



Roberta Pellizzoli *and* Gabriella Rossetti

with

Angela Calvo, Egidio Dansero, Cristiano Lanzano,
Agnese Migliardi, Cecilia Navarra, Monica Petri

IAO/Gender Project: a gender analysis of rural development programmes

IAO/Gender Project: a gender analysis of rural development programmes

Roberta Pellizzoli and Gabriella Rossetti

from "*Donne, terre, mercati*" (Cleup, 2013)

with Angela Calvo, Egidio Dansero, Cristiano Lanzano, Agnese Migliardi, Cecilia Navarra, Monica Petri

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Istituto Agronomico per l'Oltremare

Via Antonio Cocchi, 4 - 50131 Florence

Tel: ++39 055 5061.1

Fax: ++39 055 5061333

www.iao.florence.it

iao@iao.florence.it

© Copyright Istituto Agronomico per l'Oltremare (IAO) 2013

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Istituto Agronomico per l'Oltremare (IAO).

All rights are reserved. The Istituto Agronomico per l'Oltremare encourage the dissemination of this information product. No part of this publication may be reproduced or utilised in any form or by any means to use for commercial purposes without the permission of the Istituto Agronomico per l'Oltremare.

Graphics

Laura Bonaiuti, IAO

Printed in Italy

NOVA ARTI GRAFICHE, Florence

July 2013

The IAO/Gender research programme is financed by the IDC (Italian Development Cooperation - Direzione Generale alla Cooperazione allo Sviluppo del Ministero) under the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, managed by the IAO and based in Florence. The members of the research group would like to thank Bianca Pomeranzi, Giovanni Totino, Vito Grammatico, Maria Cristina Mazzei and all IDC and IAO staff for their support.

The group would also like to thank the Local Technical Units in Maputo (Mozambique) and Dakar (Senegal), the respective managers and all staff for their assistance. Special thanks goes to all those in Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mozambique and Italy who have given up their time to debate with the IAO/Gender project researchers and who have thus made the completion of this project possible.

Cover photo - Poultry farmers, Association "Asas", Beira, Mozambique (picture: Roberta Pellizzoli)



First page photo: Italy-CILSS Fund to combat desertification for poverty reduction in the Sahel" (photo courtesy of Laura Bonaiuti).

1 Introduction: the IAO/Gender project and the international debate on women and land

In the debate and practice of development and international cooperation there has been, over the last few years, a remarkable explosion of interest in land, together with a new (or renewed) and equally remarkable focus on the women who work on it. The slogan "No women, no growth" is often repeated by international organizations such as FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation), IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development), WFP (World Food Programme) and ILO (International Labour Organisation). The same theme is also reiterated in the last World Development Report by the World Bank. Data is provided showing how much more maize, rice or tomatoes could be produced if only women had greater access to land, credit, technology, expertise, seeds, fertilizers and,

above all, markets, following a discourse strategy which claims that women's rights and food security will be guaranteed by an increase in productivity thanks to the virtuous circle which leads from growth to well being for all the actors involved.

It is within this context that, between 2010 and 2012, the IAO/Gender project was carried out, set up with the aim of creating the conditions necessary to increase and improve the participation of women and the enhancement of their role in food security, environmental sustainability and rural development programmes implemented by the Italian Development Cooperation. An intervention strategy to encourage a greater role for women had to be developed with the ultimate goal of contributing to the fight against poverty. To this

Box 1 - "No women, no growth"

"The State of Food and Agriculture" by the FAO, 2010-11, subtitled "Women in Agriculture. Closing the Gender Gap for Development", argues that the productivity crisis in the agricultural sector is due to the gender gap in women farmers' access to resources and opportunities. Closing this gap - by supporting the implementation of gender-sensitive development policies and programmes - would achieve significant results by accelerating agricultural production, poverty reduction and economic growth.

The World Bank's World Development Report 2012, "Gender Equality and Development", argues that, besides smart economics, gender equality is in itself a key development objective: gender equality would increase productivity, improve the impact of development for future generations, and make institutions more representative. To this end, we need to promote policies aimed at eliminating the differences between men and women in accessing economic opportunities and in productivity, as well as to help give women a stronger voice within the home and in society as a whole.

Despite the importance of these documents in the development debate, we need to identify a broader approach for strengthening women's voice and knowledge which, above all, encourages interaction and inclusivity. In this way, we avoid the exploitation of stakeholders to endorse solutions that may be "right" but are often out of touch with reality, or which are not sufficiently taken into consideration by policy-makers.

end, the IAO/Gender working group has developed a methodology for inter and multi-disciplinary research that involves multiple levels of work and analysis:

- analysis of the scientific and technical literature and of the ongoing debate on the issues identified as priorities - the question of land, the defence of natural resources, the relationship between farming production and the market, the associations, "territoriality", rural and agricultural development and food security, all seen from a gender perspective;
- analysis at an intermediate level of the methodology and outcome of development projects, identified as significant for the purposes of IAO/Gender – partly through interviews with experts and focus groups.
- analysis at field level, carried out through field research in the countries identified as

priorities by the Italian Development Cooperation - Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Senegal – through interviews, focus groups, visual research, mapping and discussions with the actors involved.

The results of the IAO/Gender research project were released - in addition to the restitution initiatives organized in the countries studied - at an international conference held 23-24 October 2012 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome, and published in a volume entitled "Donne, terre e mercati. Ripensare lo sviluppo rurale in Africa sub-sahariana - Women, Lands and Markets. Rethinking Rural Development in Sub-Saharan Africa" (CLEUP 2013). The present report summarizes the results of the research and the main issues that emerged from the IAO/Gender project and from discussions with stakeholders, and aims to provide a useful tool for policy-makers and participants from the IDC.



Members of the Association "Nhamanembe", Vanduzi, Mozambique (photo courtesy of Alessandro Coppola)

2 The research: context, questions and reflections

Proceeding from the discussion briefly outlined in the introduction, the IAO/Gender project tried to examine in which local and global contexts are framed the frequent demands to bridge the gap between men and women in agriculture and in rural development policies. Against the backdrop of the important ongoing transformation of agricultural systems, and the emphasis given to the need to increase production through the inclusion of women in agricultural production systems, we start from observing that women are already present, as confirmed by the data which show how much of agricultural production is "feminized". Therefore, if a different approach is what is needed in response to calls to bridge the gender gap, it is urgent to make clear which elements make up this gap (which is nothing more than

an unbalanced relationship between women and men), the conditions under which this relationship can be transformed, and towards what outcome for the objectives and practices of rural development. It is necessary to analyse the choices regarding what to produce and how, under which conditions and for which markets, considering the daily lives of women (and men), the environmental conditions, the availability and patterns of use of natural resources and the social costs of the contraction or expansion of the share of work performed by women.

We have thus attempted to analyse how keywords such as "land", "food", "resources", "markets", "value chains", "work" and "associations" are changing in meaning and scope in the international debate, and this has

Box 2 - Comparing CAADP and RAP policies

The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), under the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), aims to increase African agricultural productivity and food security through a series of strategies to increase investment in agriculture. The document, however, lacks a satisfactory gender analysis, both contextually and in terms of the possible consequences of the strategies proposed. Yet such an omission was acknowledged in the presentation of the document, which restricts itself to highlighting the fundamental role that women have in African rural and urban communities as food producers and entrepreneurs.

The Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), on the other hand, underlines how gender inequalities remain a major challenge for the development of the regional agriculture sector, and should therefore be placed centre stage by means of an assessment of the implications for men and women of all initiatives envisaged, along with the development of specific gender guidelines. RAP sheds light both upon the way in which gender issues in rural areas affect the crucial role that women play in food security, and upon the impact of agricultural development models on gender relations, stating that a strong agricultural policy should play a significant role in promoting gender equality, far more so than do other sector policies.

allowed us to ask some partly new questions, such as, for example:

1. How does the transformation of local and global markets respond to the possibility of access for women in different contexts and socio-economic conditions?
2. How do demographic changes, such as the reduced number of children or the drive towards education, impact the division of labour in small, family-run farms? What does the increase in migration towards the cities and other regions mean for women farmers in many rural areas?
3. Which problems arise with the introduction of new communication technologies that provide new methods for managing land, land registration and food markets?
4. How do women and men respond differently to the phenomenon of large investments and to the introduction of new forms of labour, e.g. full-time employees versus contract farming?
5. If all these aspects lead to changes in gender relations, what solutions have already been developed by groups, associations and networks of women farmers active at all levels of society?

This shift in perspective has allowed us to better understand the concepts of "vulnerability" and "exclusion" attributed to the condition of women, which are often difficult to reconcile with the role that they, despite the lack of legal and political rights, manage to play in supporting families and entire communities.

After more than thirty years of gender mainstreaming and female empowerment policies, therefore, inclusion and access remain the keywords, the performance criteria. But it is precisely in examining why things did not work out that one can begin to reflect upon rural development. Is inclusivity the solution, ensuring access to currently available resources and rights, or are exclusion and barriers to access an integral and essential part of the way in which development is proposed?

On the other hand, one wonders how to effectively realise the promise of "transformation" in gender policies proposed during decades of the UN conferences on women: will the transformation of the relationship between women and the social, economic, cultural and political spheres in which they operate, making gender relationships more equal, promote the change of other unequal and power-based relationships, in societies where agricultural production still plays a central role? Until now this view was mainly expressed in terms of "rights" an approach which, however, shows a series of limits, among which:

- the demand for mere redistribution (e.g. in the purchase of land and use of resources) without a critical look at the issues of access and inclusivity
- the lack of clarity on the ways of supporting the individual and/or collective ability to make a claim
- the need to adapt rights to contexts (e.g. seasonal risks in non-irrigated crops can not be overcome by simply claiming rights of access and inclusion, but require also the right to some form of social protection, insurance, etc.)

In the light of these considerations emerging from the IAO/Gender research, it becomes important to challenge the unquestioned trust in "inclusion and "access", and identify new ways of thinking about food security (local and global), market organization and land and land tenure reforms. At the same time, it is important to seek the space and conditions to negotiate with governments and economic players for genuine support for women who cultivate land in various contexts and circumstances. This leads to the search for new performance criteria (discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections) and for a shift of research methods that involves looking no longer just at the impact (different, it is said, for women and men, and worse for women) of new land systems, new markets, new forms of governance (from the local to the global), but also at reactions (resi-

stance and resilience) that can be adaptive or critical or constructive.

In this perspective, the role of the new organisations, operating both nationally and through trans-national networks, has become crucial: associations of small producers, networks for the common good, for environmental sustainability and for the conservation of bio-diversity, and those acting through decentralized cooperation. But the question arises how these groups understand inequality between the sexes and the role

of women, and how they manage to avoid the risk of treating rural women and their work as a kind of "social safety net", able to absorb market pressure, without initiating any kind of positive transformation.

Rural women, the subject of the IAO/Gender research, initially seen as deprived, in need, living in a sort of static timelessness, become multiple individuals, included into a network of public and private relationships that structures their actions which, in turn, are changed by them.



Parcel of the Ngoundioura Diop GPD, Louga, Senegal (photo courtesy of Agnese Migliardi)



Italy-CILSS Fund - Water well, ZARESE of Oubrintenga, Burkina Faso (courtesy of Laura Bonaiuti)



Italy-CILSS Fund - Association of craft, ZARESE of Kourintenga, Burkina Faso (courtesy of Laura Bonaiuti)

3 Results of the IAO/Gender project: a critical discussion

In this section, we report some of the key findings and relevant themes emerging from the research carried out under the IAO/Gender project in Burkina Faso, Senegal and Mozambique.

3.1 Land and work

3.1.1 The case of strategic partnerships in Mozambique

In the international debate on development, starting from the World Bank's 2007 report on agriculture, it is underlined the importance of rural development models based on agreements (generally in the form of joint ventures or contract farming) between private investors and small producers (often organized into associations) or communities. It is believed that these agreements, mediated by local government institutions, can play a crucial role in integrating small rural producers into agribusiness value chains and into rural markets, thus contributing to rural economic development, poverty reduction and food security for the poor who live in rural areas. However, many have pointed out how the prevailing model for medium and large scale land acquisitions is jeopardizing the right to land and resources, strategies for earning a living and food security for communities and poor people living in rural areas: the arrival of new stakeholders, with economic interests and supported by policies and practices that facilitate the acquisition of land, puts the control that farmers have over the land at risk, and increases the possibility of expropriation. It is essential, therefore, that communities have the right to the resources, organization and negotiation skills that will enable them to initiate contractual agreements with private investors and, overall, that the process of decision-making

on the land becomes more inclusive and transparent.

The research conducted in Mozambique shows that, as the formalized initiatives for partnership between the private sector and groups of producers and farmers are still limited, the debate that is unfolding locally and nationally is fairly heated, while the different stakeholders involved fluctuate between enthusiasm for the possibilities offered by these initiatives and complete scepticism. Within this range of opinions, the most widespread is that, against a backdrop of continuous and increasing pressure on land, partnerships should be properly defined and implemented to guarantee a certain level of benefit and to minimize the risks for all involved:

- a formal contract is required between private investors and local producers, whether organized into associations or at the community level, which includes prearranged agreements on quality standards and the final price
- the associations of farmers and local producers should be supported by a lawyer or legal expert throughout the negotiation phase until the contract is signed
- the associations of farmers and producers need to be strengthened through the provision of legal status and land rights, and through transparent mechanisms for inclusion geared to promoting women's empowerment - this limits the vulnerability of small producers compared to the private sector.
- since partnerships are time-limited and subject to market fluctuations, it is essential to continue to strengthen small family farming, also for the sake of food security.

3.1.2: The contradictions in "establishing land security" in Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, the growing institutionalization of gender disparity and the demand for equality regarding land access coincide with the question of land in the broadest sense and its long-term developing dynamics. After the end of the Sankara revolution, the standard approach since the 1990s has been to "establish land security." Initially trialled in specific locations in the form of projects, it then became the basis for national policy documents and for a law (Law 034, 2009), intended to apply the establishment of security to rural land, neglected in previous reforms.

This approach, and the law that ensued, requires that more attention be paid to the specific nature of local circumstances, and attempts to "uncover" existing land rights recognized according to customary law. The approach of "establishing land security" promotes a formalization of traditional rights. Moreover, despite the new law providing for the recognition of collective rights or arrangements for access other than the individual "land tenure", such as loans of land, some critics point out the lack of compatibility of the approach of "establishing land security" with a legal pluralism, and an overlap of different kinds of rights that give rise to extremely complex situations - situations to which this approach risks proposing overly simplistic solutions.

With the adoption of Law 034, the debate has also been reopened on women's access to land. In Burkina Faso, albeit with important differences between the different social circumstances, where customary law regulates land relations, women generally have no administrative land rights but are guaranteed access and control over production on at least a small part of the family's or husband's fields. Discrimination continues - and is sometimes aggravated by the absence of informal agreements within the family group - even in more modern situations in which land is allocated on an individual basis by a formal

institution, as is the case for development initiatives or state projects regarding agricultural infrastructure

Although the new law was preceded by consultations with civil society and in particular with women's organizations, the approach which inspired it poses a double paradox: first of all, attempts to formalize rights do not always benefit the position of women in accessing land, which is often the result of informal negotiations, and in fact in some cases have consolidated the position of the strongest participants; secondly, the declared return to "legitimacy" and traditional law could threaten to accentuate its patriarchal nature.

In the current implementation of the law, many gender experts are present along with the active participation of women's organizations. These request, on the one hand, positive discrimination policies to facilitate access to land for women or women's groups wanting to cultivate the land collectively. On the other hand, the law provides for the creation of new advisory bodies at the municipal or village level, at which women's participation is envisaged. Finally, the workshops for communicating the contents of the law are essentially seen as an opportunity to also cover training on gender equality and to raise the village authorities' awareness in this regard. So far, the rather generic and inclusive formulation of the new law makes predictions difficult as to whether inequalities of access are likely to decline, or if the entry of private investors and the formalization procedures are likely to worsen the situation: much will depend on how the law is actually implemented and made operational on the ground.

3.2: The markets

3.2.1: The constraints to the development of agricultural markets in Mozambique and the unequal benefits they produce

The analysis in Mozambique has first of all highlighted the need to move away from the

female stereotype as disconnected from the markets: the fact that women are responsible for subsistence and production in the family field does not mean that they do not have a systematic relationship with food markets, consumer goods and agricultural inputs.

Looking at the rural markets from the point of view of the condition of women sheds light on a number of imbalances. First, we are impelled to examine the demand side: who is the consumer? From numerous interviews it emerges that the limit to an increase in production is mainly the lack of sales outlets. This is a problem made up of several components: the weakness in the supply chains and in the transformation of the agricultural and food industry, the lack of farmers' bargaining power and the high cost of marketing. Also key is the persistence of production for family consumption because of its vulnerability to fluctuations in market food prices: this is a factor behind reduced product specialization which is considered the cause of the difficulty of achieving economies of scale and thus of reducing production costs.

The analysis of strategies that could address the need to simultaneously ensure income accumulation and security reveals a number of weaknesses: on the one hand, contracts with private agricultural investors do not remove the risk, for small-scale producers, associated with production, nor do they transfer this risk to the acquiring company. On the other hand, the labour market for waged workers does not pay salaries sufficient to permit the abandonment of agricultural production for home consumption, nor greater investment in it.

Finally: who "can afford" the market? Not everyone benefits from the sale of agricultural products: those who do, generally have, from the outset, access to more resources than others, or access to the inputs market and sufficient storage facilities. The sale of a farmer's own products on the market, therefore, often has the effect of amplifying existing inequalities.

The market for agricultural produce, in addition, even when accessible, is not always a source of empowerment. For the poorest producers, the decision to market their produce is often necessitated by a lack of resources for conservation or transformation. On the one hand, then, we have the richest, that "can afford the market" thanks to the fact that they have a guaranteed livelihood from other means, and, on the other hand, at the back of the queue for income distribution are the poorest who are "forced to market" because they can not afford not to sell their own produce.

The picture that emerges is complex and highlights the need for increased income stability "off farm", the need for more tools in order to be able to rely on production from the family plot, and policies that ensure income security, with the aim of not forcing women into the role of "social safety nets". Only a comprehensive approach to economic and social policy can respond to such interconnected needs.

3.2.2: Women and markets in Senegal: the limits of standardising initiatives

The analysis of some micro-projects promoted within the Italy-CILSS Fund in the region of Louga (Senegal) highlights a collaborative approach not directed towards the relational aspects of gender but, rather, highly focused on the promotion of women-specific activities.

Specifically, the extent to which these initiatives are standardized is striking, despite their being defined as a bottom-up approach: the standardization of development aid practices also seems to shape the proposals and expectations of both female and male beneficiaries. Explicitly, the vast majority of projects observed consisted of small-scale transformation projects for agricultural or fish produce, which revolve around the organization of training and the provision of new infrastructures for groups of women. These initiatives appear to have been deployed

independently from any analysis of the specific markets where the activities were to be introduced (vegetables, dried fish, cereals and dairy products).

An attempt was made to cast a critical eye over such initiatives, removing the potential risk of locking women into pre-defined roles within agricultural supply chains and in market positions that only permit reduced earnings. If it is true that these are activities which are transferred from the domestic sphere to the external environment, all the same, they do not seem to generate stable incomes.

Great emphasis is also placed on the formalization of activities as a tool for empowerment, even if the relationship between informality and exploitation is not clear: if, on the one hand, the risk exists that supply chains associated with export exploit the informal position of women for cheap labour, on the other hand, too much emphasis on formalization in these cases risks to fix the position of women within the agricultural and food supply chain, preventing them from progressing beyond petits revenus.

3.3 Voice and agency

3.3.1 Farmers' associations in the relationship between producers and markets as a tool for empowerment in Mozambique

One possible answer to some of the problems raised by analyzing the relationship between small producers and markets comes from the associations, considered as a form of collective action with the aim of bringing benefits to members, particularly for the marketing of produce, the pooling of infrastructure, the purchase of inputs, and the management of certain steps in the supply chains.

The advantages that farmer associations can bring are first and foremost in terms of economies of scale and bargaining power with traders. Those infrastructures that could stabilize

incomes for the family farming sector and individual producers would be too expensive, but may be accessible for associations. An association can also assume the risks of production and adopt mechanisms for socialization of losses: it is an element that favours the cooperative organization of businesses that apply outgrowing schemes. The cases of outgrowing schemes encountered provide for the existence of associations, but not in purchasing positions: in its relationship with businesses, the association simply plays the role of allocation and organization of farmers.

The promotion of associations as a form of empowerment can not disregard the analysis of how associations interact with inequalities of power and gender that exist in local communities. Indeed, an open debate is taking place on the suitability of mixed or exclusively female associations to promote the empowerment of women. The association model proposed by the União Nacional dos Camponeses (UNAC) in Mozambique is a mixed-gender one, because exclusively female associations are seen as having little impact on relationships within the family, risking the trapping of women into low income-generating activities and an increase in their workload, already high in family farming production. However, where UNAC aims to integrate women into farmers' organizations, as producers, this model shows a weakness in not tackling inequalities within associations, while it does not change the control of resources for the benefit of women. On the other hand, in most female associations studied, earnings derived from the association's activities are in fact managed by women, even if insufficient to generate significant savings.

3.3.2 The case of Groups for the Promotion of Women in Senegal: the problem of representation

Is it easier to overcome exclusion and discrimination together, as a group, in an association? Women in rural areas set up associations everywhere, but in different ways

Box 3 - The Italy-CILSS Fund

The "Italy-CILSS Fund to combat desertification for poverty reduction in the Sahel" (FIC) was approved by the IDC under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in October 2002, and was officially launched in 2004 for a planned duration of three years, but then extended until 2011.

A key element of the programme was the selection of areas of intervention to concentrate efforts on vulnerable areas and populations, arid and semi-arid areas of the Sahel. These zones have been defined Zarese (Zones à Risque Élevé Social et Environnemental).

The beneficiaries of the Fund were the rural population, individuals and small business owners, farming households, legally or traditionally recognized rural associations, and local governments.

and for different reasons. How effective can associations be, for what purpose and under which conditions? In Senegal there are 1,056,000 women in 6,816 Groups for the Promotion of Women, federated since 1987. These groups are real "social worlds": women neighbours set up projects, learn to read and write, start businesses, organize saving and credit funds, and explore and use local resources (each place has its own groups). They come from the past (from the tradition of tontin and mutual aid), are suggested by governments and ministries, but also by necessity: the groundnut production crisis or the cuts in public spending. They know the local and global markets (or rather, their effects) and negotiate their way through the aid system. The associations could be the interface between all aspects of life in all its complexity and the local institutions of governance: survival, care, work, relationships, projects and hopes for the future. They should, however, select issues, voices, spokespersons and beneficiaries and also disseminate information and produce strategic skills.

What happens, however, is that the "chain" of representation often breaks, the leadership turns into the elite, speaking a different language and becoming a symbol of privilege. Collective work is rejected when "suggested" from above, the claim to "rights" arises only in response to the solution of a problem (a lack of water, food prices rise or land been sold). Groups change, they explore economic and social plans, the plans of political powers and markets, near or

distant from everyday life. They also benefit from cooperation projects, such as those proposed by CILSS Italy. But here the big programme must face a difficult challenge: to replace or complement the institutions of local governance? How to avoid the debilitating effects of aid (donor-driven dependence) supporting chains of multi-level political decisions? Perhaps the only way to overcome this impasse, and to support the extraordinary potential capacity for representation and for change, is to provide facilities, places for political dialogue and negotiation.

3.4 : The tools

Part of the research was dedicated to the study and development of appropriate tools to assess the conditions of women in their contexts, both through indicators that account for the complexity of women's lives and their relationship with the land, and through methods and tools that allow to map activities and places associated with their life and work. The results are presented here.

3.4.1: The participatory critical GIS for the empowerment of women

The critical Geographic Information System (GIS) is an approach that evaluates GIS technology using different scientific and intellectual frames – such as geography, social theory and information science – so that the context (region) can be analysed from a holistic point of view, using both qualitative and

quantitative methods. This approach enables the evaluation and validation, in a participatory way, of old and new practices of land use, production and sustainable intensification of agricultural production. Specifically, the participatory gender-focused GIS can respond to a wide range of objectives, including:

- the identification of target groups and action priorities in development programmes;
- the participatory feasibility study of initiatives to identify profitable and lasting development activities;
- the monitoring of ongoing women's activities (both productive and non-productive);
- an assessment of the initial situation, to facilitate the evaluation of results at the end of the project.

The implementation of this approach is carried out in three distinct phases: (1) a preparatory phase, analysis of existing research data and selection of indicators. This phase involves the use of a participatory approach to involve all local stakeholders who work for the promotion of gender equality, and to identify some of the indicators of women's status and opportunities. These indicators, to enable monitoring at a highly localized level, must be subject to measurement or estimation by those involved. (2) Mapping phase: description of land-use by women. This phase allows the planning of those activities that are of most interest to women and includes the negotiated and participatory definition of project activities. This simultaneous mapping of women's activities and planned interventions facilitates awareness of the self-representation of women as well as the expression of concepts that are inherent in women's knowledge, but that are not usually described geographically. These concepts can therefore be considered 'new' knowledge. (3) Final phase: the construction of new mapping to monitor women's new activities, their renewed perception of land management and of their priorities, and the effectiveness of the initiatives carried out through the assessment of indicators measured at the beginning of the project, and the analysis of the accessibility of new services launched.

3.4.2: Applicability of multi-dimensional indicators in the case studies of the IAO/Gender Project

Multi-dimensional indicators can be employed in specific contexts and can be a valid instrument even at the micro level for those involved in local development projects, rather than being used only by the top management of international agencies or large research centres. An example of this kind of indicators is the recent Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index, WEAI, which measures the roles, representation, empowerment and inclusion of women in agriculture. Indicators can also be useful to influence the choice of areas of intervention for development projects that are sensitive to gender issues and the promotion of women's empowerment. As an example we have tried to demonstrate the applicability of the WEAI index in the ZARESE case study under the Italy CILSS Fund Programme. This is important to show that gender-oriented interventions can not be added in retrospect, but must be planned in advance.

Examining the more specific case of women belonging to GPFs (Women's Promotion Groups) in the rural communities of Mbodiène and Léona in Senegal, it is worth pointing out a fundamental overlap with the WEAI in the analysis of the various factors that influence GPFs and, therefore, the empowerment of members. Such factors include: environmental conditions, quality and quantity of infrastructure, proximity of local weekly markets, relations with savings and credit mutuelle and with NGOs, farmer organizations, the presence of local government policies or large-scale cooperation programmes. The women farmers of Mbodiène are at a disadvantage, compared to those of Léona, in terms of: production, because soils are more degraded, the climate is more arid and water is scarce; resources, owing to lack of roads for marketing products and due to lack of access to loans, either from banks or farmers' organizations; income, as revenue is held by the men or the managing committees; and

leadership, because Mbodiène women face more difficulties in establishing a relationship with the outside world, and "tend to remain prisoners in the village". Belonging to different groups (GPFs rather than local farmers' organizations) also entails important differences, not only in terms of training but above all for the access to economic resources. In all cases, younger women have to endure heavier domestic workloads and consequently have less time for other tasks. By contrast, the better off women farmers have a smaller cultivable area, since increased well-being makes working the fields less necessary.

What is not covered by an indicator such as the WEAI, though, is the relationship component. An indicator is a means, undoubtedly an effective one, by which one can justify large-scale intervention policies, but this must be accompanied by detailed investigations aimed at understanding what is really going on 'in that country', 'in that community', 'in that association', or 'in that family.'

3.4.3: Land and "territorialisation". Seeing women in local development: the case of Italy CILSS

In the FIC (Fondo Italia CILSS - Italy CILSS Fund) we find two essential themes: 1) food security, supported by technologies for monitoring and preventing environmental and socio-economic crisis; 2) an interaction between development cooperation experts and national governments engaged in processes of political and administrative decentralization. The method adopted is the promotion of a new form of regional governance sensitive to working at small, medium and/or large scale, aimed at the protection of territories undergoing desertification and at their rehabilitation.

The geographical approach, the territorialization of the FIC, however, deals with the loss of decision making power of local authorities produced by the centrifugal movement of decision-making bodies (globalization) and the

consequent emptying of the meaning of many keywords like participation, territory and local. Even in the FIC, local development risked being reduced to a mere set of agreements for the division of local financial resources, legitimized by a plethora of "anchoring micro-projects". However, it is precisely the critical reflection on territorialism and local development that allows to question if planning arose from above or below or, rather, if policies were "normative" or "positive": i.e. whether we think of development as it should be, or how it actually is. Rereading the programme from a gender perspective, it is evident that only in the second case ("positive" planning), are stakeholders seen as real people, i.e. as women and men who also interact with the available local resources, who begin relationships, sometimes conflicting, with the different levels of non-local government, and who weigh up the competitive advantages. Places themselves become protagonists, playing a role in guiding the process of development, "providing opportunities and helping to contain and reduce the risks." In summary, this is not about saying "there are also women," or that they are in the majority, or to promise "access" or "inputs". It is about putting oneself in the centre of their life experience, so that the planning process stems from their needs and their interests, thus understanding the living conditions that create a geography of care, the co-existence of often conflicting interests between growth, cohesion and social protection, between working for food and for the market, as noted in other parts of this report.

This brings us to overturn the view of what is central in what has been referred to as "place-based politics," which sees stakeholders as "placed" but by no means isolated in localism. It is only in this way, even in the FIC case, that one could have perceived the resistance and conflicts that, overlooked by "normative" planning or thought of only as "obstacles to overcome," instead open up other priorities for "development" and, above all, for managing processes of change.

3.5 A cross cutting issue: food security

All the reflections carried out by the project IAO/Gender touch on the issue of food security, currently at the heart of all discussions on how to guide policies for rural development. Women's new central role in agriculture today is not linked to the need for increased production as much as to the need to solve the crisis of food and food production which, according to some authoritative assessments, is the result of the failure of "global" markets to respond to food requirements. It is as a result of this failure that we turn back to smallholders and family-based farming, able to guarantee food sufficiency at the local and national level if properly supported.

The experience of women, socially responsible for the care and support of others, has within it the potential to reconstruct the complex supply chain of locally-based food, from production to assimilation, showing the links between food security and the food production system.

Support for women food producers, in subsistence farming as well as in small farming businesses, can take several directions:

- 1) provide knowledge, inputs and technology to raise the level of these activities and make them competitive with other forms of waged agricultural work
- 2) support programmes that help the equitable redistribution of resources within family budgets
- 3) support local supply chains, where possible, encouraging the sale of at least part of the products of transformation managed by women
- 4) support campaigns and movements, often conspicuously female, claiming food as a right rather than as a commodity, and resist the excesses of commercialisation
- 5) analyse the circumstances in which contract farming is implemented, to avoid it leading to increased food insecurity.



Capsicum field, Vanduzi District, Mozambique (picture courtesy of Roberta Pellizzoli)

4 Conclusions: rethinking rural development

4.1 Policies, cooperation and research

We have tried to build a process of interconnection between stakeholders: research/knowledge, planning/action, policy creation/implementation, political bodies (local and global agencies). Establishing and maintaining dialogue and encouraging communication between different levels of local government and expertise.

What emerges is a picture of complexity and relationships. If we no longer wish to read the situation as a relationship between the centre and the marginalized fringe, it is because we have established that the point of view of women from those rural areas should be central to any critical analysis capable of explaining the failures and distortions of development policies.

- The promises of access to markets are translated into proposals for the transformation of exclusion mechanisms of which they are an essential part, and therefore in support of inclusive markets able to safeguard agricultural output produced by women and the family.
- Claims to rights of land access mean dealing with the barriers created by land reforms and the dynamics of change at the local level to the disadvantage of the poorest; the value of the absolute principle of individual land property should be called into question, opening the way to experimenting with the communal management of productive, rather than marginal, land.
- The safeguarding of food security must find ways to contend with the unbalanced power

relationship between investors and small local farmers.

- In defending local knowledge, it must be taken into account that this can sometimes restrict women to predefined roles and hold back empowerment.
- Support for small family farms must reveal the huge amount of unpaid work carried out by the women that support them. This is linked to the fact that new forms of investment in rural areas and demands to diversify strategies for the rural poor continue to be based not only on women's unpaid labour but also on their endless supply of time.
- Support for small family farms, as a range of stakeholders have protested, must involve the social and family-based redistribution of care work and the reappraisal of the autonomous work of women in cooperatives and supply chains, paying special attention to the poorest women.
- In terms of value and quality, farmers' associations must prove they practice genuine democratic participation and representation.
- Space and time dedicated to free participation of associations and individual women should be supported at the different levels of local government. Political dialogue can only be exercised when made visible and accessible in the designated places and times.
- The concept of the association is to be understood as an intermediate space between the family unit and the market, and as a place of empowerment in local situations at risk of "the decentralization scam" in which multiple players emerge with competing interests and where power hierarchies take root.

Box 4 - The circle of knowledge: the submission of the results of the IAO/Gender Project in Mozambique

Of all the meetings held in Mozambique for the submission of the project results, that which took place in Chimoio, thanks to the support of the Programme of Support for Rural Development, saw the participation of most of the people interviewed and involved in the research carried out in the provinces of Sofala and Manica. The encounter between stakeholders with different and often competing interests (e.g. women farmers and entrepreneurs) developed into a constructive dialogue, able to deliver important mainstreaming practices if sustained and repeated over time. Specifically, the most debated issues were associations, land rights and registration in the context of the purchase of land by foreigners, the limits of the local market, the importance of regulated and transparent contracts between local and private farmers and the complex relationship between subsistence and commercial agriculture.

These are some of the elements of a debate that can be built today around the centrality of women farmers in the process of change, both in their world and ours. This is linked to an unbalanced interdependence between north and south, of course, but also clearly to a common search for other "development models", with comparisons suggested with the same themes in Europe, such as by examining the Common Agricultural Policy or promoting a debate with women's agricultural associations (e.g. "Donne in campo" - "Women in the field"). It is not so much a question of creating fair-trade links, or aid, as to open up to an analysis of the global, macroeconomic and financial forces affecting the availability of food and land for agricultural production.

"Best practices" must be identified from the point of view of those who live in the area and not just of those planning initiatives. What new "mental models", aspirations or potential new experiments might the farmers devise? We are not talking here of impacts and effects, but rather that the "drive" of the much sought after agency, the motivation to move and act together, is never aroused by lack alone, but also by possibility, by an alternative - not a model, but a suspension of the status quo, a "disorder" in the human landscape that is the basis for social change. This produces "good" or less good practices within programmes for Cooperation, and these movements for change should be central to

ongoing research shared by groups of local stakeholders.

What lessons have thus been learned about the methods and possible meanings of a research project that is interwoven with, not subordinate to or overly defined by, the decisions and possible visions of the work (and works) of the Italian Development Cooperation?

A subject on which much has been said and many proposals made: from the rhetoric of participation, of action-research or research-action, to successful experiences, especially of Anglo-Saxon origin, of participatory rural appraisals, complex proposals of findings from Latour's systems of relations between stakeholders, analysis of "mediation", brokerage, researcher translations for and with the IDC. Each discipline is presented with its own original contributions and invokes a multidisciplinary approach. Scientific knowledge is compared with local, "traditional" knowledge, only to discover that it too is linked to traditions and exists in a historical and geographical context, while local knowledge becomes ever more indispensable for understanding regions and histories from different contemporary, modern worlds. For the sake of brevity, here we make just two points:

- 1) Research as dialogue. The "geographies of knowledge production" compare subjects, cultures, different histories, all rooted in



Restitution of the research results, Chimoio, Mozambique (photo courtesy of Maria Cristina Mazzei).

different spaces. This often takes place in an unbalanced, unequal relationship that can be, must be, corrected. For example, the "convention" which places the absence of individual, registered land ownership in a "backward" time that must inevitably be "left behind", can be questioned following recent requests from women's associations in some parts of Africa that are seeking access to, but not ownership of, common land.

2) Research as a creation of alliances for a purpose. If dialogue works in the creation of knowledge, then, inevitably, the outcome is the identification of shared interests and goals. This, we discovered, is a possibility created by the thought, research and actions of many women over the last thirty years, and to which we tried to refer over the course of our work.

4.2 Check list of possible practices

In conclusion, we offer a summary of the "lessons learned" during the project: a memorandum for future research in different

contexts.. The original question was: "Under which conditions can we ensure a gender policy in rural development able to improve living conditions for women?" To answer this we recall the following points:

- 1) Women generate data and knowledge relating to the place they live in.. Associations representing women, at all levels of local administration, must participate in the production of local and national data collection systems, making them accessible to the widest public, free of charge. Spatial data must be included. There are many obstacles in the, organization and availability of databases by gender, such as the privatization of data collection and its use by parties with conflicting interests. It emerged, in the work carried out in Senegal on gender indicators in agriculture, that the data sector is largely overlooked by the major international funding agencies because it is not considered profitable in terms of image and results.

- 2) Indicators of women's empowerment and of the mainstreaming of their interests, flexible and continuously updateable, must accompany all phases of rural development programmes, including those not specifically aimed at women. Demographic, social and economic indicators, as well as indicators in rural areas, on employment in agriculture, associations and production for export must be defined through dialogue with all stakeholders within a region. On this issue, too, it should be remembered that multiple interests rest on the definition of gender indicators, which are sometimes used to effectively support changes in public policy, sometimes in co-operation projects and sometimes in joint actions between all the international, and often competing, stakeholders.
- 3) Women always work in family businesses as unpaid labour. Any initiative to support family farming must collect data on:
- division of responsibilities and roles
 - composition and management of the family budget
 - transformations of workloads and skills
 - comparison between households headed by women and men. For example, in the area of Thies, Senegal, the collection of such data has revealed that: (a) women at the head of the family are more independent and have better access to resources than if they were married; (b) they use resources more efficiently (with greater attention to the basic needs of the whole family, including children); and (c) to meet basic needs, women have more initiative in the use of resources (through tontines or other forms of women's groups), to which may be added allowances for any emigrant husband or relative, which contribute to the total revenue of the family.
- 4) Women have rights of access, often overlooked, to all the components of agricultural work. Widespread knowledge of the rules on ownership, family law and inheritance must be ensured. For example, it is noted that often women that seek access to land through purchase do so to build a house, presumably unaware that they can also access the land, and under more favourable conditions, for agricultural use. In the processes of reform, of land redistribution or in the face of large new acquisitions of land, disputes arise at all levels of regional governance that require not only information to be provided, but also legal support and the creation of structures for the management of disputes in which women's interests are properly defended.
- 5) Common lands. Women often have collective rights of use and access to lands considered, in different forms according to the circumstances, as collective property of the group. These forms of collective use of land must not be relegated to "traditional" common law, but rather this model should be promoted in response to the damage and marginalization created by the pressure to register individual land ownership. It is therefore important to create and sustain these experiences (an interesting example of this is one supported by the IFPRI - International Food Policy Research Institute – and the Archive of World Commons). If it is true that women's farms need an increase in the land asset eliminating the underlying conditionalities, and that such conditionalities could be lifted over time, then one can perhaps imagine such an increase being linked to land reserved for group use, provided that the value of "land capital" be recognised. This process could not only contribute to calling into question the inflexibility of the land system, but also lift women out of the trap of micro-credit, for the small farm that doesn't expand beyond the limits of the domestic circle.
- 6) Quality of the land. Women who suffer from the most devastating effects of the degradation of land and natural resources, of desertification, of loss of soil productivity become, in the statistics, "vulnerable"

individuals. It is, however, these very women who are most interested in investment in the regeneration of degraded land, in the equitable management of water and in the care of the quality of land, so they may be freed from a "vulnerability" often brought about by bad land-use choices and investments.

- 7) Other value chains for other markets. In various forms under different circumstances, women face specific obstacles in controlling value chains from production to market. Such obstacles may be in the form of transportation costs, lack of infrastructure, lack of storage points, dependence on single buyers or the marginalization of their food production. Once identified locally, these obstacles must also be overcome through the promotion of short value chains and alternatives to the existing ones, avoiding, however, ghettoization in marginal and unsustainable pockets (as in the examples of jam or preserve production funded in support of "traditional local knowledge", but with no sustainable markets). The lack of women's control over their own products must be overcome, even within the internal dynamics of family production, by promoting value chains associations and cooperatives able to ensure escape from 'ghettoization' often created by micro-credit.
- 8) Women's work in partnerships between private companies and small local producers. Such cases are more and more common and are liable to result in negative consequences for women where they are not established within a framework of transparent and inclusive agreements in which all those involved are properly informed of the nature of the agreement. Moreover, these initiatives must be accompanied by an analysis of the circumstances and of the value chains involved in order to identify the economic and gender inequalities and internal power relationships.
- 9) Women control and manage food and nutrition. They are positioned between survival, food quality, production and consumption. This centrality is likely to be overturned by transformations in the food system, literally removing the ability to control quality and accessibility. The links between malnutrition and the trends in the market system for food need to be rebuilt. For example, malnutrition is not always the result of poverty, as seen in cases where the profitable production of a food item – e.g. by potato producers in Sikasso in Mali – occurs alongside manifest conditions of malnutrition in children due to the exclusively commercial destination of the product in family businesses where the man manages the earnings. In the same region, the replacing of meat with "Maggi cubes" marked an "epoch-making" change in eating habits, the harmfulness of which is not perceived.
- 10) Agency. No gender policy in rural development can produce significant results if not actively supported by the local presence, at all levels, of associations, groups and spokespersons for women farmers in all regions, even if profound differences emerge. Criteria for selection and for recognition of the actual representativeness of associations at various regional levels must be made explicit, as is the relationship between mixed and women-only groups, identifying organizational objectives and methods. Women associations in rural areas have gone through, alternatively, the spheres of social protection and micro-businesses: the meeting of these two approaches can produce new experiences of which women have expertise and responsibility.
- 11) Structures. To achieve support for the collective organisation of women, the creation of specific places and spaces open to the associations present in a region must be guaranteed. Negotiations and political dialogue should be supported at all levels. An example of success, promoted by the Italian

Development Cooperation and also the basis of much of the IAO/Gender research, is the Welod programme in the Palestinian territories. Here, the creation of centres supported by the local governors, the Tawasol ("communication"), which managed, on the one hand, to overcome fragmentation, elitism and poor representation of women's associations and, on the other, to bridge the gap between the different administrative levels of regional policies could be discussed and disseminated. Opening a process of communication and comparison between some of the good gender practices created by the Italian Development Cooperation in different regions may be useful to clearly identify a pattern and assure continuity and effectiveness.

These issues are not new to the theories and gender policies of rural development. Research has confirmed many, arguing their relevance within specific local contexts. In any case, these

are the recommendations, supported by local evidence (described in detail in the book *Donne, terre e mercati. Ripensare lo sviluppo rurale in Africa sub-sahariana - Women, land and markets. Rethinking Rural Development in Sub-Saharan Africa*, CLEUP, 2013).

The recommendations suggest the need to develop a system of monitoring, shared with all stakeholders participating in the life and governance of the land. In order to guarantee women a voice and support empowerment and mainstreaming, in line with what has been done globally at least since 1995, the year of the Beijing conference. But that is not all. What emerges with clarity and, above all, backed by local evidence, is that in order to consistently and radically pursue these policies means working to create a different development model, new lifestyles profoundly different from those prevailing now, and into which it appears impossible to "integrate" women's freedom without a deep change in the existing power relations.



Italy-CILSS Fund - Primary education, ZARESE of Oubrintenga, Burkina Faso (photo courtesy of Laura Bonaiuti)

Criteria for gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes of rural development

Bianca Pomeranzi

It is by now given for granted, at least at international level, that women's participation in rural development interventions is absolutely necessary in order to meet the goals of food security and environmental sustainability which impact on the future of our planet and of its inhabitants.

Nonetheless, in spite of the considerable amount of literature on this issue, the political will to pursue this objective clashes with the survival, at global level, of a stereotyped image of gender roles within the family unit and the community. For this reason, development interventions at all levels (from macroeconomic policies to country programmes, to programmes' design) must be able to offer a correct analysis of the results reached by the processes which have been implemented

The short synthesis of IAO/gender Programme explains and discusses some "principles", based above all on the appraisal of women's subjectivity and agency and of the knowledge useful to guarantee that rural development interventions might improve women's condition in life and work and, thanks to their participation, facilitate the achievement of the more general goals identified by the United Nations, as stated in the sector guidelines (Poverty, Rural Development, Environment, etc.) and in the thematic guidelines (Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment) produced by the DGCS (General Direction of Development Cooperation)

In order to support the implementation of these "principles", we hereby list some criteria which should guide Policies, Country Programmes and Projects which favour a better use of well

established techniques (Gender Budgeting, Gender Analysis Rapid Rural Appraise, SWOT Analysis, etc.) in the new contexts of development cooperation.

*Global policies**

- › To analyse the gender impact of policies for food security decided at G20.
- › To analyse policies for small farmers focusing on the different roles and tasks of women and men inside the households.
- › Support the creation of data base at global level with gender indicators in rural contexts promoting harmonization with the criteria used by the World Bank in the Survey on "Agency and Voices of Women for Development" planned for the year 2014.

*Country programmes' strategies**

- › To make use of existing analysis at country level and/or support gender analysis of political, economic, legal, cultural technological and environmental factors which have an impact on women's on the situation of women and men in a society.
- › Support the production of gender statistics and, where possible, the implementation of gender budgets at national level.
- › Support laws on ownership, divorce, inheritance which give women access to land
- › Support women's and girls' access to primary education and to trainings on agricultural production and conservation of natural resources.

- › Support the country's policies for the implementation of Article 14 of CEDAW ¹.

Programmes*

- › To use gender analysis for:
 - ›› Identifying qualitative and quantitative farming systems
 - ›› Producing information on *food crops* e *cash crops*
 - ›› Information on farm e off farm activities and on the major sources of income in the rural world.
 - ›› Information on groups/associations/cooperatives active at village level
 - ›› Information on existing infrastructures: markets, access roads, (to villages, to markets and towns) , health assistance (dispensaries, medicines, professional staff)) education and training.
 - ›› Information on: water points, milling machines, nurseries, specialized farms.
 - ›› Information on: traditional authorities, land tenure systems, attitudes towards associations.
- › To involve women's associations, as well as men's in the design of programmes for rural development and nutrition;
- › To make sure that the programme accounts for

women's and men's preferences in the introduction of new technologies.

- › To support women's access to: better mobility, information on markets, transports, water and information technology.
- › To support local leadership and relations with central ministries and other institutions in order to create conditions of food security in crisis also thanks to women's competence.
- › To facilitate access to credit of women entrepreneurs in rural contexts.
- › To include from the initial steps of programmes indicators for monitoring and gender impact evaluation and on food security.
- › By the year 2015 all programmes will have to apply OCSE/DAC Gender Marker

* Technical assistance and support in the implementation of the criteria is supported: at the level of global policies by the Senior Gender Advisor and by the specialised UN agencies. At Country Strategy programmes level by the Senior gender advisor and or by the gender Focal Points: at programmes level, by national and international expertise.

¹Article 14

1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas.

- (a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;
- (b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning;
- (c) To benefit directly from social security programmes;
- (d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;
- (e) To organize self-help groups and co-operatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self employment;
- (f) To participate in all community activities;
- (g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;
- (h) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

Contacts

CFR - Consorzio Ferrara Ricerche

<http://www.conorzioferrararicerche.it>

Centro Cooperazione allo Sviluppo Internazionale Unife

<http://www.unife.it/centri/cooperazione-sviluppo>

CISAO - Centro Interdipartimentale di Ricerca e Collaborazione Scientifica con i Paesi del Sahel e dell'Africa Occidentale

<http://www.unito.it>

IAO - Istituto Agronomico per l'Oltremare

<http://www.iao.florence.it>

UTL Dakar, Senegal

<http://www.dakar.Cooperazione.esteri.it/>

UTL Maputo, Mozambico

<http://www.maputo.Cooperazione.esteri.it>



IAO/GENDER PROJECT: A GENDER ANALYSIS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Roberta Pellizzoli and Gabriella Rossetti

with Angela Calvo, Egidio Dansero, Cristiano Lanzano, Agnese Migliardi, Cecilia Navarra, Monica Petri

In rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa women, according to the most influential international development institutions, play a central role in agricultural production, in food security, in the protection of natural resources. Yet they are often portrayed as being a vulnerable and marginalized group. The IAO/Gender project aimed at analysing the reasons behind this contradiction through field research in Western and Southern Africa that focused on the following issues:

- How can women have access to cultivable land within the ongoing processes of change in land tenure systems that often produce marginalization?
 - How differently do men and women respond to the phenomenon of large scale land-related investments and to new labour opportunities in rural areas (such as contract farming or wage labor)?
 - Under what conditions does a small family business can become a sustainable and equitable response to private land-related investments?
 - How do demographic changes (such as the decreasing number of children or the increased access to schooling) affect the division of labour within small family farms?
 - What is the impact of increasing migration towards urban areas on rural women farmers?
 - If all these aspects produce changes in gender relations, what answers have already been developed by women's groups and associations?
- Answering to these questions contributes to finding interpretations and suggestions for rural development programs in the study areas and beyond.



ISTITUTO AGRONOMO PER L'OLTREMARE
Florence - ITALY

<http://www.iao.florence.it>

ISBN 978-88-89507-11-7