



# FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative



## Learning from Feed the Future Programs about Gender Integration and Women's Empowerment

COMPILED CASE SUBMISSIONS

APRIL 2016



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Leveraging Economic Opportunities

# Learning from Feed the Future Programs about Gender Integration and Women's Empowerment

## Compiled Case Submissions

April 2016

The case studies in the following pages were solicited from Feed the Future partners through a Call for Cases about Feed the Future Learning on Gender Integration and Women's Empowerment, released in April 2016.<sup>1</sup> Feed the Future partners submitted twenty cases spanning ten different countries. The cases were ranked and chosen according to the quality of the data, the compelling nature of the story, demonstration of learning, and diversity of representation in terms of geography and type of intervention.

While the majority of information in the *Cultivating Women's Empowerment: Stories from Feed the Future 2011-2015* came from these twenty cases, it was not possible to include everything. In the spirit of learning and transparency, all of the original case submissions are compiled here and are available for download on USAID's Agrilinks website. They are a complimentary piece to the publication and showcase the broader set of activities happening around gender integration and women's empowerment in Feed the Future programs.

The cases are organized alphabetically by region and by country.

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<sup>1</sup> See the Call for Cases here: <https://agrilinks.org/blog/call-cases-feed-future-programs-learning-gender-integration-and-women%E2%80%99s-empowerment>.

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# Asia

## International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT)

### Submission of case for:

#### **USAID: Call for Cases from Feed the Future Programs: Learning for Gender Integration and Women's Empowerment**

#### **Introduction**

This case is based on experiences from the USAID-funded project Cereals Systems Initiative for South Asia in Bangladesh (CSISA-BD). The five-year project (October 2010 – December 2015) aimed to increase household income, food security and livelihoods in poor agricultural regions in Bangladesh by expanding the rate of adoption and dissemination of improved crop and aquaculture varieties and management practices. The project was implemented jointly by CIMMYT, IRRI, and WorldFish.

#### **1. Lesson:**

An important lesson from this project is that investing in the capacity of women farmers pays off and can improve agricultural outcomes, for instance, by strengthening seed viability and quality. Similarly, business training and linkage events for women entrepreneurs help women expand existing businesses and embrace new business opportunities, inspires other women and strengthens their confidence and position at household and community level.

#### **2. Activities**

The project aimed to raise the awareness, knowledge and skills of farmers on new varieties and agricultural management practices. To reach this aim, CSISA-BD provided e.g. trainings, demonstrations, on field trials, and farmers could participate in farmer field days or cross-farm-visits. From the beginning, the project was committed to reach an equal participation of women and men in these events. A Whole-Family-Training-Approach was applied. Additionally, technologies and interventions were designed that are appropriate for women and specifically target them.

Trainings covered relevant topics like seed production and storage, maize production for income generation and human consumption, best practices for cereal based cropping systems, intercropping and business training.

Special efforts were made to increase women's business and entrepreneurship capacities. For example, a workshop with women who had already initiated small businesses was held in collaboration with UN Women to identify women's constraints in establishing and expanding a small business, and, furthermore, to link women-led small businesses with supermarkets, processors, and enterprise associations.

Another approach to increase women's entrepreneurship skills was the concept of "Info Ladies". A number of women successfully applied for loans to buy laptops and Internet connections in order to sell web-based agricultural services to farmers. These activities were implemented through local NGOs: Pride from Jessore and Dnet from Dhaka.

### **3. Data**

A baseline survey was conducted in late-2010 and early-2011 including 324 farm households in Dinajpur and Gazipur. The survey covered household demographics as well as agronomic practices, income sources, market linkages, adoption of modern seeds and technologies, as well as women's participation in household decision making, family businesses and farm management. In early 2015, the endline survey was conducted, in which particular attention was given to the participation and the outcome of training and on-farm trials related to maize and wheat cultivation for home consumption and marketing, including intercropping, grain storage, as well as seed production and storage.

Other data sets, including yearly surveys of participating farm households, as well as the systematic collection of women's and men's participation in specific activities and their feedback, e.g. to on-farm demonstrations and trials, and M&E data for the quarterly FtF reports.

### **4. Story:**

The woman farmer Monowara Begum from Jessore and her family were struggling to make ends meet from growing only one rice crop per year. In 2013, CIMMYT started with the introduction of maize in her region. Ms. Begum attended a training on intercropping maize with other crops, followed by several trainings on management practices on maize/wheat cultivation. Also her husband and her son attended. She was the first one in that region cultivating hybrid maize, resulting in a good harvest of high value. Given her agricultural and economic success as well as her pioneer spirit, Ms. Begum was chosen to be the leader of a CIMMYT-supported women's group. They started to grow maize, intercropped with garden pea and bush bean, and by selling their produce they could earn an income. By accumulating the earnings, the group was able to purchase a power tiller. The women also decided to buy a seeder machine and earn additional income as service providers by seeding and tilling other farmers' lands. Hunger Free World Bangladesh awarded Monowara Begum as the best entrepreneur in 2013. Similarly, as a consequence of their involvement with the project, four young women obtained loans after intensive training to buy laptops so that they could provide community members with Internet-based services.

# Latin America and the Caribbean

# Haiti Hope: Supporting Female Leadership in Haiti's Mango Export Sector



Haiti's farms yield some of the world's best mangos, but they have rarely yielded big profits for the farmers who own them. The country's mango sector has long been chaotic, with scattered production, volatile market channels, and extremely limited investment. Farmers were largely unable to reach potentially lucrative and relatively stable export markets.

The Coca-Cola Company, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the U.S. Agency for International Development, alongside implementing partner TechnoServe, launched the [Haiti Hope Project](#) in 2010 to address these challenges. One of the project's major initiatives involved the creation of producer business groups (PBGs) to aggregate the members' mangos and manage bulk sales to exporters. As the Haiti Hope project staff mapped the value chain, they identified an important issue: while women controlled much of the sales in the informal mango trade, they held just 9 percent of leadership roles in the country's farmer associations supplying the formal export market. How could the project support female leadership in a more formal, efficient mango export sector?



## THE HAITI HOPE APPROACH

In designing an approach to encourage female leadership in the new PBGs, the project held conversations with farmers to identify obstacles that kept women out of such positions in other farmer associations. The low rate of literacy among women in Haiti's rural areas posed a significant barrier. To address this, TechnoServe partnered with a local microfinance institution, Fonkoze, to pilot literacy training for women in the area. Evidence from focus groups suggests that this was well received, and that it helped to nurture women's confidence in their own leadership abilities.

Another significant obstacle to women's participation is the demand placed on their time by domestic responsibilities, such as childcare. Therefore, training was scheduled at times when women were more likely to be able to attend, such as non-market days, and were held in more accessible locations. However, women were still constrained from assume leadership roles at the PBGs because their husbands were unwilling take on tasks that were considered women's activities.

To address this, the project made the business case for female leadership. Trainers used a metaphor of a bird, which soars only when both of its wings are strong. If the PBG was the bird, women and men were its two wings. By making the business case for female participation in leadership—how this would help the PBGs, strengthen the mango sector, and boost household incomes—the staff encouraged households to develop strategies to provide women with the time needed to assume those roles.

The Haiti Hope staff also worked to ensure that women outside the formal PBG structures continued exercising leadership in the market, reaching out to *Madan Saras*, the informal traders who work in the local mango market. PBGs identified local *Madan Saras* in their business plans and contacted them to organize sales, especially when quality issues or low volumes prevented the group from selling on the export market. Armed with this knowledge, these traders adapted to new market opportunities, discovering that it was efficient and advantageous to purchase mangos aggregated by the PBGs. Over time, certain zones developed mango sales networks comprised of farmers, PBGs, *Madan Saras*, and packing houses to sell on local and export markets. 90 percent of the PBGs' rejected mangos, deemed unsellable on the export market

due to aesthetic reasons, were sold by women on the local market for a competitive price.

### **MARIE-CARME FILS-AIME: RISING UP**

In a rural community 100 miles north of Port-au-Prince, Marie-Carme Fils-Aime and her husband joined a local producer business group called Leve Kanpay, or “Rise Up,” in 2013. With the support of the Haiti Hope Project, they have improved their production techniques and earned USDA Organic and Fair Trade certification. Their fruit has been exported to the United States, and Marie-Carme has used the profits to buy seeds for other crops. The couple has also planted a 76-tree mango orchard.

Marie-Carme had also been chosen to serve as the PBG’s marketing agent, directly managing the sale of the group’s mangos to an exporter in the Haitian capital. With input from Marie-Carme, the PBG has used the premiums it has earned to repair the main line in the community’s water pump, improving access to potable water. The group has also invested in tilapia farming, providing a diversified source of income.

Marie-Carme’s influence in the community has grown since the Haiti Hope Project’s end. She was elected to serve as the Junior PBG Trainer, tasked with carrying on the agronomy training for member farmers that had been part of the project. She has even been urged to run for public office. “We’re working together and growing stronger,” Marie-Carme said. “And as women, we’re not just selling mangos now. We can do everything.”

### **SUPPORTING FEMALE LEADERSHIP**

By the time it finished in early 2016, the Haiti Hope Project had helped farmers organize 262 PBGs—94 percent of which were profitable. 38 percent of leadership roles were held by women, more than four times the average in Haiti’s farmer associations and exceeding the project’s target of 30 percent. 47 percent of the 19,138 participating PBGs’ members are women, as were 52 percent of the farmers who accessed loans.

The success of the Haiti Hope Project in supporting female leadership in the PBGs reflects several lessons. First, it is critical to understand and address the structural causes for low rates of female participation in those leadership roles. Second, it is important to make the business case for greater female participation in those positions. Finally, it is important to understand formal and informal markets, and how women and men interact with both, to create market channels that are as inclusive as possible.

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## **WOMAN-OWNED BUSINESSES SPUR EMPLOYMENT, INCOME, EMPOWERMENT**

*More than 70 percent of value addition clients under USAID-ACCESO were women.*

Recognizing that women have the potential to be the drivers of economic activity that improves quality of life and increases food security for rural families, [Fintrac](#) prioritizes the inclusion of women in activities along all points of the agricultural value chain. In Honduras, however, most women are not involved in crop production, so Fintrac, through the four-year Feed the Future program USAID-ACCESO, engaged women in value-added processing and small business development to encourage their participation in economic activities.

Women's participation in processing, value addition, and micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) under ACCESO was higher than in other project activities such as production. The project had overwhelming success working with women in value addition activities, where more than 70 percent of all individual clients were women. Many of these women formed off-farm MSMEs to produce and sell processed products such as pickled vegetables, plantain chips, fruit concentrates, dried fruits, and baked goods, opening up a variety of income-earning opportunities for themselves and their families.

MSMEs provided significant paid employment and self-employment opportunities for female clients. Out of the total number of employment positions created through MSMEs, 37 percent were for women, compared to just 15 percent of positions created *outside* of MSMEs. Forty-two percent of MSMEs that received technical assistance and training from ACCESO were woman-owned. Of these woman-owned MSMEs, 72 percent were focused on processing and value addition.

Technicians provided woman-owned MSMEs with comprehensive and integrated training on good manufacturing practices, processing systems, food safety standards, and business skills such as recordkeeping, budgeting, cost analysis, and profit margins.

Nearly 2,000 woman-owned MSMEs accessed new market opportunities through the project. They learned about packaging, labeling, and branding and received support in company registration and legalization, sanitary licenses, and credit access. The project helped these small businesses identify new markets and buyers, and worked with them to develop delivery schedules, helping to ensure long-term viability and profitability.

All of this resulted in concrete results for the businesses. On average, woman-owned MSMEs improved their sales by 50 percent above baseline, resulting in an increase in net incomes of 81 percent.

One of these businesses is Café ARIMEL, a coffee processing company run by two sisters in Santa Rosa de Copan. In 2012, with help from ACCESO technicians, they conducted a full business diagnostic to identify opportunities for growth. Based on this diagnostic, project specialists provided a suite of trainings in market-driven production, improved productivity, and finance and administration. With these interventions, Café ARIMEL increased its total sales by 35 percent over two years, translating directly to increased income and empowerment for the women, who have since invested in new equipment and are expanding their distribution network.

"We expect to grow by at least 100 percent over the next five years," Eunice Arita said after attending a business conference where she networked with leading supermarket chains.

Their success is proving to the larger community that women are capable of running efficient and profitable businesses – something long assumed to be the purview of men. "In my country, when we talk of a coffee



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producer, people think of a man in a *sombrero*,” Karen Arita said. “They did not believe all our [processing] work was done by women.”

USAID-ACCESO’s follow-on project, Feed the Future ACCESS to Markets, began in December 2014 with a target of benefitting 15,000 rural households. In order to increase and diversify household incomes, ACCESS to Markets is involving family members, particularly wives and daughters of producer clients, in developing small-scale businesses that utilize local production and focus on local markets. These include: processing milk into cream cheese, passion fruit into pulp, and sweet potatoes and plantains into chips; roasting coffee; and producing baked goods such as *pasteles* and bread.

In 2013, two women from Callejones, Santa Barbara formed a small plantain processing business called *Fuente de Bendicion*. They started receiving technical training in plantain chip production and when processing operations began, the women sold roughly \$170 per month. With ongoing support from ACCESO, and later ACCESS to Markets, the women made steady improvements in production efficiency, packaging, and labeling. By incorporating some basic technologies such as new stoves, they were able to ensure quality control and workplace safety.

Their investments and training have paid off. The women recently started filling weekly orders for large regional buyers and are processing 1,500 plantains a day, turning them into 1,300 bags of chips. Their monthly sales now exceed \$1,900 – a dramatic tenfold increase from their initial operations. They have invested part of their earnings into new equipment and a delivery truck.

The success in engaging women in agriculture through value-added processing and MSMEs teaches us important lessons. When women in Honduras are given the opportunity to participate in activities that are accessible from their homes, do not add significantly to their workloads (thanks to improved technologies), and result in additional income for their families, their participation rates and interest levels are high. These activities empower women by boosting household incomes, giving them control over more household financial decisions, and expanding their networks of like-minded entrepreneurs.

Women like those running Café ARAMEL and *Fuente de Bendicion* exemplify the entrepreneurial spirit that exists in rural communities and can inspire others to venture into non-traditional economic activities. Making a concerted effort to target women specifically for income-generation through processing results in improves household income and helps families move out of poverty.

####

### **Photo captions**

**Honduran business owners:** Glendy Nery Medina (left) and Lourdes Medina Hernandez started their own banana chip processing business in 2013. Thanks to technical assistance from Fintrac, their monthly sales have increased by nearly 1,000 percent and they have a steady stream of clients from surrounding towns.

**Coffee processing women:** Eunice Arita (right) and Karen Arita package ground coffee at their shop in Santa Rosa de Copan, Honduras. After receiving extensive training from Fintrac, the sisters expect to increase sales by 100 percent over five years.



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## Learning for Gender Integration and Women's Empowerment

A Case Study from Lutheran World Relief

### Background

In Honduras, an estimated 51 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, with the most extremely poor populations concentrated in six departments in the west. With that region, only 28 percent of households are headed by women, but 64 percent of those households live in poverty.<sup>1</sup>

Despite public policies at the national level, which provide the legal framework for supporting gender equality in agriculture, nonexistent or ineffectively implemented policies at the municipal and community levels prevent women from accessing the resources that would allow them to achieve food security.

### Gender in Agriculture: From Policy to Practice

Lutheran World Relief recognizes that women and men best fulfill their personal, family and community responsibility when they have equitable access to government services and programs, it is important for local governments to understand gender roles and responsibilities and promote gender equality through their policies and programs.

LWR learned that in order to achieve equitable access to program and services at the local level, there must be participation by women and men in consultative processes and local government decision-making. Women and men should be able to participate fully, allowing them to influence the outcomes of decision-making processes and play a substantive role in deciding local government priorities as well as the allocation of public funds. To achieve this required an increased capacity for women and men to practice leadership skills, with women in particular increasing their ability to take leadership roles in decision making at the municipal level.

The Gender in Agriculture: From Policy to Practice (GAPP) project is a two and a half-year activity (2013-2016) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through its Feed the Future (FtF) Program that is piloting a methodology that empowers both to advocate for policy changes that enhance women's access to credit.

The project works in nine municipalities in Western Honduras with 2,721 women members of ten Municipal Women's Networks (Red Municipal de la Mujer, RMM), as well as with 895 male leaders of 60 rural credit institutions (Instituciones de Credito Rural, ICR) from the department of Lempira.

### Capacity Building Activities

Qualitative needs assessments at both the RMM and ICR level determined the need for several interventions to strengthen the capacity of women to serve as leaders and advocates, as well as for male leaders in rural credit institutions to be supportive of women's business and agricultural initiatives.

Women in the department of Lempira contribute nearly half of all members' savings to rural credit institutions, yet receive less than a third of all issued credit. Further, they face significant obstacles to

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<sup>1</sup> INE (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas). 2011. System of Social Indicators for Children, Adolescents, and Women in Honduras. Quoted in USAID, 2013. Gender Analysis USAID/Honduras 2013. Washington, DC: USAID.

accessing credit including high interest rates, collateral requests and high transaction costs, among other factors.<sup>2</sup>

To address these issues, the GAPP project carried out interventions aimed developing a cadre of women and men with knowledge and leadership skills in the areas of equity, agriculture, and food security. One intervention, carried out with members of the RMM, focuses specifically on building women's leadership skills and improving their understanding of gender equality. The intervention consisted of five workshops, each with multiple modules, focusing on the topics of facilitation techniques, leadership and self-esteem, gender equality, masculinity and agriculture.

To expand the overall reach of the intervention, the workshop followed a Training of Trainers (ToT) model where women who completed the training were expected to replicate it to other RMM members. Women also received coaching by the GAPP team to address challenges or questions that emerged during the ToT. Men took part in participatory and reflective trainings to build understanding of how masculinity contributes to (or impedes) the achievement of gender equitable outcomes. This was carried out through workshops aimed at changing behavior among men that had them confront and deconstruct their perceptions of masculinity to rebuild a more positive and supportive image of what it is to be a man.

### **Impact and Outcomes**

As of year two, the GAPP project delivered training to a total of 2,142 participants (1,545 women and 395 men). Following year one, a sample survey was conducted that found 80 percent of women surveyed were using the knowledge they gained and felt increased confidence and willingness to participate in the development of municipal gender policy. A survey of 40 men found that 75 percent surveyed were interested in supporting policies and programs to promote gender equity in the agricultural sector. Following year two, another sample survey of 217 participants found that 90 percent were using the knowledge they gained to either support or execute a policy or program that promotes gender equity.

### **Testimonials**

Women's leadership in the agricultural sector remains limited by disparities in earned income and wages, as well as limitations in political empowerment<sup>3</sup>. National laws such as *Equal Opportunities for Women* and *Food and Nutrition Security* legislation have yet to define mechanisms to ensure effective implementation at the regional and municipal levels<sup>4</sup>. Through LWR's GAPP project, Feed the Future is addressing these challenges through the development of activities that allow equitable access to resources while promoting the role of local governments as institutions seeking the equitable development of the communities they serve. Idalma Cárcamo is a single mother who lives in Erandique, where poor quality water has a negative effect on children. After receiving training on leadership development from the GAPP project, she and other single mothers decided to work through their local women's network to draft a proposal to establish a water purification company. The proposal process had many steps, negotiations and follow-up with their local government officials, but with the skills they learned, the women navigated the process with tenacity and confidence. Now Agua Erandique provides safe water to more than 700 families in and around Erandique, and employs 10 low-income women.

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<sup>2</sup> INAM (Instituto Nacional de la Mujer). 2010. *El Plan de Igualdad y Equidad de Género de Honduras*. Tegucigalpa, Honduras: INAM.

<sup>3</sup> World Economic Forum. "2011 Global Gender Gap Report." 2011. Page 192-193. Available from <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-2011/>

<sup>4</sup> *Equal Opportunities for Women and Food and Nutrition Security* legislation have yet to define mechanisms to ensure effective implementation at the regional and municipal levels.

José Maximino Cruz is the president of the "Progressing Together" Rural Credit Institution in Erandique. He reports he initially thought he was practicing gender equity in his leadership role, but after undergoing training he realized ways he could greater support and promote women's agricultural initiatives. "Now that we know about this idea of masculinity, we have had to deal with some problems. And that is a big deal, because when we began we had the capacity and the skills (but) sometimes we didn't use them like we should have," José says. "But now we understand why it's important to let all people participate."

## **Sub-Saharan Africa**



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**Feed the Future Innovation Lab  
for Genomics to Improve Poultry**

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**Training women researchers brings science closer to culture**

Despite the large role that women play in agriculture in developing countries, they are critically underrepresented in agricultural research. In Sub-Saharan Africa, women represent just 30% of all researchers (UNESCO, 2010) and 14% of management positions in agricultural research and higher education agencies (Beintema & Di Marcantonio, 2010). Veterinarian and researcher Esther Molell of Sokoine University in Tanzania describes how in her country, “(d)eeply rooted traditional values very often pose serious obstacles to gender equality. Many cultural forces continue to stand in the way—ranging from women being steered toward other professions from an early age. It was believed that boys (do) better in science than girls” (Molell, 2016). In Tanzania, women represent just 24.8% of public agriculture research staff and 25% or researchers at academic institutions (UNESCO, 2010).

As part of the USAID Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Genomics to Improve Poultry, Molell is proving that women can play an important role in advanced scientific research. This 5-year research program has emphasized mentorship and capacity-building of women in research laboratories that are using genomic and genetic approaches to develop a breed of chicken with improved resistance to Newcastle Disease and heat stress. Women represent 55% of the long-term graduate student staff associated with this University of California, Davis led project, which partners with the University of Ghana, Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania, the University of Delaware, and Iowa State University (USAID Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Genomics to Improve Poultry, 2016).

As it works to develop this improved bird, the Genomics to Improve Poultry project is simultaneously committed to providing hands-on, practical training to students. In the first two years of the program, the University of Ghana and Sokoine University have hosted trainings in biosecurity, laboratory safety, laboratory techniques, and sample collection. Ghanaian graduate student Princess Botchway has worked for the project for two years, and says that it has increased her confidence to work as a researcher in animal breeding and genetics. “Prior to this project, I never had the courage to handle chickens. This project has therefore given me that courage and taught me appropriate bird handling and restraining techniques” (Botchway,



*Figure 1: Graduate student Melissa Hermann training Tanzanian graduate students to conduct ELISA assays*



*Figure 2: Princess Botchway processing newly hatched chicks*



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2016). Graduate students are also trained to perform advanced research techniques including tear collection, ELISA, RNA isolation, and qPCR. These assays are rarely available and accessible for scientists in Africa, especially women, which can empower them to pursue science in these areas. “(I have gained) hands-on experience in key aspects of chicken production, laboratory and on-farm biosecurity measures and team work” explains Botchway.

By gaining practical experience in the lab, trainees empower themselves to work in advanced laboratories that are contributing to the fight on global food insecurity. The objectives of the Genomics to Improve Poultry program are especially important for women in African countries, who are often cited as the primary owners of poultry (Guèye, 2005). “(L)ocal chickens are very important to the rural farmers, especially women and children, who make-up a majority of farmers in Ghana... Due to limited access to veterinary care resulting from poor access routes, lack of electricity, field personnel, funds, education, etc., most of these farmers lose a substantial number of chickens during an outbreak of Newcastle disease. It is important therefore to provide another alternative which is resistant local chicken breeds” (Botchway, 2016).



Figure 3: Princess Botchway collecting tear samples from chicks to assess presence of Newcastle Disease Virus

Molell agrees, and insists that women can help to bridge the gap between science and the real world, an important concern for the Genomics to Improve Poultry program. “Women have been centrally involved in the transmission of culture, given their close involvement with the education of children, and have thus been key transmitters of values and norms from generation to generation. Because of their closeness to family and children, women have a unique approach to science and its application that emphasizes the human dimension of science and technology, and its value in improving the quality of life and the empowerment of humankind. The integration of science into culture is a prerequisite for bringing science closer to society in which women are closely involved” (Molell, 2016). By integrating diverse expertise and perspectives, this program is addressing the need for the product in development, an improved chicken breed, to meet the specific needs and be relevant for the expected beneficiaries, rural smallholder farmers.



Figure 4: Dr. Esther Molell (left) brainstorming best models to breed and distribute improved chicken breeds to smallholder farmers with poultry experts from Kenya, Tanzania, and US in September of 2015.



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for Genomics to Improve Poultry**

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## Pay for Performance Incentives to Empower Women in Agriculture through Access to Finance

### DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

According to the Feed the Future (FtF) Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) baseline report, access to productive resources, including access to and decisions on credit, is the main challenge that contributes to the disempowerment of women in Ghana.<sup>1</sup> This has implications not only for women’s empowerment, but also food security, as women are responsible for the production of 70 percent of food crops in Ghana. Access to finance is a challenge for all agribusinesses in Ghana due to supply side constraints, including financial institutions’ (FIs) reluctance to make agriculture-related loans, lack of understanding of the opportunities and risks in agricultural lending, and limited product offerings suited to borrower needs, as well as demand side challenges, such as borrowers’ unfamiliarity with how to interact with the financial system. Women in Ghana’s north face additional economic and cultural barriers that impede their access to credit. Structural issues also play a role; women working in staple food value chains are mostly concentrated upstream as producers, primary processors, and small-scale traders—segments of the value chain that FIs often have difficulty catering to profitably due to their risk profiles, lack of collateral, remote location and small-sized loans.

### THE USAID-FINGAP MODEL

USAID’s Financing Ghanaian Agriculture Project (FinGAP), implemented by CARANA Corporation (now Palladium, following its acquisition of CARANA in 2015) was designed to support a wide range of beneficiaries working with FtF Implementing Partners in Ghana so that they could increase their level of access to finance. The project’s design placed specific emphasis on targeting unbanked actors in the ‘missing middle’ seeking financing amounts of \$25,000 to \$500,000. USAID-FinGAP was tasked with identifying a large set of agribusiness lending/investment opportunities, and then experimenting with technical assistance and “smart subsidies” to stimulate the expansion of the financial sector into agricultural lending.

USAID-FinGAP mobilizes finance to male and female-led agribusinesses in Ghana through a two-pronged approach (acting on both the supply and demand sides) utilizing “smart subsidies” (e.g. performance-based sub-awards). To build demand for banking services and products by agricultural value chain actors, USAID-FinGAP began by building a network of Ghanaian business advisory services (BAS) providers to identify investment opportunities, and to help these structure and package financing requests for FIs. It then put in place a parallel program on the supply side to encourage financing for those investments by Ghanaian banks, microfinance institutions (MFIs), rural community banks (RCBs) and investment funds—also using a pay-for-performance approach. In the case of both BAS and FIs, payments are made upon proof of financing and investment into the target value chains.

Gender-related challenges identified by the project early on, included that USAID-FinGAP was designed to directly benefit actors in segments of the value chains seeking “missing middle” financing, in which few women were found. Female-led BAS providers were also few in number. The USAID-FinGAP team recognized that innovative approaches were needed to connect more women from the Feed the Future value chains with appropriate financing.

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<sup>1</sup> Hazel Jean Malapit et al., “Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index: Baseline Report”(USAID and IFPRI, 2014)



## THE SOLUTION

USAID-FinGAP employs several strategies to ensure the project's pay-for-performance framework reaches women operating in the maize, rice, and soy value chains in Northern Ghana. First, the USAID-FinGAP team targets agribusinesses (e.g., processors, traders, aggregators) for financing which frequently “on-lend” to upstream actors where most women are located within each value chain. The project also includes a bonus within its performance incentive scheme to encourage FIs and BAS providers to identify and facilitate financing for women-led agribusinesses. The USAID-FinGAP team actively pursued female consulting firms to encourage them to join the BAS network, expanding the number of female-led providers by several-fold, leading to more female agribusinesses served. The team also decided to take their Investment Summit concept “on the road”, and in addition to hosting a large Agribusiness Investment Summit in Accra each year, hosted a series of “Mini-Summits” in rural areas where upstream actors are located to facilitate business linkages between women-led BAS providers, SMEs and FIs. FIs jumped at the opportunity to meet more potential clients directly in the field. Last, BAS providers began to aggregate women's financing applications into one larger application, for submission to rural community banks and MFIs, thereby easing collateral requirements, reducing the transaction costs for the banks evaluating them, and increasing the likelihood of loan approval.

## IMPACT

By March 2016, USAID-FinGAP efforts had generated a total of \$87 million in new, private, incremental financing to more than 700 small, medium, and large businesses for targeted investments in the maize, rice, and soy value chains. As of this date, 248 female-led agribusinesses have received direct financing from the project and an estimated 25,000 female smallholder farmers in Northern Ghana have received on-lent input financing from beneficiary SME firms to support their agricultural production and trade activities, in addition to being linked with a secure buyer for their goods. For example, Premium Foods, a USAID-FinGAP-supported poultry firm that benefited from a loan facilitated through this program, provides interest-free input financing for smallholder farmers, including women. USAID-FinGAP's “Mini-Summits” have successfully enabled BAS providers and FIs to identify new potential borrowers while expanding SME understanding of the benefits of BAS. Holding these and other events (e.g., meet and greets, events at markets) closer to where the women in the value chains are physically located has been a successful strategy to identify new, rural clients, especially women. USAID-FinGAP has engaged five women-led BAS providers to facilitate deals for women-led agribusinesses, which has proven to be an effective approach: nearly one-third of all women-led agribusinesses the project works with are partnered with these BAS providers.

## SPOTLIGHT

One of the most successful strategies to unlock financing for women in agriculture is aggregating the financing requests of many small-scale producers and aggregators. This model has been widely used by the northern Bonzali Rural Bank, an FI in USAID-FinGAP's network. Heavily leveraging a performance-based grant from USAID worth \$33,000, it has so far released \$820,000 in agribusiness loans to mostly female-dominated farmer-based organizations in the target value chains. Over 740 women from 91 different women's groups expanded their agribusinesses in Northern Ghana because of these individual and group loans. Ayishetu Adama, a rice, maize, and soy aggregator, is just one of the hundreds of women impacted by USAID-FinGAP, but her experience typifies that of many. Before USAID-FinGAP, Adama was selling 10-15 bags per week in Tamale, now with the support of loans from Bonzali, Adama is aggregating 50-80 bags per week.

For further information on USAID-FinGAP's progress in reaching women, a Gender Report completed by the project is available upon request. The Palladium team would be happy to present it at the Learning Evidence Exchange as well.

USAID Financing Ghanaian Agriculture Project (USAID-FinGAP)  
AID-641-C-13-00002

## **Reducing gender gaps in agriculture – a story from ADVANCE Ghana**

### **Background**

ADVANCE is a five year project, funded by USAID/Feed the Future and implemented by a consortium led by ACDI/VOCA, with Technoserve, PAB Consult and ACDEP as the partners. The project's main goal is to increase the competitiveness of the maize, rice and soya value chains in Ghana, more specifically in the Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Ashanti, and Brong Ahafo regions. ADVANCE achieves this through boosting the agricultural productivity of the three commodities, improving the value chain actors' access to market and finance, and strengthening local capacities.

### **Gender strategy**

The project will reach over 113,000 smallholder farmers by end of 2018, out of them 40% will be women. At the end of 2015, since the beginning of the project, a total of 70,238 smallholders benefitted from the project, 30,510 of them (or 43.44%) were women. To impact women farmers' lives and mainstream gender equity in the targeted communities, ADVANCE designed and implements a gender strategy. The related activities in FY14 and FY15 evolved around the key points below:

- *Actively engage women in capacity building:* This includes among others making sure that the women can attend and benefit from the trainings through gender appropriate materials (more pictorial given their low literacy level) and training settings (sometimes with husbands), times, frequency and duration (in the afternoon or after serving dinner where they have more free time, for not more than two hours), in local languages etc.
- *Recognize relevant technology:* Technologies that meet women's needs and preferences, and are time saving, less physically demanding, and affordable will be the ones promoted towards women farmers through trainings and demonstrations
- *Build women's leadership capacities* through training, mentorship, awareness campaign, and networking
- *Improve women's literacy and numeracy skills* through specific trainings
- *Facilitate women's access to land* through advocacy activities, sensitization, and linkage development with outgrower businesses
- *Increase women's access to agriculture inputs* through community input promotion and Village and Savings Loans Associations (VSLAs) formation to save for inputs acquisition during crop season

As of end 2015, the project was able to train over 20,000 women in good agricultural practices, farming as a business, sell more for more, post-harvest handling, leadership, literacy and numeracy, business management and the like. The targeted number of women training beneficiaries for the whole life of project is 36,000.

### **Purpose**

This note summarizes the extent to which the project was able to reduce the gender gap by increasing women's yields through the above mentioned activities.

### **Methodology**

ADVANCE conducts every year a survey to estimate beneficiaries' yields from a representative sample, through crop cut procedures. In addition, the projected collected in 2015 data on women's ownership and uses of assets, resources and income, as well as decision making processes in the households from a representative sample of its FY15 beneficiaries, which included 1,592 women planting maize, rice and soya. Data was analyzed and statistical tests were conducted to assess relationships and their significance between the support provided and women's yields.

## Findings

Analysis of the 2014 and 2015 yields showed that men farmers always obtained higher yields, across crops. However, as seen in **Table 1** below, women’s yields increases were much higher than the men’s, especially in maize and soy.

*Table 1: Yields values and changes in 2014 and 2015*

|                    | Maize  |       | Rice   |        | Soy    |        |
|--------------------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|                    | Female | Male  | Female | Male   | Female | Male   |
| 2015 yield (MT/ha) | 3.65   | 3.73  | 3.81   | 4.07   | 1.8    | 1.86   |
| 2014 yield (MT/ha) | 3.18   | 3.58  | 2.82   | 3.04   | 1.49   | 1.65   |
| % increase         | 14.65% | 4.14% | 35.28% | 33.95% | 20.42% | 12.57% |

To ascertain whether the project’s gender strategies contributed in those significant changes, further analysis and tests were conducted. Data on the 2015 crop season indicated that the women who attended the good agricultural practices (GAPs) trainings were more likely to use improved seeds (chi-square test p-value of 9.99797E-72): 50.8% of the female farmers who attended the GAPs training used improved seeds while this percentage is only at 42.9% for those who didn’t attend.

Further analysis showed that use of improved seeds significantly influenced yields (t-test p-value 3.60861E-08). The women who used improved seeds had their yield 21.23% higher than those who didn’t in average. This implies that those who attended GAPs trainings, were more likely able to get higher yields as they were more likely to use improved seeds. This assumption has been confirmed by a t-test on the relationship between GAPs training attendance and yields that was found significant (p-value of 7.91841E-05). The women who attended had over 20.43% higher yields in average. Many other factors were tested (ownership and use of assets, inputs into decisions, attendance to other trainings etc.), but no relationship was found as significant. However, further analysis are being carried out.

## Lessons

These findings imply that to increase women’s yields, the key activity would be training them on GAPs. Any other type of assistance has to be accompanied by GAPs to get better impacts, in the case of ADVANCE. It is also fairly assumed that the GAPs trainings delivered so far are effective and are properly reaching the women farmers. The project implements those through demonstration sites. Inputs providers sponsor the setting up of these sites through donation of all the needed inputs. The demo sites represent a marketing opportunity for those companies, allowing them to expand their customer base and sell more products. Through the established relationships between them and the farmers, the project increases women’s access to improved inputs, which would have been difficult to them otherwise. This fits into ADVANCE’s sustainability strategy, as that relationship is likely to remain, even after the project ends. Implemented corollary activities helping the beneficiaries to apply the GAPs knowledge are the formation of VSLAs by the project so that the women can finance the inputs purchase, and provision of women friendly tools and equipment through small grants programs.



*With ADVANCE’s support, Margaret Tabla increased her maize yield from 0.3 MT/acre to 1.04 MT/acre, earning her an income of \$1,330USD*

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## CASE STUDY:

# WOMEN EMPOWERED BY MOBILE MONEY

The merits of financial inclusion are strongly rooted in empowerment. And yet, in Malawi, only 33 percent of the adult population is banked. The primary reasons for this low number are remote distances from bank branches and cumbersome procedures to open bank accounts and access formal credit. These barriers are particularly acute for women. Only 28 percent of Malawian women are banked, compared to 37 percent of men (FinScope Consumer Survey Malawi 2014). **So what if that distance was removed? And what if women could safely store money and access financial services through their phones?** Technology makes this possible. In Malawi, there is no discernable difference in mobile phone ownership between women and men. Affordability, rather than gender, is the main determining factor in mobile phone ownership.

Research by Women's World Banking in rural Malawi showed that Malawian women fill many roles within their families. They lead domestic as well as economic activities at home, on the farm, and in the markets. Women are often very involved in household financial decision making around farm inputs, school fees, and housing rent. Malawian women are unique in that they identify themselves as providers and have an expected role in saving for the family's future. Thus, it is imperative that Malawian women have access to financial services.

This access becomes even more important when you factor in women's limited property rights and that they tend to own fewer assets than men. Combined with low levels of wages and labor force participation, women are often left with insufficient collateral to even obtain credit. Even if women have collateral, married women remain barred from full membership in farmers' clubs – the main sources of credit and extension services for small farmers. And yet, access to credit is a key link between economic opportunity and economic outcome.



*Airtel Money provides financial access points throughout Malawi for mobile money customers  
April 2016*

Recognizing the barriers to credit that women face in Malawi, FHI 360 partnered with The Hunger Project to pilot the use of mobile money in the process of microloan disbursements and repayments. Through this pilot, 186 beneficiaries opened mobile money accounts and FHI 360 delivered training on financial literacy and mobile money and subsidized the cost of the mobile handset to offset burden on the beneficiary. In total, the pilot disbursed microloans to a total of 48 recipients (43 females and 5 males), disbursing a total of MWK 1,532,000.

While programs such as The Hunger Project's microloan program are making considerable efforts

to ensure financial inclusion for women in Malawi, FHI 360 was able to support the addition of a layer of technology – mobile money – to make these efforts easier and more inclusive for women.

So now we have answers to our initial questions: What if the distance was removed? And what if women could safely store money and access financial services through their phones? Registering for a mobile money account is less cumbersome than procedures required by banks. It also brings financial access points closer to the beneficiaries through the agent network rather than requiring them to traverse long distances to reach a bank branch or other location through which they could receive or repay their loans from The Hunger Project.



*Melina sharing with other people how she has used her mobile money account: March 2015*

Perhaps most importantly, a mobile money account provides a safe and secure way for women to have control over their money. This point is illustrated well by Melina Chizimu<sup>1</sup> aged 39 from Msamanyada Village in Ntcheu District. Melina is a married 39 year old woman. She earns a living through farming and small scale income generating activities. She and her husband have four children – three girls and one boy. She comes from Msamanyada Village in Ntcheu District. Melina does not have a bank account so finding a secure place to save money had been a challenge for her. That changed in November 2013 when she opened her first mobile money account with the support of FHI 360 and The Hunger Project.

Melina said, “Before I had a mobile money account I used to keep money in my handbag. But very often I would find that the money is not there. My husband drinks beer and he would take the money regardless of where I hid it. This was causing quarrels in our family. With a mobile money account, I have done away with him and the problem is over. He does not even know the PIN for my account.”

Melina used to hear about mobile money on the radio, but she lacked the confidence and understanding of the system to open her own account. When FHI 360 and The Hunger Project implemented the pilot in Blantyre and Ntcheu, Melina received training on mobile money and financial literacy. In addition to using the mobile money account to save money securely, she has been using it for many other things – as a wallet, for buying airtime, and for sending money. In January 2015, Melina saved MWK 3,600 (\$8.60) in her account. In the next month, she saved an additional MWK 5,000 (\$12).

“Quarrelling with my husband was the order of the day. Even when I tried to change places to hide the money, he could find it. My heart was in pain. With a mobile money account now the problem is over.”

**- Melina Chizimu, Mobile Money Pilot Beneficiary**

Melina further says she wants to use her mobile money account to save more money. “Now I plan to keep more money in my account the same way we keep money with Village Savings and Loan groups. I plan to accumulate savings to buy fertilizer to use in my garden.”

[www.feedthefuture.gov](http://www.feedthefuture.gov)

<sup>1</sup> Name has been changed to protect the beneficiary’s identity.

## Empowering Women Cooperatives through Public-Private Partnerships for Shea Value Chain Development in Mali

**Djalalou-Dine A.A. Arinloye (ICRAF)\* Antoine Kalinganire (ICRAF)\* & Ataoulaye Bah (ICCO-Cooperation)†**

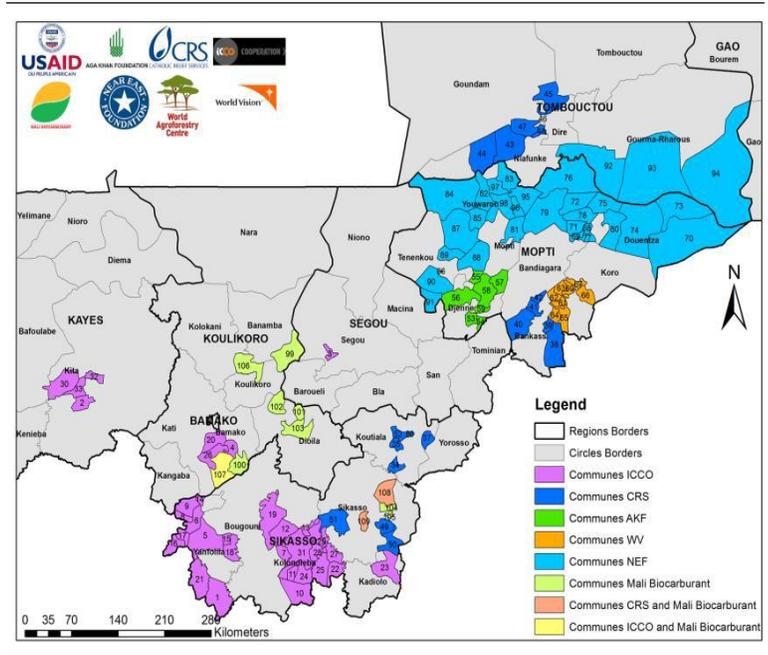
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In the framework of the Feed the Future (FtF) USAID-funded project on Scaling-up Climate-Smart Agroforestry Technologies for improved market access and food and nutritional security in Mali (SmAT-Scaling), a particular emphasis has been placed on empowering women through tree-based public-private partnerships (PPP).

**Key Lessons:** Since its inception in 2014, the SmAT-Scaling project has placed particular emphasis on empowering women through tree-based agroforestry using the following scaling-up approaches: (1) diffusion of bottom-up, demand-driven, market-oriented agroforestry technologies and practices including high quality seeds and seedlings; tree grafting and planting; farmer-managed natural regenerations; climate-smart soil and water conservation, etc.; (2) multistakeholder innovation platforms; (3) rural resource centers, which are managed by grassroots organizations, that serve as training and demonstration hubs and provide opportunities to farmers, especially women, to share experiences with peers and receive technical guidance and services that are tailored to their livelihood needs; (4) capacity building, demonstrations, and learning visits; (5) radio broadcasting on agroforestry practices, tree planting, and climate information for decision making; and (6) market opportunity development for priority tree species that have high market potential through PPPs.

This development-oriented project, which implements its gender-specific activities in the Mopti, Sikasso, Segou, Kayes, Koulikoro, and Timbimktu regions of Mali, works in more than 810 villages across 104 communes. The project has contributed to creating awareness and improving rural communities' consumption of nutritious, tree-based products, including fruits and tree-based leafy vegetables, for improved food and nutritional security. This assistance has helped create incentives for women to include Moringa and Baobab leaves as part of their household food consumption. With private sector support, SmAT-Scaling also contributed to improving the quality and competitiveness of shea products; strengthening the management skills of women's cooperative organizations; improving access to and management of loans; access to finance; and improving food and nutrition security. This assistance has created opportunities for more than 14,000 women to develop business plans with the support of business development services providers.



**Figure 1: SmAT-Scaling Project Focus Locations**

**Activities:** The World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) is implementing the five-year project, which is funded by USAID/Mali, from 2014 to 2019. Field activities are being implemented in partnership with the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), World Vision Mali (WV), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO Cooperation), Mali Biocarburant SA (MBSA), the Near East Foundation (NEF), Institut d'Economie Rurale (IER), and the Regional Directorates of Agriculture and Forest (DRA and DREF).

SmAT-Scaling emphasizes cascade and farmer-to-farmer training and experience sharing through inter-country and inter-community learning routes. More specifically, the shea value chain development PPP, with the support of national and international NGOs and research centers, including ICRAF, ICCO Cooperation, Société Abdoul Talla et Frères (SOATAF), TERAFINA, OIKO, and Olvea-Burkina, has empowered Malian women through the following activities:

- Improving the quality and competitiveness of shea products through market assessments and business plan development; promotion of energy- and time-saving technologies and business processes; building of warehouses; and training on best processing techniques to achieve certification standards
- Strengthening the financial and administrative management of shea cooperatives while also streamlining gender considerations. To this effect, a capacity gap assessment is being carried out, and a development plan to address the main

weaknesses will be developed. ICCO Cooperation is facilitating membership of shea producer organizations in the Global Shea Alliance.

- Facilitating linkages with local, regional, and international markets and improving access to financial services. Local microfinance institutions TERAFINA and OIKO are helping to develop tailored financial products that are adapted to the specific needs of shea value chain actors. ICCO Cooperation is also assisting in identifying ways for cooperatives to sell more directly to end users (manufacturers of refined shea products) and to further develop value-addition capabilities at local and national levels.
- Fostering an environmentally smart, climate-resilient shea value chain by promoting shea parkland regeneration, improved governance of and women's access to shea parklands, and enhanced shea parkland resilience
- Improving the food and nutrition security of shea producers through sensitization and trainings on the need to produce and consume more nutritious food

**Data:** In facilitating collective actions and centralization of shea nut supply, a warehouse with a capacity of 3,000 tons is being constructed in Bamako as a first step toward connecting shea producer organizations to markets. The warehouse for the storage of *karité* is a milestone in the economic empowerment of women involved in the collection and sale of shea nuts. The warehouse cost approximately CFA 50 million (approximately \$100,000) to build. ICCO Cooperation is facilitating further private sector investments in warehouses in strategic locations, including two in Sikasso, one in Koulikoro, and one in Kita, in 2016 and 2017.

In terms of women's needs related to financial products, the SmAT-Scaling project facilitated support from Terrafina Microfinance to assist local microfinance institutions in providing innovative financial products that are tailored to the needs of shea cooperatives. This collaboration with financial institutions has also allowed SOATAF to obtain a line of credit of 500 million CFA francs (\$1 million) from the Banque Nationale de Développement Agricole (BNDA) as a guarantee to purchase shea nuts from women cooperatives in 2015.

Collaboration has been strengthened between ICRAF, ICCO Cooperation, and Fair Match Support (a business development provider with strong experience in providing support to cooperatives on shea certification) to work on capacity building for cooperatives in the production of certified shea nuts. The SmAT-Scaling project, through ICCO Cooperation, has signed agreements with Olvea and Fair Match Support to facilitate the certification of shea nuts in Mali. More specifically, actions are being taken to (1) improve the revenue of 3,000 Malian women who are certified shea nut processors; (2) build the financial, management, and governance of five women's groups; (3) improve the quality of shea nuts; and (4) supply Olvea with 60 tons of certified shea nuts in 2015, 200 tons in 2016, and 500 tons in 2017. The linkage between women's cooperatives and local financial institutions improved women's access to better quality financial services, particularly credit.

As the value chain is strengthened and incentives are aligned, shea cooperatives are becoming more attractive, more credible, and more reliable customers for the microfinance institutions that are on board. Now that the cooperatives are becoming stronger, more professional, and more bankable, they are more likely to be able to hire financial and administrative managers (i.e., accountants and cooperative and business coordinators) and pay them based on their own revenues. They are also more likely to be able to pay fees to business development service providers for training and other services such as quality improvements to ensure the sustainability of achievements.

**Story:** ICRAF, in partnership with ICCO Cooperation, has engaged SOATAF and Olvea, two private partners that are committed partners in the SmAT Scaling project. ICCO Cooperation discussed building a storage facility with SOATAF to aggregate shea nuts from cooperatives. ICCO Cooperation and SOATAF have purchased shea nuts from cooperatives at competitive prices and are issuing long-term commercial contracts with shea nut and butter cooperatives. The SmAT Scaling project has also engaged Olvea, a private sector firm that processes oil for cosmetic products, on sourcing shea bio from cooperatives. SOATAF signed a \$1.2-million purchase agreement contract with women's cooperatives for shea nuts. Olvea is committed to purchasing higher volumes of shea nuts from 2015 to 2017. More specifically, they intend to purchase 360 MT of organic certified and conventional shea nuts in 2015; 500 MT in 2016; and 800 MT in 2016 from women's cooperatives in Mali. Increased production is being achieved through awareness-raising activities, capacity building, greater access to and use of improved agroforestry practices (seedlings, nursery, grafting techniques, etc.), and value addition. The social status of women is improving as the project is working to ensure that women are in leadership and other decision-making positions, and that they are more proactively advanced to management positions in cooperatives and federations. Improving women's resiliency to external shocks, given that many live in women-lead households, is considered to be part of capacity-building activities. Additionally, the project is working to register 25 women's cooperatives under the Global Shea Alliance sustainability initiative. This will provide women's cooperatives with greater visibility and more direct access to higher-level markets, thus bypassing middlemen. ICCO Cooperation has committed to linking these groups to the national shea association and has also helped them achieve ASBI-type certification standards. Moreover, the food security and nutrition of these households are a major focus as actions are being taken to facilitate access to diverse, high-quality food, including Moringa and Baobab leaves.

**Photos:**



*Photo 1 Caption: Training workshop for women cooperatives representatives on shea nuts aggregation, commercialisation, and negotiation techniques. Tominian, Segou Mali*



*Photo 2 Caption : Women hand depulping freshly harvested shea nuts. Sangana Cooperative, Sikasso Mali*



*Photo 3 Caption: Women cooperatives members being trained in quality shea nuts that meet markets requirements, Kemeni, Segou Mali*



*Photo 4 Caption: Women cooperatives members being trained in Baoba juice processing in Mopti- Mali*

## Immaculee Kayitesi - Rwandan Women Entrepreneur of the Year

*Have capacity building and increased leadership or management opportunities for women led to increased participation of women in leadership roles in the community?*

Through collaborative research with the Rwanda Dairy Competitiveness Program II (RDCP II) and the Integrated Improved Livelihood Program (IILP) in July 2014, the Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING) Project attempted to build a comprehensive understanding of how increases in income affect purchasing and consumption patterns among these programs' participants, their care seeking and caregiving practices, and women's empowerment.



Photo: Immaculee Kayitesi recognized at the Rwanda Development Board Awards

A key component of women's empowerment is their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home. SPRING wanted to see whether or not activity beneficiaries increased their presence and participation outside their home and how their perceptions of status may have changed as a result.

One USAID-funded activity that focuses on training and empowering its beneficiaries, many of whom are women, is RDCP II. The five-year program, which started in 2012, seeks to reduce poverty through expanded marketing of good quality milk that generates income and employment, and improves household nutrition. The program has made conscious efforts to engage women at different points along the value chain (e.g. holding training sessions at times most convenient for women, setting targets of female participation before training sessions and actively encouraging women to participate, stipulating to service providers to reach out to women, and encouraging women to actively engage when they attend training sessions).

Over time, RDCP II has seen a positive trend in self-efficacy, self-confidence, and equity among its female beneficiaries. The activity assesses those three key program indicators before and after trainings that focus on improving beneficiaries' ability to secure grants and loans, increasing the quality of their



# FEED THE FUTURE

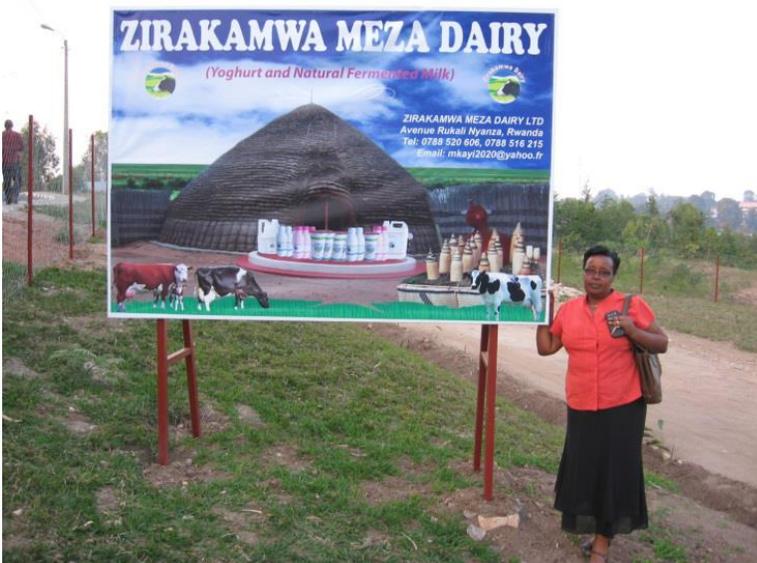
The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

product, and enhancing their business and management capabilities. Using both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, SPRING looked more closely into if and how participation in RDCP II increased women's presence and participation in activities outside their homes. Change in women's status was captured in several ways including involvement in decision-making, engagement in development projects and in income-generating activities, reduced dependency on their male partners, and taking up leadership positions within their groups and in the local committees.

While the overall trends were positive, one story stood out: Immaculee Kayitesi's. Immaculee is a widow of the Rwandan Genocide against the Tutsi. In 2013 RDCP II started working with Immaculee on her small dairy enterprise with only a handful of employees. Over the past three years, the activity has provided Immaculee with a range of trainings and business opportunities in order to boost her milk and yogurt company. The transformation has been remarkable.

After Immaculee participated in trainings on financial management and business performance, RDCP II encouraged her to apply for a loan to enhance her dairy business. With the loan secured, the activity worked with her to improve milk quality, emphasizing the importance of milk testing at the source and

good hygiene. To facilitate improved milk testing, RDCP II provided Immaculee with testing kits.



After receiving training in good manufacturing practices, RDCP II linked Immaculee with the Rwanda Bureau of Standards (RSB). Working alongside the RSB, Immaculee is acquiring two certifications to signify the quality of her milk and manufacturing practices to consumers: the S-Mark and HACCP certifications. She has successfully passed all the tests needed to acquire the S-Mark, and is currently waiting to be approved. She will start the

application process for HACCP shortly.

It is evident that through capacity building and creating business opportunities for women, people like Immaculee are able to transform an idea into a profitable company. RDCP II's Gender Expert, Alice Bamusiime, articulated it best when she said, ***"Female entrepreneurs just need mentors that help them pursue their own dreams. And once they have the right ones, they can make powerful strides in their community and their country."***



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# Feed the Future Rwanda PSDAG

## Anne Marie Ukwimanishaka, Kigali Farms

March, 2016

The Rwanda Private Sector Driven Agriculture Growth (PSDAG) Program is a five-year project funded by USAID/Rwanda that began in August, 2014. The goal of PSDAG is to increase smallholder farmers' incomes by promoting private sector investments, with particular focus on women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWD's). PSDAG's two main objectives are 1) Assist the GoR to increase private sector investment; and 2) Facilitate increased private sector investment in upgrading agricultural value chains. Now through the first year and a half of implementation, PSDAG is gaining greater understanding of how **paid employment for women is created through the increased commercialization of value chains**. Both wage and self-employment for women has been found to increase in some cases.

PSDAG developed the Value Chain Competitiveness Grants (VCCG) Facility designed to solicit applications which facilitate increased private sector investment in upgrading agricultural value chains. Ninety-nine applications were received from private partners involved in all stages of the project's four targeted food crop value chains.

In January 2016, PSDAG partnered with local private sector firm, Kigali Farms, under the VCCG Facility for the production of button mushrooms in the first production facility of its kind in East Africa. This activity is ongoing through January 2017 and will assist Kigali Farms to make necessary investments to build and operate a commercially successful mushroom substrate and growing plant in the Musanze District of Rwanda's Northern Province. Kigali Farms is working closely with the local community, specifically with some 800 farmers, 368 of whom are expected to be women, in order to produce and export a total of USD 110,000 of fresh button mushrooms to regional markets.



Ann Marie weighing wheat straw at Kabuye Ka Kavumu collection center in Musanze District, Rwanda.

Photo: © PSDAG Project/Wilson Kaikai

Kigali Farms collects and reports on its transactions with beneficiary communities through aggregation centers. Data collected is disaggregated by gender and location and includes quantity and value of wheat straw supplied to Kigali Farms by beneficiary community members. As the project and activity are still in nascent stages, strong quantitative data is in the process of being collected for this case under the VCCG Facility. Despite this, however, early successes have emerged under Kigali Farms' activities.

Smallholder farmers working with Kigali Farms have the potential of realizing multiple benefits from their involvement in the endeavor. Since the production of button mushrooms requires the use of wheat straw in February 2016, Kigali Farms began purchasing wheat straw from farmers through a collection center mechanism. Three collection centers have been established to date in Musanze District, Busogo Sector for this purpose. Wheat straw has not traditionally been viewed as a marketable commodity, and the collection and disposal of it was usually left to women.

Straw collection is now emerging as a good business opportunity that farmers are beginning to consider for off-farm incomes. Before Kigali Farms engaged farmers, wheat straw was either burnt or used as manure. Most farmers and communities saw no economic value attached to wheat straw, and therefore considered it a woman's responsibility to burn and clear the farm. When Kigali Farms engaged the community for supply of wheat straw, women saw an opportunity to convert the 'worthless' waste into family income.

Kigali Farms have so far purchased approximately 20 tons of wheat straw, generating earnings of USD 800 in less than one month to 26 farmers and collectors, 21 of whom are women. Purchase of wheat straw through collection centers has not only increased women's off-farm income, but is increasing women's employment and entrepreneurship as well. Kigali Farms works with paid facilitators to coordinate collection, aggregation and storage of wheat straw.

Anne Marie Ukwimanishaka, a 25-year-old high school graduate, is employed by Kigali Farms as a facilitator for Kabuye Ka Kavumu collection center in Musanze District. Anne Marie earns \$2 a day and since she started working in February 2016, she has used her earnings of \$60 per month to buy a sheep for her family, and also materials for her new basket-making business. She expects to generate more income for her family from this side-business. During the day, Anne Marie works at the collection center and at night, she makes 2 baskets which she sells at \$1.40 per basket. Her business generates a weekly profit of roughly \$15, and Anne Marie says her income from her salary as a facilitator and her basket business has made her the bread winner of her family. She plans to buy more sheep and expand her basket making business.



Ann Marie with her handmade baskets.  
Photo: © PSDAG Project/Wilson Kaikai

*"Kigali Farms has created an opportunity for me and other women to earn income to our families. It is a great economic opportunity for women in this village, and the impact of earnings from wheat straw is visible at household level as demonstrated by myself."  
-Ann Marie Ukwimanishaka*

## Feed the Future Senegal / Naatal Mbay - Anna Gaye, GIE Kissal Patim

Anna Gaye from the village of Mampatim in the Casamance Region of Senegal has emerged as a leader of her rice growing group with the support of USAID/Senegal's Feed the Future initiative. Since 2012, she started working with the Kissal Patim farmer organization in her capacity as a development worker with a local NGO. When she started working with Kissal Patim, the organization was made up of some 600 members. —two thirds of whom were women. USAID/Senegal's Economic Growth Project forged partnerships with existing producer groups and local NGOs to expand rice production and **empower women in leadership roles** in their organizations, communities and households. Anna has continued her involvement with the group which has now grown to 2,016 members and still the majority women through the Feed the Future Senegal initiative Naatal Mbay. Anna was trained by Feed the Future as a lead farmer to share best production practices with her follow farmers, as a data base manager to monitor and track critical production and business information, and as a community advocate in marketing and organizational skills to promote the expansion of the rice value chain in southern Senegal.

Feed the Future has introduced and expanded access to new high-yielding rice varieties and improved planting techniques. Anna's group has been able to produce as much as three times greater yields while using less water, and other inputs. In 2012, they produced 584 tons of rice with average yields of 2.1 tons/hectare. In 2015, Kissal Patim produced an average of 3.02 tons/ha, for a total of 2,569 tons of rice. Their group was surpassed by only one other group in the Naatal Mbay affiliated groups, and Kissal Patim has 60% women in leadership positions. Anna says of her involvement in the project, "I work as a facilitator, training other farmers on best practices, quality, and other important skills. Since the work I do is at the family level, I find I am always in the role of facilitator or a moderator—even my own family now says that I'm the "grandmother" (matriarch) of the family- even my grandmother says it."

Anna explains that an empowered woman is one who takes control—not *from* men—but she is a woman whose perspective is heard and taken into consideration by society. In the home, she contributes to household economic activities from start to sale, and after sales are finished she has a say on what is done with the money- for school, childcare, and more- without needing to ask her extended family for help. In the rural world it is really up to the woman to take care of the household, but she needs to have the means to do so.

Before working with Feed the Future, Anna admits she was too shy to speak in public, especially to share her personal point of view, adding "It was impossible!" But gradually, through the project trainings she received on best practices, and business principles, she came to



Anna Gaye of the Kissal Patim rice growers group based in Kolda, Casamance, Senegal, supports more than 600 farmers and has become a leader in promoting the highly sought after Riz du Sud

## Feed the Future Senegal / Naatal Mbay - Anna Gaye, GIE Kissal Patim

appreciate the importance of her work and her contributions in meetings. In her words, “I became truly passionate about it so I overcame my shyness. Now people say I talk a lot. Maybe I do, but it’s because I know I can help. Being seen as an empowered woman in my community, I am often sought after by women’s groups, even from other communities, to help them get ahead. I want to sensitize women about what they can do and inspire and motivate them to advocate for themselves and each other. I want to show that women can work and participate in meetings, in different activities, projects, etc—and even if they are illiterate they can still understand the work and do it well. Women also have a responsibility to overcome their shyness and show the world that their opinions are important.”

At the 2016 national agricultural trade fair held in Dakar, Senegal, Anna was front and center of the marketing effort to promote *Riz du Sud* – the rice produced in Southern Senegal’s Casamance region. Long in the shadow of its production giants from Northern Senegal’s River region, the Casamance traditionally produced only enough for home consumption. However, with the new adapted and high yielding varieties, commercial rice production has now become a viable economic activity for predominately women smallholder farmers in the zone. Alongside Anna’s group, Kissal Patim, 24 other groups are producing quality rice for the national market. While local rice was always a preference, especially for the population in the Casamance region, previously the supply could not meet the demand, making way for imported rice. Since 2014, local rice production has increased by at least 100%, which has allowed women to rise to the forefront of the emergence of the Casamance rice trade.

*“I know the realities in the rural world and I can help women there. I am one of them and speak their language and know I can help.”*

- Anna Gaye

Anna is looking ahead to the future, and her aim for women’s empowerment goes beyond rice marketing. “I also want to enable other women to send their children to school, because that’s what really changed my life: my mom was able to send me to school. It wasn’t something I chose when I was little - but it made the biggest difference and now I can serve my community. I could do as many other educated people do and leave

to get a better paying job, but I told myself, “I know the realities in the rural world and I can help women there. I am one of them and speak their language and know I can help.” Anna notes that luxuries are an illusion, and there are more important things for her to do. She wants to change lives and help women get out of their precarious situations. “That is what truly makes me happy,” says Anna.

Drawing on a combination of technical training in rice production, and backed up with a clear business perspective, Anna was able to directly influence her level of leadership, first targeting her peers, but then in many ways, by-passing the traditional male leaders, as she was able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the technical elements, and more importantly, she had the confidence to speak up and lead others. Naatal Mbay will continue to support Anna’s skills development with the introduction of new data monitoring tools to track the impact of the various production practices she is promoting, and make critical business decisions along with her fellow group members.

*Naatal Mbay, a Feed the Future Senegal program, is implemented by USAID contractor IRG, an Engility company.*

## Feed the Future Senegal's Naatal Mbay Project – Women's Empowerment in Agriculture

### Learning for Gender Integration and Women's Empowerment

In March 2016, Naatal Mbay launched the Abbreviated Women's Empowerment in Agriculture A-WEAI study to deepen the understanding of women's current situation in agriculture production in the Zone of Influence, and to track the project's impact on women's empowerment. While the A-WEAI results are still in the process of being analyzed, Naatal Mbay's core objectives and workplan have been developed based on the learnings and successful approaches that were carried out under the USAID/PCE project. It is anticipated that the results from the A-WEAI will strengthen Naatal Mbay's activities and ability to scale-up the successful examples of empowerment that were achieved under USAID/PCE.

Under PCE, a gender assessment was carried out using the Gender Integration Framework (GIF). One of the key findings was that women lacked equal access to resources, decision-making, management and leadership roles, and strong social networks. Specifically, the assessment found that 43% of women do not have a say in productive decision-making. As such, PCE activities focused on building the productive capacity of women and promoting women's leadership in producer networks. To track the progress in these areas, the project monitored indicators such as "input into productive decisions," "autonomy in production" and "group member."



Gnima Koma (in blue, center) among women farmers in a growing rainfed rice plot at Medina Souane.

Gnima Koma, from the Sedhiou region in Southern Senegal, exemplifies how women can overcome barriers to participation in agricultural decision-making through capacity training. Through PCE interventions, Gnima received training on agricultural best practices, climate change adaptation, activity monitoring, mapping, and data analysis with simple tools like Excel. This inspired her to increase the number of hectares under rainfed rice production. Gnima also works as a database manager for the local association of ASSOLUCER where, thanks to support from PCE, she is able to prepare reports and deliver presentations at debriefing workshops with

both internal and external value chain stakeholders. Gnima has become a role model for other women in the community and an example of how the GFI framework was able to identify and monitor progress towards removing key constraint.

Gnima now has control over her production decisions, and as a member and manager of ASSOLUCER, she demonstrates how women leaders can increase opportunities for women to engage in agribusiness in their regions.

One of Naatal Mbay's objectives is to scale-up women's participation and empowerment in the agriculture sector to create more success stories like Gnima's. The A-WEAI is a crucial tool to identify the types of needs and opportunities for women in agriculture, however, it is imperative that the tools and methodologies are well-designed. Naatal Mbay has identified key lessons concerning the A-WEAI planning and implementation process that should be taken under consideration when the A-WEAI is employed in other projects. These include:

1. The A-WEAI study must be a team effort between the project implementers and the external service providers responsible for collecting and analyzing the data.
2. The translation and adaptation of the original English version of the A-WEAI questionnaire requires a keen understanding of the local culture and context.
3. The WEAI guidance documents are useful but some terms and concepts can be misinterpreted (e.g. the meaning and difference of primary and secondary

## Feed the Future Senegal's Naatal Mbay Project – Women's Empowerment in Agriculture

activities), and thus service provider training on A-WEAI jargon and tools is necessary.

4. The elaboration and validation of the methodology is a critical phase and should be allocated sufficient time for review and discussion before launching the field work.
5. The time required for careful data collection and analysis is significant, especially for those conducting the assessment for the first time.
6. The time occupation patterns for both men and women are tightly dependent on the season and therefore any replication of the analysis must be done at a similar period for the results to be comparable.
7. It is helpful to go beyond the strict quantitative WEAI questionnaire and investigate broader gender issues through additional focus groups and targeted interviews if the results are intended not just to compute an index but also to inform intervention programming.

Building from PCE experiences in capacity building and leadership empowerment for women, and the anticipated results from the A-WEAI, Naatal Mbay will be able to design effective, targeted interventions, and monitor progress and report on outcomes.

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## Feed the Future Senegal's Naatal Mbay Project -- Nimna Diayté FEPROMAS

As a result of activities carried out under the Feed the Future Senegal Naatal Mbay project, and its predecessor, USAID/Projet Croissance Economique (PCE, running from 2009 to 2015) **capacity building and increased leadership** and management opportunities for women have led to increased participation of women in leadership roles in the community. The project relies on a farmer-driven structure, where farmer's networks undertake the responsibility for extension of technical trainings and support services. Naatal Mbay provides direct trainings of trainer (ToT) sessions to farmer extension agents ("facilitators"), who then deliver trainings to other members of their producer network. Facilitators and lead farmers extend the messages to "satellites," who grow their crops around demonstrations sites. Lead farmers in charge of the Project-supported demonstration sites receive regular follow-up support and on-site training and guidance from network facilitators and liaison agents known as "relays," who provide training support for facilitators that support large satellite groups. Data collection and analysis is led by trained database managers who work closely with the technical team (lead farmer and facilitator) to collect and track seasonal activities and performance data that is used for network-wide decision making. This farmer-led model provides a natural platform for inclusion, but certain checks and balances must also be in place to ensure that all able actors may benefit regardless of gender, age, social status or ethnicity. Naatal Mbay's expansion approach is directly targets partnerships with women's groups particularly in irrigated rice. Naatal Mbay is extending its geographic coverage to the women dominated lowland zones for rainfed rice, while also promoting women's leadership in the maize sector. The project has targeted the hiring of women as technical specialists deployed in the field to encourage women's involvement in many different aspects of the value chain development. Promoting "gender champions" through economic empowerment of women in value chain activities has resulted in the emergence of women role models and leaders, who are becoming known on the national and international level. In addition to advocacy and dialogue, Naatal Mbay has informally promoted these women as positive deviants within local communities and producers groups.

In addition to increasing the capacity and leadership of women as lead farmers, facilitators/trainers, and database managers at the network level, the success of women-led and women-only producers' groups has had a significant impact on the role of these women as leaders in their respective communities. Many of the women engaged with the Naatal Mbay and USAID/PCE projects have come to be known on the national level and have become staunch advocates for women's economic empowerment. In addition to these empowered women serving as role models for other women in the agriculture sector, farmer groups are coming to recognize the business case for equal inclusion and empowerment of women in agriculture sector development. During annual seasonal farmer debriefing sessions, farmers analyze and discuss differences between women's and men's yield profiles, and work together to set targets to increase women's inclusion and access to productive resources in subsequent seasons, in the interest of increasing the profitability of the farmers' group as a whole. Fixing these objectives as tangible targets in seasonal partnership contracts has seen exponential growth of women's inclusion.

*"My daughter is still very small, but already she sees other adults coming to me for advice, that I am on the municipal council, and invited to high level meetings in Dakar and even abroad - I hope she will see that she can do all this and more."*

- Nimna Diayté

In its final years, USAID/PCE placed a special focus on identifying and engaging additional women's groups for FY14 and FY15 across all value chains. As a result, the number of women receiving U.S. Government (USG) assistance through USAID/PCE increased from 11,533 to 15,645 between FY13 and FY14. Most notable was the increase in women's associations in

## Feed the Future Senegal's Naatal Mbay Project -- Nimna Diayté FEPROMAS

irrigated rice that were reached – from 2 to 12, and the significant scale-up of rainfed rice demonstration sites to 780, 36% of which were led by women. Women's participation in capacity building trainings increased project-wide in all value chains, from 17% in FY 2011 to over 40% in FY 2015. In the first year of Naatal Mbay's implementation, women's involvement has already reached nearly 32,000 women receiving capacity building trainings, representing nearly 45% of farmers trained across value chains.

Nimna Diayté, president of the FEPROMAS maize producer's federation spoke to us about her experience, beginning as an empowered woman farmer, rising to president of a mixed-gender federation. "I want to help other women advance, too. I simply can't gain this new knowledge and success and not share it with other women. In fact I can't see a future where more women are not doing what I and other women leaders have done. I see that this is already happening in my community—women come to ask me what I have done to get where I am, and I share my experiences and inspire them to become leaders and develop themselves further. I work with other women leaders to get the word out about the importance of women's economic empowerment. I attend meetings where I encourage youth and women to help their communities by becoming a resource for others by sharing the best practices and other new approaches. I want to see women continue the model we've started and to continue reaching out to help empower them to multiply their potential well into the future. With my new economic status I am now on the municipal board and invited to more and more institutional meetings, and even ministerial meetings in Dakar. Now that I am attending these types of meetings I intend to do my all to make sure that more women have a voice in these spaces as well.



Nimna Diayté (left), president of the FEPROMAS maize producers federation, welcomes Ramata Niasse (center), head of the maize producer network of Taïba Niassène, and her colleague (right). The two groups joined forces for contract farming in the 2014 season. According to Ramata Niasse, head of the network, "The good reputation of FEPROMAS and especially the commitment of its female leadership caught our attention and we felt the need to join this effort."

What we are doing with my cooperative, which is mostly women, has a bigger impact than our economic empowerment- we are proof that women can succeed as professionals in the agriculture sector- that women can be a *force* in agriculture. So, we are starting to apply pressure politically to get policies changed to improve women's access to land. This is historically one of the most discouraging factors for women since it is such a longstanding problem, but I have insisted that we address it and work to overcome it. It's one of the reasons I wanted to become a member of the municipal board in the first place. I have a daughter, and I am glad to see her making an effort to advance in school. Above all I want my children to have the best possible chance in life. I can now afford to send them to the best schools, make sure they have the materials they need and that they are well taken care of to concentrate on getting good grades. My daughter is still very small, but already she sees other adults coming to me for advice, that I am on the municipal council, and invited to high level meetings in Dakar and even abroad- I hope she will see that she can do all this and more."

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## Women's Leadership and Economic Empowerment are Bolstered through Partnerships with Agricultural Education and Research Institutions: Lessons from Value Chains in Senegal

Thomas Archibald, Yaye Fatou Seck, Bineta Guissé, and Demba Mbaye  
*USAID/Education and Research in Agriculture*

In the suburbs of Dakar, Senegal, a group of women entrepreneurs crowd around three women who are leading a demonstration of improved methods for making *thiérou lalo*, a traditional millet-based couscous. They take notes and record videos on their smartphones. Elsewhere, in the city of Touba, another group of women entrepreneurs gather to learn how to use a small but powerful extruder machine to produce instant flours, made from a mixture of millet, peanut, and cowpea, enriched with mango, baobab, and other local fruits. The instant flours are suitable to feed to small children, which offers these entrepreneurs an opportunity to make a profit while also addressing childhood malnutrition in their communities. In recent years, Senegal has witnessed a rapid expansion of its value-added processing sector for products made from local fruits and cereals. The great potential for women's economic empowerment through food processing is attracting an increasing number of women to the sector, mostly through women's groups that promote entrepreneurship (*Groupements d'Intérêt Economique*, or GIEs). However, lack of capacity on two different levels has hindered this potential. On one level, many women and GIEs lack the technical capacity to produce high-quality products that meet food safety norms. On another level, the GIEs lack the group management capacity to ensure economic and social outcomes for the groups.

### Lesson

To address needs such as these, the [USAID/Education and Research in Agriculture \(ERA\)](#) project, funded by USAID/Senegal as part of the Feed the Future initiative and implemented by Virginia Tech's [Office of International Research, Education, and Development \(OIREd\)](#), works to strengthen human and institutional capacity throughout the agricultural education, training, extension, and research system in Senegal. ERA fosters new partnerships and catalyzes the creation of innovation platforms for public institutions to support private entrepreneurship. ERA works with universities, training centers for agricultural technicians, an agricultural high school, and two national research institutes to help them better connect research and practice in service of community and economic development.

#### **(3) Capacity Building and Leadership:**

Have capacity building and increased leadership or management opportunities for women led to increased participation of women in leadership roles in the community?

**(4) Commercialization and Women's Empowerment:** Have interventions advancing commercialization in value chains affected access to paid employment or types of employment for men and women? Or, have they led to increases or decreases in unpaid work for men or women?

ERA has demonstrated how such partnerships and platforms can support women's economic empowerment in food processing value chains. Specifically, in relation to Feed the Future Learning Agenda questions *three* and *four*, we have learned that *agricultural education and research institutions can be important actors supporting capacity building and leadership opportunities for women, which in turn strengthens small-scale commercial food processing and promotes women's empowerment*. Empirically, this lesson is manifest through evidence of improved management skills for women leading GIEs, increased numbers of women trained in research-based food processing techniques, creation of new wage employment and self-employment opportunities, increased numbers of product commercialization authorizations by the government, and

creation of new agreements between GIE platforms and Senegalese universities and research institutes. Two especially salient takeaways from this lesson pertain to *project sustainability* and to *democratic knowledge sharing*.

In terms of project sustainability, the public-private partnerships and innovation platforms that ERA catalyzes are designed to ensure that women entrepreneurs in Senegal have access to capacity building and leadership development opportunities for years to come. The institutional partners in the platforms see the partnerships as ‘win-win.’ Universities and research institutes can contribute to women’s empowerment and economic development while simultaneously enriching their own educational and research agendas. In terms of democratic knowledge sharing, our activities first faced a challenge because some university and research institute leaders saw collaboration with women’s GIEs as outside of their traditional institutional missions. With time, however, when the mutually beneficial nature of the partnerships became more apparent, those same institutional leaders came to value the practical wisdom of the GIE leaders, and the GIE leaders gained confidence in their own expertise and voice. Below, we elaborate further on these lessons by describing our activities, providing data on results to date, and situating the lesson in an illustrative story of successful women’s leadership.

### Activity

Starting in 2011, ERA facilitated the following activities to foster two-way knowledge translation and shared capacity building: (1) A rapid assessment to document the needs of women’s food processing GIEs; (2) A study tour to U.S. land grant universities, involving select GIE leaders and Senegalese university and research institute leaders to learn from successful community-university partnerships; (3) Support for food fortification research by Senegalese food scientists at the national Institute for Food Technology (ITA); (4) Establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding for capacity building



A leader of one women’s group leads a demonstration of improved techniques for making local cereal products. *Photo credit: Yaye Fatou Seck, USAID/ERA*

between Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar (UCAD) and the Platform of Professional Agroalimentary Organizations of Senegal (POPAS); (5) Support for training by UCAD food science professors of GIE leaders on a suite of food processing competencies such as hygiene, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) systems for small and medium enterprises, packaging, barcodes, marketing, commercialization, and sensory and consumer tests; (6) Support for a research and training partnership between ITA and a large GIE, Touba Darou Salam, led by Ms. Sokhna Astou Mbake Gaye, on fortified instant flour production; (7) Support for nutritional and other analyses needed to obtain governmental certification for food products; (8) Leadership training in GIE management by the president of POPAS, Ms. Nafy Diagne Gueye, in partnership with another Feed the Future USAID project, Africa Lead; (9) Support for train-the-trainer sessions to scale up technical knowledge, whereby trained GIE leaders gain the skills to train their individual GIE members on the research-based techniques provided by ITA and UCAD; (10) Launching of a revolving fund to provide sustainable microcredit for POPAS GIEs to access quality packaging for their products; (11) Placement of university student interns with GIEs to offer follow-up support; and (12) Support for POPAS leaders and their UCAD and ITA partners to replicate the model elsewhere in Senegal—in Saint Louis and Ziguinchor—whereby platforms similar to POPAS have been established and trained on group management.

## Data

As a result of these activities, 12 GIEs initially benefitted from the suite of ERA-supported analysis and training provided by UCAD. Thirty-six women leaders were trained and 12 interns were placed in women's enterprises. Fifty-six different products were certified for commercialization. Through the scaling up process, led by Ms. Nafy Gueye, the suite of training has been expanded to over 1000 women through the POPAS network in the Dakar suburbs. Through POPAS, plus the recently established platforms in Saint Louis and Ziguinchor, over 3000 women will be trained. In Touba, the technology is still at an earlier stage of the knowledge translation process, but scale-up activities led by Ms. Mbake Gaye are already planned as a next step. Her GIE was chosen because it, like POPAS, is a network of smaller GIEs, which will eventually reach approximately 2000 women in the Touba region. The extruder machine, which was refined and tested with support from ERA, was recently granted to Touba Darou Salam by a partnering Feed the Future project, the Food Processing Lab housed at Purdue University. While we do not yet have economic impact data on the benefits of these trainings and analyses, we hypothesize that the large number of GIE leaders and members trained in research-based food processing techniques, plus the added value of the government certification and the association with the national university, will soon have positive economic impacts. We have evidence of young women entrepreneurs now hiring wage employees to help meet the increased production demand for their improved products. What's more, in terms of capacity building and leadership, both Ms. Mbake Gaye and Ms. Nafy Gueye have become nationally renowned leaders in the food processing sector, while dozens of GIE leaders they have trained have also become more confident and engaged leaders in their associations and in their communities.

## Story

When these Feed the Future activities began through ERA in 2011, food processing GIEs existed, but product quality varied and some groups were not managed well. The aspiring women entrepreneurs often received support from development projects and non-governmental organizations, but felt shut out from the national system of education, training, and research. One early encounter between Ms. Nafy Gueye and a UCAD professor resulted in the professor (who is a woman) asking rhetorically, "Why are you mixing us with these rags?" Just a few years later, Nafy and the many women she herself has trained are now sought-after consultants, creating a niche market not just for their high-quality local food products but for their knowledge and leadership competencies, too. Recently, the Minister of Higher Education and Research invited Nafy and her POPAS colleagues to his office to plan for how to make POPAS's local food products available to the tens of thousands of UCAD students, and to find a way to bring the expertise and practical wisdom of these women entrepreneurs into the classroom, as instructors in UCAD's Institute of Agriculture and Entrepreneurship. Thus, through these new partnerships and platforms, two-way knowledge sharing connects research and practice for capacity building, leadership, and women's empowerment.

*A video (in French) about the partnership between POPAS and UCAD can be found here: <https://youtu.be/gup2C1YjuVI>*

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## Women in the Fisheries Sector in Senegal Increase Participation in Leadership and Decision Making for Sustainable Fisheries Management

The Collaborative Management for a Sustainable Fisheries Management Future in Senegal Project (USAID/COMFISH) has contributed to a transformation of attitudes by artisanal fisheries stakeholders, including women themselves, about the role of women as leaders and decision makers. As a result, practices that increase women’s participation in leadership roles have been institutionalized. The lesson learned highlighted below informs question three from the Feed the Future Learning Agenda; Capacity Building and Leadership: *Have capacity building and increased leadership or management opportunities for women led to increased participation of women in leadership roles in the community?* A new Feed the Future Project in Ghana, the Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (USAID/SFMP) is directly benefiting from USAID/COMFISH lessons learned in women’s empowerment. In early 2016 leaders of women’s civil society organizations in the fisheries sector in Ghana and Fisheries Commission representatives went on a study tour to learn from Senegalese peer organizations that benefitted from USAID/COMFISH capacity building support.<sup>1</sup>

***Lesson Learned: Women can play an important and powerful role in sustainable fisheries management, fisheries livelihoods and value chain improvements beyond their traditional post-harvest processing activities.***

In Senegal women are now represented among leadership and participate actively in Local Artisanal Fisheries Councils (CLPA), the legally recognized governance structure for artisanal fisheries at the district level. They are decision-makers and key actors in recently approved Sardinella Fishery Management Plans and in Ethmalosa Fishery Management Plans under development. Before USAID/COMFISH’s support for the renewal of CLPA governance structures over the 5 year project period from 2011 - 2016, the number of women on the Councils was limited to a maximum of two women per CLPA out of a total of 38-40 members. Now women’s membership ranges from 6 – 11 per CLPA in 10 CLPAs nationally. These women are all on the CLPA Coordinating Councils and are, therefore, in a decision making role.

COMFISH achieved this result through its facilitation of a participatory fisheries co-management planning process that included renewal of CLPA governance structures and provided the opportunity for training in governance best practices. Inclusiveness and empowerment of underrepresented stakeholders, including women, was highlighted as a key governance best practice. COMFISH then supported the institutionalization of best practices in CLPA by-laws. COMFISH field-based facilitators and community “relays” accompanied CLPAs as they put the by-laws into practice through the formation of Coordinating Councils and through the actions of the Coordinating Councils in the execution of their roles and responsibilities. COMFISH also provided training in administrative and financial management for CLPA members. This helped to ensure a common understanding and skill level among CLPA members in management and decision-making roles and facilitates transparency.

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<sup>1</sup> The University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center is the lead implementing partner for both the USAID/COMFISH and USAID/SFMP Projects.



(Credit: Albert Boubane)

*“Women’s interests are taken into account. Women keep the money as treasurer. Women enforce monitoring by refusing to buy juvenile fish. We are powerful.”*

*Anta Diouf, Local Artisanal Fisheries Council (CLPA), Mbour, Senegal.*

At the national level, women in Senegal’s fisheries sector have come together to form an active, powerful and self-sustaining civil society Network of Women in Artisanal Fisheries in Senegal (REFEPAS). As a result, women are now invited to national policy dialogues and conferences as well as international meetings and conferences, where previously they were not represented and their needs and concerns not considered a priority. Their presence is already resulting in a transformation of “business as usual” dominated by men’s interests.

COMFISH supported REFEPAS to renew and mobilize its membership from the 5 largest sub-national women’s fisheries groups and sub-groups under this national level organization that enabled women to increase their visibility and influence at the national and local levels. REFEPAS members highly appreciated the COMFISH approach that emphasized the important role of participatory action research using local knowledge (as opposed to just hiring an outside consultant) to document the number of women involved in fisheries nationwide and their contribution to the sector. The exercise served to engage members who take ownership of the results and who now use the data to present compelling evidence to government that women should lead and be represented proportional to their contribution in the sector. COMFISH also assisted REFEPAS to develop an Action Plan and to begin to implement it, including support for an operational budget and some equipment. The Action Plan is instrumental for REFEPAS to articulate clearly to members, other fisheries stakeholders and donors how they intend to accomplish their objectives and to catalyze support. As a result REFEPAS today has a physical and operational identity in addition to its legal identity. It is very much respected by the Government of Senegal, which includes REFEPAS in all important processes related to artisanal fisheries.

*“Without women there is no sustainable development”*

*Maty Ndao, REFEPAS*



(Credit: Albert Boubane)

Study tour participants from the USAID/Sustainable Fisheries Management Project in Ghana met with two different CLPAs, visited the landing sites under their management and saw first-hand how women's roles in CLPA leadership and decision-making are influencing sustainable fisheries management on the ground. They also met with REFEPAS leadership to share experiences. Participants from the Ghana National Fish Processors and Traders Association (NAFPTA) were particularly interested in how REFEPAS was self-financing its activities and ensuring sustainability through membership fees. They resolved to re-evaluate their own token membership fees in light of the more sustainable business model demonstrated by REFEPAS.



(Credit: Albert Boubane)

Study tour participants from the Ghana USAID/Sustainable Fisheries Management Project with leaders of REFEPAS and the USAID/COMFISH Project team in Senegal.

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**Call for Cases from Feed the Future Programs: Learning for Gender Integration and Women's Empowerment**  
Mentoring Program for Capacity Building: Leadership and Management Opportunities for Women  
Innovative Agricultural Research Initiative (iAGRI)



The [Innovative Agricultural Research Initiative \(iAGRI\)](#) is a Feed the Future project supported by USAID Tanzania that concentrates its efforts and project activities in not only providing support for Tanzanian students to pursue advanced degrees in the agricultural sciences, but also engages in institutional strengthening to ensure that gender-sensitive policies are adopted and women are encouraged to pursue leadership roles in the various departments of SUA. In the summer of 2013, iAGRI and Sokoine University of Agriculture initiated a [mentoring program](#) where students were paired with established leaders at the university. The goal of the program was to increase the capacity of entry and mid-level academic staff and to encourage positive attitudes of women in

leadership roles and management positions.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** The [2013 mentoring program](#) was evaluated and feedback from participants is being used in preparation for the 2016 session. The original target for participation for the program was 50 individuals. However, established professionals felt there was little incentive to participate. Feedback from the evaluation indicated the following challenges:

- **Lack of incentives to participate:** Senior staff members expressed they had limited time to devote to mentoring activities. Suggestions obtained during the evaluation included the distribution of material incentives such as portable electronic devices to encourage greater participation.
- **Conclusion joint session:** In addition to the orientation session, mentors specifically requested that there be a session concluding the program to assess overall achievement.
- **Mentee Feedback:** Mentees requested for future programs to incorporate an emphasis on the development of teaching skills and methodologies, specifically those needed for handling large classes.
- **Mentor Feedback:** Mentors suggested that mentees should be attached to ongoing research at the universities to increase both incentivization and relevance of the program.
- **Communication Challenges:** Mentees reported lack of power and limited internet connectivity as challenges in communicating with mentors.

**ACTIVITY:** Components of the program included: 1) orientation session, 2) pairing of mentors and mentees, 3) goal-setting, 4) regular meetings and discussions between pairs on a monthly basis, and 5) training workshops on gender mainstreaming, scientific writing, and leadership skills. The participants developed a blog (<http://suamentor.blogspot.com/>) to share experiences, photos, upcoming events, and increase awareness. Mentees reported that mentors were able to develop constructive ideas on how to improve their professional development. Overall achievements of the mentees attributed to the mentorship program (obtained through self-assessment evaluation and participant feedback surveys) included:

- Encouragement to participate in scientific conferences
- Assistance with proposal writing and presentation skills
- Encouragement to pursue management and leadership positions
- Successful implementation of their personal “road map” of professional development goals i.e. conference attendance, new skills, improved data analysis capabilities
- Improved professional (and social) networks

**DATA:** According to the [ASTI](#), there are 818.8 total agricultural researchers (full-time equivalents - FTEs) in Tanzania of which, 24.8% are female. At SUA, out of 484 academic members of staff, 19% female; whereas [36% of administrative staff are female](#). A follow-up study would be needed to determine the career progression of participants following the mentoring program. Of note, one of the female participants was promoted from the role of Assistant Lecturer to Lecturer at SUA. Another follow-up question would be to assess whether or not male participants in the program are more likely to see females as leaders than previously.

## Call for Cases from Feed the Future Programs: Learning for Gender Integration and Women's Empowerment

Mentoring Program for Capacity Building: Leadership and Management Opportunities for Women  
Innovative Agricultural Research Initiative (iAGRI)

**STORY:** The mentoring program distributed a call to multiple departments at SUA for mentors to participate. The program began with an orientation workshop led by facilitators experienced in mentorship from the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD). Mentoring pairs met on a monthly basis. As part of the initiative, funds were allocated to support three mentees to attend scientific and professional conferences to encourage their development in the areas of public speaking, presentation of research, and improve their networking skills. Funds were also provided for mentees to join professional associations thereby increasing their network and contacts in their respective fields. The program involved key leaders in the university including the Deputy Vice Chancellor-Academic, the Head of the Department, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Prof. Susan Nchimbi-Msolla.

Key informant interviews of female participants found that participants gained greater self-reliance, improved capability, and empowered. Informants described the mentoring program as an opportunity to drive their own learning and career development goals and develop soft skills essential for successfully performing leadership and managerial positions. Female participants included the following:

- **Neema Sumari (pictured below with mentor Isaac Minde):** Currently an Assistant Lecturer in Software Engineering at SUA. Neema stated, "Much of our learning that contributes to our success happens not through a book, but through world experience." Neema was paired with Prof. Isaac Minde, a Professor of Development Economics and Deputy Director of iAGRI.
- **Nyamizi Bundala:** Formerly an Assistant Lecturer in Nutrition at SUA. Since the program, she has been promoted to the role of Lecturer. She stated, "Through the mentoring program, I managed to get a PhD scholarship under the ScaleN project. I am expected to start my PhD in May 2016. My supervisor taught me publication skills. I managed to co-author a manuscript and submitted to the Journal of Food, Agriculture and Nutrition Development... She also gave me an opportunity to attend a workshop held in Addis, Ababa to present issues related to nutrition." Nyamizi was paired with Dr. Joyce Kinabo, a Professor of Human Nutrition at SUA in the Department of Food Science and Technology.
- **Victoria Gowele:** Assistant Lecturer in Nutrition at SUA. Since the mentoring program, she has since started a PhD in micronutrient status of women in rural Tanzania. The mentoring program inspired me to shape my career dreams. I set my road map to acquire a PhD and to become a competent professor in nutrition." She also stated, "Through the inspiration from the mentoring program, I have realized most of what I intended in the road map." Victoria was paired with Dr. Bernard Chove, an Assistant Professor of Food Engineering at SUA.

In the formalized mentoring program, mentors were comprised of established faculty members at SUA and paired with emerging students with an equal proportion of male and female mentors and mentees. The effect of this was two-fold. Male students were mentored by established female professors while females were paired either with male or female mentors. Both aspects of the mentoring program contributed to improved opportunities for female scientists to pursue managerial positions and attitudes about women in leadership roles at SUA.



**CONCLUSION:** The Mentoring Program is one of the tools used by iAGRI to facilitate HICD to improve both the capacity and confidence of women, but also to improve the enabling environment within the institution for the realization of gender empowerment. Capacity building in leadership skills are critical for achieving increased management opportunities for women at SUA. The ultimate goal of the program is to advance the empowerment opportunities for women in the agricultural sector; not only at the farm-level, but also at institutions pursuing research shaping the policies and practices needed to modernize the country's agriculture sector. The next program will begin at SUA on June 27-30 2016.

Organization: [www.iagri.org](http://www.iagri.org)  
Project Webpage: [Mentoring Program](#)  
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## How horticulture technology is surging the income of professional women

Sustainable income generation has for a long time been one of the unreachable targets for women in Tanzania, even for those employed due to increasingly high costs of living and limited chances of innovating multiple income sources. Some of these women, having learned on businesses opportunities in horticulture have taken up initiative to invest in the industry to boost their income.

One such a woman is Renalda Mlay. Renalda, who runs a landscaping design and commercial cleaning company, realized that with increasing and unbearable living expenses, she needed to explore other business opportunities and create stable income generating source. She initially engaged into staple crop production (maize and beans) which earned her very little.

That is when she opted to engage into horticulture production in greenhouses; the technology which requires minimal labor force and optimizes resources such as water and fertilizer. Initially, she invested TZS 9 million in 2 greenhouses (8 By 15m) where she produced red and yellow capsicums. Renalda hired a permanent Assistant to manage the production process. After the first production cycle, she made a total of TZS 6.7 million with a deficit of 2.3 million to her investment costs. Although she did not manage to break-even in the first production cycle, she was guaranteed to enjoy the staggering profits from the second season and onwards. With good practical lessons, knowledge and experience obtained in the first production cycle, Renalda perfected her skills and in the second production cycle within the same year, her income from sales of capsicums increased to TZS 8 million, after spending TZS 1.2 million as business operational costs. Meaning in just one year, she realized return on investment and made a total profit of TZS 4.3 million.

Greenhouse effective life is at least 10 years, during which the Renalda will be able to earn more and more incomes from greenhouse farming; while incurring some costs for minor repairs and materials replacement.

Just recently, with TAHA's assistance on funding linkage Renalda acquired 2 larger (8 By 30m) additional greenhouses for expansion. Eventually, with the kind of investment she will create more jobs (2 permanent and 1 casual).

Renalda's aggressive nature impressed TAHA Associate Members who convinced her to take up a leadership role in TAHA Board of Directors, as Associate Members' representative. She vied for the seat with 3 male competitors and she won the elections in December 2015, becoming the first Female to represent Associate members in the TAHA Board. Indeed this is a proof that through empowerment, women will not only grab the opportunities towards creating sustainable incomes, but in addition they will increase their participation in leadership.

**About 130 Kilometres from Morogoro town we are welcomed by a hip of harvested tomatoes awaiting the delivery vehicle.** We later learn that we are in Mamboya village Kilosa district in Morogoro region. The region is one of the highest horticulture production zones due to good soil fertility and climatic conditions. There is assortment of more than 8 ethnic groups with majority population engaging in rain fed agricultural activities.

"Come on in and see for yourself" a delighted Professor Penina Mlama invites us while proceeding with tomato harvesting activity. Prof. Penina who is the Professor of Fine and Performing Arts at the University of Dar es salaam and a re-known artist and author is among women professionals who have demonstrated that even with intensively demanding jobs, one can still spare some hours in an additional income generating activity where technologies are applied to lessen labor intensity as well as increasing productivity.

One may wonder how a busy white color job lady would fall in love with soil and engage in farming activities defying the myth that farming is for non- skilled and poor. She is among the modern trend of professional women that have made substantial achievement in supplementing their income through horticulture.

Women make crucial contributions in agriculture and rural enterprises in all developing country regions, as farmers, workers and entrepreneurs. According to an FAO study on the role of women in agriculture; women make up more than 50% percent of agricultural labour force in East Africa (FAO, 2011). However, very insignificant number among these are professional employed women that are simultaneously engaging in horticulture production.

Defying her inexperience in farming undertakings, Prof. Mlama approached TAHA early in 2015 to establish the best way to utilize her 10 acres land productively. With her busy and dynamic work schedule and the travel distance to Morogoro where her farm is located, she managed to install drip irrigation in one acre on tomato production as trial. For easy farm management, Prof. Mlama employed two permanent farm assistants who worked closely with TAHA's Morogoro Field Officer on technical support. Drip irrigation technology reduces labor intensiveness and utilizes optimal water in irrigation.

*"I was hesitant to engage in something so new to me but now I have confidence after witnessing the first production cycle. Frankly speaking, the quality and volumes of harvested tomatoes have by far surpassed my expectations although I only utilized a fraction of my farm."* Declares Prof. Mlama

With a capital investment of TZS 4 million on irrigation technology infrastructure, improved seed and labor, Prof. Mlama earned TZS 4.7 million in just one tomato production cycle although she experienced some hitches in accessing profitable markets due to poor road infrastructures. This income is far much better than TZS 800,000 which she would have earned without improved technologies.

Her expectation is to triple profits by investing all the tomato earnings to expand on the remaining acres in the second production cycle which is planned for May. In addition to that, she has purchased a generator to assist in pumping irrigation water to substitute the current manual pump

Through USAID support under Feed the Future Initiative, which supports TAHA in strengthening its institution, TAHA has been mobilizing and engaging more women and youth in horticulture value chains, some of them already in white color jobs as this will supplement their income. Consequently, a large number of studies have concluded that there is substantial positive impact when women control additional income as they tend to spend more of it on family needs especially food, health, clothing and education. This has positive implications for immediate well-being as well as long-run human capital formation and economic growth through improved health, nutrition, income and education.



## Microcredit Savings Allow Farmers to Prosper

The Twifashe SACCOS began in Kagongo Village outside of Kigoma, Tanzania to help farmers deal with shocks, have access to finance, and to invest in higher income generating activities in 2009. Initially, SACCOS began with an initial collective savings of 300,000 TZS. The premise of the group was that members could apply for four loans each year to increase agricultural production, initiate small businesses, and pay for children's school fees. In 2012 as part of the [Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods](#) program supported by the Jane Goodall Institute (JGI), increased investment was allocated to the group in order to formalize its operations.

JGI assisted the group by helping them to officially register as a SACCOS and to open a bank account. JGI advised the SACCOS council members to incorporate safety measures such as ensuring that no single member had control over the collective savings. Today, SACCOS members have amassed a total of 9 million TZS that provides individuals with loans for businesses and emergency funds for large, unexpected expenses. Members regularly buy shares of 5,000 TZS each month. In return, the group provides individual members with access to finance in the form of loans distributed between 5-15 members per month.

Access to finance is one of the challenges faced by smallholder farmers. With little collateral to ensure loans and limited earnings, agricultural producers struggle to obtain additional capital to move higher up the value chain to invest in more profitable crops or businesses. Farmers often resort to collecting firewood or expanding agricultural land to increase incomes. With access to finance; however, farmers are able to increase their earnings through higher value crops, reducing the need to depend on forests as a source of income. In addition, access to finance for the SACCOS group has led to improved livelihoods and food security for households, enabling smallholder farmers to cope with fluctuations in market prices and obtain the initial start-up capital needed for small businesses and income generating opportunities outside of food production.

The investments enabled by the micro-credit group are as varied as the members themselves, allowing individuals to pursue opportunities that maximize the knowledge, skills, and interests they already have to produce higher incomes. Three of the farmers we interviewed were able to significantly increase their earnings through small loans from the microcredit group's saving. Whether investing in a store, processing of raw products, or in additional inputs such as fertilizer, farmers are reaping the rewards of saving together, drawing strength and funds from their collective savings.

### **Selena Samuel Bilabaye – shop owner and palm oil producer**

*“All of this is because of SACCOS. Before, I used to purchase cassava and walk 6 km to the miller carrying the load on my head. Now, I am able to invest in transportation via motorbike to get the cassava to the miller.”*

Selena juggles several income generating activities. As her primary business, she owns a shop in the center of the village where she sells cassava flour. She initially took out a loan from SACCOS and invested in transitioning from primarily agricultural production to selling milled and processed goods. Once her cassava flour business was up and running, she borrowed an additional 150,000 TZS through the microcredit group to venture into palm oil production. She buys palm oil seeds from local producers and processes them into oil. She then sells the oil to soap makers who purchase the oil at a higher price than the initial input of palm oil seeds. Today, she earns 200,000 – 300,000 TZS per month through selling palm oil while her cassava flour shop provides enough earnings for household expenditures. The additional investment in a second income-generating activity has allowed her to pay school fees and to



invest in books and supplies for her four children. In the future, she plans to take out a larger loan from SACCOS to move higher up the value chain into soup production.

**Mchuma Halid Mchuma – shop owner**

*“Before, my wife stayed at home and was farming. Now, she manages our second store that helps to support our eight children.”*

Mchuma is one of the original members of the microcredit group. He joined SACCOS after being encouraged by the group’s chairperson. He began by contributing monthly reaching a total of 300,000 TZS and eventually took out a loan of 1.5 million TZS. He used the funds to purchase a small store and to start a business selling products in the center of Kagongo Village. After repaying the initial loan, he decided to invest in some additional products to increase his revenue. He took out a smaller loan to acquire items that are difficult to find in the village. Prior to his investment, the store generated a profit of 500,000 TZS. Today, the store has nearly doubled in revenue netting him a monthly profit of 900,000 TZS as a result of his decision to invest in specialty items. With the earnings, he was able to invest in a second store closer to the main road that now produces a profit of 1.5 million TZS a month. His wife, who previously was engaged primarily in small-scale agricultural production now manages the store and is in charge of purchasing the merchandise, taking stock of the store’s inventory, and accounting.

**Elesia Aron Mjoleka – business owner and maize farmer**

*“Before joining the group, I was a normal farmer. After joining, I was able to start a small business selling palm oil and soap.”*

Elesia is one of the most successful members of the group. Before joining the group, Elesia produced maize primarily for household consumption. She sold the surplus each season to generate income and to support her children. With a loan from SACCOS, she invested in a maize storage room in her home and in purchasing a key agricultural input, fertilizer. Before, her maize yielded an average of three bags weighing 100 kg each. Today, the same plot of land produces 20 bags of maize as a result of her decision to invest in fertilizer. From her additional earnings, she has been able to pay for school fees and books for her six children. In addition to maize, Elesia is also a soap maker and processes palm oil into fragrant varieties of soap of different grades. “When you take a loan, you are able to move forward, get help, and provide better support for your family.” In the future, she plans to take out another loan to invest in the initial capital needed to start a poultry farm. Her plan is to utilize her surplus of maize for feed, allowing her to move higher up the agricultural value chain maximize her initial investment in fertilizer.

By investing in income generating activities, farmers and business owners in Kagongo Village are working together to improve livelihoods and provide a sustainable source of credit and finance to group members. Farmers are able to produce more on the land they have and to invest in environmentally friendly ways of increasing revenues and incomes. Farmers are able to reduce their need to rely on surrounding forests as a source of income and resources. Their families are able to benefit from their increased earnings through school fees, business opportunities, and economic well-being through the investments tailored to their needs, resources, and skills. As a group, they hope to be able to invest in an office in the future, attract more members, and continue to building on the improvements they have made to improve the lives of individuals and their families.



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# LEARNING FOR GENDER INTEGRATION AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT:

The Feed the Future PROFIT+ Project, Zambia

## **Learning for Gender Integration and Women’s Empowerment: The Feed the Future PROFIT+ Project, Zambia**

Vincent Akamandisa (INGENAES), Kristy Cook (INGENAES), Moses Musikanga (ACDI/VOCA), and Alex Pavlovic (ACDI/VOCA)<sup>1</sup>

### **Lesson**

The Production, Finance, and Improved Technology Plus (PROFIT+) project approach to strengthening the agricultural market system in Eastern Province, Zambia, focuses on expanding local input and output market options for men and women farmers, while also improving women’s empowerment. The project first established a network of demonstration host farmers (DHF) and parallel savings and internal lending communities (SILC). The best-performing DHFs have been subsequently trained to become community agrodealers (CAD), small enterprises that serve as bridges between private sector service providers and rural community members. The PROFIT+ project deliberately reached out to women, for example, through women’s agricultural associations, and a reasonably high percentage of women became DHFs and CADs.

This inclusion of women in a market-based approach has led to greater leadership roles for women, increased knowledge of agricultural practices among these women and other women farmers they service, increased use of agricultural inputs by women farmers, and increased asset ownership on the part of the women involved in these activities. This locally based approach opens up economic opportunities for women who are often constrained in their mobility and access to credit. Leadership develops through their roles as entrepreneurs in the community and creates opportunities for more women in the community as these DHFs and CADs build a network among other women farmers. A qualitative survey conducted in April 2016 by the INGENAES project documents how women CADs have become leaders in their communities and are reaching an extended network of women with farming skills.

### **Activity**

The PROFIT+ project, implemented by ACDI/VOCA since 2012 in Eastern Province, Zambia, is the primary Feed the Future value chain project in the Zambia Zone of Influence. PROFIT+ aims to increase productivity and efficiency along seven value chains and increase trade and private sector investment, expanding benefits to include women and vulnerable yet viable groups. The strategies applied to achieve the benefits of women’s leadership, entrepreneurship, and expanded roles in agricultural extension include implementation of a demonstration host farmer model, where lead farmers are selected to train other farmers and promote awareness about improved technologies, practices, and products. One DHF works with five lead farmers, each of whom reaches out to 20 smallholder farmers; in this way, one DHF will ultimately reach over 105 smallholder farmers. Best performers and motivated DHFs have been assisted to become CADs.

The CAD model facilitates local access to and availability of improved seed varieties and other inputs and services (such as spraying, mechanization, etc.) for community members by building partnerships between CADs and input companies as well as commodity buyers. CADs serve as input suppliers to local farmers, but they continue to demonstrate improved technologies on demonstration plots, such as conservation farming methods that reduce labor input and maintain soil fertility, promotion of soil testing, methods of proper spraying, fertilizer application, etc. Women CADs thus effectively facilitate farmer-to-farmer extension through regular visits around the demonstration plots and farmer field days, with information aligned to the crop and marketing calendar and promotion of locally available technologies, inputs, and services. CADs also connect to SILC members, where the savings model enables farmers to generate funds for improved inputs. Recently in certain

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<sup>1</sup> The PROFIT+ project is implemented by ACDI/VOCA and other consortium members, including Catholic Relief Services. Alex Pavlovic is chief of party of the PROFIT+ project, and Moses Musikanga is the M&E officer. The INGENAES Project (Integrating Gender and Nutrition in Agriculture Extension Services) is implemented by a consortium led by the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Kristy Cook and Vincent Akamandisa work for Cultural Practice LLC, an INGENAES consortium member.

areas, PROFIT+ has assisted some of the most successful CADs to form producer companies (PC), private sector trade enterprises that generate profits at the cooperative or commercial-farmer level, making them even more attractive to potential private sector partners.

## **Data**

A recent qualitative survey of women CADs explored their roles in agricultural extension: particularly, how women's leadership roles as community agriculture input suppliers (a role previously performed mostly by men) extended their agricultural knowledge and their outreach to a greater number of women farmers.

The project developed a gender strategy at the beginning and reached out to women's groups to identify interested women farmers. Women were targeted in all trainings and represented over 50 percent of all participants in past project years. Starting from 72 DHFs in 2012/13, of whom 34 were women, the project now works with over 1,000 DHFs, of whom 323 are women. These women reach a network of up to 30,000 farmers throughout five districts in Eastern Province. In 2015/16, 115 women advanced from demonstration farmer to functional community agro-input dealers, selling inputs and providing advice to other men and women farmers. Although there are fewer women than men CADs, women have performed better than men in general: 35 percent of women DHFs became CADs, while only 26 percent of men DHFs became CADs. CADs work with SILC groups, of which 76 percent of the 17,000 members are women and 79 percent of leadership roles are occupied by women. Women represent 24 percent of all members in the newly formed PCs, which are community businesses that aggregate inputs and outputs and function as wholesalers, retaining profits in the communities.

In a recent survey, women CADs reported the ability to pay school and medical fees, improve their houses, and purchase assets such as cattle, goats, and bicycles. In the survey, women articulate how owning a shop and having access to improved agricultural knowledge has increased their status in the community providing them with more business opportunities. In the Feed the Future baseline Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), leadership was cited as a domain in which women were most disadvantaged with 26 percent not yet empowered in terms of group membership. The PROFIT+ project is having an impact on women's involvement in organizations, especially as CADs and PCs, but also in their roles as processors, members in input companies, and buyers. Access to savings has increased through the SILC groups as well. More women are involved in decision making, have access to finance, apply improved agricultural technologies, and are leaders in their communities as a result of the progressive PROFIT+ gender strategy, which deliberately identifies women in all activities. As a result of this strategy, the PROFIT+ community-based market model allows women to become leaders and viable entrepreneurs within their own communities, linking community members to external input and output businesses.

## **Stories**

### *Grace Phiri*

As a lead farmer with the PROFIT+ program, a Feed the Future program funded by USAID/Zambia and implemented through ACDI/VOCA, Grace was trained by extension agents in advanced techniques: irrigation, greenhouse seedlings, tenting and drip lines, installing water tanks, managing tomatoes (especially in pest and disease management and fertilizer use), and recordkeeping. She is now growing tomato seedlings from seed for individual customers; white onion; rice; chili pepper; and 10 acres of orange maize, a vitamin A enriched hybrid. Grace has successfully applied her training, but she also trains women in these techniques. Many other women are benefitting from this type of extension as a result of the project.

*Interview: Katy Heinz, Nikki Grey Rutamu, and Vincent Akamandisa, INGENAES Project, March 2015.*

### *Nelia Banda*

Nelia Banda, household head, is the owner of the Small Small Agro Store in Sinda county, Eastern Province, Zambia. Nelia is one of the women farmers who PROFIT+ assisted to become a CAD. Within the Small Small Supply Store are four shelves with several types of seeds, including okra, tomato, and rape (kale), among others, as well as herbicides, pesticides, and other basic farming inputs. She says about 150 people come to her shop

every day during planting season, some from as far as Mozambique. Nelia also serves as an unofficial extension worker, fielding questions about crop health and planting and harvesting techniques – even visiting the farms of community members facing challenges in their fields. From 2012 to present, she attended PROFIT+ trainings on business management and new technologies, including reaping and fertilization, use of certified seeds, and orange maize. Nelia shared that PROFIT+ gender training has been an important part of agricultural livelihood improvements in her rural community. “If people learn about gender, they can learn to work together, they can both understand the work they can do,” Nelia said, explaining some of the changing roles of women and men in her community now that more women are leaders in the community.

*Interview: Katy Heinz, Nikki Grey Rutamu, and Vincent Akamandisa, INGENAES Project, March 2015.*