports the production and marketing of crops such as groundnuts, chili, rice, soya, beans, sunflowers and others as appropriate to market demand.

It is organised into a unique extension network to support its membership of about 100 000 smallholder farmers. The smallest operational unit of NASFAM is a club, made up of 10-15 individual farmers. Clubs combine to form action groups, which are the key points in the extension network for dissemination of information to members, and for the bulking of member crops. Action groups combine to form NASFAM associations, of which there were 40 in 2007-08.

Commercial and development

NASFAM functions are split into commercial and development activities. Its commercial activities include the marketing of inputs to farmers and produce from farmers. NASFAM development activities deliver community development and capacity building services to members.

Both the commercial and development operations are respectively divided between an independently registered profitable company and a legally registered non-governmental organisation (NGO). Both are governed by a farmer board, democratically elected each year by the members.

Protecting livelihoods

NASFAM works with member communities to protect their livelihoods. Programmes are run on the impact of HIV/Aids on the smallholder farming community through raising awareness on the prevention of infection. To care for and support

One of the best graded rice brands in Malawi, Kilombero Rice, and farm nuts produced by NASFAM.



Agro products packaging at a NASFAM factory.



Farmers take the products from the farm to the table.

those already infected, members are trained on how to improve nutrition and food security, using indigenous crops and labour-saving practices such as drip irrigation and permaculture.

Members are also sensitised on good individual and community practices with relation to issues of gender equality, child labour and food security. Adult literacy training is a priority to ensure that members are equipped with the necessary skills to manage their farming activities.

NASFAM lobbies on behalf of smallholders to ensure that their voices are heard and their needs are considered. NASFAM takes part in various policy fora, representing issues raised by the smallholder members, such as trade and taxation issues, government policy and programme implementation.

To keep members up to date, they are provided with topical information on all aspects of farming as a business and community development with a

NASFAM radio programme twice a week, quarterly newsletters and specialist crop bulletins.

To ensure that the NASFAM system performs effectively, a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation programme is in place to measure progress and impact on members' lives. This is supported by a systems coordination function of financial, human resources, IT and administration services.

For more information, phone NASFAM on +265 (0) 1 772 866, send an e-mail to nasfam@nasfam.org or visit the website www.nasfam.org. ■



NASFAM takes farmers from the field to the market in Mozambique for FDC.



Fighting for a better life

The history of Mozambique is fraught with colonialism, internal conflict and famine. A Portuguese colony for almost 500 years, Mozambique achieved its independence in 1975 after a five-year, hard-fought war. That struggle was followed by 15 years of foreign-influenced war. A United Nations-brokered settlement brought peace in 1992, but the consequences of the wars were devastating.

Almost a million people died during the fighting and from famine caused by a severe drought. Landmines littered the landscape. The country's children were deeply affected. Healthcare delivery was minimal, creating a fertile environment for the spread of HIV/Aids. The nation's economy and infrastructure were ruined. Today tremendous poverty persists, but Mozambicans are pulling their country back together.

One of the rays of hope in Mozambique emerged thanks to the vision of Graça Machel, widow of Mozambique's first president after independence, Samora Machel, and other Mozambican leaders. She decided to create a private foundation that would enable Mozambicans to help themselves.

The Foundation for Community Development (FDC) is a Mozambican-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) that aims to bring together efforts of all sectors in society to achieve an ideal of development, democracy and social justice. FDC was created in 1994 from the conviction that poverty is not a fate, but a result of a complex mechanism of marginalization and exploitation of the most disadvantaged populations, as well

as a weak dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge and appropriate technologies. These structural and psychological obstacles are the root causes of poverty that FDC intends to fight.

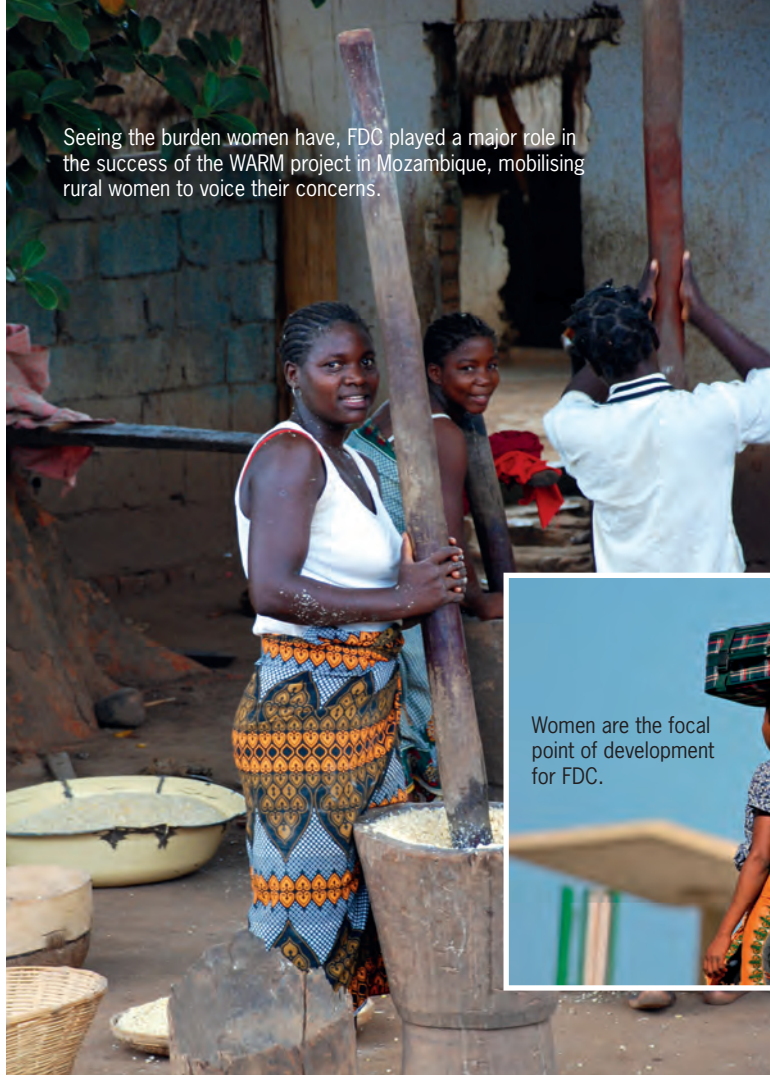
Vision

FDC believes in "Mozambican communities able to lead local development processes, promoting dialogue and partnerships with government, civil society and the private sector, promoting participatory decision-making mechanisms and strengthening, in particular, the rights of children, women and young people in order to eradicate poverty".



Graça Machel founded FDC because of her passion for women advancement, poverty alleviation and the general welfare of poor people.

Seeing the burden women have, FDC played a major role in the success of the WARM project in Mozambique, mobilising rural women to voice their concerns.



Women are the focal point of development for FDC.



Mission

FDC seeks to strengthen the capacities of disadvantaged communities with the view of combating poverty and promoting social justice in Mozambique.

To achieve its mission, FDC intervenes in five main areas namely:

1. Co-financing for community development as a means of providing resources to NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) for the implementation of their programmes and projects.
2. Capacity building for NGOs and CBOs to equip them with knowledge and skills for effective implementation of their programmes.
3. Advocacy on issues of common interest with the view of promoting the creation of an enabling environment for development in Mozambique and beyond, for the realisation of human rights.
4. Networking with other organisations to increase knowledge and create mutually beneficial synergies.
5. Convening through the organisation of seminars, conferences and workshops to discuss critical development issues. ■



Speak Out

– Happy Shongwe's story

Maphumulo, in Swaziland's Lubombo district, is an unlikely place to find new farmers as it has harsh, dark winters, a short, cool growing season, some acidic soil, and a transportation infrastructure system that makes haulage both in and out of the area a challenge.

Happy Lungile Shongwe is farming in this district. She started producing seed right after Swaziland was hard hit by drought in 2002. As the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) assisted the hardest hit communities with food vouchers, they also gave them information on the best ways they can respond to the drought. Shongwe took the advice and started planting crops that are drought-resistant.

Over the years, her move has yielded the best results and this motivated her to become a business woman by registering a company as a seed producer. She is also assisting her fellow community women by imparting the information and knowledge gained from the extension officers.

Shongwe is a smallholder farmer who produces seeds on a five-hectare plot. So far she has managed to buy a tractor and put up a 5 000-litre water tank for use at her homestead, but her wish is to assist other struggling farmers.

Shongwe was amongst the smallholder farmers who felt the shock as their fields were destroyed by the drought in 2002. Food reserves ran dry and she was among the people who were left destitute.

She stopped planting maize and raising broiler chickens as these were not conducive to a changing climate. Instead she began planting leguminous plants that have proved to be drought-resistant. Starting with just one hectare of her land, she soon realised increased yields in the first season. She planted an extra three hectares the following season and has never looked back.

Over the years, her move has continued to produce higher yields and this eventually motivated her to become a business woman. She registered Hlelile Investments (Pty) Ltd, a company that produces and markets seeds. She is now a certified seed producer through the Seed Quality Control Division of the Ministry of Agriculture. The division plays an important role in guiding smallholder farmers on the process of seed certification.

Shongwe was the winner of the FANRPAN 2011 Civil Society Policy Mover and Shaker Award. Her nomination was endorsed by 14 FANRPAN member countries – Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe – after they realised her hard work and commitment.

The Ministry of Agriculture in Swaziland assists smallholder farmers with information and knowledge through its extension officers in order to respond appropriately to climate change challenges and opportunities.

Shongwe benefited from this service and has managed to buy a tractor, which assists her in planting on time as well as benefiting the local community, which also uses it for planting. The community was initially dependent on a government tractor, which had a long waiting list, making this not a practical option.

Shongwe further imparted skills and knowledge to her community by gathering women and advising them. As her business grew, she purchased processing and packaging equipment and embarked on a marketing programme so that others in the seed industry had a source of quality seed that was packaged and labelled appropriately to be sold directly at markets.

She believes her seeds can compete with those of any seed producer in Swaziland and she is working hard to realise another dream of smallholder farmers, accessing markets in big cities and getting recognition for producing quality seeds.

Shongwe's activities in seed production and community work, as well as in assisting other farmers, have made a tremendous contribution in terms of food and nutrition security in the country.

Currently, African women produce between 80% and 90% of the region's agricultural produce and they are the majority of the agricultural labour force on the continent. Despite this fact, they receive only 5% of the resources from extension services and less than 10% of the credit allocated to smallholders.

It is estimated that agricultural productivity in Africa would increase by 20% to 30% if women are given the same access as men to key agricultural inputs.

Shongwe's success illustrates how empowering African women farmers can help to boost food security and resilience to climate change. It is estimated that agricultural productivity in Africa would increase by 20% to 30% if women are given the same access as men to key agricultural inputs. ■

(Source: FANRPAN and Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, Reuters article)



Happy Shongwe, a farmer, receives the Mover and Shaker Award from Hon. Sindiso Ngwenya, chairperson of the FANRPAN board.



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the story workshop
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in malawi



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FANRPAN

Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network

Advocating for a food secure Africa

FANRPAN

Celebrates

Africa-Wide
Mandate

FANRPAN country nodes

2001



2002



2005



2008



2010



2011



FANRPAN upcoming countries 2012 - 2015

