



**FARMERS
FIGHTING
POVERTY**



Evidence of Impact 2014



FARMERS FIGHTING POVERTY

***Evidence of Impact 2014:
Focus on farmers' income and livelihood***

- Evidence of Impact 2014 is the sixth in a series of reports prepared annually since 2009 for the General Assembly of AgriCord. It presents some impacts of the Farmers Fighting Poverty programme on farmers' income and livelihood, based on evidence derived from work with farmers' organisations in developing countries.
- Throughout this document, the term 'farmers' organisation' is used as shorthand for a broad range of membership-based groups. It covers the many types of association – including cooperatives, unions and rural women's organisations – that may be formed by producers, peasant farmers, smallholders and rural dwellers. The term also includes more general associations concerned with commodities, politics and economic services, and covers too those in emergent stages. The common thread is that their members are all involved in the land, whether in agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture or forestry.
- Agro-info.net (AIN) is an online database for the Farmers Fighting Poverty programme, which has been running since 2003. The database currently contains information on more than 600 farmers' organisations, on more than 1,600 projects, in more than 80 (mainly developing) countries. It is a multipurpose database, providing descriptive information on organisations and activities, as well as financial data about the farmers' organisations and the projects. The database can be accessed at www.agro-info.net and guarantees transparency of the Farmers Fighting Poverty process. Quick user instruction guide is available in English at <https://www.agricord.org/news/58242/agro-info-net-for-dummies> and in French at <https://www.agricord.org/news/58242/agro-info-net-for-dummies>. This report refers to projects by their AIN number.
- Farmers' organisations often have long names in the language of their home country. For simplicity, this report refers to most of them by their acronyms. The full names and organisational information can be found on Agro-info.net.
- Evidence of Impact 2014 was written by Julie Harrod from material provided by the AgriCord agri-agencies. Julie is an Oxford-based writer and editor with a long interest in natural resources and sustainable development. With degrees in environmental science and forestry, she has lived and worked for more than 20 years in different developing countries (including Nepal, Kenya, Zambia and Malawi). She works for many organisations, including UNICEF and the World Bank. Her association with AgriCord dates from 2009.



FARMERS FIGHTING POVERTY

Farmers Fighting Poverty is a farmers' initiative which started in 2007. Its general objective is to contribute to poverty reduction in developing countries, specifically by strengthening the capacities and enhancing the operations of agricultural producers' organisations. This is done through funding and advice to farmers' organisations in developing countries. Farmers Fighting Poverty is steered by farmers' organisations and managed by AgriCord.

Projects are based on long-term relationships between agri-agencies and farmers' organisations. Contracts are, where possible, multi-annual. Farmers Fighting Poverty works with farmers' organisations at different levels (national, intermediate (district, préfecture) and local), farmer-controlled cooperatives and business initiatives, and commodity-based producer organisations.

AgriCord mobilises funds from farmers' constituencies (through membership subscriptions), from the general public and from other private sources. Farmers Fighting Poverty is supported by the governments of several OECD countries (Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland), by IFAD and by the European Union.

AgriCord has the following members:

Country	Farmers' organisation	Agri-agency	Member since
France	FNSEA, APCA, Jeunes Agriculteurs, CNMCCA	Afdi	2003
Netherlands	LTO, SSVO, NCR and NAJK	Agriterra	2003
France	Groupe Céréaliers de France (AGPB, AGPM, ARVALIS, UNIGRAINS)	Fert	2003
Belgium	Boerenbond, Landelijke Gilde, KVLV and KLJ	Trias	2003
Canada	UPA Union des Producteurs Agricoles (Québec)	UPA DI	2003
Sweden	LRF Federation of Swedish Farmers	We Effect	2004
Italy	CIA Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori	-	2009
Spain	UPA Union de Pequeños Agricultores y Ganaderos	-	2009
Belgium	FWA Fédération Wallonne de l'Agriculture	CSA	2010
Asia	AFA Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development	AsiaDHRRA	2011
Senegal	Organisations agricoles du Sénégal membres d'Asprodeb	Asprodeb	2011
Germany	DBV Deutscher Bauernverband	-	2012
Finland	MTK, SLC, Pellervo and ProAgria	FFD	2013 (2006)

Contents

SUMMARY	5
SETTING THE SCENE	7
CHAPTER 1 – INVESTMENT BY SMALLHOLDERS IN THEIR OWN FARMS	11
Investing in higher productivity and resilience.	12
Small-scale farmers invest higher income in new enterprises – MVIWATA, Tanzania	13
Rice farmers can now afford secondary school fees – IDRA, Zambia	15
Professionalising family dairy farms – Unileite, Brazil	16
Adopting production models suited to the local environment	17
Integrated farming on small plots – Mayanzi Area Cooperative Enterprise, Uganda	17
Zero-tillage adopted in erosion-prone areas – various groups, Morocco and Mali	18
Breeding cattle to produce more milk – AOPP Koulikoro, Mali	20
CHAPTER 2 – COLLECTIVE INVESTMENT TO OVERCOME LIMITED ASSETS	21
Investment in education pays dividends – FIFATA, Madagascar	22
Study circles increase income for women cotton farmers – CAZ, Zambia	22
Refrigerated storage for potatoes – FPF, Guinea	23
• Warehouse tenants build their own storage facilities – Faso Jigi, Mali	23
Setting up farmers’ groups in a remote area – SFACF, Nepal	24
New bread recipes to use local grains – UNCAS, Senegal	25
CHAPTER 3 – INVESTMENT TO MANAGE RISK	27
Agri-consultancy for risk management – Burkina Faso and Guinea	28
Diversification and warehouse credit system – CAPAD, Burundi	28
Protective veterinary services – FIFATA, Madagascar	29
Peasants contributing to their own land security – AOPP Koulikoro, Mali	30
National farmers’ union joins national climate change committee – ZNFU, Zambia	31
CHAPTER 4 – INVESTING IN ENABLING MARKETS	33
Markets that favour smallholders	34
Link to schools offers a secure and growing market – UCCA, Uganda	35
Twinning support links horticulture to tourist market – TAHA, Tanzania	36
Dairy coops build new shops to boost sales – Bahir Dar Dairy Cooperative, Ethiopia	37
Malting factory buying barley from small farmers – Tsehai Union, Ethiopia	38
Developing the mushroom value chain – Nimh Binh Cooperative Alliance, Vietnam	39
Ecological farmers finding new markets – AOPEB, Bolivia	40
Business advice seen as ‘money in ideas’ – Kiambaa Dairy Cooperative, Kenya	40
• Market news via sms and radio – Mayanzi Area Cooperative Enterprise, Uganda	41
Organic rice farmers flourishing with education and markets – APPOLI, Indonesia	41
Access to financial services	43
Farmers learn business skills and gain access to loans – CONFRAS, El Salvador	44
Accounting skills and loans for small farmers – SFACF, Nepal	45
CHAPTER 5 – INVESTING IN ENABLING INSTITUTIONS	47
Investing in policies	48
Bringing farmers’ organisations into the planning process – AsiaDHRRA	49
Lobbying for a more liberal coffee market – KCPA, Kenya	50
Dialogue to guide agricultural and food policies – CPF, Burkina Faso	51
Farmers influencing agricultural policy – Réseau SOA, Madagascar	51
Investing in research	53
Thorough monitoring of family farms – FONGS, Senegal	54
CLOSING REMARKS	55
ANNEX – INVENTORY OF EVIDENCE USED IN THE REPORT	57



Summary

Farmers Fighting Poverty has been a framework for action by agri-agencies since 2007. It operates through a fund managed by AgriCord and supports many farmers' organisations across the developing world. This Evidence of Impact report brings together brief case studies showing where support under Farmers Fighting Poverty is improving the income levels and livelihoods of smallholder farmers.¹ It is particularly significant this year, as 2014 has been designated the International Year of Family Farming.

As impact is hard to quantify, qualitative proxy indicators (such as improvements in housing, education, lifestyle or self-esteem) are used. And although impacts stemming from Farmers Fighting Poverty activities cannot be isolated from those caused by other factors, the voices of the farmers recorded here, together with other evidence, suggest that significant impacts can be attributed to Farmers Fighting Poverty.

Case studies are arranged under five types of investment useful for smallholder agriculture that can be made via farmers' organisations. The arrangement is to some extent arbitrary, as activities arguably fall under more than one category, but the five themes provide a useful way of presenting the evidence. This year the work and impact of more than 30 farmers' organisations in more than 20 countries are included, from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Investment by smallholders in their own farms

Small family farmers operating close to subsistence level are poorly placed to make cash investments. But support from effective farmers' organisations can help them to create surplus income by using their assets of land and labour more productively.

To achieve higher productivity and resilience, training (to raise awareness of what improvements are possible and provide vital technical knowhow) and access to inputs (such as modern seed varieties and improved breeding stock) are crucial. Farmers also need credit facilities to pay for the improvements and to support their families until their investments start to bear

fruit. Cases from Tanzania, Zambia and Brazil show how these support mechanisms, provided via farmers' organisations, are proving effective.

Another route to self-investment is choosing production models suited to the local environment and the resources available to family farms, which are often land-poor but labour-rich. In favoured areas – shown by a case from Uganda – it may be possible to integrate a range of crops and small livestock into limited space, or to grow a single crop more intensively. A different approach is needed where the environment is at risk of degradation – a case from North Africa shows how farmers using zero-tillage methods are bringing eroded land back into production. Careful selective breeding of livestock is another way of working within environmental constraints – a case from Mali shows how local cattle have been crossed with a more productive dairy breed to give cows which combine higher milk yield with the hardiness of the unimproved type.

Collective investment to overcome limited assets

Individual investment is often more effective if it is paralleled by collective investment in education, joint facilities, or new ideas. Adult education and training can be formalised in agricultural colleges, as shown by a case in Madagascar where there is now a cohort of educated young farmers able to work as agricultural technicians. An informal approach can also be effective, such as the study circles conducted in local languages for women cotton farmers in Zambia. An example of a joint facility is illustrated by a case in Guinea, where refrigerated warehouses have been built to store potatoes grown by farmers' organisation members. Finally, the idea of developing new ideas is shown by a case in Senegal where flour from local grains is now mixed with wheat flour to produce more nutritious bread.

Investment to manage risk

Agriculture is inherently risky, whether viewed in terms of climate change and fluctuating weather patterns, the occurrence of pests and diseases, market fluctuations or the political setting. These risks can be managed by diversifying, and by investing in best

¹ Parallel impact reports focus on cross-cutting themes: gender, the environment, organisational strength, and financial health and management.

practice to maximise production and minimise loss. Farmers' organisations have key roles here, to join the climate change debate and help promote climate change adaptation, and to inform their members about efficient methods suited to small-scale production in uncertain conditions (there is overlap here with the education noted under collective investments). They can also provide veterinary expertise and improved inputs.

Cases here include agri-consultancy for risk management in Burkina Faso and Guinea, and diversification funded by a warehouse credit system in Burundi. Veterinary services in Madagascar are helping farmers keep their animals healthier and more productive. The risk of losing land to big institutional buyers is being mitigated to some extent in Mali by a centre to monitor and respond to potential 'land grabs'. A case from Zambia shows the national farmers' union representing small farmers on the national climate change committee.

Investing in enabling markets

Useful support mechanisms here include developing markets that favour smallholders, and increasing access to small loans and other financial services. Farmers' organisations are often the only way that family farmers can reach more lucrative markets, as individual farmers can pool their production with that of their peers for collective sale. Cases illustrating the benefits of tapping into markets collectively include a dairy in Uganda that supplies milk to schools, and market gardeners selling fruit and vegetables to the hotels and restaurants catering for the growing tourist trade in Zanzibar. A dairy coop in northern Ethiopia has opened new shops for direct sales, and small farmers in the same region are now, via their organisation, linked to a large brewery which has a constant demand for malting barley. Women's groups in Nepal are using a waste product (rice straw) as a substrate for mushrooms and supplying growing markets.

Other cases show a different approach – improving production in terms of variety or quality. An organisation in Bolivia is helping its members develop new products from organically grown crops, and a dairy in Kenya has improved its cooling and storage facilities to such an extent that customers notice the difference and are willing to pay a higher price. In Indonesia, a combination of training, support, market links and a warehouse credit scheme has helped farmers improve their livelihoods.

Illustrating the importance of access to financial services are two cases, from El Salvador and Nepal, where farmers have been able to expand their businesses by taking out small loans via their farming groups.

Investing in enabling institutions

The broad idea of 'enabling institutions' is in this report narrowed to agricultural policy and research priorities. These closely linked issues affect farmers, whether they realise it or not, but they are powerless (as individuals) to influence either area, so investment here relies heavily on farmers' organisations. As institutional change is a slow process, impacts at farm level take time to appear. But this report highlights some current efforts that should, in time, lead to the most widespread impacts of all.

Farmers' organisations are being brought into the planning process of projects under the multilateral Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, and results are particularly promising in Nepal and Cambodia. Here there are good working relationships between farmers' organisations, governments and other stakeholders so the needs of small farmers are properly considered in project design. A case from Kenya shows a long-established and well-connected farmers' organisation persistently pursuing its vision of a more liberalised coffee market. In Burkina Faso, the national farmer's organisation has been closely involved with drafting agricultural legislation; and in Madagascar the national network of agricultural organisations is undertaking research to inform its policy position. Careful monitoring of family farms in Senegal has shown how important such farms are in terms of local food security, wealth and employment, and the research findings are now being used to modernise small farms.



Setting the scene

This publication is part of the reporting carried out by Farmers Fighting Poverty, in this case presenting evidence of impact – beyond direct project-level output results – stemming from support to farmers' organisations. In parallel with this report, which focuses on the impact on the income and livelihoods of farming families, four other thematic reports will this year examine impacts on the cross-cutting issues of gender, the environment, organisational strengthening, and financial health and management.

Measuring impact on farmers' incomes and livelihood

Quantifying impact is generally difficult (many farmers keep poor records because they have had little formal education) or impossible (who can put a figure on quality of life?). But Farmers Fighting Poverty is committed to collecting impact information regularly, in descriptive terms if necessary.

It will remain a challenge to measure – quantitatively or qualitatively – the exact attribution of the improvement of the livelihood situation of the members.... Even when changes at this level are measured, it does not say anything about the extent to which these results can be attributed to [the activity of a farmers' organisation and/or external support]. A lot of factors influence the results at this level: political, economical, natural, financial, and also the involvement of other actors.²

Of course, not all impacts can be attributed unequivocally to Farmers Fighting Poverty – there are many factors that determine livelihood and incomes. In some cases a farmers' organisation is receiving support from more than one source; and fluctuations in world market prices and weather conditions all contribute to the success or otherwise of a small farm enterprise. Nevertheless, the proxy indicators by which impact can be assessed (improved housing, more spare cash to pay for children's education and healthcare, together with intangibles of self-esteem and a sense of agency) are showing a positive trend in the cases described in

² Evaluation of the Trias DGD programme 2011-2013, *Actions in the South*

the body of this report. It is reasonable to state that support to farmers' organisations has played a part in these improvements.

Some of the cases show that support at institutional level, particularly when efforts are directed at changing policy, rarely has immediate consequences for livelihoods. But since, without a supportive institutional environment, family farmers face an uphill struggle to lift themselves out of poverty and into entrepreneurship, it is vital that policy and legislation are framed with family farmers in mind.

How the report is arranged

It is less than a year since Evidence of Impact 2013 was published, but there are new cases to be presented and some lessons to be drawn. The cases are arranged to reflect the various routes by which investment in smallholder agriculture can be made: in every case, farmers' organisations have a significant role. This approach loosely follows the structure of an FAO report *Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security*³. For each type of investment, we highlight projects under Farmers Fighting Poverty that show impact at organisation or farm level. The report has five sections:

1. Investment by smallholders themselves (usually with some support) in their own farms
2. Collective investment to overcome limited assets
3. Investment to manage risk
4. Investment in markets
5. Investment in enabling institutions.

Investing in family farming

Smallholders have the potential to increase their productivity by investing in new techniques in sustainable agriculture and becoming more business-oriented. After all, having few other options to improve their livelihoods, they have every interest in making best use of their limited assets – land and labour. But it is difficult for poor farmers operating just above subsistence level to make such investments, especially in remote rural areas where infrastructure may be lacking

³ HLPE (2013). *Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security*, Rome.

and government policy may focus on the needs of bigger players. Without action by governments and donors to provide appropriate policies and public goods, smallholder investment will be suppressed.

“Working together we can enable others to learn [that] investment in agriculture, and smallholders in particular, is not just about food security, it is also about creating jobs. It is about generating wealth; transforming the rural space; creating cohesive societies; and most importantly, it is about empowering rural people and lifting millions of them out of poverty.”⁴

Strength in numbers

For many reasons, smallholders are more likely to succeed if they are members of active rural cooperatives or farmers' organisations. Well-run organisations are widely recognised as playing a key role in empowering small agricultural producers, especially women farmers.⁵ And the strength in numbers offered by a group leads to market efficiencies (cheaper inputs bought in bulk, joint sales to reach larger markets) as well as enabling access to services and business development advice. Groups can lobby for a better policy environment, giving voice to the concerns of the small producer. And the mere fact of running a member-based organisation on democratic, inclusive principles has wider implications for democracy and gender balance in society.

Given the undeniable value of farmers' organisations in promoting their members' interests, building capacity in these organisations is an excellent way for donor and partner institutions to invest in smallholder farming. The Farmers Fighting Poverty strategy, through which farmers' organisations in the developed world offer tailored support (using farmer-to-farmer methods) to their counterparts in the developing world, is proving an effective means of channelling this investment. Support is provided under four key themes: developing organisational strength; creating networks; lobbying and policy-making; and developing business opportunities. It also provides cross-cutting support in the fields of gender and the environment.

Recognising the importance of family farming

The United Nations has designated 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming. As well as highlighting the fact that most family farmers live in poverty, this sends a clear message about the importance of small farms to global food security. Family farmers are already the primary source of staple foods for most of the world's population, and there is plenty of scope for improvement. With a higher profile and increased support through their organisations, family farmers can be significantly more productive; unlocking the potential of small producers to alleviate poverty has wide environmental implications too.

Smallholder family farmers produce four fifths of the developing world's food. These women and men are key contributors to global food security, custodians of vital natural resources and biodiversity, and central to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Despite this reality, they remain a largely untapped resource, and are disproportionately represented among the world's poor people. The potential economic and social returns to investing in them are enormous.⁶

What is a family farmer?

Although precise definitions vary, it is easy to recognise family farmers: they are smallholders, pastoralists, forest keepers and fisher-people who work small plots of land. They have a family-focused, usually labour-intensive approach and much of their production is used within the household.⁷ 'Small' generally means smaller than 10 hectares (ha), but many farms in the developing world cover less than 1 ha. In this report, the terms 'smallholder', 'small farmer' and 'family farmer' are used interchangeably.

4 From the IFAD President's opening statement at the Fifth Global Meeting of the Farmers' Forum, 17-18 February 2014, Rome.

5 HLPE (2013).

6 International Fund for Agricultural Development (2013). Investing in smallholder family farmers...for the future we want.

7 FAO (2012). Factsheet on smallholders.



Listening to family farmers

With 1.5 billion people living in smallholder households and family farming being the most common model of agriculture worldwide, the debate on food security and poverty reduction should include the voices of small farmers. Evidence is growing that small-scale producers can be highly productive, especially if measures of productivity include environmental indicators. And it has been shown that agriculture is more powerful than other sectors at reducing poverty among the very poor, as long as inequality is not too high. Indeed, in sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture is 11 times more poverty reducing than other sectors, largely because so many people are already involved.⁸

Giving small farmers a voice is not easy – trade policies are thrashed out at international meetings that until recently were dominated by the US and EU. But with global dynamics changing and Brazil, China and India now taking part in negotiations at the highest level, there is change afoot: the newcomers are home to hundreds of millions of small-scale farmers, so there is hope that their interests will be considered along with the needs of ‘industrial’ farmers.⁹

8 Christiaensen, L., Demery, L. and Kuhl, J. (2010). The (Evolving) Role of Agriculture in Poverty Reduction: An Empirical Perspective. Working Paper No. 2010/36. UNU-WIDER. Finland.

9 Murphy, S. (2012). Changing Perspectives: Small-scale farmers, markets and globalisation (revised edition), IIED/Hivos, London/The Hague.





Chapter 1

Investment by smallholders in their own farms

Projections show that feeding a world population of 9.1 billion people in 2050 will require food production in developing countries to almost double from 2005 levels.¹⁰ As developing countries rely to a great extent on smallholder agriculture, family farmers must therefore make dramatic improvements their productivity, but this is not easy in the face of grinding poverty. Small farmers have few assets to spare, face many risks (including unpredictable weather and periodic ill-health) and whatever income they may have is usually needed simply to satisfy basic needs. Investment, often in a range of areas, is therefore needed to unlock their potential.

In most cases, farmers will need training – this might start by raising awareness, so that farmers have an insight into the types of worthwhile investment, before moving on to specific technical training. Training in how to keep financial and business records is also important (and can be particularly challenging for farmers who do not find it easy to read and write).

The examples given below show that individual investment is generally inseparable from wider collective investments through farmers' organisations and other interested parties. But with the support of their organisations, family farmers are certainly willing and able to make worthwhile investments in their own enterprises.

¹⁰ http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/wsfs/docs/Issues_papers/HLEF2050_Global_Agriculture.pdf

Investing in higher productivity and resilience

Increasing productivity, whether in yield or value, is vital. Although there is rarely scope to increase the land area of family farms, better management (which might include improving soil fertility, irrigation or diversifying the cropping pattern) can increase the 'economic size'. Typically a range of improvements will be needed, but in each case the technology must be affordable and locally available.

Increasing the yield of a crop may be easier than increasing its value, because the latter depends on the costs of inputs (fertiliser, machinery etc.) relative to the fluctuations of the market for the end product. Nevertheless, unless the value does increase, family farmers will not continue to invest. This adds weight to the argument that technology must become less dependent on external inputs, and that farmers need training in more efficient production. The role of farmers' organisations is key here, providing training and extension services to their members. They can also help with joint infrastructure such as warehouses and market facilities. This part of the investment picture is discussed in more detail below (in Chapter 2 – Collective investments to overcome limited assets).





Small-scale farmers invest higher income in new enterprises – MVIWATA, Tanzania

Despite beginning during a serious drought, a six-year initiative to encourage economic development in rural northern Tanzania had significant results.¹¹ Average annual household incomes and GDP per capita of farmers involved increased by 42% – from €3,450 to €4,884 – between 2008 and 2013, compared with 22% growth in the wider population. These increases spurred income growth in other ventures, particularly vegetables and other agri-enterprises. Most of the farmers (85%) felt that their lives had changed for the better, with children's education, higher household incomes and improved food security being particularly noted.

Much of Monduli District in Northern Tanzania is semi-arid land suitable only for pastoralism. During the drought of 2008-2009, over 60% of the livestock in the area died and feedstocks were depleted. Neighbouring Babati District is a more favoured area, with (usually) good rains that allow two plantings per year, but it too suffered during the drought. Linking-up: local economic development in a global world is a joint initiative that sought to place small-scale farmers and entrepreneurs at the heart of local economic development. It focused particularly on the poultry and sunflower value chains: the former was more successful but there were synergies between the two products as described below.

Local farmers' organisations under the national farmers' umbrella network MVIWATA (an acronym from the Kiswahili) organised residential and village-based training courses for small farmers. Subjects ranged from agronomy and animal husbandry to record-keeping and business management, and learning was reinforced by exchange visits and a practical, field-school approach. Production and productivity were boosted when the farmers began to apply what they had learned – investing in their own farms and enterprises.

Poultry farmers began to rear quick-maturing hybrid hens, feed them better, and improve pest and disease management. After six years, households were keeping larger flocks of hens and egg production had almost doubled. Sunflower farmers achieved higher productivity by using improved seeds and correct cultivation methods, although overall production only increased slightly (by 10%) because a smaller acreage was planted. Nevertheless, the technical support given by MVIWATA enabled farmers to improve their growing techniques, and farmers have transferred this knowledge to other crops with beneficial effect.

There are now estimated to be about 50 sunflower oil presses in Babati, and the 'cake' left after oil extraction is a useful addition to poultry feed rations. As most farmers in the project produced both poultry and sunflower seed, this was a useful synergy even though sunflower was only a small part of overall household income (2% in 2013, compared to poultry at 15%).

Access to loans

With MVIWATA's support, farmers who had taken the initiative to set up SACCOs gained access to low-interest loans from a range of micro-finance providers. Farmers like member-based SACCOs in which they have a sense of ownership. They also appreciate low interest rates, a simple process for arranging loans, small but frequent disbursement rates and loan 'holidays' that allow them to defer repayment until harvest time. Average loan size was €275.

Access to loans seemed to be correlated with higher incomes, and loans were used to expand and increase production in various enterprises. Almost half the farmers received a loan, and of these over a third re-invested in the production cycle. Some used the money to pay school fees, invest in other business or make household improvements.

Keeping records

Although not all farmers keep records, the proportion has increased since the start of the project. In 2009 only 40% of farmers kept records, but by 2013 78% were keeping track of production and costs. Training in how to calculate gross margins has helped farmers to set economic prices for their produce and given some of them confidence to engage directly with buyers.

¹¹ AIN 5576 and 5577, Trias.

Challenges

All participating farmers benefited from better market access and the chance to add value to their produce. But despite the existence of ready markets for poultry (88% of farmers said they now found it easier to market poultry), the lack of working capital and some lack of organisational functioning made it difficult to establish bulk selling of poultry. This meant that producer groups were not always able to benefit from potentially lucrative contracts with large consumers in the catering trade.

Overall impact

Most of the farmers (91% in Babati, 81% in Monduli) report that their lives have improved. They say that the most significant impacts have been in their children's education (55%) and higher household income (50%). Food security (41%) has also improved: maize, beans and rice can now be stored throughout the year in low-cost granaries built by MVIWATA and supported by the project.



Impact stories

Both women and men have become more confident:

.....
"We have improved our self-esteem and confidence as women. There are some of us (like me) who could not even speak in front of people and thus could not present issues that are important to us. Now, because of training, exchange programmes and experiences of attending meetings, I can speak well in public and even represent other women. I see myself now as a leader."
.....

– Female farmer in Babati.

.....
"We now have better food security in our households. I am proud especially because of poultry that now even when I am late, my wife will not bother, but just cook a chicken to put food on the table. This has reduced conflicts at home over food and money for buying food. We are also respected in the community, and people come to ask us how we have managed to do all we have done. We are role models in our communities because of the project."
.....

– Male farmer in Monduli.

Farmers now see agriculture as a business:

.....
"We have mastered modern agriculture and business management skills. Before we had chicken but we did not know it had value beyond food. We did not know the value of sunflower. We were using local seeds and the yield was paltry. We were even given improved seeds (through the seed credit fund) and now we get a bumper harvest of up to 10 bags of sunflower per acre."
.....

.....
"We have businesses like bodaboda [motorbike taxi], selling potatoes, curio shops, M-pesa vending which have been possible through incomes from sunflower and poultry. I have two TVs and I can now watch news, I live in a new house I built from incomes of the two chains. All these have assured our livelihood security and accorded us status in the community."
.....

– Farmers from Monduli and Babati.



Rice farmers can now afford secondary school fees – IDRA, Zambia

Growing rice in northwestern Zambia is now more productive and profitable thanks to investments in better seed varieties and improved cultivation techniques.¹² The Isoka District Rice Association (IDRA) offers training opportunities, input supplies and other services to its members, who have improved their livelihoods as a result.

IDRA was formed in 2009 with the aim of helping rice farmers run more profitable enterprises – there are now almost 2,500 members (almost half of them women). The association provides a range of services for business development, including extension, training, input supply, marketing and warehouse facilities, and access to loans.

The association gained about 1,000 new members during 2013, most of whom are growing upland rice varieties. Awareness meetings and micro training sessions were held for newly registered groups and most of them took part in a farmers' field school. Isoka District now has 97 farmers' groups, and 13 of them have set up internal savings (whereby farmers set aside a small amount every week). There are three new SACCOs. Production has increased and standards of living have improved – most of the farmers make enough from rice production to send their children to secondary school (primary education is free in Zambia, but secondary schools charge fees).

¹² AIN 5990, Agriterra

An impact story

Anne Nambeya, 45, is a female married rice farmer with four children and six grandchildren. She joined IDRA in 2010 and says, *"I have never regretted joining and being a member. I'm able to send my children to boarding school and even to college thanks to my income out of rice farming and IDRA, who empowered us through rice trainings."*

Her husband used to do casual work locally. *"We hardly had enough food to eat, let alone pay school fees."* Her working relationship with her husband was poor. They had land but no one to train them how to increase quality and yield. The family had no vision for the future; the situation of their neighbours was no better.

Encouraged by IDRA, Anne and her neighbours formed a rice group to take advantage of IDRA training courses. They learnt to abandon wasteful traditional methods and moved towards careful seed spacing and using improved varieties. In 2010 Anne doubled the area under rice cultivation (to one lima¹³) and harvested 8 x 50kg bags. Her yields have increased dramatically since then and now she expects to harvest 20 bags per lima. It now pays her husband to work on in rice production rather than seeking casual work. In 2011, after selling part of the harvested rice, Anne convinced her husband to buy a piglet and more hens to diversify the sources of household income.

¹³ 1 lima = 0.25 ha

Professionalising family dairy farms – Unileite, Brazil

The goal here is viable farms and better lives, with increased productivity coming from higher efficiency rather than farm expansion. There are 3,500 beneficiaries, almost half of them women, who have become more productive because they have learnt technical and record-keeping skills.¹⁴ The farmers have become confident to invest in their own enterprises, and their organisation has made a collective investment in hay-making machinery and a storage barn.

Created as a dairy producers' association in 2001, Unileite is now managed by 25 farmers. It provides services to more than 115 dairy farms in SW Parana, a major milk-producing region of Brazil where field crops (corn, soybeans, wheat and tobacco) are also grown. There are a few large milking herds, but most farmers have only about 10 cows.

Unileite now helps with tagging cattle, milk recording and monitoring, and has run training courses and visits. There are meetings where members discuss their farms and share ideas. Input costs are reduced for members through bulk purchasing, and hay is made collectively (one member makes hay using equipment bought by the association and the hay is sold for a price that covers the work of the producer as well as cultivation costs). The other collective investment is a storage shed.

Small farmers now manage their grazing better, and they have started to improve their livestock by buying in heifers and using artificial insemination by proven bulls. The average net margin has tripled in eight years, and productivity per cow has doubled since 1993.

An impact story

Mariano and Juliana Marchak operate about 8 ha of grassland and maize silage. In 2006, they had six dairy cows on poor quality grazing. Their livestock produced only 50 litres of milk per day and the farm's main activity was growing tobacco. After joining Unileite they started to invest in new varieties of fodder and fertiliser to improve the grasslands. Mariano installed a watering system and they began using artificial insemination to breed more productive cows.

Today, their herd is just over twice as big (15 cows) and production has quadrupled to 200 litres per day. The increased income and a soft loan from Unileite have allowed them to invest in milking equipment and a second-hand tractor. Mariano is now Secretary of Unileite and he plans to start producing heifers for sale, to increase the farms profitability further.

¹⁴ AIN 5045, Fert



Adopting production models suited to the local environment

Given that family farmers' main assets are natural resources, it is vital that their farming activities make optimum use of the local environment. In the first example below, it has made sense for smallholders to invest in labour-intensive agro-ecological models of production, to maximise the value of family labour on small plots of land. In the second example, the best production model requires a dual approach which entails farmers changing their farming methods and having access to specially adapted seed-sowing equipment. The third case describes cattle bred to increase milk production.

Integrated farming on small plots – Mayanzi Area Cooperative Enterprise, Uganda

Many family farmers have only small areas of land to work. This means they have to diversify with a carefully chosen range of crops (an integrated farming model) or grow a single crop more productively if they are to improve their income. Members of a coop in Uganda have benefited from learning about both approaches.¹⁵

Myanzi Area Cooperative Enterprise (ACE) is taking steps to improve members' access to local markets (see

box in chapter 4). Underpinning this market support are training courses on modern farming, particularly integrating a range of crops and animals on a small farm, and how to increase crop yields with minimal inputs. Direct beneficiaries are 880 farmers, of whom half are women.

Training workshops led by community-based facilitators from local farmers' organisations covered technical farming subjects as well as post-harvest handling of produce and environmental education. There was a focus on five types of enterprise (dairy, poultry, maize, bananas and coffee) and the 86 facilitators observed that group dynamics encouraged faster learning, and that farmers were responsive to interventions as long as they were guided when setting up new enterprises.

¹⁵ AIN 5987, Agriterra

An impact story

Joyce Nakaweesa took part in the Myanzi ACE courses and gradually developed several enterprises. They included bananas (bunches now weigh 120 kg rather than 30 kg); a piggery which has grown from a single pig to 10; coffee (she has planted more 300 plantlets); and poultry (she has 12 local birds).

Joyce praises Myanzi ACE for her training in integrated farming, which has enabled her to use her small piece of land productively. The by-products of some enterprises are the inputs of the others – the manure from her piggery and zero-grazed cattle is used in her banana plantation, and passion fruits are grown on the boundary fence. Eucalyptus trees (grown for poles) produce nectar for honey production.

Joyce now has income from sales, her food security has improved and she is able to pay school fees for her children and other requirements. Two of her sons are in a boarding school and others are in good private day schools. The farm provides a balanced diet including milk, eggs, fruits and honey. She has money saved in the SACCO to cater for emergencies.

In the small village of Kigalama in Central Uganda, 52-year-old Edward Kiwanuka grows bananas and is the breadwinner for twelve members of his family. He has been a member of the local producer group since 2003. The organisation now has 420 active members, more than three quarters of whom grow bananas. Staff from Myanzi ACE have provided training on growing better bananas and successful marketing to the Kigalama group.

The most important changes have been the adoption of recommended agronomic practices that Kiwanuka has learnt through intensive on-farm training. Healthy improved varieties mature early and are tolerant to certain pests and diseases as well as giving better yields. Mulching keeps the soils moist even in the dry season, and farmers have planted shade trees to reduce heat stress. Using composted animal manure has improved soil fertility.

Banana production provides income throughout the year, unlike seasonal crops like maize and beans. By growing more banana plants and adopting better production methods, Kiwanuka now harvests almost 3,000 bunches per year.

Zero-tillage adopted in erosion-prone areas – various groups, Morocco and Mali

Eroded land semi-arid areas has been reclaimed by using a mulch-based, zero-tillage farming system.¹⁶ By reducing or eliminating ploughing and leaving crop residues on the land, soil organic matter has increased. Farmers' organisations have supported their members by trialling prototype seed drills and helping small farmers to adopt conservation agriculture techniques. Productivity is already increasing, but farmers are currently held back by the shortage of specialist equipment – many of them would be keen to invest if the machinery were available.

Land conservation and food security are common concern for peasant farmers, particularly in areas with insufficient or unpredictable rainfall. In Mali, intensive cotton cultivation in the Sikasso region led to erosion and depleted soils (reflected in declining yields). In the mountains of Morocco, soils are stony and fields are small. Rainfall patterns in both areas are changing, and farmers are finding it more difficult to feed themselves.

Such conditions prompted a radical rethink of traditional production models, to prevent further soil degradation and if possible restore depleted soils. The obvious solution was to use reduced- or zero-tillage methods to restore soil organic matter, but this was a challenge for small farmers who could not afford expensive equipment. The first project (supported jointly by Fert in Morocco and Afdi in Mali) developed small seed drills that did not require huge traction power, and these drills attracted the interest of

¹⁶ AIN 6065 and 6051, Afdi and Fert



producers.¹⁷ The next phase was to support farmers' groups to apply conservation agriculture techniques, particularly reduced tillage, find out how best to implement direct drilling in local conditions, and to help them acquire the new machinery. In Mali this involved five local farmers' organisations with a total of 190 members; in Morocco there were six coops or village groups with 180 members.

Results

The degree of farmers' knowledge about conservation agriculture and direct-drilling increased in both Morocco and Mali. Encouraged by their organisations, farmers have experimented with various agronomic and mechanisation initiatives – some have even modified the prototype seed-drills. In some cases, farmers have been able to restore land that was abandoned because of erosion and lack of water. Cotton yields increased from 800 kg/ha to 1,200 kg/ha in sample plots in Mali.

Almost 80% of farmers used reduced-tillage techniques in 2013. Direct-seeding, which has the further benefit of allowing early sowing, has helped farms to double their yields compared with farmers who sowed seed later.

Impact stories

.....
 “I have long observed my neighbour Jean Claude’s field, and I noticed he did not plough. I also saw that the land did not suffer erosion. Some of the *Stylosanthes* seedlings he had planted were swept onto my plot by the stream. They germinated and begun to reduce the effect of runoff. I said to myself: whatever folly Jean Claude is currently doing, I’m going to do the same. I adopted the practice this year by joining a dynamic group.”
 – Mamadou Sanogo, Naposséla peasant and member of a new group set up in 2012.

In Morocco, the project’s national coordinator said:

.....
 “Initially we worked on three hectares. The plot was visited by many sceptical producers, but they had to change their minds when there was a drought and our three hectares was the only green field. The first drills were manufactured and tested, but the first one broke. Despite the difficulties with respect to the drill, the project has contributed to the development of agricultural techniques and many farmers have joined the project. A survey indicates that most of the producers planned to reserve a plot for direct seeding and that about 30-35% would like to buy the drill if it was available.”
 – Mr. Bentassil Abderrazzak, Agronomist.

.....
 “We have problems with respect to erosion and soil degradation. I did virtually all of my field using direct seeding this year except for two acres which I ploughed. The yield was better than the performance of other farmlands.”
 – Tianon Bolozogola, farmer in Fama, Mali.

.....
 “It is this technique which is the only fight against erosion in our area. The technique is also inexpensive.”
 – Ali Maimoun, farmer, AMHARCHEN Association, Morocco.

¹⁷ Described in Evidence of Impact 2013

Continuing challenges

Despite many achievements, significant work remains to be done to achieve sustainability, both institutional and organisational. Many farmers are now aware of and interested in reduced-tillage methods, but there have been teething problems with the seed drills and they are not yet widely available. Impacts will not be consolidated until the farmers' organisations have become stronger and there is more effective dialogue between farmers and research bodies.

Breeding cattle to produce more milk – AOPP Koulikoro, Mali

Long cooperation between Afdi Basse Normandie (in northern France) and the regional association of professional farmers' organisations (AOPP Koulikoro) in Mali to develop and restructure the dairy sector has led to many changes in the way farmers produce and market their milk.¹⁸

An important initiative was to use artificial insemination to cross local cattle with more productive French breeds.

Many family farmers only have space for small cows. But it is possible to increase productivity from small animals, so breeders in Koulikoro began crossing local cows with French varieties back in 2005. The project is part of a bigger dairy programme aiming to increase productivity through better animal husbandry and record-keeping, and to improve the distribution and processing of milk products.

The hybrid is a good compromise between the tough but relatively unproductive local cattle and high-yielding French cows from Normandy. Having cross-bred cattle means that a farmer can increase production without increasing herd size. The hybrid cattle could perhaps be used in other parts in West Africa, but it is important not to lose the indigenous cows as their disease resistance, adaptation to the local climate and general thriftiness may provide useful breeding material in future.

¹⁸ AIN 5933, Afdi



Chapter 2

Collective investment to overcome limited assets

Collective investments are often prerequisites for individual investment by family farmers. In this document, adult education and training is considered a collective investment, especially when courses are carefully tailored by a farmers' organisation to the needs of its members. Collective investments can also focus on the wider landscape – the environmental assets – that small farmers are exploiting. Natural resources are, apart from labour, the main assets of family farmers and, wisely managed, they can be improved to support higher productivity. Infrastructure projects (storage facilities, roads, bridges, communication systems) and irrigation schemes are another type of collective investment. And direct cash investment is also possible, as happens when a farmers' organisation puts resources into setting up a formal cooperative.

This type of investment can include a range of activities. Examples below show that education, for instance, can be formalised in teaching institutions or can occur in looser arrangements such as study circles. The potential contribution of farmers' organisations is particularly relevant, as these groups are (by their nature) of and for the farmers, and they are aware of the type of support needed. They are also well placed to explain the utility of new ideas, and later to help bring them into practice, often tailoring them to specific local conditions.

Investment in education pays dividends – FIFATA, Madagascar

Agricultural colleges have been set up in Madagascar to give rural youngsters the chance to earn a living without migrating to urban centres.¹⁹ The country now has a critical mass of educated young farmers, technicians and officials who can advise and train farmers. Impact is felt in higher employment rates, with many of the students now teaching in the colleges or working as agricultural technicians.

FIFATA is a federation of 11 local farmers' organisations with more than 18,500 members. Recognising the importance of having expertise for its farmer members to call on, it has for more than a decade been bringing in agri-consultants to support the technical services of local farmers' organisations. Such specialists need more than just technical competence – they need to understand the realities faced by farmers in a country that

is often beset by humanitarian and political crises, and be able to interact sympathetically with their clients.

As such combinations of skills were lacking in Madagascar, FIFATA decided to invest in designing carefully tailored training courses. The aim was to produce consultants who could support farmers and their organisations while giving ownership to local farmers and supporting the sustainability of family farms.

There are four agricultural colleges in rural Madagascar, founded since 2002, and curriculums were developed for different participants: an 11-month course for inexperienced young graduates; a 7-week course combining work and training for consultants already in post; and ad hoc sessions (1-12 days) on special topics for either consultants or farmers. There is a permanent team of Malagasy trainers, and outsiders are brought in for specific themes. All the courses included major elements of practical activities including field trips and demonstration plots, and trainees' existing experience was particularly valued.

¹⁹ AIN 4952, Fert





Impacts

Training has created a sense of group cohesion, and many of the already experienced participants were later recruited as trainers in a rural college. Others went on to work for NGOs or as agricultural technicians. The drop-out rate is declining because of a better selection process and better treatment of the students, although some students still drop out because of family, farming or financial crises. Offering grants to students might be a way to reduce this loss.

.....
“Training is interesting, because it doesn’t focus on the technique only: it discusses the profession more widely. There are different modules that complement each other and that will help me always. I learn so much about communication, and I learn new skills!”

– Norbert Rakotovolona, 2011 participant.

Study circles increase income for women cotton farmers – CAZ, Zambia

Education as a collective investment needs to be provided to suit the audience. In this example, a project on value addition and entrepreneurial skills found that its biggest success was the translation and printing of study circle materials into the local languages (Nyanja and Tonga).²⁰ Cotton farmers can now understand better what has been said, facts are clearly stated, and women are gaining confidence along with knowledge. Productivity has increased on average by 40%; cotton farmers that have participated in study circle activities have seen their household income triple.

Cotton production has always been male-dominated in Zambia: men make the decisions and women do the work. But this trend is now changing as women join study circles and learn about farm management, production and marketing of cotton. In 2013 alone, more than 8,700 women cotton farmers joined study circles organised by the Cotton Association of Zambia (CAZ). Their increasing knowledge has not only improved gender equality in the home but has also contributed to increased female representation in CAZ structures.

²⁰ AIN 5945, We Effect

CAZ has provided extension services in 27 cotton-producing districts and seven Area Cotton Associations through more than 1,700 study circle groups, a third of whose members are women. More than 25,000 farmers have joined, taking part in on-farm demonstrations and other practical activities as well as theoretical sessions. Cotton production was not increased as much as was hoped, owing to poor rains, but overall productivity increased in all the crops that comprise the cotton-based system (cotton as the cash crop; maize for food; and soya beans to improve soil fertility, sell for cash and add dietary diversity).

An impact story

.....
“Before I started participating in study circles, my husband made all decisions. Now we are making decisions together. I had to finish school after Grade 9 because I got pregnant. I want my children to have a better life. Now I have the resources I need, both to pay for school fees and provide for food for my children.”

– Mayaba Kaomba, Magoye village, Southern Province, Zambia.

Refrigerated storage for potatoes – FPF, Guinea

Potatoes are an important cash crop in the Fouta Djallon area of Guinea, and good post-harvest storage reduces waste and increases the marketing period. Investing in a refrigerated warehouse was a good collective investment for the Federation of Farmers of Fouta Djallon (FPF): the organisation is attracting new members, its turnover increased five-fold between 2005 and 2010, and the country's potato production is growing at 10% per year.²¹

Conditions on Middle Guinea are perfect for potatoes. Yields are good and the annual production (about 20,000 tons) meets the country's demand and leaves a surplus for export to neighbouring countries. FPF has focused on potato production and marketing to improve the income of its 31,000-odd members, and has been in technical partnership with Afdi for 20 years. There have been many exchanges between Guinean producers and farmers in northern France, looking at input supply, mechanisation, irrigation and training.

Guinean farmers use techniques that reflect the availability of (cheap) labour – there is some mechanisation in the lowland areas but many operations are done manually. These include the collection and bagging of potatoes after harvest, which represents an important source of rural employment. Recognising the importance of controlled storage conditions to keep the crop in optimum condition for as long as possible, FPF has built refrigerated storage with capacity to hold 6,000 tons of potatoes and 600 tons of seed. Now the potatoes do not have to be sold immediately after harvest so the income stream flows for longer.

Although the quantitative impact at farm-level remains to be measured (the project runs until the end of 2015), this case is an example of collective investment facilitated by the farmers' organisation to improve farm livelihoods.

²¹ AIN 5860, Afdi

Warehouse tenants build their own storage facilities – Faso Jigi, Mali

Mali's union of agricultural cooperatives, Faso Jigi, used to rent warehouses from OPAM (Office for national security stocks). But when OPAM gave them notice to quit, Faso Jigi decided to invest in building their own storage facilities and has bought plots of land for this purpose.²² Current storage capacity is 1,200 tons, which will increase to 5,400 tons as the warehouses are expanded. Faso Jigi can now store rice, dry grains and shallots until prices are advantageous, which means that its members benefit too.

Setting up farmers' groups in a remote area – SFACF, Nepal

In isolated parts of Dhading District, Nepal, there were until recently no women's groups or agricultural cooperatives at all. Establishing groups in an area where there is little external support is itself a form of collective investment. It is early days yet, but the Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperative Federation (SFACF) believes that Nepali women farmers will achieve higher production and better market access by working through groups. In only 12 months, more than 280 women's groups and six new cooperatives have been established, effectively reaching six new village development committees (VDCs).²³

Few outside visitors venture so far in difficult terrain to this project's target area: until now, local people have had little external support. As the president of SFACF, Shiva Bhandari, explained:

"Why do the NGOs and the government not come to this area? Because it is not easy to reach... a few NGOs work here but their work is not effective because they do not understand the needs of the farmers. SFACF had the plan to reach this VDC but we did not have resources, but with Agriterra we can do our job... We cannot satisfy all your demands, but we can give you skills to start and continue yourself... in a group you can get access to services quickly."

²² AIN 5856, UPA-DI

²³ AIN 5905, Agriterra



Organising the farmers was the important first step before tackling the second objective of increasing farmers' incomes. There are now six new cooperatives (two legally registered and four in process), and 287 new women's groups representing almost 1,800 women. The project provided training for group and coop leaders on the functions and management of member-based organisations. Chuna Maya Shakya is member of a group in Samjung VDC:

"I am Chuna, 26 years old, married with two children. I have land and I grow potatoes, cauliflower, rice, millet and maize. I know about the benefits of the cooperative because I got a loan from the cooperative through a friend. I want to continue producing but I want to introduce other techniques in the management of my crops."

"I do not know yet know much about the functioning of a cooperative. But I know that, using our traditional techniques, we work hard but this is not enough because of the traditional way of working. If we can improve and get more income we can change the situation. With the project we expect to get skills through training, to get loans and to be independent from men."

Belonging to a group enables members to make regular savings – each woman saves 100 rupees per month, which amounts to just under €14 per year. This money is used as rotating credit for investment in agriculture, and spending is guided by training in organic production, the basics of farm management and horticultural techniques.

Services that SFACF and the cooperatives aim to provide to the new groups are not yet fully operational, as priority was given to making sure that the groups function properly and will be sustainable. Given the diverse demands made by farmers in these poor areas, the groups and coops need to learn to set priorities. Shiva Shaky is the Chairwoman of a group in Samjung VDC, and she stresses the need for good planning as group:

"In our group we are seven women. I participated already in diverse trainings on cooperative and leadership. I grow rice, millet, maize, carrot and vegetables. I would like to have training in horticulture. In each meeting we discuss how we will manage the saved money but we do not yet have a plan as a group regarding other issues."

Challenges

The project's second objective (to increase the income of women farmers by improving production and access to market) has not been reached yet because the mobilisation and organisation of the women was time consuming and difficult, especially for the field staff and the future managers. And there are serious challenges to commercial production of fresh produce, including the topography and isolation of these six VDS, bad roads and lack of electricity: SFACF now has to consider how to overcome these disadvantages.



New bread recipes to use local grains – UNCAS, Senegal

Investing in processing units that can deal with the local cereals (millet, maize and sorghum) means that small farmers have a new market for their produce.²⁴ The grains are now being incorporated into commercial bread and pastries, which are now more nutritious. Impact for farmer and their families is expected to follow in two areas: security of income and a healthier diet.

Since the 2008 world food price crisis, farmers' organisations in Senegal have been looking at how to incorporate flour milled from local grains into high quality bread. This has the dual effect of increasing the nutritional value of a loaf and providing an expanding market for millet, maize and sorghum. A pilot scheme experimenting with different proportions showed that up to 15% of the flour in a loaf could be local grains rather than wheat; pastries could include up to 50% local flour without loss of quality.

Having established that putting local flour into bread would not reduce the quality, collective investment was needed to set up special grain processing units – millet, maize and sorghum cannot simply be milled together with wheat, as they have different handling characteristics. The aim now is to establish four local mills to provide fine flour in the Daka region and six micro-processing units for women's groups to supply the bakeries of Thiès, Diourbel, Saint-Louis, Matam, Louga and Tambacounda. It is hoped that 200 bakeries will eventually use the local flours.

Collective investment is required to raise awareness as well as to establish new bulking and processing capacity – local bakeries have to learn how to use the new flour mixtures, and the public need to appreciate that the bread and pastries are more nutritious even if they taste a little different. This is being done through training and publicity campaigns.

So far more than 100 tons of millet has been collected, and 22 bakeries are using millet flour daily. About 1,600 loaves containing 15% local grain are produced every day, and 40 bakeries have learned about the new flour mixtures.

²⁴ AIN 5958, Asprodeb



Chapter 3

Investment to manage risk

Agriculture has always been a risky business, and farmers contend with the vagaries of the weather, outbreaks of disease and fluctuating market prices every day of their lives. In some parts of the world, political instability adds another layer of uncertainty. And some farmers do not even have secure tenure rights over their land. A poor harvest one year or low market prices can be disastrous for a family farmer, and they may have to sell assets – if they have taken out loans to make investments, they may be forced to sell assets at below cost-price even before they have finished paying for them.

Given the inherently risky nature of farming, formal insurance is prohibitively expensive. But risk management can take many forms, diversification being one of the most useful. By growing a range of crops and rearing livestock too, the farmer's investment 'eggs' are not all in one basket – except in the case of catastrophic incidents it is unlikely that all production would fail at once. Better agricultural practices are also a form of insurance, as healthier plants with adequate soil moisture and nutrients are more resistant to pests and diseases. Using seeds particularly selected for disease-resistance and vigour, and suited to the specific growing conditions, also helps. For animals, regular vaccination and anti-parasite programmes are important preventive measures.

Farmers' organisations have roles to play in all these strategies, by informing and training their members in efficient, diversified farming methods suited to small-scale production.²⁵ They may also be involved in veterinary support programmes and in the supply of improved seed varieties.

²⁵ Education and training arguably falls into the category of collective investment, as discussed in the previous chapter. This shows how difficult it is to draw theoretical lines between practical activities.

Agri-consultancy for risk management – Burkina Faso and Guinea

To support family farms facing difficult economic and climatic conditions, this project helped manage risk by boosting the technical consultancy offered by farmers' organisations to their members.²⁶ Farmers are now better prepared for uncertainty, and they can access information relevant to their specific needs – such as seasonal weather predictions and advice on crop rotation – in a simple, accessible way. Impact is being seen in the form of improved food security.

Many family farms in West Africa still operate close to subsistence level. They suffer from a lack of finance, too little information on climate change adaptation and increasingly expensive inputs. There has been some history of providing support in the form of consultancy to family farms: Cagef in Burkina Faso, for instance, has had a Support Centre since 1998 that in the early days focused on individual farms. Focus has now turned to group facilitation on broad themes such as productivity, diversification to improve nutrition etc. (by working in groups, it is possible to reach more people and keep costs down). Group work includes both theory and practice, such as excursions to model farms and demonstration plots. Consultancy has been used to encourage farmers to try new methods. Since 2013 Cagef has focused on developing upland rice and agro-ecological techniques.

.....
"Our advice still needs to improve but today it offers beneficial services to producers. The first result is the most important: our members and their families have no more food shortage. All members of Cagef can satisfy their hunger even in difficult periods of drought. The consultancy also allows us to improve our farms and diversify our business to increase our revenues. Our decisions are better reflected now!"

– Cissé Tamimi, President of Cagef
.....

Following Cagef's lead, a project was set up across two countries. Called Farmers' Organisations mastering agri-consultancy: an efficient tool for risk prevention and control, it aimed to increase rural incomes by improving the ability to predict and manage risks of seven farmers' organisations in Burkina Faso and

Guinea that between them have roughly 500,000 members.²⁷ The task was approached via three objectives: increasing the capacity of family farmers to analyse their farming activities (through group sessions); improving their ability to make farming decisions by providing technical, economic and market information; and making consultancy a basic support technique, with a foundation in effective strategic thinking. Afdi worked with the farmers' organisations in the two countries to consider the best way to offer services to members and how to find synergies between the organisations.

Training sessions on group facilitation techniques were augmented by individual consultations with almost 4,000 farmers. Farmers' organisations were encouraged to take a strategic approach when choosing the most useful services to develop for members. In Burkina Faso, the farmers' organisations were able to reach a significant proportion of their members, and technical modules (such as financial management and crop rotation) were developed. Innovations such as group counselling and technical modules are now established tools for farmers' organisations.

In Guinea, the project supported an already existing consultancy system. Brainstorming was used to define farmers' input needs (including seeds and fertilisers), and information on three important sectors (potatoes, onions, tomatoes) was collected through management counselling.

Diversification and warehouse credit system – CAPAD, Burundi

Many smallholders in Burundi, where the average farm size is only half a hectare, operate very close to subsistence-level and have little cushion against unexpected events. This project has improved the situation for some farmers by improving crop management and setting up a warehouse credit system, among other activities.²⁸ Farmers can now take out loans for inputs against the value of crops stored in CAPAD²⁹ warehouses, so they are able to diversify and spread risk. The project is still running but some impact to farmers' incomes can already be seen.

27 FepaB, Cagef, ANPHV and Nian Zwe in Burkina Faso; FPF in Guinea

28 AIN 5751, CSA

29 Confédération des Associations de Producteurs Agricoles pour le Développement

26 AIN 5645, Afdi



Weakened by more than a decade of civil war, Burundi's institutions and society are further beset by a growing population and widespread poverty. This initiative brought support to 23 coops under the CAPAD umbrella in an effort to create some sustainability in agriculture and the rural financial system as a whole. It involved boosting production in various ways, including distributing goats (preferentially to women farmers) to provide milk, meat and manure, and training farmers to plan their production and invest in inputs.

To fund these investments, a warehouse credit scheme (known as warrantage) was set up. Farmers producing cereal and dry legume crops (such as rice, sorghum and beans, all of which store well for several months if kept dry and protected from pests) can take them to coop warehouses for safe storage. The collective produce of the coop members is then processed (if necessary) and sold in bulk when the price is favourable; in the meantime, farmers can then take out a loan against the value of the crop.

An impact story

.....
"I'm Bigirimana Anicet, father of three children. I am a producer of food crops but especially rice in the marshes of Muhembuzi. I started growing rice at the age of 10 with my parents, but it was not until 2010 I started to enjoy the fruits, thanks to the warrantage system that CAPAD has taught us. (I call it warandaje – you made me live). In 2010, I produced 600 kg of paddy rice and I placed 500 kg in warrantage where I got 60% of the value of the stock. I could then buy a bike and clothes for my family, not to mention opening a bank account. In 2011, I sent in 800 kg of paddy rice and got enough money to buy a banana plantation and open a small shop. In 2012, I used 1,200 kg of paddy rice as guarantee and received a loan of Fr480,000 [about €220]. With revenues of my small shop and my banana beer, I have just bought a heifer for Fr620,000 [about €285]. I use its manure as fertiliser for my banana crop and for another small field that my father left me. I plan to buy a motorcycle and renovate my house, all thanks to the warrantage system."

Protective veterinary services – FIFATA, Madagascar

Regional agricultural funds from the Madagascar government are used to provide agricultural service centres for farmers needing technical and financial support. At one such centre, a veterinary health post was established to reduce animal mortality and prevent the spread of disease.³⁰ In 2013, over 25,000 animals were vaccinated and 2,000 farms used the Animal Health Service. Investment was also made in cold-chain equipment to store drugs at the correct temperature. Healthier animals will be more productive, so impact is expected to be seen in better livelihoods for farmers.

Madagascar's Regional Fund for Agricultural Development is designed to fund services at the regional level, including requests passing through the agricultural service centres and direct requests by farmers' organisations or others in rural areas of Amoron'i Mania and Menabe regions.

The agro-ecological conditions of Amoron'i Mania and its relative proximity to the capital give the region significant potential for animal rearing. Poultry (about one million birds), cattle (142,000 head) and pigs (136,000 head) are the major domestic animals. In close collaboration with the regional veterinary services, FIFATA decided to establish an animal health post in mid-2010.

The first aim of the service was to reduce animal mortality through prophylaxis (vaccination, deworming and providing vitamin and mineral supplements). Eleven local individuals were trained as village vaccinators, and investment was made in cold-chain equipment (a refrigerator and 17 coolers) to maintain the quality of veterinary products during transport and storage.

³⁰ AIN 5344, Fert



Peasants contributing to their own land security – AOPP Koulikoro, Mali

Many family farmers do not own the land they cultivate. Managing the risk of losing their land is difficult, but farmers' organisations in Mali are now actively monitoring the sale of agricultural land to big investors, giving small farmers some degree of protection.³¹ This project is part of a larger initiative, Strengthening the institutional capacity of the AOPP network to meet members' needs. It is too early to expect impacts for family farmers, but there is no doubt that the issue of land tenure merits continuing attention.

A critical problem for Mali's agricultural development (and for peace and security in rural areas) is the question of land ownership. Recognising that existing legislation and administrative practices are not consistent with African Union and FAO directives, the government began reframing policy on agricultural land in

2012. The national association of farmer's organisations (AOPP) is contributing to the policy development process and has drawn up a memorandum on the various issues. This is being updated as the national policy takes shape.

AOPP speaks for the farmers belonging to its roughly 180 member organisations when it asserts that securing family farming should be a national policy objective. It believes that the status of family farms should be enhanced and that rural areas should be locally managed.

As a practical adjunct to this dialogue, Malian farmers' organisations have set up a centre to monitor 'land grabs'. Where they believe there is a risk that big investors may be making unreasonable purchases of large tracts of agricultural land, they alert the courts to take legal action to uphold the rights of small farmers who earn their livelihoods from such land.

³¹ AIN 5863, Afdi



National farmers' union joins national climate change committee – ZNFU, Zambia

The Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU) is keen to promote farm forestry as part of its response to rapid deforestation across the country. Growing trees on farms should provide income for farmers, reduce the pressure on indigenous woodland, protect the environment and bring climate-change benefits.³² ZNFU now sits on the National Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) Climate Change Committee for Zambia; work is ongoing towards establishing ZNFU National Farm Forestry Committee. It is too early to see impacts at household level, but the fact that ZNFU has a place on an important committee shows that the organisation is growing in institutional strength and influence.

Changing weather patterns pose serious and growing risks to small farmers who, by themselves, are unable to take meaningful action. In Zambia, extreme weather due to climate change is leading to erosion problems which are exacerbated by rapid loss of forest cover (cut down for charcoal and to clear land for agriculture). ZNFU and the Central Union for Agricultural Producers and Forestry Owners of Finland (MTK) therefore set up a one-year twinning arrangement to make institutions in Zambia's agricultural sector better able face the challenges of environmental sustainability and climate change. MTK brings considerable experience of farm forestry and the organisation of private forestry at national level. It is hoped that the partnership between ZNFU and MTK will lead to the formation of a national committee on farm forestry.

Direct beneficiaries are 150 members (female and male) who have received training on planting trees on their land. Baseline studies of farm forestry in three agro-ecological regions with different patterns of deforestation have identified tree species needed by farmers – as farmers report a lack of tree seeds and seedlings, nurseries are being set up at key sites. There also an environmental outreach education programme.

It is too early to measure farmer-level impacts from this collaboration, but there have been many awareness-raising activities, including TV coverage, about the risks posed by deforestation and the potential benefits of farm forestry. The ZNFU launched a new

National Farm Forestry Commodity Committee in October 2013 at the ZNFU congress. As a result of this environmental stance, ZNFU now sits on Zambia's national climate change committee, which looks at matters of deforestation and climate change adaptation. Through this forum ZNFU is able to monitor and directly influence the ongoing forest management and legislative reforms, the government's Integrated Land Use Assessments and the UNREDD+ programme in Zambia.

Challenges

Potential key stakeholders for the proposed ZNFU National Farm Forestry Committee have been identified, but the relevant legislation governing forestry is currently under review in parliament and little can be done to speed its progress. There are also issues of land administration, unclear forest policy and a lack of investment.

³² AIN 5906, FFD



Chapter 4

Investing in enabling markets

There are three main useful interventions here: improving access to affordable inputs, developing markets that favour smallholders and increasing access to financial services. Access to inputs is mentioned in various cases throughout this document, so in this chapter we look at favourable markets and access to financial services. Although the cases are arranged to illustrate these as separate themes, in practice it is common for a project to include elements of both.

Markets that favour smallholders

FAO recommends giving highest priority to items suited to domestic markets, defined as the products that together make up the daily diets of low-income populations. As well as staple foods, these include vegetables, fruit, animal and dairy products, and fish. The growing urban markets are potentially ideal outlets for smallholder production. The physical infrastructure of markets needs attention – storage facilities, clean water, electricity, regulated weights and measures and, if possible, cold storage. And farmers themselves need access to market information and business advisory services. Farmers' organisations are involved at all levels here, lobbying for better facilities in the market place, enabling groups of farmers to pool their produce and sell collectively (sometimes by providing storage facilities to prevent post-harvest losses), and providing business information and training as required.

The challenge of adding value at farm or local level is part of this issue. Smallholders are unlikely to compete directly with large-scale agribusiness producing commodities for the world market, but they can add value to their produce instead. Low-cost processing technologies, especially those (such as drying, cooking and juicing) that allow longer storage of food products, are very useful. Small farmers in rural areas often have traditional knowledge of local (often wild) produce, and their comparative advantage of labour availability means that, via cooperative networks, they can produce sufficient quantities to be worth taking to market. It is also recognised that market short-cuts, whereby producers and consumers (such as rural groups and urban shoppers) can meet directly, are worth encouraging.





Link to schools offers a secure and growing market – UCCCA, Uganda

Farmers in southwestern Uganda can now access the hitherto-untapped schools market: 19 primary coops are now supplying milk to 33 schools.³³ Farm incomes have risen and schoolchildren are benefitting from better nutrition. There is also a micro-finance support centre that provides low-interest loans. The umbrella organisation, Uganda Crane Creameries Cooperatives Union Ltd (UCCCA), won the farmer category of the East African AgriBusiness Award in 2013.

UCCCU was established in 2005 and serves over 30,000 dairy farmers in SW Uganda. The Union developed from an earlier association that represented dairy farmers in the region but was not able to cope up with the changing market and business environment and had little influence on policy. Farmers therefore decided to unite all dairy farmers under a commercial institution (UCCCU) so as to have more influence on policy, market development and value addition.

The current project's main objective is to improve farmer livelihoods by increasing their incomes through market access. The dairy sector in Uganda is growing fast (8-10% per year), with some milk exported to Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan etc. These export markets could be expanded and, as 80% of milk is sold 'raw', there are good opportunities to invest in processing too.

Until recently, small dairy coops had ignored the growing demand for milk in trading centres, schools and towns. Milk vendors were savvier: they paid farmers more than coops were offering at the farm gate, and took the milk to market. Turning this threat into an opportunity, coops have now opened window sales and started supplying milk to schools. They can now pay a better price to farmers (cutting out the vendors) and coop production has increased accordingly – primary coops have seen their membership increase by 20%. Small farmers now have the same chance as larger producers to sell their milk at a good price.

Dairy farmers are now seeking, via UCCCU, to add value by setting up their own processing plant, which should boost capacity to deal with the larger volumes of milk produced during the in rainy season (which is

currently often wasted). They see themselves as part of a profitable business and are happy to invest in a processing plant that will bring higher returns in due course. There are plans to have a processing line in the dairy plant exclusively for school milk (in subsidised packaging) so that it can be transported longer distances to more remote schools. Capital investments (and some of the costs of capacity building) are fully funded by the coop members.

Farmers are improving their productivity thanks to training courses on animal breeding, husbandry and health in Ntungamo and Rubundi, and they are planting fodder trees to improve the variety of feed available for their cattle. More than a hundred youth groups and two women's groups have been trained how to set up dairy microenterprises.

The project also includes elements of climate change response. A demonstration biogas plant has been set up at Kyera farm institute, and Heifer International has subsidised 45 households to have their own biogas plants, reducing their reliance on firewood, charcoal and kerosene. There are rainwater harvesting tanks for houses and at milk-collection centres. Valley dams have been constructed to reduce erosion and provide watering points for cattle, and manure is valued as a fertiliser.

One indicator of the strength of a farmers' organisation is its ability to create networks, and UCCCU is doing well in this regard. It is a member of the Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) and contributes to policy formulation on trade, agriculture and value addition. It has other influential partners too. By running joint courses with the Dairy Development Authority it has improved milk quality control and hygiene standards, such as by promoting the use of metal rather than plastic cans. The Agribusiness Initiative Trust, via the Dairy Value Chain Development project, has offered cold chain infrastructure – coolers, cans, lab equipment, generators etc. – to reduce milk waste and improve hygiene. Finally, the Micro-Finance Support Centre has provided low-interest loans to farmers and coops for farm improvements and to buy assets.

Impacts

Selling milk to schools benefits farmers with children, as they in effect pay school fees (indirectly) in milk: farmers borrow from the coop to pay the fees and the coop acts as a guarantor and recoups the money gradually from the farmer. Schools now see less absenteeism

33 AIN 5848, We Effect

and the children are healthier and more attentive with the addition of milk to their diets. Wider effects have also been noted: one of UCCCA's customers (Sameer Agriculture and Livestock Ltd) now supplies processed milk to schools in central Uganda, which will strengthen the milk-drinking culture and should expand the domestic market. The biogas and erosion protection initiatives are expected to make a difference to livelihoods in the longer term: the women on farms where biogas is being produced are already spending less time collecting firewood for fuel.

An impact story

Ms Christine Ndungu comes from Rubindi, Mbarara district. She has transformed her herd from subsistence to commercial level and is a model farmer and trainer of fellow UCCCU members.

Ms Ndungu is a retired politician and teacher. After leaving politics, she decided to take on dairy farming as a business and joined Rukaka dairy farmers' cooperative society (a member of UCCCU). But at that time she says, "The prices offered by the society were lower than those offered by the community, so farmers had started selling milk outside the cooperative." Christine and other committee members asked the society leadership and management to address the low farm gate price. "With our [members'] support, the cooperative opened up window sales to serve the community and surrounding schools, and would sell any excess to the processors since they were offering the lowest prices," she says.

.....
"My society supplies milk to Lypa International primary school and Nombe secondary school. Since that partnership was established, the parents who were members of Rukaka have no difficulty in paying fees for their children in these schools. This is because the cooperative acts as a guarantor for the school and pays fees gradually from the milk we supply to the cooperative."

Twinning support links horticulture to tourist market – TAHA, Tanzania

Zanzibar's economy has shifted from clove and spice production to tourism, and there is now a strong local demand from hotels and restaurants for good quality fruit and vegetables. Local farmers have become better trained and organised and to take advantage of this ready market, and some of them are already seeing tangible improvements in their lives.³⁴

Zanzibar was long known as the Spice Island, famed particularly for its cloves. But the clove market declined steeply in the 1970s and the island now has a new economic driver: the rise in global tourism. Roughly one million visitors every year enjoy the equable climate, beaches and historic Stone Town, and they expect good quality food during their stay. Until recently the farmers of Zanzibar were not able to benefit from this market, so an estimated 80% of fresh vegetables, 20% of fresh fruit and 40% of herbs and spices were imported. Local farmers did not have access to good quality seeds and other inputs, they were not using appropriate growing methods, and much of their produce was lost through poor marketing and a lack of processing and packing facilities. Crucially, they were not organised to sell into this market, which demands consistent, high-quality produce.

Twinning collaboration between the Tanzanian Horticultural Association (TAHA) and the Finnish Garden Women's Association focused on complying with the market requirements for quality produce. Work began with 170 farmers (about 30% of whom were women) in three districts. Farmers were trained in good agriculture practices, farming as business and post-harvest handling. Training was both theoretical and practical, and included the establishment of demonstration plots to showcase new technologies.

Farmers who were formerly supplying hotels as individuals have now set up a registered organisation, ZESA, which gives them collective strength. Hoteliers were invited to visit farms to see the production process, and this exchange reinforced business relationships between producers and buyers. Market price information is now available through TAHA – farmers can access this via sms on their cell phones – and there are specific collection points for their produce.

34 AIN 5744, FFD



Information on the estimated demand for the type and tonnage of particular crops are available to farmer groups.

The twinning collaboration is continuing as the Zanzibar Horticulture Linkage Project (ZaHLIP) for another two years, to build on current success by increasing the variety and productivity of horticultural crops, and by helping the value chains to develop.³⁵ The high-value tourism market will continue to be targeted.

An impact story

Mr. Abdi Mattar was an early adopter who started one of the first groups. He was elected as secretary of their Farmer Group Association, Sikufikiria. Mr. Abdi Mattar used to farm traditionally, earning a meagre income and finding it difficult to cater for his family. Harvests were low, of poor quality and were sold at low prices.

.....
“Things have changed drastically within one year of the project: training on new technology (such as planting on raised beds, proper plant spacing and correct plant population, coupled with proper use of fertilisers and manure) has enabled me to increase the yield of my crops significantly. For example I harvested 18,000 kg of watermelon from my three-acre plot. This was equivalent to 6,000 tones/acre. My income was Tshs 4,000,000 [about €1,700], almost twice as much as I usually got before. This is because of the knowledge I obtained from training, including the ability to set good prices for my commodities and better production planning. The crop price information I received from TAHA for the various markets helped me to set my commodity prices. My situation is much better. I can care for my family better, as my income has increased; we now can afford three meals per day instead of one or two I previously afforded. Besides I have been able to start improving my house, which is now a standard brick house in the village with iron sheet roofing. It has also become easier to carter for the needs of my children for school uniform and books. These are far-reaching achievements.”

Dairy coops build new shops to boost sales – Bahir Dar Dairy Cooperative, Ethiopia

Twinning support for Bahir Dar and Deha Ansit dairy coops in the Amhara region of northern Ethiopia has reported good early progress despite poor access to markets and undeveloped infrastructure.³⁶ Impacts have not yet reached household level, but the coops are becoming stronger institutions – new market links have been established and farmers are keen to become members.

With the aim of creating growth and higher incomes for dairy farmers of the two coops by creating a competitive and sustainable dairy value chain, this project is a twinning arrangement between Ethiopian and Finnish farmers' organisations. Bahir Dar coop is the biggest dairy cooperative in western Amhara, handling almost 1,700 litres of milk per day. It is well placed to access the markets of Bahir Dar city and is, not surprisingly, a better-established organisation than Deha Ansit dairy, some 55 km to the north. In fact, Deha Ansit coop had only 25 members and might have closed down, had it not been for the twinning support. Instead, Deha Ansit gained ten members, taking it away from the brink of collapse.

In the pilot phase, attention was paid to both production and marketing. More than 70 dairy farmers took part in training courses designed to improve their productivity, and market surveys were conducted and sites acquired to build small shops as direct outlets for the two dairies. The Bahir Dar coop also rented a shop on the university campus to reach the ready market there. The coops now supply milk to two local factories and Bahir Dar University, and a link has been established with a flour factory to supply dairy meal.

The milk still not pasteurised, so cooling equipment is important to keep the milk safe for consumers; Bahir Dar University has agreed to research milk treatment

³⁵ AIN 5947, FFD

³⁶ AIN 6008, FFD

to minimise public health risks. Warehouses and offices have been made more hygienic, and there are new milk collection points.

Challenges

Now that they see the new shops and collection points, more farmers are keen to join the coops. However, the coops cannot cope with larger membership until they have expanded their milk-cooling and handling facilities. The challenges – a lack of working capital, transport difficulties, milk wastage caused by over-production – are common to the dairy sector, given that raw milk is a perishable product that quickly goes bad if it is not refrigerated or processed.

Malting factory buying barley from small farmers – Tsehai Union, Ethiopia

The Gondar Malting Factory (GMF) has set up a malting plant next to the Dashen Beer Factory. To supply the plant, GMF is working with cooperative unions to buy their barley.³⁷ The project still has almost three years to run, but farmers are already seeing improved incomes from this assured market.

The beer industry has recently been privatised in Ethiopia and there is high demand for quality malting barley. Gondar Malting Factory has set up a malting plant next to the huge Dashen Beer Factory, so the Gondar area is a good place to be growing barley right now. But although Ethiopia has excellent climate and soils for growing barley, it is not widely grown and 60% of the demand is currently met by imports.

In a joint programme with the Dutch organisation SNV called Cooperatives for Change, Agriterra is supporting Tsehai Union to develop a contract malting barley business. They have a ready partner in the malting factory, which is keen to establish good relationships with local farmers to ensure a reliable supply of barley. There have been teething problems, such as an underestimate of the amount of seed that needed to be distributed in order to reach a certain production level – this was based on all farmers planting the seed they had, and on adequate rainfall. In 2012 the rains were poor and the seed was distributed late, so there was a shortfall in production.

The factory has drawn up a contract with the Tsehai Union which details price structure and delivery

³⁷ AIN 5963, Agriterra

arrangements: the price is 15% above market price (and the prices of competing crops such as wheat are also taken into account). GMF is also committed to work through coops rather than traders, as the traders do not always provide grain of consistent quality and do not necessarily pay a good price to the farmer. Demand is increasing, so it is a challenge for the farmers and coops to grow enough to satisfy the factory.

Improvements have been made for the coming season. Seed will be provided in good time, and farmers will be given further training. Some impacts are already being seen, but the true benefits of this considerable market opportunity may take some time to become apparent.

An impact story

Enate Yasew runs a 2 ha family farm in Anba Georgis district. She is 60 years old and has 10 children. Last year she received 3 quintal of seed from her cooperative and planted around 1.5 ha with malt barley, giving her a yield of 21 quintals.

.....
“I used to be a subsistence farmer but now I prefer to deliver to the market instead of consuming it. Even my son who studies at Gondar University told me over the phone not to consume but sell all malt barley to the market. Before we were short of markets, now delivering to cooperatives works well for us. We still keep a very small quantity for drinking beer though. We have been growing malt barley for three years now. We used to get 530 birr [about €20] per quintal, but this year the price was 920 birr [about €34]. If I had grown wheat or any other crop it only earns me 800 birr/qt so now I get a 120 birr additional profit per quintal. The only downside is that the price of teff has gone through the roof and now is at 1,200 birr [about €44] per quintal for white teff.”³⁸
.....

³⁸ Teff is the staple grain of Ethiopia, used to make the traditional food njera



With the malt barley income, Enate has constructed a building in town, which is now rented out by Commercial Bank of Ethiopia to earn a decent off-farm income. Her children are attending university and have high hopes for the future.

Developing the mushroom value chain – Ninh Binh Cooperative Alliance, Vietnam

In the past few years, mushroom-growing in Ninh Binh has developed rapidly due to increasing demand for fresh and processed mushrooms from domestic and international markets. The sector involves over 6,000 households in eight districts of the province.³⁹ Women from poor households in particular are seeing impacts.

Noting the growing demand for mushrooms, Ninh Binh Cooperative Alliance (NBCA) has been supporting farmers to organise themselves into mushroom producer groups over the past two years. It has lobbied local authorities to support this endeavour and its related processing enterprises. Small farmers are able to produce good crops of mushrooms using readily available rice straw as the substrate.

An impact story

Mrs Vi Thi Dam is 51 years old, married and has three sons. She is group leader of the Khanh Cong mushroom farmers' group, which consists of 18 members and 41 households. She is very active – as well as being group leader she is also a farmer, a member of the Ninh Binh Farmers Union, vice chairman of the Communal Women Union and member of Ninh Binh Mushroom Association.

Mrs Dam started growing mushrooms because it makes good use of the straw left over from the rice harvest, and because it can produce income without the need for more land. With three sons to bring up, additional income is always welcome, and she is keen to stimulate the wider economy.

Her group is well organised. Every year the group drafts a joint production plan based on estimated demand. The group sells to buyers in Hanoi, Quan Nim and Hanam but, despite Mrs Dam's long relation with the buyers, it is the buyers who set the price. She collects mushrooms from the members every day is paid every five days. As some of the farmers are very poor, she pays them daily (before she has received payment from the buyers). As 'out of season' mushrooms fetch a higher price, the group is trying to spread production beyond the usual season. There are no extra costs but the crop needs more attention and there is higher risk of failure.

Mrs Dam wants more farmers to join the group, with the aim being to use all the rice straw that would otherwise go to waste. Of course, she will also have to work on marketing so that increased production would all be sold. She would also like more support from NBCA in testing out-of-season production.

39 AIN 5681, Agriterra

Ecological farmers finding new markets – AOPEB, Bolivia

Adding value to a range of products has helped small farmers in Bolivia make the most of their yields.⁴⁰ Several new products have been developed and are being actively marketed. There is a new business school and AOPEB⁴¹ is working to help small farmers certify their produce as organic. The project is still running and impacts are not yet visible at household level, but it is confidently expected that adding value will soon be reflected in higher revenues.

Running since 2012, this project aims to consolidate the economic initiatives of producers' organisations so that members can take part in national and international markets. The approach includes training for long-term thinking and developing new products wherever possible, and activities are focused on three different products (quinoa flakes and flour; chiquitana almonds; and Madidi chocolates). The roughly 2,400 participants are members of 72 organisations.

It is too early for results to be seen in terms of household incomes, but increases in revenues are confidently expected as a result of value-addition. Twenty new products have been developed and eight of these have been standardised. These include carrot jam and pickled vegetables; wholegrain flour, dried fruit, yogurt, pre-cooked chorizos and bagged lettuce; and many of them are now being actively marketed.

School breakfasts are a significant market – amaranth and quinoa bars are in demand, and production has doubled – and wholemeal bread is sold in weekly town markets. Banana flour is being sold under contract to two companies, and orange juice is on sale in Celcar stores. The approval of new business plans has released funds for the honey producers' organisation to sell honey in sachets, process and market beeswax candies; and for another organisation to process vegetables.

The Solidarity Trade School (La Escuela Comercial Solidaria) is undoubtedly one of the most important results – under the project, Tarifa's coffee trade school and business school has expanded to more broad-based school of economics. The AOPEB has its own curriculum, validated in training sessions, with an emphasis

⁴⁰ AIN 5894, Agriterra

⁴¹ Asociación de Organizaciones de Productores Ecológicos de Bolivia (the Bolivian ecological producers association)

on marketing and leadership. Learning methods are participatory and experiential, and strong attention is paid to gender and self-esteem.

The AOPEB has encouraged ecological fairs in different regions, to promote 'green' products and increase sales. Farmers were trained in selling skills and encouraged to take part. About 40 'bio-fairs' (in Oruro, Tarija, Achocalla, Caranavi and BioBolivia) were organised; they raised about €40,000.

Certification of 'green' products can be a challenge for small producers but without it they do not have access to the most exacting markets. The AOPEB has been promoting a Participatory Guarantee Systems for organisations unable to access third-party certification, which allows them to sell their products as organic. About 270 new families have entered the certification process and 180 reviewers (including 54 women) were trained in the system.

Business advice seen as 'money in ideas' – Kiambaa Dairy Cooperative, Kenya

A long-established dairy coop near Nairobi was a partner in a project to improve its business activities.⁴² Although concrete results were few, the dairy was delighted with financial and advisory services provided by Agriterra and SNV. Farmers now enjoy a higher standard of living, which they attribute to improvements in the way the dairy operates and markets its products.

The Kiambaa Dairy Coop has been running for more than 50 years. It buys milk from about 1,300 small-holder farmers around Nairobi, then delivers it to a broad range of hotels, schools, processors and its own milk shops (called milk bars). Kiambaa is currently one of the best coops in Kenya in terms of the price it pays farmers for milk, and it benefits from the proximity of Nairobi, which is a huge and growing market. It has ventured into value-adding activities (Dafina yogurt) and diversification by selling water from its borehole and running a commercial car park (although 89% of its income comes from milk).

In 2011, collaboration began between Kiambaa Dairy, Agriterra and SNV, with a view to analyse the market, increase production and improve the (already healthy) business activities of the dairy. The long-term aim was

⁴² AIN 5636, Agriterra



to boost dairy farming into agribusiness to improve livelihoods and assure a reliable milk supply for the coop in future.

If success were measured solely in terms of targets and deliverables, this collaboration might be seen as a failure. Membership remained static, milk intake did not grow according to plan, no (bankable) business plans were developed, plans for strategic alliances stalled and there is still no computerised stock management. But success clearly has other dimensions, as Kiambaa hugely appreciated the financial and advisory services they received, which they described as ‘money in ideas.’ They said the support had improved the way the coop operated and had increased farmers’ knowledge and productivity. Financial reports show increases in turnover, gross profit and net profit after tax (compared to a small increase in expenses).

Members are increasingly satisfied with their cooperative and have faith in its leaders. They are loyal and willing to (and actually do) invest in their coop. They particularly appreciate the punctual payment for their milk, the fact they can access credit via the coop, and the coop’s training courses. Not everything is perfect, however, and farmers would like to see better access to affordable feed, facilities for feed storage and more reliable milk collection (particularly in the afternoons).

Significantly, milk quality has increased considerably, which means it can be sold for a better price. Quality was improved because of better cooling systems, milk intake logistics and stricter quality controls. One hotel manager from Nairobi said, “I don’t know what happened and what they did but I do know that milk quality improved very much in the last two years.”

Challenges

At board level, personal interests overruled the interests of the coop over the question of a merger between Kiambaa and another dairy coop. This proposed strategic alliance might have benefited both parties – its failure may jeopardise the society’s development in the longer term.

Impact stories

Several farmer members experienced an improved standard of living, which they attributed to a better-managed and performing cooperative. When asked about their current standard of living, two farmers replied:

.....
“It increased due to good and improved management. I can pay the school fees right now, I can buy food; I always bothered my husband to buy salt for example. And he always said I had to sell the cows because they only cost money. But now I earn money from them!”

.....
“I can pay the school fees of my grandchildren right now, without any problem. I also see that my neighbours improved, they are doing better now. Their children go to school from the dividend they received last year.”

Market news via sms and radio – Mayanzi Area Cooperative Enterprise, Uganda

Mayanzi Area Cooperative Enterprise is taking steps to improve members’ access to local markets. Mayanzi and its member Rural Peoples Organisations are providing market information to farmers via mobile phone services and radio broadcasts, and working to improve farmers’ skills in selling their produce.⁴³

43 AIN 5787, Agriterro (for more on this project, see chapter 1)

Organic rice farmers flourishing with education and markets – APPOLI, Indonesia

A farmer's life has changed for the better over the last decade through his membership of a growers' association.⁴⁴ His story shows how a combination of training, support, market links and a warehouse credit scheme can help farmers improve their productivity and livelihoods.

APPOLI now has a warehouse credit scheme for members – farmers can take loans against their crop of unhulled rice held in the group warehouse. They pay 10% interest and make repayments in instalments after harvest. Compulsory dues (in the form of 5 kg of rice) are used to accumulate working capital for the group.

Ponomin, 45, has four children and lives in Central Java. He has been a member of APPOLI (the Organic Rice Growers Association of Boyolali) since 2000.

Before 2000, he worked as a farm labourer and sharecropper. He bought rice seed and used chemical fertilisers, but his working methods changed after joining a farmers' group. The group took part in training sessions which taught the farmers how to grow rice in an environmentally friendly manner: they learned to save seeds from one crop for the next, and to make bio-fertilisers and pesticides.

Most of the farmers produced rice for home consumption and celebratory social occasions. But in 2008 APPOLI invested in market studies and arranged contracts with buyers. The farmers started by selling about 25 kg per month and by the following year orders had increased to 150-300 kg per month. By 2012 they were selling 500-900 kg per month.

Ponomin reports that before he joined the group, harvests were small and cultivation costs were high. Since starting to make fertilisers and pesticides, yields have consistently increased and costs are lower. He has diversified his farming and now grows groundnuts and corn as well as rice.

He often joins further training sessions, and has learnt about organic livestock farming, optimum plant spacing, medicinal plants and other subjects. He is now better informed about post-harvest handling of crops and good storage practices, and sees the benefits of group-selling rather than individually via a middleman. Discussions with APPOLI and government staff led to the setting up of a food barn for the village community (essentially a market place of cheap rice if there is a food shortage).

⁴⁴ AIN 5757, Agriterra



Access to financial services

When it comes to financial services, traditional banks have a poor record in their dealings with small family farmers. Such farmers have long been regarded as high-risk prospects, with their lack of collateral, risky livelihood and paucity of assets. But community-based providers such as savings and credit cooperatives (SACCOs) have been established in many places to offer small loans at reasonable rates of interest. A SACCO is often an offshoot of a farmers' organisation in any case, and builds on the social capital inherent in any group whose members share a common interest and are linked by community ties.

Of course, credit by and of itself has no direct impact on agricultural production –farmers need to invest wisely in assets that improve their operations and thus increase either profit or yield. But by linking credit facilities to training and support, farmers' organisations can nudge farmers into wise decisions on how and where to invest – perhaps in new equipment for food-processing, or better housing for animals, or labour-saving machinery.



Farmers learn business skills and gain access to loans – CONFRAS, El Salvador

CONFRAS⁴⁵ in El Salvador set up and administered a credit assistance programme for producer groups under its umbrella.⁴⁶ During the three-year project, over half a million dollars were disbursed in loans, allowing many small farmers to invest in their enterprises and improve their standard of living.

Under this project, which offered credit and business training to small farmers, 300 members of producer groups belonging to the national federation CONFRAS learnt basic business skills in preparation for their gaining access to small loans. Roughly half the participants were women. A credit assistance programme called PROCAMPO was then established to disburse funds to agricultural producers and processing businesses.

In the event, more loans were made than had been expected, with the total exceeding US\$540,000. Of those taking loans, almost half were women, who reported higher self-esteem as a result. They had proved their ability to take out loans and take part in decision-making.

An impact story

Magdalena García de Castellano is 44. She runs the small family farm (just under 1.5 ha, half of which is rented) with her husband and children, cultivating maize, beans, sorghum and vegetables, and raising hens. Four grown-up children still live on the farm. Magdalena is member of the local producer group ADPAL⁴⁷ in Tamanique. She is also part of a ten-strong group of women who received credit to raise poultry through the La Fuente coop. The first loan was US\$400 per person, but now she receives US\$2,000 over the course of a year. She makes repayments every three months.

She used to borrow money from banks, but that was a bureaucratic and expensive way to borrow, and the loans were too small. Magdalena says that being member of a coop and receiving credit from it gives her the feeling that they are investing in her. La Fuente disburses loans on time and with a lower interest rate than the banks. And the coop loans are supported by training from CONFRAS technical staff. These experts have helped Magdalena to rear chickens more productively by using better feed and housing. She has learned through CONFRAS to do bookkeeping so she now has more control over her costs and income.

Having experienced the advantages of being member of ADPAL, she decided to become more active in the association. ADPAL is now growing indigenous varieties of corn, beans, maize etc. and the organisation offers technical advice in growing techniques so members do not need to depend on imported seeds anymore. ADPAL plans to sell the seed collectively in order to gain a better price for its members.

45 La Confederación de Federaciones de la Reforma Agraria Salvadoreña

46 AIN 5633, Agriterra

47 Asociación de Productores y Productoras de Tamanique



Accounting skills and loans for small farmers – SFACF, Nepal

In difficult terrain where there are few sources of outside support, women farmers are creating Small Farmers groups to support each other.⁴⁸ Programme staff travel across the district to encourage women to form groups and help them with the accounting skills they need to borrow money.

Dil Prasad Simkhada is a programme replicator for the Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperative Federation (SFACF) project in Dhading District. His role is to explain to women the benefits of being organised into Small Farmers groups. Being a local himself, Mr Simkhada is used to the long hours needed to access remote villages on foot (there are no roads). There is now an advisory committee in each Village Development Committee (VDC) and during field visits Mr Simkhada teaches accounting to small farmers and management skills to local volunteers. He says that new members join every day.

48 AIN 5905, Agriterra

Impact stories

Ganga Adhikari is a single woman with three children who used to work as a city labourer. Since joining the programme, she has taken out a loan to start a small tea shop and vegetable farm.

.....
“I am impressed with SFACF because it has provided me a loan; now I have started a small business. I have found good friends and I feel that small farmer’s group is good for me. I will continuously saving and encourage other illiterate women. I have earned a small amount of money to spend on my family; another part I have put in a cooperative savings account.”

Ms. Chotaru Mager is the wife of Bir bahadur Mager. They have one child. She says:

.....
“I am proud of joining a small farmer group. I used to be worried because I had no money to start an occupation. But after joining the group I have taken a loan and started goat farming. I attended goat farming training programs in Marpak, which gave me good knowledge about how to increase the number of goats. Nowadays I earn an income by selling male goats.”



Chapter 5

Investing in enabling institutions

The idea of ‘enabling institutions’ is a broad subject. Here we narrow it down to two aspects – agricultural policy and research priorities. Both of these impinge on the lives of family farmers, but they are unlikely to be aware of this fact. They are certainly helpless, as individuals, to influence either policy or research. This type of investment therefore relies heavily on the actions of farmer’s organisations.

The results of this type of investment take time to manifest themselves at household level. It might therefore be argued that there is no place in Evidence of Impact for discussing projects aiming for institutional change. Indeed, institutional change is seen to be a slow process in the cases below and there are few impacts described. But since this is such an important type of investment, this report would be incomplete if it did not illustrate some of the current efforts, not least because change at institutional level should ultimately lead to the most widespread impacts.

Investing in policies

Policies and legislation dealing with a range of issues (such as agriculture, trade agreements and land tenure) can have far-reaching impacts on smallholder farmers. Despite this, policies are often drawn up with scant attention to their views. So farmers' organisations have a significant role: they must keep their members informed about wider issues, gather their opinions and then speak up persuasively on their behalf. To do this, farmers' organisations need to have effective reciprocal communication channels between individual members, local organisations and their national federations.

Effective farmers' organisations can also speak up for rural dwellers as a whole, lobbying for public services such as healthcare, education, drinking water supply and better roads. As the primary asset of a family farm is its labour, poor health and under-nutrition can dramatically reduce the quality of the labour force. And improvement in transport links makes it easier to take goods to market and access input supplies.





Bringing farmers' organisations into the planning process – AsiaDHRRA

A two-year project to engage farmers' and civil society organisations in the planning process of a major development programme found that the organisations had achieved varying levels of success.⁴⁹ Some had influenced project objectives, type of interventions, targets and possible levels of engagement during implementation. Peer-to-peer support from other farmers' organisations appeared to be important.

The Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) is a multilateral mechanism to help poor countries alleviate rural poverty and improve rural livelihoods and food security. The Programme was designed to include farmers' organisations in the design of countrywide projects as well as in the implementation phases, so the challenge is how best to bring them into the planning process. Some of the findings are discussed below.

Results were particularly promising in Nepal and Cambodia, where a 'warmer' working relationship emerged between different farmers' organisations, and between farmers' organisations, government and other stakeholders. Activities included building capacity on constructive engagement, and bringing government partners into consultation workshops to refine project design. The Nepal Peasant Coalition lobbied successfully to amend the objectives, design and targets of the GAFSP-funded project in Nepal. And the mechanism for including farmers' and other civil society organisations in the national steering committee was agreed.

In Cambodia, farmers' organisations had several discussions with government and GAFSP representatives, and dialogue flowed between GAFSP-implementing bodies, the Asian Development Bank, FAO-Cambodia and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Farmers' organisations submitted various proposals and spoke out strongly in favour of being involved in the implementation of the two GAFSP projects.

There was less progress in Togo where, despite various opportunities for capacity building and dialogue, the lack of transparent communication channels remained

a constraint. It was concluded that the farmers' organisations lacked sufficient capacity to make fully effective contributions to planning projects.

The efforts of farmers' organisations in Bangladesh and Mongolia have not yet translated into participation in GAFSP-funded projects, but the organisations have managed to work together on a common agenda. In Mongolia, government officials are not used to engaging with farmers' organisations, and the institutional and political environment makes interactions between farmers' organisations and government entities difficult.

In Ethiopia, the absence of an apex body of farmers' organisations to represent farmers' interests at national level was one of several constraints. In Rwanda, although farmers' organisations are theoretically involved in the institutional setting of via the co-federation of cooperatives, the co-federation is government-funded and is not seen as truly independent.

Given the recent history of wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, it is not surprising that their social infrastructure is damaged. Here, the fragile national farmer's organisations began consultation processes to identify the priorities of active local farmers' groups and to reinforce the governance and legitimacy of the national platform.

Lessons learned

It is clear that each country poses different challenges to the participation of farmers' organisations in planning processes. Post-conflict disruption or institutionalised suspicion of civil society organisations are obvious hurdles to meaningful participation, but barriers also arise from a lack of capacity within farmers' organisations themselves, or from their competence as active collaborators with other relevant players. So farmers' organisations need to be better coordinated, to join forces with other organisations where necessary, and to have good internal communication channels so that they can be seen to represent the views of their members.

Project reviewers noted that peer-to-peer support from another organisation seemed to be a key element in enabling farmers' organisations to become involved with governments. They therefore called for continuing support to farmers' organisations so that they can contribute effectively to the design of public investment projects, and later to be genuinely involved in their implementation.

⁴⁹ Supporting inclusive planning of country projects financed by GAFSP, Agriterria and AsiaDHRRA, 2012-2012

Lobbying for a more liberal coffee market – KCPA, Kenya

Illustrating just how difficult it can be to make progress, this case concerns a long-established association with good lobbying connections.⁵⁰ But its position paper on the coffee business may need to be completely redrafted if a new law is enacted as expected. Impacts have not yet been reported as the project still has almost two years to run.

The first formal group of coffee growers was founded in 1934. From 1960, the renamed the Kenya Coffee Growers Association focused on good industrial relations in the coffee sector. It was effective and vocal in representing the interests of its members after independence and into the 1980s, when the coffee trade was booming. But the association was deregistered in 1989 and farmers' views were not represented during coffee sector reforms. Since reregistration as the Kenya Coffee Producers Association (KCPA) in 1997, the organisation has sought to reposition itself as the voice of the coffee farmers and ensure they get fair returns from their investments. This has not always been easy.

Support to KCPA has been in place for less than a year, so it is too early to expect impacts. But it is worth noting its efforts so far to illustrate the complex task that faces organisations seeking to influence policy. For a start, coffee production and revenues were lower in 2013 than in 2012, which means that farmers are short of income, and lobbying requires time and money. Kenya is also undergoing a process of political decentralisation under which power (and revenue-raising) is being devolved to county-level. This is proving a mixed blessing, with some counties actively promoting coffee (such as by direct marketing) while others see it as a potential revenue-raiser via local taxes.

Given that coffee is a big earner of foreign exchange and has the potential to grow if the sector is liberalised, KCPA went to some lengths to draw up position papers on the 2001 Coffee Act (these covered taxation, farmer representation on the Coffee Board of Kenya and Coffee Research Foundation, and the idea of bringing in direct marketing of coffee). This work is likely to be wasted as the Agriculture Fisheries and Food Authority (AFFA) Act, which will supersede the 2001 Coffee Act, may be brought into effect this year (2014).

Looking to the future

Redrafting position papers should not be too big a task, given that KCPA is partners with various other organisations for lobbying and advocacy. For instance, it is part of the Agriculture Industry Network, which brings together agricultural producers, processors, traders, employees and consumers. It is also a member of the Kenya National Agricultural Farmers Federation (KENAFF), and it can tap into the Business Advocacy Fund (BAF) set up by Danida to train and build lobbying capacity in organisations. Nevertheless, the government currently turns a deaf ear to lobbying, perhaps because there is so much discussion about the (controversial) decentralisation process. It may be that further partnerships are needed, such as with the media and the new county governments.

Although the lobbying objective of the project appears to be stalled, other aspects show promise. Many new coops want to join KCPA to benefit from the (planned) improved member services (78 applied to participate in the project, although only 60 can be accommodated). Exchange visits to Uganda – where the coffee sector is fully liberalised – have already been made, and Kenyan farmers have seen the difference when a coffee producer can sell at a time and price of their choosing rather than losing control when they deliver coffee to the processing companies. Activities to boost productivity by improved coffee husbandry are under way, and the project is mainstreaming sustainable land management practices such as agroforestry, soil and water conservation, agronomic practices and residue management.

⁵⁰ AIN 5847, We Effect



Dialogue to guide agricultural and food policies – CFP, Burkina Faso

An active farmers' organisation is taking part in dialogue that in the long term should create impacts for smallholder farmers.⁵¹ In a process that involved the members of the national umbrella organisation for small farmers, CPF⁵², a memorandum was drawn up commenting on the government's proposed agricultural legislation. The issues raised cover the range of topics important to family farmers, and the memorandum was given credibility by the number of contributors.

Painstaking efforts have been made by CPF to bring together the views of the farmer members of its constituent organisations on a proposed act of parliament. A workshop brought together 14 federations and member organisations to look at the draft Agricultural Direction Act and draw up suggestions for its improvement. The proposed legislation will cover agriculture, forestry and pastoralism so is of importance to every family farmer in Burkina Faso.

After careful consideration, the consensus was that the proposed act did not have clear objectives and was too general – it was felt that it covered too wide a range of issues and that ecotourism, hunting and ranching should be excluded. It was also felt that the act should explicitly aim to strengthen existing agricultural institutions and farmers' organisations rather than trying to create new ones.

Objectives considered vital by the farmers included ensuring the nutritional sovereignty of the country by focusing in the development of family farms; supporting the professionalisation of family farmers; supporting such farmers to maintain the social, economic, ecological and demographic balance of the nation; improve the living conditions and revenues of the – family farmers; and safeguarding security of tenure so that family farms could confidently develop without conflict over land.

Other issues considered worthy of further discussion included seed-sowing techniques suitable for family farms; organic farming rather versus genetically modified crops; fertiliser availability; effective technical consultancy; and increasing the use of mechanization by family farms.

Farmers influencing agricultural policy – Réseau SOA, Madagascar

This project has supported the national farmer's organisation in a country that suffers frequent natural disasters and political instability.⁵³ A study into family farms will help farmers' organisations know their members better and in time feed into the policy-making process.

The Malagasy government has been developing a sector programme for agriculture, livestock and fisheries since 2009. National farmers' organisations are beginning to take part in agricultural policy making, but their participation is limited. The organisations' officials often lack information and are poorly trained on national and international issues, for instance. Lacking a common vision of agricultural development, peasant leaders focus narrowly on the interests of their organisation or sector and farmers' organisations struggle to contribute to broader national strategies.

Such a lack of capacity is not surprising: Madagascar has been politically unstable for several years and suffers frequent natural disasters (including cyclones, locust infestations and drought). Against this challenging backdrop, the national union of agricultural organisations (SOA) is working to build a common vision on agricultural development that will include the views of national farmers' organisations in agricultural policy development.

The SOA network includes 16 regional farmers' organisations with a total of 14,000 individual members. It leads an initiative (called Regards Paysans) which makes space for dialogue between farmers and policy makers. This was particularly in demand when the regional fund for agricultural development (FRDA) was being set up in 2009: SOA made several proposals for improving this fund, which is co-managed by farmers, government and other stakeholders. Today, SOA is active on several national committees relevant to agriculture and rural development.

⁵¹ AIN 5865, Afdi

⁵² Confédération Paysanne du Faso

⁵³ AIN 5854, Afdi

In 2012, a SOA workshop defined the scope of an agricultural policy, and what processes might allow farmers and farmers' organisations to be proactive in policy development.

.....
"The discussions showed that farmers can make their voice in the debate vis-à-vis policy makers. Farmers can express their needs and do not always accept what others offer."
– Frederick, a farmer.

.....
It emerged during the workshop that many farm leaders were unaware of the diversity of farms in their region. SOA therefore plans to conduct a study on family farms, because although they are mentioned in agricultural development policies, there is little quantitative information about them. This is a clear illustration of the fact that policy and research are inextricably linked – this report separates them for discussion purposes only.

.....
"To develop a sound agricultural policy, we must know the situation of farms and the region. Farmers do not know their real needs which is why they suffer the dictatorship of policymakers."
– Randrianandrasana Michel, President of the farmers' organisation VFTM.



Investing in research

Some would suggest that poor farmers have been offered only poor research and extension in the past. But the importance of family farms is being better recognised and, in turn, research priorities specific to this type of farming are being set. Areas of particular interest include responses to climate change, and agro-ecological approaches (which allow natural resources to be managed sustainably to provide ecosystem services as well as agricultural production). Most of the investments mentioned above (from improved seed to better machinery and soil management) could be fine-tuned by focused research relevant to local conditions. The results could then be disseminated by the farmer-to-farmer approaches that have proved so effective in the Farmers Fighting Poverty programme.

Setting these research priorities and raising awareness of new ideas are further roles for farmers' organisations. They can also, where such transfer of knowledge would be useful, collate and share more widely the specific local knowledge developed over generations by farmers themselves.



Thorough monitoring of family farms – FONGS, Senegal

Research into the activities of nearly 2,000 family farms in Senegal shows that they can be highly productive if properly supported: family farms currently provide 60% of the country's nutrition needs and contribute to national capital of natural resources.⁵⁴ Local monitoring helps local farmers' organisations to tailor their support services to family farms, which in turn have become more productive.

The national organisation FONGS⁵⁵ consists of 31 associations, 3,000 village groups and roughly 120,000 members. It has been involved in the monitoring of family farms for 15 years and in 2006 it developed a more thorough monitoring system that used its member organisations to cover whole country. FONGS' strategic plan focuses on supporting family farms to modify and improve, which requires sample farms to be monitored. Under a previous project, 600 farms were reached – this project involves over 1,800 farms.

Monitoring family farms is useful for several reasons: it allows a better understanding of the impact of such farms on the national economy; it shows how these farms function; it enables FONGS to assess the effects of support; and finally to improve policy arguments by having an evidence base.

So far various conclusions have been drawn. Family farms are certainly significant in terms of Senegal's food security, as they provide 60% of national nutrition demand. They also contribute to the national wealth, with the monitored farms creating roughly €2,000 per year. Rural employment benefits too, with each family farm having on average nine workers. In less easily measurable ways, family farms are also contributing to the environmental and social capital of the country, by applying fertilisers, using natural resources sustainably, and by transmitting local knowledge of the agricultural techniques, values and culture of Senegalese peasant societies. All in all, FONGS considers family farms should be considered as common goods of the nation.

Having invested in this ongoing baseline research,

54 AIN 5968, CSA

55 Fédération des Organisations Non-Gouvernementales du Sénégal

FONGS concludes that there are several factors limiting the development of family farms (and thus their contribution to national wealth). Farming does not pay high wages, and agricultural produce on the whole fetches low prices. Small farmers do not have secure tenure, so those who feel threatened by the potential loss of their farms are less likely to invest in their enterprises. Despite these limitations, the positive findings about contribution to national wealth mean that FONGS is determined to continue supporting family farms in their diversity, rather than take the 'big-agri' approach that sees large farms as the only way to increase productivity.

Impacts

Farmers' organisations belonging to FONGS are helping to modernise family farms. One farmer in Niyaes says,

.....
"Previously, we were less organised and concentrated rarely on the future of the farm, and all the decisions were taken by me and the others were there to perform under my orders. Since the advent of the family farm approach by FONGS we have received support and services to improve our performance.

Because of this, we have been able to reorganise the work in the family farm; increase the capacity in the farm (we've installed two motor pumps for irrigation system and ploughed more land); strengthen our own financing; strengthen the relationship with the technical services; and rationalize our resource management."
.....

The effects are acknowledged by the family, who report better social cohesion, more democratic work management, and better planning with everyone's active participation. Agricultural production is estimated to have tripled between 2011 and 2013 (from 4m CFA to 12m CFA), the house has been improved, and 1km of irrigation has been installed.

Another family produces more than they would have believed:

.....
"I thought we would produce less since we have less land than others, but it turned out that we produce more and our production increases every year."
.....

The agricultural output of the farm rose from 49,000 CFA in 2011 to 1,327,500 CFA in 2012. The rise is thanks to diversification: the family rented extra land to produce onions and tomatoes as well as rice. The improvement was visible in 2012 despite the small crop of rice due to floods.



Closing remarks

The monitoring and evaluation of activities and results is vital for farmers' organisations. Most importantly, it informs the organisations of their impact, and provides information to guide organisational development.

Impact manifests itself in different ways. For instance, it can be seen in the way that farmers' organisations operate (resulting from support through Farmers Fighting Poverty) and in the lives of individual farmers (resulting from the support and services provided by farmers' organisations to their members). To demonstrate as many aspects of impact as possible, AgriCord uses a range of reporting tools:

1. Documenting the direct outputs and outcomes of an organisation's activities within a project or programme context.
2. Profiling the key capacities of farmers' organisations over time, beyond a particular project or programme.
3. Analysing the incomes and livelihood of farmers' households, bearing in mind that these may be influenced by factors other than project interventions. (Evidence of Impact reports draw on this analysis, showing examples of impact and how it has been achieved.)
4. Regional/geographic, thematic and programme evaluations, which look beyond the situation of individual farmers to cover structural and societal changes.

Related to the development of evaluation strategies and tools, and its support to regional farmers' organisation platforms, AgriCord is committed to further collaboration with relevant IFAD and EU-supported initiatives. AgriCord is also involved in building synergies between the complementary actions of farmers' organisations at different levels (local, national, and regional) for the benefit of farmer households.

Annex – Inventory of evidence used in the report

1 – Investment by smallholders in their own farms

AIN No.	Farmers' Organisation and Country	Agri-agency	Level of support	Type of evaluation	Support period	Essence of story
5782	Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima (MVIWATA) Manyara and Mviwamo - Tanzania	Trias	Sub-national	External	2008-2013	Poultry and sunflower enterprises bring higher income
5990	Isoka District Rice Association – Zambia	Agriterra	Local	Story harvesting	2013	Better seed varieties and cultivation techniques, plus training
5045	Associação Intermunicipal de Produtores de leite do Sudoeste do Paraná (Unileite) – Brazil	Fert	Local	Internal	2008-2010	Dairy farmers aim for higher efficiency rather than farm expansion
5987	Mayanzi Area Cooperative Enterprise – Uganda	Agriterra	Local	Story harvesting	2013-2014	Integrated farming model or higher productivity to improve income
6065	Fimpifi & Fimpao – Madagascar	Fert		Brochure		Catalogue of services provided by FO to farmers
6051	Various groups – Morocco and Mali	Afdi and Fert	International	Internal	2011- 2013	Zero tillage to combat erosion, using adapted seed-drill
5933	Association des Organisations Professionnelles Paysannes (AOPP) Koulikoro – Mali	Afdi	Regional	Article	2012-2016	Breeding more productive dairy cattle

2 – Collective investment to overcome limited assets

AIN No.	Farmers' Organisation and Country	Agri-agency	Level of support	Type of evaluation	Support period	Essence of story
4952	Fikambanana Fampivoarana ny Tantsaha (FIFATA) – Madagascar	Fert	Sub-national	External & internal	2007-2011	Investment in education for rural young people
5945	Cotton Association of Zambia (CAZ) – Zambia	We Effect	National	Story harvesting	2013-2014	Study circles for women farmers have increased household income
5860	Fédération des Paysans du Fouta Djallon (FPFD) – Guinea	Afdi	Regional	Internal	2012-2015	Cold storage for potatoes; many new members
5856	Faso Jigi – Mali	UPA DI	Sub-national	Internal	2013- 2014	FO builds own warehouses
5905	Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperative Federation (SFACF) – Nepal	Agriterra	Sub-national	Story harvesting	2012-2013	Groups in remote area allow women to make regular savings
5958	Union Nationale des Coopératives Agricoles du Sénégal (UNCAS)- Senegal	Asprodeb	National	Internal	2012-2013	Local grains augment wheat flour in bread
5933	Association des Organisations Professionnelles Paysannes (AOPP) Koulikoro – Mali	Afdi	Regional	Article	2012-2016	Breeding more productive dairy cattle

3 – Investment to manage risk

AIN No.	Farmers' Organisation and Country	Agri-agency	Level of support	Type of evaluation	Support period	Essence of story
5645	Various – Burkina Faso and Guinea	Afdi	Regional	Internal	2010-2013	Agri-consultants help farmers become more resilient
5751	Confédération des Associations des Producteurs Agricoles pour le Développement (CAPAD) – Burundi	CSA	Sub-national	Internal	2011-2015	Diversification and warehouse credit system
5344	Fikambanana Fampivoarana ny Tantsaha (FIFATA) – Madagascar	Fert	Sub-national	Leaflet	2008-2010	Protective veterinary services
5863	Association des Organisations Professionnelles Paysannes (AOPP) Koulikoro – Mali	Afdi	National	Internal	2012- 2016	Monitoring land sales to boost security of tenure
5906	Zambia National Farmers' Union (ZNFU) – Zambia	FFD	National	Internal	2013	ZNFU now member of national climate-change committee
5958	Union Nationale des Coopératives Agricoles du Sénégal (UNCAS)- Senegal	Asprodeb	National	Internal	2012-2013	Local grains augment wheat flour in bread

4 – Investing in enabling markets

AIN No.	Farmers' Organisation and Country	Agri-agency	Level of support	Type of evaluation	Support period	Essence of story
5848	Uganda Crane Creameries Cooperative Union (UCCCU) – Uganda	We Effect	Sub-national	Internal	2012-2014	Dairy supplies milk to schools on regular basis
5744	Tanzania Horticultural Association (TAHA) – Tanzania	FFD	Sub-national	Internal	2011-2013	Links to tourist market in Zanzibar
6008	Bahir Dar Dairy Cooperative – Ethiopia	FFD	Local	Internal	2013- 2014	Establishing new market links and increasing FO membership
5963	Tsehai Union – Ethiopia	Agriterra	Local	Story harvesting	2013-2016	Malting factory buying barley from small farmers via farmers' organisation
5681	Nimh Binh Cooperative Alliance – Nepal	Agriterra	Sub-national	Story harvesting	2011-2013	Mushroom producer groups supply increased demand
5894	Asociación de Organizaciones de Productores Ecológicos de Bolivia (AOPEB) – Bolivia	Agriterra	Sub-national	Story harvesting	2012-2014	Adding value to local products
5636	Kiambaa Dairy Cooperative – Kenya	Agriterra	-	External	2011-2013	Improved business activities
5787	Myanzi Area Cooperative Enterprise – Uganda	Agriterra	Local	Story harvesting	2013-2014	Market information via sms and radio broadcast
5757	Alliance of Boyolali Organic Farmers (APPOLI) – Indonesia	Agriterra	Sub-national	Story harvesting	2011-2014	Organic rice farmers benefiting from education and market access
5633	Confederación de Federaciones de la Reforma Agraria Salvadoreña (CONFRAS) – El Salvador	Agriterra	Local	Story harvesting	2011-2013	Learning business skills and gaining access to loans
5905	Small Farmer Agriculture Cooperative Federation (SFACF) – Nepal	Agriterra	Sub-national	Story harvesting	2012-2013	Groups of small farmers able to take out loans

5 – Investing in enabling institutions

AIN No.	Farmers' organisation and country	Agri-agency	Level of support	Type of evaluation	Support period	Essence of story
	Various – Asia	AsiaDHRRA	-	Internal	-	Discussion of bringing FOs into planning process
5847	Kenya Coffee Producers Association (KCPA) – Kenya	We Effect	National	Internal	2013-2015	Lobbying for liberalisation of coffee market
5865	Confédération Paysanne du Faso (CPF) – Burkina Faso	Afdi	National	Internal	2012-2015	Talks to guide agriculture and food policies
5854	Réseau Syndical des Organisations Agricoles (SOA) - Madagascar	Afdi	Regional and national	Internal	2012- 2017	Farmers influencing agricultural policy
5968	Federation des Organisations Non-Gouvernementales du Senegal (FONGS) – Senegal	CSA	Local	Internal	2013-2015	Thorough monitoring of family farms



© Insa/Isabel Cortiier

AGRICORD



How to contact
www.agricord.org

- A** Diestsevest 32,
3000 Leuven, Belgium
- P** 0032 (0) 16 24 27 50
- F** 0032 (0) 16 24 27 55
- E** info@agricord.org