

# CROSSROADS



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AgriCord is a global alliance of agri-agencies mandated by farmers' organizations. The mission of the AgriCord Alliance is to promote and help to build strong, democratic, inclusive and professional farmers' organisations and cooperatives and in that way to spur development.

# Empowering Farmers through Knowledge: The Innova Ecovida Virtual Learning Platform

BY LUIZA RODRIGUES - CRESOL AA



video production for the platform© CRESOL AA 2024

The Innova Ecovida Project launched its virtual learning platform in October 2024. This platform represents a significant step in disseminating agroecological knowledge, directly connecting farmers and their organizations. Its goal is to strengthen the exchange of sustainable practices among rural communities, encouraging research, innovation, and the growth of family farming.

The bilingual platform, available in Portuguese and Spanish, serves Brazil and other Latin American countries, enhancing the exchange of regional knowledge. Organized collaboratively, the platform brings farmers' own practices into its video lessons, valuing knowledge built in the field and promoting practical and accessible learning. The content is structured into thematic areas such as seed production, bioinputs, the Direct Seeding System for Vegetables (SPDH), and the sustainable management of deciduous plants, all based on real experiences from the Project.

In addition to facilitating access to knowledge, the platform provides an opportunity for greater longevity of information, ensuring that agroecological practices can be transmitted and improved over time. There is also the potential for it to become a living repository of agroecological knowledge and practices, incorporating new publications and content as the project evolves.

In partnership with Agricord, Cresol, CNFR, and Rede Ecovida, the Innova Ecovida Project promotes agroecology and sustainability in Brazil and Uruguay, creating a network of collaboration and innovation among farmers in both countries.

Implemented by Cresol AA as part of the global FO-RI initiative, the platform is accessible and dynamic, empowering rural communities and strengthening farmers' autonomy and technical capacity.

**Scan here to explore the Innova Ecovida Virtual Learning Platform**





# Changing gender dynamics through the "Model couple" approach

BY KATJA VUORI - AGRICORD

In Tanzania, as in many other African countries, women play a central role in agricultural production but face often limits in their participation in decision-making. For example, in sunflower farming women are responsible for a wide range of tasks, including planting, weeding and harvesting and in some cases small scale processing. The FO-RI project led by MVIWAARUSHA and supported by the Swedish agri-agency We Effect, is not only improving sunflower farming yields and profitability by introducing agroecological practices and innovations but also making strides towards gender equality through Gender Transformation Approach (GTA).

## The Model Couples Approach unfolds in several key stages:

- Selection of Model Couples to serve as role models in their communities.
- Training in Gender Equality and Agroecology which encourages shared decision-making and equal participation in farming, focusing on agroecological practices.
- Couples are coached to work together and share responsibilities on farming activities such as planting, harvesting, and commercialization.

- Model couples advocate for gender equality and sustainable farming in their communities by organizing workshops, participating in media programs, and sharing their experiences to inspire others.
- Facilitators from the FO-RI project regularly support the couples, providing capacity-building opportunities on key topics such as skills for mobilization and sensitizations, identification of gender issues, facilitation, advocacy and knowledge sharing.
- As successful models, these couples influence others, creating a ripple effect that encourages broader adoption of gender-sensitive and agroecological sunflower farming practices.



Juliana & Deonist in their farm © We Effect Tanzania 2025

As part of the strategy, the project uses male champions who are trained in GTA and promote this approach and work closely with innovative farmers and researchers to enhance women participation in action research.

## Savoir-Faire & Links

- Interested by the [Gender Transformative Approach](#)? Read this We Effect document about it:
- Check out the publication "[Summary Document FFF/FAO Exchanges on Access to Finance](#)". This document summarizes a series of thematic exchanges in the context of the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF/FAO) around "access to finance".
- Did you miss the Webinar series on the programme SEPOP Capitalisation? [Catch up here on our Youtube](#).

# Changing gender dynamics through the "Model couple" approach

## Story of Juliana and Deonist from Karatu District

BY **KATJA VUORI** - AGRICORD

Before the FO-RI program, Juliana and Deonist cooperated very little in financial matters. Each had their own money and Juliana, not being involved in any economic activities, often struggled to meet the family's basic needs. The community's belief that women should stay at home and not engage in business or social activities held her back and limited Juliana to domestic duties.

Juliana was selected as a Gender Champion and was trained in GTA. During this period, she became involved in sunflower research on agroecological practices with support from the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI), a project institutional partner. She asked her husband for a piece of land to grow sunflowers, and Deonist gave her a plot.

Juliana applied agroecological farming techniques, resulting in a significantly better harvest than before - from two to five bags of sunflower seeds. Empowered by this success, Juliana encouraged her husband to attend GTA training. Deonist learned about the barriers faced by Juliana and realized how traditional gender norms were restricting her from benefiting from agriculture. As a result, Deonist embraced the role of a Gender Champion himself and committed

to changing his own attitudes and those of others. He began to challenge the limiting traditions. With her husband's support, Juliana opened a tailoring shop. She now sews various types of clothing, earning up to 400,000 Tanzanian shillings per month. Juliana and Deonist work now together, pooling their income and making joint decisions about how to spend and invest their money.



Juliana & Deonist in their farm © We Effect Tanzania 2025

Impressed by her pro-activeness, MVIWAARUSHA invited Juliana to participate in radio programs on Mega FM Arusha and TV shows to raise awareness about gender issues and agroecological matters. Her contributions were recognized, leading to invitations from other media outlets, allowing her to expand her reach and inspire change on a larger scale. Inspired by all this, Juliana ran for a position in the village council alongside with other eight women. This involvement in local politics has given her a platform to advocate for the rights of women in her community.

Juliana summarizes her experience:

*The training in gender transformative approaches has completely changed our lives. I no longer feel like I am just a housewife; I am a businesswoman, a farmer, and an active member of my community. My husband and I make decisions together, and this has brought us closer and made our family stronger.*



# Local breadmaking flours: the successful Senegalese experience

BY ANNE PÉTRÉ - CSA

As part of the Farmers Organisations for Food Systems (FOFS) program, funded by GIZ and implemented by AgriCord, the agri-agencies Collectif Stratégies Alimentaires (CSA) and ASPRODEB are conducting a project that was developed to promote the incorporation of local raw materials for breadmaking, as well as institutional purchases focused on sourcing from agricultural cooperatives. In this project, the CSA and Asprodeb partners are the PROPAC (Regional Platform of Peasant Organizations of Central Africa) and ROPPA (Network of Peasant Organizations of West Africa) networks, thus reaching out to peasant organizations throughout West and Central Africa.



Workshop participants - © CSA 2025

Senegal is leading an initiative to replace imported wheat with local cereals and tubers in bread-making. A study trip to Dakar enabled the partners to discover this promising and already very successful experiment.

Producers, processors and bakers work closely together through constant dialogue, guaranteeing a fair distribution of margins and consistent product quality.

Senegal imposes a minimum incorporation rate of 15% local flour, but the industry players are aiming much higher, with the support of research, which is helping to find the right flour compositions, and the Federation of Bakers, which has set up a specialized school to train bakers in the use of flours incorporating up to 50% local products (millet, cassava, fonio, rice, moringa, corn).



Bakers practicing © CSA 2025



Breads with local flour © CSA 2025

Participants were able to attend practical training sessions with the bakers and meet with researchers, processors and producer cooperatives. This experience gave them a concrete vision of the initiative's benefits and motivated them to draw inspiration from it in their respective countries (Burkina Faso, Togo, Chad, Cameroon, CAR).



The AgriCord alliance administrates the Farmers' Organisations for Food Systems (FOFS) programme with the financial support of the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ). FOFS program is part of the global programme StäBo, which focuses on working with national, regional and global farmers' organisations.



The Collectif Stratégie Alimentaire (CSA) is an AgriCord member agri-agency mandated by the Fédération Wallonne des Agriculteurs - Belgium  
Find them online: [www.csa-be.org](http://www.csa-be.org).



ASPRODEB is an AgriCord member agri-agency mandated by the CNCR (National Council for Rural Cooperation) - Senegal

# Young Farmers Determined to Revive Local Rice Varieties in Senegal

BY CHAMSYATOU MAMA GAO & KATJA VUORI - AGRICORD

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*At the beginning, it was the farmers themselves who went to the various localities to collect the rice varieties they knew. When they came back, they chose the women farmers to carry out the seed multiplication experiments. Together with ASPRODEB, we went to see the research institute, which agreed to support them in their activities”.* (AJAC, Senegal)

In Senegal's Casamance region, the traditional rice varieties, which are essential to local farming, are under threat from soil salinization, exacerbated by climate instability. The farmers' organisation Association des jeunes agriculteurs de Casamance (AJAC) started their FO-RI project by identifying and collecting traditional rice varieties. These were distributed among local women for multiplication as this project wants to empower women as seed producers. The AJAC facilitators provide the technical assistance for the women's seed production. AJAC itself is carrying out field trials with support of researchers from Institut Sénégalais de Recherche Agricole (ISRA). ISRA assesses the productivity and resilience of the tested local varieties.



Rice harvesting © Isabel Corthier

The experiments will continue in 2025, comparing the results obtained in controlled and farmers environments. Visits to ISRA enabled the women seed multipliers to learn about the cultivation techniques used by the researchers. This interaction led to fruitful discussions on adapting technologies to local conditions and strengthened the collaboration between women farmers and researchers. The women have an increased capacity for action research - from plot preparation to harvesting. Their role in seed production has also encouraged them to position themselves in the FO's governing bodies.

The project revitalizes also important cultural practices. The rice varieties selected are used for specific cultural celebrations such as weddings, baptisms, and funerals. There exists a large undersupplied market for these traditional rice varieties. Through community radio programmes, AJAC has also raised the visibility of its women's collaboration with ISRA. These emissions raising awareness of the benefits of local rice varieties and agroecological practices in general.



The Farmer-led Research and Innovation (FO-RI) programme, led by the AgriCord Alliance with support from the EU and OACPS, drives sustainable agroecological transitions through farmer-led research. Spanning 13 projects across 17 countries, it strengthens local farmer innovation, advocacy, and agroecological practices in partnership with national and regional farmer organizations.

**QUESTIONS? WANT TO SHARE YOUR STORY? A FRIENDLY CHAT?**



**CONTACT US!**

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AgriCord financial partners included the EU, OACPS, FAO, AECID, AFD, DGD, and GiZ. The views expressed herein do not reflect the official opinion of the EU, OACPS, FAO, AECID, AFD, DGD, and GiZ.

