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**FARMERS
FIGHTING
POVERTY**



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Evidence of Impact 2012

AGRICORD





Evidence of Impact, 2012

FARMERS FIGHTING POVERTY

- 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 that covers all relevant aspects of the Farmers Fighting Poverty programme. It describes each project and gives information on targets, how the project is financed, the approval process and progress. The database can be accessed at www.agro-info.net and guarantees transparency of the Farmers Fighting Poverty process. In this report, projects are referenced 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 can be found by looking on Agro-info.net under the relevant project number.
- Monitoring and evaluation is carried out by a task team of the AgriCord Project Committee, who provided insight and conceptual guidance for this report. Evidence of Impact 2012 was written by Julie Harrod from material provided by the AgriCord agri-agencies. Pauliina Paananen translated documents from French and Spanish, and summarized their content. At AgriCord, Pekka Jamsen coordinated the compilation and writing process.
- Julie Harrod 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' organisations

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 Professionnelle Agricole (Québec)	UPA DI	2003
Sweden	LRF Federation of Swedish Farmers	SCC	2004
Finland	MTK Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners	-	2006
Italy	CIA Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori	-	2009
Spain	UPA Union de Pequeños Agricultores y Ganaderos	-	2009
Belgium	FWA Fédération Wallonne d'Agriculture	CSA	2010
Portugal	CAP Confederação dos Agricultores de Portugal	-	2010
Asia	AFA Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development	AsiaDHRRA	2011
Senegal	Organisations agricoles du Sénégal membres d'Asprodeb	Asprodeb	2011

Farmers' organisations in different regions of the developing world

Farmers Fighting Poverty has been operating since 2007. Between 2007 and 2011, almost 260 farmers' organisations in around 60 developing countries have been supported in a framework of 640 projects. Projects are estimated to have reached more than 4.5 million people, of which 39% were women.

Most of the projects were active at national (34%), sub-national (28%) and local (23%) level. Some regional or international farmers' organisations (such as ROPPA, EAFF, SACAU, AFA and ACCU) were also involved.

Just over half of the projects took place in Africa (mainly in East and West Africa) and almost a quarter were in Latin America. A little over 20% of the projects were in Asia, with a small percentage (5%) in Mediterranean countries such as Moldova, Armenia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Projects are based on long-term relationships between agri-agencies and farmers' organisations. Contracts are, where possible, multi-annual.

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Advisory Committee for Farmers Fighting Poverty, closing session, Madrid, 14 October 2011.



Preface

With the firm belief that eliminating rural poverty starts with those who make their living from the land, and that individuals derive strength from belonging to groups, AgriCord established the Farmers Fighting Poverty strategic framework in 2007. AgriCord is an alliance of the national farmers' organisations of Belgium, Canada (Quebec), France, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Senegal, Spain, Sweden and a group of 10 Asian countries. As farmers, we share the concerns of growers throughout the world – variable weather patterns, pests and diseases, the movements of global markets – and we are convinced that farmers' organisations are the means by which smallholder farmers in the developing world will break out of poverty.

Farmers' organisations can provide farm and business services, institutional access, confidence and voice to their poorer members. We therefore strive, together with our fellow farmers in developing countries, to make these organisations stronger. This is not easy, given the often challenging environments, so firm commitment and lengthy investment is needed. We thank our donors for understanding the long-term nature of this work and for supporting our efforts.

Evidence of Impact 2012 is the fourth in a series of reports prepared each year for the General Assembly of AgriCord. It presents some of the impacts of the Farmers Fighting Poverty programme, based on evidence collected during the previous year. Earlier reports, published in 2009, 2010 and 2011, are available on request.

This report illustrates how farmers' organisations are becoming stronger and how they are encouraging and enabling farming families in the developing world to become better farmers, produce more food and take an active part in markets. It is both an endorsement of the Farmers Fighting Poverty approach and a call for future support.

January 2012

Piet Vanthemsche

PRESIDENT

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Summary

The Farmers Fighting Poverty strategic framework was established in 2007. It operates through a fund managed by AgriCord, and provides support to farmer organisations in the developing world. *Evidence of Impact 2012* presents qualitative evidence from various sources. Essentially a compendium of brief stories, the material shows how support to farmers' organisations builds capacity in the organisations and thus affects the lives of farmers. This year more than 30 countries are included, mainly in Africa but also in Latin America and Asia.

Work area 1 – Organisational strength and inclusiveness

Helping to make farmers' organisations stronger and more inclusive is a complex process. Attention must be paid to a range of issues, including the participation of members, human resources, financial management, governance, the membership base and specific groups such as women and young farmers.

Examples are presented from more than a dozen countries, and from differing scales of activity. Large organisations, themselves the umbrella under which smaller organisations function, have often taken many years to reach their current status. Evidence suggests that the most successful, such as Faso Jigi in Mali, have been instrumental in improving national food security. Farmers in Uganda are developing agro-enterprises using a participatory approach, and showing improved group dynamism. A dairy cooperative in Ethiopia provides a vital market for the many female members running their own households, and half the board of directors are women. Dairy cooperatives in Kenya are introducing computerised accounting systems to improve transparency.

Farmers' organisations are becoming more accountable to their members and are providing a range of services to meet their specific needs and to improve their farming businesses. Practical ways of involving farmers in their own development, such as demonstration plots managed by 'experimental farmers' and hands-on training courses, particularly where farmers themselves take the role of trainers or innovators, are clearly beneficial. In some cases, information is shared via radio broadcasts, which allows information to reach those in remote areas. One example shows democratically-run

farmers' organisations providing stability in a post-conflict situation. Others show the benefits of shared facilities, such as warehousing.

Work area 2 – Institutional development

As farmers' organisations cannot by themselves provide everything needed by their members, they must have connections with other organisations. Evidence from the Philippines shows productive links being established between parallel farmers' organisations and with government structures at both ministry and local level. This has allowed the adoption and spread of low-input organic farming, and the establishment of commodity clusters for marketing agricultural produce.

Close connections between farmers' groups and a horticultural research institute in Madagascar are showing benefits in terms of better yields. Links to micro-finance institutions are enabling small farmers in Tanzania to take out loans to expand their businesses. Exchanges between farmers' organisations in different countries have allowed skills to be transferred successfully.

Work area 3 – Policy elaboration and advocacy

Farmers' organisations are becoming more vocal and effective lobbyists. Policy change is a slow process, but a success story from the Democratic Republic of Congo shows how sustained pressure by several farmers' organisations brought in much-needed national legislation on agriculture. This should establish a better policy environment for small farmers. The National Rice Producers' Platform in Mali is another example of successful work at policy level. The Cotton Association of Zambia has strengthened the position of small-holder cotton growers in agreeing contracts with the major cotton companies. And a percentage of Zambia's cotton export levy will be returned to the Association to help pay for its support to members.

Land reform in Madagascar has been accelerated by the concerted action of farmers' organisations. As security of tenure is crucial if farmers are to have the confidence to invest in farm enterprises, help from farmers' organisations to formalise their members' rights under the new rules has also been significant.

Work area 4 – Farmer-led economic development

There is a range of examples showing how farmers' organisations are making it easier for farmers to step up from subsistence to entrepreneurship. Support takes many forms, including training, and is often multi-faceted. There are about a dozen examples of growing businesses, chosen to illustrate the range of approaches taken by Farmers Fighting Poverty.

Improved, certified cereal seed in Burkina Faso has increased yields. In Tanzania, nomadic pastoralists are improving their livestock and developing markets for meat. A dairy cooperative in Madagascar is operating to European standards as well as producing quality cattle feed. Forestry groups in Vietnam are learning how to produce more valuable timber. Other examples show various farm enterprises, including rice growing, agro-tourism, guinea fowl and cowpeas.

Cross-cutting concerns – Gender and the environment

All projects supported under Farmers Fighting Poverty include elements relating to gender and environmental issues. But some projects take these issues as their primary focus and a few of them are highlighted here.

Women are certainly seeing the benefits of being members of farmers' organisations, whether the groups are for women only or not. More of them have access to credit to develop their farms and businesses, and their confidence – as seen in their willingness to speak out and take their own decisions - is growing.

Environmental benefits are accruing from various initiatives, many of them involving organic compost and reducing the amount of chemical fertilizer and pesticides used. Organic methods are eminently adaptable to small-scale agriculture, and there are many reports of better health from adopting an organic approach.



A note on exchange rates

Throughout the report, currencies have been converted into Euros using the average interbank rate for 2011, as published in www.oanda.com. These figures have then been rounded, usually to the nearest Euro.

1 Euro = 656 CFA franc (West Africa)
11.25 dirham (Morocco)
60.25 Philippines peso
1.39 US dollar
28,720 Vietnamese dong
6,767 Zambian kwacha



Introduction

Today, more than ever, the 500 million smallholder farmers in the developing world need the strength that comes from being part of a group.¹ They need resilience to produce more food in the face of scarce natural resources, price volatility and changing weather patterns. Farmers' capacity to adapt successfully to changing circumstances can be increased by diversifying their sources of income and by making the most of their productive assets. They can be helped to do this by their membership organisations – support provided by Farmers Fighting Poverty goes directly to help farmers' organisations in this task. It is becoming increasingly evident that such organisations can significantly increase the ability of smallholder farmers to become resilient to both sudden shocks and long-term stresses.

The Farmers Fighting Poverty strategic framework was developed to formalise farmer-to-farmer mechanisms of support. It strengthens farmers' organisations so they can provide better and more wide-ranging services to their members. Experience shows that the economic development brought about through the activities of dynamic farmers' organisations has wider benefits too, including more democracy and a better deal for women.

Farmers Fighting Poverty

Smallholders face a further challenge in the rush to invest in agricultural land. Between 50 and 80 million hectares globally, much of it in sub-Saharan Africa, have been earmarked by international investors to buy or lease, and such land deals usually result in large commercial estates being established.² Experts from FAO suggest that this large-scale investment risks damaging the food security, incomes, livelihoods and environment for local people. They say that most crops can be grown just as productively by smallholders as in large commercial estates, although smallholders (as individuals) do poorly in comparison with large businesses in processing and marketing. Several of their

recommendations are in clear agreement with the Farmers Fighting Poverty approach (see box below).

Farmers Fighting Poverty can also be seen as an exemplar of capacity building. Its activities closely follow UNDP principles in that they build on local resources, favour sustainable change, take an inclusive approach and emphasise lasting transformation through policy and institutional reforms.³ Farmers Fighting Poverty certainly values 'best fit' over 'best practice', and works closely with farmer's organisations to develop solutions for each particular circumstance. It is this emphasis on making organisations better able to transform themselves (and sustain the changes) that is the particular strength of Farmers Fighting Poverty.

Recommendations from *Land tenure and international investments in agriculture relevant to Farmers Fighting Poverty*

- Governments should develop agricultural policies that ensure fair land rights and a voice for minorities.
- They should invest in the small farm sector and in food systems that are socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable.
- There should be more support for farmer representation through their own organisations.
- Donors should support public infrastructure and policy development to create an enabling environment for smallholder agriculture - evidence shows that smallholders can be dynamic and competitive on global markets, and that small farm development is feasible and desirable for its impacts on poverty reduction.
- There should be much more public funding for agricultural research and development, emphasising agroecological approaches.

HLPE 2011, Rome

1 *The IFAD Conference on new directions for smallholder agriculture, held in Rome in January 2011*

2 *HLPE (2011) Land tenure and international investments in agriculture A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome*

3 *UNDP (2009) Capacity Development – A UNDP Primer New York*

Actions taken under the Farmers Fighting Poverty framework will certainly help the world face a huge challenge – how to increase food production to feed an estimated nine billion people by 2050. Most of these extra mouths will be in developing countries, where rural populations are likely to be living and working on small plots of land. Not surprisingly, food prices are on the rise. An FAO study found that higher prices increased poverty in seven out of ten countries they examined, and that high prices are worse for households where a woman is head.⁴ Poor people are particularly affected by high food prices, because they spend a significant proportion of their income on food.

The good news is that even small increases in farm yields have a direct effect on reducing poverty, and that converting farms to sustainable practices can increase yields significantly while also providing critical environmental services.⁵ With the world preparing for the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, where one theme will focus on the *green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication*, the work of Farmers Fighting Poverty is particularly relevant. The low-carbon, labour-intensive agriculture practised by most members of farmers' organisations in the developing world is being recognised as a genuine route to development rather than a poor relation to intensive, industrialized agriculture.

Despite this growing recognition, small farmers are still at a disadvantage compared with big agri-business. So their needs for fair access to land and water, good links to markets and access to finance are all more likely to be met if they are members of active, democratic farmers' organisations. Farmers Fighting Poverty helps such organisations to function better, categorizing support under four work areas. These overlap and interconnect so that in practice support will cover more than one work area, but they provide a useful way to conceptualise the different elements involved. Each work area is associated with a set of 'deliverables' that specify the outcome of activities.⁶

Evidence of Impact 2012 presents stories 'harvested' from farmer organisations as well as results and comments taken from formal project evaluations (both internal and external). Because of the holistic approach of Farmers Fighting Poverty, most projects have impacts in several work areas. So the arrangement of examples

by work area is to an extent arbitrary, with decisions taken in the interests of balance.

The report makes no claim to be comprehensive. Instead, it aims to show the range of approaches that have proved successful. The impacts described are largely qualitative, although some figures are provided. However, since baseline data is not always available, it can be hard to quantify the impacts.

The question of attribution must also be faced – a farmer's cooperative might have higher income from its wheat production, for instance, but this might be caused simply by an increase in prevailing market prices rather than any real improvement in productivity. Nevertheless, it seems clear from the information presented here that impacts are being seen. Farmers' organisations are becoming more democratic, open and business-minded, even though this process takes time to become thoroughly embedded in the institutional culture. And the small farmers who are the grassroots producers are benefiting from their membership in many concrete ways.

Farmers Fighting Poverty is supported by the governments of several OECD countries (Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Sweden), by IFAD and by the European Commission. Agri-agencies and the farmers' constituencies of AgriCord also mobilise funds from membership subscriptions, from the general public and from other private sources.

One particular source of funding over the past two years has been the EU Food Facility Programme, which has provided financial support to several farmers' organisations. Established in response to the sudden jump in agricultural prices in 2008, the Programme' aim was to increase overall food production by making production systems better and more efficient.

4 FAO (2011) *The State of Food Insecurity in the World*

5 Based on data from Africa and Asia, as discussed in *Green Economy – Why a Green Economy Matters for the Least Developed Countries* UNEP, UNCTAD, UN-OHRLS, May 2011

6 See Annex II for a list of deliverables under each work area.



Work Area 1

Organisational strength and inclusiveness

The fight against rural poverty starts with collective action by farmers themselves. Farmers' organisations can be highly effective agents of poverty reduction via a series of economic and advocacy roles, as long as they are well organised internally, genuinely representative of farmers, and embedded within the institutional fabric of the country. Their potential for poverty reduction, in proportion to their scale of operation as institutions, is huge.

Farmers' organisations need active members who are informed, motivated and keen to participate. They must represent a substantial proportion of the farmers - both women and men - in their area of operation. A strong membership base gives farmers' organisations economic leverage and allows them to include the poor (although specific actions might be needed to urge them to effectively do so), to transmit the voice of the genuine farmer, to influence policies and to contribute to the structure of rural society and markets.

Under work area 1, Farmers Fighting Poverty supports the efforts of farmers' organisations to enhance their capacity for internal organisation, widen their membership base and hone their leadership skills. More specifically, work area 1 focuses on the way farmers' organisations consult their members and disseminate information, and how they broaden their membership and improve accountability. It helps them to define their strategies and priorities. It promotes key actions to address the needs of women, young people and other vulnerable groups. And it strengthens other vital competencies such as financial management, the management of human resources, and monitoring and evaluation. Underlying every action is the wish to help farmers' organisations to develop systems and procedures so that they can provide members with the services they demand - tailored to suit the circumstances - in an open and accountable manner.

Supporting organisations to become stronger and more inclusive is a lengthy, complex process. Agri-agencies have to take the long view and make firm commitments. They also need to be creative in finding new solutions to fit particular circumstances, rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach. The examples given below show that with persistence, some real changes are being seen in the way farmers' organisations are serving their members.

Bringing democracy, transparency and professionalism – Faso Jigi, Mali

Faso Jigi ('hope for the people') has more than 200 member cooperatives, including village cereal producer groups and shallot-producing women's groups. It was founded in 1997 in the Ségou region when Mali's grain market was being liberalised. At that time, farmers faced enormous challenges, with distorted markets exacerbating the difficulties to be expected in this climate - drought, flooding and locust attacks. Credit was hard to obtain, and producers had little bargaining power with buyers. Farmers needed the collective strength of a farmers' organisation, but in the early days Faso Jigi's capacity to provide the services needed by its members was inadequate.

To boost this capacity and thus increase food security and economic growth, Faso Jigi has been the target of two phases of a project for more than a decade. The project had a set of related objectives that included helping farmers to get a fair price for their products and attain a more stable income. Faso Jigi was helped to become administratively and financially autonomous through economic activities and by having

better democratic processes. Women were encouraged to become more involved in decision-making, and a professional farmers' organisation was established to represent the (mainly women) producers of shallots.⁷

The second phase of the project ended in 2009, after a total of 14 years' intensive work.⁸ A final evaluation found that the support had brought democracy, transparency and professionalism to Faso Jigi, and that collective activities were being managed openly and fairly. Faso Jigi is now one of the largest farmers' organisations in West Africa, and the number of active members in the rice sector has grown by more than 1,000 (from 1,658 to 2,667), and numbers producing other cereals (millet, sorghum and maize) have more than tripled (from 685 to 2,534). Women producers have benefited from the overall economic development and are better positioned than when the project began.

The leadership and credibility of Faso Jigi are now well recognised in Mali's cereal sector, and the organisation has significant financial impact in the region. This is partly because of the financial structures set up to provide credit to Faso Jigi members, and partly because there are so many other entrepreneurs (traders, transport companies etc) that have business dealings with the organisation. Jobs have also been created within the service sectors associated with agricultural markets.

Faso Jigi has specialised in the collective marketing of its members' produce, so farmers receive higher prices than if they sold as individuals. It bulk-buys inputs at wholesale prices and, with good links to banks, can negotiate credit arrangements with micro-finance institutions. Collective marketing, the availability of large-capacity grain stores and warehouses, and information about cereal stocks and their location, have improved food security. Members of Faso Jigi now have a more assured income. They can invest in good quality production equipment to improve their businesses, and their living standards have improved.

Being able to borrow at crucial times of year (and at competitive interest rates) has helped farmers invest in the fertilizer and other inputs they need to increase production. Rice farmers in particular have seen bigger yields. Group purchasing of seed and fertilizer keeps

⁷ Shallots are a crucial ingredient in the local cuisine. Traditionally, men have dominated the cereal sector and women have produced shallots.

⁸ AIN 5165. The project was known as PACCEM II, and was supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (ACDI) and UPA International Development (UPA DI)



costs down for individual farmers, and allows members to have lower production costs than non-members. Through a system of advance payments and dividends, producers' incomes have been further improved.

The organisation has helped create and mobilize surpluses through the market. This has contributed significantly to food security in Ségou and indeed the whole country. Faso Jigi stores over 5,600 tonnes of cereals every year, which is about 20% of Mali's national food security stock. At a local level, thousands of producers have been trained how to ensure food security for their families.

Women's groups of shallot producers are an important part of Faso Jigi's overall success. With collective marketing of their products, and storage facilities that mean they can keep shallots in good condition to sell several months after harvest (when prices are higher) rather than disposing of surpluses at a loss, women have seen a sharp increase in their incomes compared to women who produce and market as individuals. The women producers are also learning professional skills and are taking roles within the organisation, which has increased their confidence.

The final report of the PACCEM II project concluded that Faso Jigi had:

- supported the development of agriculture in Mali
- contributed to the food security and poverty reduction in Mali
- defended the interests of the agricultural world
- professionalized the farming community
- encouraged the recognition of women's contribution to the development of agriculture
- developed business relationships with financial institutions

It also pointed out that a farmers' organisation could only be expected to achieve autonomy after several years of professional training.

Better living standards in the 'water tower' of West Africa – Fédération des paysans du Fouta Djallon (FPFD), Guinea

In neighbouring Guinea, 40% of the population lives in absolute poverty, and Middle Guinea is worse than the national average. Here, more than half the population lives in poverty, with more than 14% being extremely poor. In the highlands of Fouta Djallon, women are the main labour force. They carry the burden of poverty, because in the past many working-age men left to seek employment elsewhere. But the area has considerable potential for economic development, not least because of its water resources and land available for agriculture. Known as the water tower of West Africa, the Fouta Djallon is the source of the major rivers of Senegal, Niger and Gambia. The climate and elevation here are suitable for a range of valuable cash crops, including onion and potato.

Change was already under way, with small farmers clustered into producer groups, unions and umbrella organisations (associations or federations), when the programme to support peasant populations in Middle Guinea (PAPP) began. Its aim was to support the development of farmers via these organisations.⁹ There was a wide range of activities, with training, support and advice being provided to farmer groups at all levels. One hundred demonstration plots were set up, and farmers chosen to take responsibility for cultivating these plots and reporting any pest or disease problems to FPFD technicians. A Canadian expert helped train farmers how to examine their crops carefully and what to look for.

Various trials were carried out, for instance to establish the optimum density for onion seedlings, and the best way to use green manures and native plants as natural protection for other crops. The aim was to minimize the use of expensive chemical fertilizers and pesticides so that farmers did not have to rely on them to improve their yields. All the trials were carried out directly by farmers or in collaboration with them, and their existing knowledge and expertise were taken into account. Farmers were encouraged to analyse their own problems, prioritise them and devise solutions. Results were disseminated by the FPFD. Every year, training courses were updated in the light of experimental results.

⁹ AIN 5242, UPA DI

Literacy rates in the area are low, so the programme included courses in reading, writing and arithmetic. These were used to transmit research results, as the training was firmly based on practical agricultural subjects – sessions were also timed to fit in with the varying workload of the farming year. Environmental issues were included in training for ‘professional farmers’, and information was also broadcast by local radio stations. Literacy rates increased from 26% to 38% during the programme, and the literacy gap between men and women was reduced.

The PAPP programme ran for seven years from 2003 and positive impacts can be seen. Living conditions for women and men farmers have improved significantly, and they have learned skills to become better producers and entrepreneurs. Onion production per farm has increased on average from about 570kg to 840kg. Potato production has more than doubled to about 2,500kg per farm. Despite increasingly expensive inputs for potato growing, net income to producers has risen because potatoes fetch higher market prices. From being an area where men left to find jobs elsewhere, Fouta Djallon now attracts agricultural labourers from other parts of the country.

The FPFDD had significantly more capacity to support its members by the end of the programme. It has acquired expertise in medium- and long-term planning, and updated its development strategy to identify areas for action up to 2013, based on a sound grasp of priorities, objectives and possible risks. Improvements were also seen in budget planning, and the accountants’ work is much easier now they have more efficient software. Within the organisation, financial audits and their use are better understood, and the leaders now base their management decisions on up-to-date financial information.

Since training is such a vital part of improving the skills of smallholder farmers, it is significant to note that the FPFDD’s training unit has developed its own training courses. There is a more structured programme, led by the FPFDD and supported by AgriCord¹⁰ to meet the different needs of farmer members, and farmer groups were re-categorized in 2009 to make sure that all would receive appropriate training. With this more tailored approach, the farmers who have benefited from training are better equipped to transfer their knowledge to other farmers. They are also able to analyze their technical and financial results, and set realistic goals when making farm management decisions.

¹⁰ AIN 5645, Afdi

Better food and income security – MADFA, Uganda

In the Masindi district of Uganda, farmers typically subsist on small plots ranging from 0.25-5ha. Until recently their yields were poor and, lacking storage facilities, they sold immediately after harvest when prices are at their lowest. They had no links to specific buyers. Although more than half of them had food throughout the year, their diets were unbalanced. There is an HIV prevalence rate of 25-65% and a third of the Masindi District Farmers’ Association (MADFA) are women. To improve the food and income security of these farmers, enterprises have been developed with the close participation of the smallholders themselves.¹¹

This participatory agro-enterprise development (PAED) approach sees collective action, diversification and added value as a pathway out of poverty. It starts with existing skills and resources, and develops micro-enterprises in a collective and highly participatory way to secure cash income. The enterprises use what small households have (family labour, for instance), are deliberately low-risk and do not require much capital.

Together with achieving balanced nutrition for smallholder families throughout the year, the project also aimed to give farmer groups access to markets and for them to invest more in their businesses. As these groups became stronger, the savings and credit cooperative organisation (MADFA SACCO) designed suitable loan products and trained farmers how to keep records and do basic financial management.

At the end of the three-year project,¹² agricultural production and productivity had risen (in both cash and food crops), farmers had more access to loans, and they knew more about marketing and market research. Food security has improved. Yields of maize, the staple crop, have tripled to 1.5 tonnes per acre, because of better growing techniques (such as better spacing and weed control) and improved seed. Families now have enough food throughout the year with some surplus to sell. Understanding the need to diversify food sources, many families have adopted cassava as a standby staple crop.

Given that food security is top of the agenda for most government and NGO programmes in agriculture, these improvements cannot necessarily be attributed solely to the project. But the improved group

¹¹ AIN 5088, Trias

¹² *Itself the third and final phase of an ongoing project.*



dynamism that underlies the PAED approach certainly contributes to the commercialization of agriculture, even though it may not be sufficient to outweigh other factors such as volatility in maize prices caused by other influences.

A particular point in favour of this approach is that it reinforces rather than contradicts traditional coping mechanisms such as borrowing money from friends and neighbours, sharing food when necessary, providing labour in return for payment in kind etc. Social cohesion among farmer groups has improved and farmers are better able to articulate their needs from project partners and government programmes. Financial capital is more available in the district and there are more employment opportunities. Many farmers have improved their houses, and sanitation and hygiene have improved. There is better access to health and education, because farmers can afford to pay for private services. Women were deliberately included in project activities, and certain activities (such as energy-saving stoves and kitchen gardens) have saved women's time and improved their health.

There has been significant growth in the culture of internal savings within farmer groups. All groups had bank accounts, mostly with MADFA SACCO, and in 2010 half of them kept up-to-date records using SACCO ledger books. They have learnt that record-keeping is an integral part of any enterprise – without an accurate knowledge of production costs, it is impossible to determine an appropriate sale price. And some groups use the records to draw up business plans and carry out cost-benefit analyses of proposed enterprises. The internal savings were used to support group and individual agricultural activities. Before the project, 75% of households would place savings in the care of trusted individuals or in hiding places such as a box under the bed. More groups are taking loans (22 in 2010, 79 in 2011), and many borrowers are already on a second cycle, having successfully repaid their first loan.

Overall, the organisations MADFA and MADFA SACCO were found to be much stronger after the project. They reached more farmers and offered better services, which included spreading information by radio broadcast as well as demonstration plots. However, this success did not translate into greater membership, so the organisations still need support for the foreseeable future.

Daily access to markets – Selale Dairy Cooperative Union, Ethiopia

Established a decade ago, the Selale Dairy Cooperative Union has quadrupled in size to its current composition - 27 affiliated societies with 2,000 members.¹³ The 170-odd women members are mostly from female-headed households, and the 12-strong Board of Directors includes half a dozen women. Dairy farming is the main agricultural activity in this area, and most households have two or three milking cows. This is true even of urban households, although these farmers have to buy in hay as fodder. Some arable crops are grown, but these are marketed via another organisation.

The Selale Union collects and sells the milk from its member coops, with four big dairy processors in Addis Ababa being the main customers. Milk intake and sales are five times as high as they were in 2002. It also supplies inputs such as cattle feed and milk collection equipment, and provides training and education to farmer members. The feed mill operates consistently despite intermittent shortages and the increasing cost of raw materials, and there is a well equipped laboratory to test milk quality and hygiene. Training has so far focused on quality control, as this is particularly important in the dairy industry. Links to other bodies that provide training (such as NGOs and the Ethiopian Meat and Dairy Institute) increases the number of members who can attend courses.

Members are pleased to have '365-day access to markets' and enjoy receiving dividends (the union has produced a surplus nearly every year since it was established). The fact that they are able to get inputs on credit, with the loan repaid automatically via reduced milk payments, improves members' cash flow. Other clear benefits are the availability of good quality cattle feed, fertilizer and other inputs, improved heifers and a higher price for milk. Productivity has increased as a result of better animals and higher milk prices – daily milk yield was at best only 1.5 litres per cow, but the cross-bred heifers now give 8-20 litres per day. Inflation has eroded some of the benefit of this increased productivity, but farmers are still better able to send children to school, upgrade their housing from mud huts to modern dwellings and buy mobile phones that allow them to follow market prices.

13 AIN 5526, Agriterra, financed by MTK Finland

Markets and development – 13 projects across 10 African countries

Small farmers are at a disadvantage in liberalized markets, as trade tends to become concentrated within commodity chains which are only accessible by bigger players. But by coming together into farmers' organisations, small producers can achieve economies of scale in marketing and thus join the commodity chains. In such cases, members need to trust the organisation to pay fairly for produce sold collectively. Farmers' organisations must therefore have transparent management and accounting systems to provide this assurance.

The wide-ranging market-based agricultural development programme supported by SIDA, SCC and AgriCord aimed to increase the income of small farmers, improve the sustainability and accountability of farmers' organisations, and to strengthen their influence on local and national policy-making. A final evaluation of the programme reported that most of the 13 organisations had become more accountable to their members and several had become more sustainable. Accountability is particularly important where the projects are promoting cash commodities – rice, cashew nuts,

cowpeas, dairy products and cotton – as a bigger group turnover makes members naturally more interested in the revenue flows. But improved accountability was also found to be relevant in projects encouraging farmers to boost production to higher-than-subsistence levels so that the surplus could be marketed via trusted organisations.

Impact was in general greater on the farmers' organisations than on member's incomes, but this is to be expected from an initiative that had been running for only three years (2008-2011). The programme reached about 35,000 farmers in total, some of whom managed to increase their incomes, others of whom benefited from training courses, even if this has not yet translated into financial impacts. Farm incomes improved for various reasons – reducing the costs of production, processing, transport or sales; adding value through on-farm processing; higher produce prices because of better quality or more competition between buyers; joint selling of larger quantities at higher prices to institutional buyers; being able to store produce and thus take advantage of seasonal price fluctuations; and achieving more stable prices through contracting.

Projects under the Market-Based Agricultural Development through Farmers' Cooperative Business Programme

Country	Farmers' organisation	Project	Agri-agency	AIN
Benin	Three unions in Mon & Couffo	Rice production and marketing	Afdi	5070
Benin	URPA district unions and village coops	Cashew nut production and marketing	Afdi	5163
Burkina Faso	Three unions in Sanmatenga Province	Cow pea commodity chain improvement	FERT with SCC	5072
Senegal	TFKP in Benin and Senegal	The Farmers Knowledge Programme	UPA DI	5255
Kenya	KENFAP	Enhancing women's entrepreneurial skills	SCC & Agriterra	5066
Kenya	KENFAP and KCPA	Biogas from cattle manure and coffee waste	SCC & MTK Finland	5520
Kenya	KCPA	Shade trees for coffee	SCC & MTK	5521
Kenya	Meru Central Dairy Coop Union	Computerised accounts	SCC & MTK	5522
Rwanda	IMPUYAKI	Potato, milk, beekeeping, wheat, soil conservation	SCC Vi-East Africa	5064
Uganda	MBADIFA	Food crops	Trias & SCC	5138
Uganda	HODFA	Nutrition, market access, farm investment, management and governance, micro-finance	Trias & SCC	5139
Madagascar	ROVA/PARC	Dairy development, improved marketing, farm improvement, emerging breeders	FERT with SCC	5050
Southern Africa	SACAU	Fair deal on cotton marketing, legal strengthening	SCC	5051

Figures from the relevant farmers' organisations on their members' productivity showed some notable impacts of the projects. They included a quadrupling of rice production in Benin in two years and a 21% increase in cashew nut production between 2009 and 2010. In Burkina Faso, farmers' organisations reported that the acreage of cowpeas had increased by 18% and actual production had gone up by 50% between 2009 and 2010. In Rwanda they reported a 30% increase in the combined marketed volumes of potatoes, wheat and milk between 2008 and 2011. In Uganda, the yields of some food crops were reported to have tripled since 2008.

Reviewers noted that improvements in farm incomes as a result of project activities might take several years to become apparent, and that farm records were not yet consistently kept. It was also not possible to assess to what degree the weather or fluctuations in the market price had affected incomes.

Looking at organisational capabilities, the evaluation noted that several of the farmers' organisations had set up training programmes so that staff, officials and members could learn how to analyse the potential of existing and new markets. Many of the organisations were now able to carry out business planning. Negotiating skills had also improved, especially in the cashew project in Benin and the southern Africa cotton marketing project.

Members were better informed about the revenues of their organisations. A particular example was the Meru Dairy project, whose main objective was to improve the union's accountability for milk sales and processing costs by computerising the financial transactions at union and society levels.¹⁴

CoopWorks - computerised accounting for dairy cooperatives

Although computerised systems are the norm in developed countries, this is by no means the case in the rest of the world. But dairy cooperatives are ideal candidates to benefit from computerised records, because they have to process vast numbers of transactions every day as individual farmers deliver their milk. One of the projects under the market-based agricultural development programme was to computerise the accounts of Meru Central Dairy Coop Union in Kenya.¹⁵ This covers the transactions of the union and

six affiliated societies, with the aim of making milk marketing more effective, saving operating costs and improving accountability to members.

An evaluation of the project found that the CoopWorks software had improved internal processes, with reports and figures available quickly and reliably. Opportunities to defraud the system were much less, and the coop management could make faster decisions based on up-to-date information. The relationship between the coop and its members was improved, due in large part to the faster payments possible under the new system.

Tulaga dairy showed the clearest impacts of computerisation. Membership had risen from 1,200 to 3,000 and production had increased from 3,000kg in 2006 to 18,000kg in 2010. To improve the system further, digital scales could be added. This would speed the milk-buying process and reduce further the chance of error or fraud in recording the amount of milk delivered by each farmer.

Improved fish and shellfish farming – Nam Dinh Province Farmers' Union, Vietnam

Growing prawns, crayfish, oysters, crab and tilapia in extensive ponds has long been important to the economy of north-eastern coastal Vietnam. But production has suffered from the problems common to many small farmers – scattered production, poor infrastructure and facilities, and difficulties accessing profitable markets. In this case, problems have been compounded by increasing environmental pollution, which poses hazards to food safety and human health.

Many aquaculture farmers are members of the Vietnam National Farmers Union (VNFU), so this was a good route to provide farmers with information to help them improve their businesses. A one-year pilot project was supported to raise the awareness of farmers and VNFU staff on food safety, environmental protection and more efficient production methods.¹⁶ Information was spread by union staff, through training courses and by a specially produced TV documentary.

Even after such a short time, results were promising. More than 30% of farmers had started applying new techniques, and incomes had risen by 8-10%. The area under aquaculture had increased only slightly (2%) but with the improvements in quality, the value of the

¹⁴ Some other impacts of the projects under this programme are discussed under cross-cutting concerns.

¹⁵ AIN 5522, SCC and MTK Finland

¹⁶ AIN 5671, Agriterria and MTK Finland

products had risen by 8%. Union staff were able to transfer the skills they had learnt, in both production techniques and business planning, to farmers.

Stability during conflict – Unickor and Coyebo, Ivory Coast

By 2009, after years of civil war in Ivory Coast, Unickor and Coyebo (two cotton cooperatives) were the only active structures in the region of Bouaké. The national cotton processing and marketing society (CIDT) had been privatized and had run into difficulties, and the whole cotton industry faced collapse. The war had ruined the local economy, undermined confidence and displaced many people.

Farming cooperatives had been the victims of theft and hijacking during the war, and had not held elections for several years. Accounts were no longer kept, and the debts were many times larger than the annual turnover. Nevertheless, the leaders, seeing that the organisations were the only groups still active, fought to save whatever assets could be rescued. And the agency Afdi, which had been supporting the cotton cooperatives since 1990, continued its role, even though meetings had to be held in neighbouring Burkina Faso. Funds were allocated to help farmers who had suffered the most with the end of cotton growing.

A two-year project formalized these efforts to pick up the pieces after such difficult times.¹⁷ It focused on collecting and marketing what cotton was being grown, coupled with training and education to improve both quality and quantity. Social projects (wells, school and health activities etc) and acquiring facilities and equipment were also important.

Unickor and Coyebo have nearly 3,000 members in 93 villages in Bouaké. In order to restart economic activities and regain members' confidence, the coops needed to elect and train new administrators and officials. A consultant funded by the project helped define the roles of each structure and official, and later provided training to the new incumbents. The coop accounts were also examined and a budget drawn up. At Unickor, both the President and the General Secretary tried to flout the organisation's rules and extend their terms, but the women members objected.

The two cooperatives both had a good turnout for their Annual General Meetings, with local officials,

representatives of public authorities and traditional chiefs all in attendance. Farmers expressed their concerns during the debates, and resolutions were adopted. At Unickor, the position of Vice President is now reserved for a representative of the women's section. The elections complied strictly with the coop statutes, and members felt that they had been properly involved.

Since the elections, more farmers attend local meetings. Coop membership is increasing, with new members joining and former members returning. Some cooperatives from more distant village have applied to join Unickor. This is a positive sign, but increasing Unickor's geographic range might affect the cohesion and effectiveness of the network as a whole. And the newly elected officials must keep their eye on the ball, as members' expectations are high. They see the recovery of the coop as a powerful symbol of a return to 'normal life' after the war.

Storing grain, storing credit – Maison des Paysans, Madagascar

Maison des Paysans (MdP or the Farmers' Home) operates in a region characterized by significant climatic and market instability. The food security of rural households depends to a great extent on agricultural production and food marketing, but the price of grain fluctuates during the year. In 2004, MdP set up a service for collective storage in collaboration with a micro-finance institution, Vola Mahasoa.¹⁸

The principle of storing credit is simple. Farmers put their produce into a village warehouse at harvest time when the massive supply drives the price down. They receive credit of up to 70% of the value of the stock, which they can use to finance ground preparation and inputs for the next crop, to invest in other activities or to buy household necessities. When prices rise during the lean season, farmers sell their produce collectively, which enables them to repay the advance and to make a profit. Alternatively, they might choose to sell individually or keep some grain for their own consumption, provided that they can reimburse the advance. In both cases the loans are repaid in full and the farmer keeps any profit.

Farmers and groups now store larger quantities. In 2005, for instance, they stored a total of 120 tons of corn; since then they have stored up to 900 tons after a good harvest. Profit is estimated to be 30%, and

¹⁷ AIN 5257, Afdi

¹⁸ AIN 5146, Afdi

most households renew their credit transaction from one season to the next.

In such a geographically isolated area where there is little other guidance on marketing or farming technology, the close relationship between MdP and the farmers is crucial. MdP provides technical support to farmer groups and has developed tools to support group decision-making. Its other roles include training, helping groups apply for funding, and facilitating the exchange of ideas.

Raymond Rakotonirina, a farmer from Ankiliabo, says, 'With this storage and credit scheme, I have no money problems: I don't have to sell my produce at a low price. I was also able to buy land to build my house.'

Nevertheless, the scheme has limitations. Grain may be stolen during storage (a recurrent problem in the area), and some farmers do not repay the credit. Sometimes the market price does not rise sufficiently to cover administration and warehousing costs. And produce may be damaged by pests or disease during storage, which lowers its value. To prevent these problems, farmers' organisations need more technical support to ensure that the storage and credit scheme functions properly.

Higher rice yields with cheaper inputs – Farmer and Nature Net (FNN), Cambodia

There is no doubt that extra food will have to be grown to feed the increasing global population. The FAO believes that the largest contribution to increases in agricultural output will probably come from intensifying production on existing agricultural land. This will require widespread adoption of sustainable land management practices, and more efficient use of irrigation water.¹⁹ Until recently, intensification implied using more artificial fertilizer, but the System of Rice Intensification (SRI), developed 30 years ago in Madagascar, is proving that yields can be boosted without expensive inputs. Instead, it focuses on changing cultivation and irrigation techniques, and using organic rather than manufactured fertilizer.

In Cambodia, the Centre for Studies and Development of Cambodian Agriculture (CEDAC) and the farmers' organisation Farmer and Nature Net (FNN) have been promoting SRI through the collective associations

under FNN's umbrella.²⁰ Rice production has increased by an average of more than 60%, and more than 130,000 farmers are now using SRI. Farmers are using only half the amount of seed than before, and the use of chemical fertilizers has dropped by 72% - some farmers have stopped using them altogether. On the other hand, the use of organic fertilizers has increased by 85%.

How is this done? Farmers have relearned their cultivation techniques, growing healthy seedlings in an upland nursery bed and transplanting them at a much earlier age than is traditional. Seedlings are planted more widely and shallowly than before, and fields are not continuously flooded – this improves soil aeration. Weeding is done frequently to reduce competition and further improve aeration, and organic matter is added to increase fertility and biological activity in the soil.

Such fundamental changes to traditional methods could not have been introduced without the active involvement of farmers' organisations. Initially, CEDAC organised SRI farmers into groups and introduced collective savings to bind them together. These groups formed local networks under the national FNN. The new methods were introduced by means of farmer-innovators who adopted SRI and demonstrated their success to neighbours.

Stories of change – impacts of stronger farmers' organisations

New methods, higher living standards – Mamiratra Soa, Madagascar

Mr. Mahareta is a farmer from Fokontany de Bekifafa (a fokontany is a traditional Malagasy village), in the municipality of Mahasoa. He is married with six children. Using traditional farming methods, his yields were poor and the rice he grew was only enough to feed his family.

Like most villages in Mahasoa, Bekifafa enjoys the local services developed by FERT within the AROPA project.²¹ Mr. Mahareta and his family had meetings with a project technician and created a family farm organisation called Mamiratra Soa (Organisation of Family Farms) in April 2010. Mamiratra Soa's goal is to develop and improve its members' living standards.

19 FAO (2011) *The State of the World's Land and Water Resources for Food and Agriculture*

20 AIN 5114, *Agriterria; IATP and AFASRD (2011) Agroecology and Advocacy: Innovations in Asia*

21 Not on AIN, FERT

Mr. Mahareta received training on the system of rice intensification (SRI) and profited from exchange visits through the organisation and the services of FERT. As a representative of his organisation, he feels honour-bound to apply the new techniques.

Planting is now carried out eight days after germination (at the two-leaf stage) rather than after two months. Weeding is done every 13 days from the date of planting. Mr. Mahareta also measures the height of water in his rice fields, to make sure it is never too high. With this system, he has doubled his yields. Using traditional techniques, he used to obtain 750kg rice from 30 acres, whereas now, 'I harvested 1,500kg from the same area,' he says proudly. He has also decreased the amount of seed planted. So the new system allows him to increase margins and reinvest some of the money earned into agricultural inputs the following year.

In 2010, for the first time, he was able to buy five zebus. Before, Mr. Mahareta had to sell his zebus to feed his family during the lean season. With the increased income, he could also buy new materials and pay for his son's expenses in the high school in the regional capital. There have been improvements in daily life too: solar panels have replaced the old oil lamps, and Mr. Mahareta is saving money for a rainy day.

Mr. Mahareta also keeps poultry (88 hens). Following the advice of the technician, the barn is equipped with perches and feeders, and it is kept clean. All the hens are vaccinated, and he plans to increase the size of his flock to 150 in 2011.

Future objectives are to increase the area of arable land for rice and onions and to continue improving living conditions. Mr. Mahareta would also like to attend a training course on how best to store his rice and other products, and to build a grain store.

Family farms embrace modern agriculture – GEA and FUPRO, Benin

A programme called *Les savoirs des gens de la terre* (people's knowledge of the land, LSGT) promotes the sharing of agricultural knowledge through farmers' organisations in several countries.²² Farmers and their leaders benefit from a related series of training programmes that cover farming as a profession, solidarity between farmers, democratic action, motivation and cooperation between farmers. Local trade has been boosted by higher production and income growth, and farmers now approach their activities with business in mind. Below, three farmers who benefited from training courses over a 15-month period and small loans (about 600 Euros in each case) talk about the way LSGT has affected their lives.

I can now afford to educate my children

'My name is Léon Cakpo and I am a farmer from the village of Agon (in the borough of Dame, department of the Atlantic). I am 48, married and have seven children. I also provide for my widowed mother, who no longer works. I am the president of a group whose name means 'Let's unite'.

'I produce pineapple, corn, cassava, tomato and cowpea, which allows me to feed my family and make substantial income to meet family expenses. In order to expand production, I took a high-interest loan (24% per annum). But to repay on time, I had to sell my products, which made my income fall. So with the members of my group I started to look for a different source of credit. In November 2007 we were selected to join the LSGT programme. In January 2008,

I started a training course with the other 19 members of my group. The training allowed me to develop a project to expand my farm. My project is supported by a loan from the programme's development fund. With the funds and training, I can organise my family and expand my farm.

'I doubled the area of pineapple (to 0.5ha), tomato (to 2ha) and cowpea (to 1ha) and increased areas under maize (from 4ha to 5ha) and cassava (0.5ha to 2ha). The sale of maize, cassava, tomato and cowpea raised a total of 865,300 CFA francs, an increase of 241,500 CFA francs (about 370 Euros) over the previous year. Pineapple is not yet ready for harvest and I am following the technical procedures learnt during the training course. The size of the plants suggests that the yield will be better than in previous years, and fruit will be ready for sale in August 2010. I

22 AIN 4949, UPA DI



estimate that my 0.5ha will produce 25 tonnes of pineapple. I might be able to expand pineapples to 1ha in 2011 and increase my income further.

'Higher income has allowed me to expand my farm and to meet the needs of my family better, especially the education of my children.'

Living like senior officials!

'My name is Alègui Hounwanou, I am 48 years old and a farmer. I live in the village of Zoungùè, about 15km from Porto-Novo, the capital of Benin. I belong to Ahononvi clan and I am the wife of Sèlovè Hounwanou. I produce corn, cassava, groundnuts and sweet potatoes. There are 17 members in my family, four of them of school age.

'Initially, we were happy with our three acres. But it was very hard to make profits from our agricultural activities. We then joined the group called Djrodagbé which means 'Goodwill'. In 2007, a delegation from GEA held a workshop introducing the LSGT programme, and I was chosen to take part. On March 27, 2009 (a date I will never forget), we got a loan for a project that we developed with the support of the trainers. It was unbelievable! Within living memory, no farmer has ever received this kind of credit and, better still, it is for over three years with an interest of only 32,000 CFA francs (less than 50 Euros).

'Until recently, our farm had never kept an accounts book. Today, we keep daily records of business transactions. My husband and I realised that all members of our family must take an active part in running the farm. Thanks to the LSGT training, we find it easier to agree on farm activities and other family issues. With the advice of Quebec producers, who often visit us, I realised that being a farmer is not a foolish thing, but can allow us to live as the Akowé (senior officials). Everything is a matter of planning and rigorous management. In financial terms, my husband and I were worth 398,100 CFA francs (about 610 Euros) in April 2008. But by December 2009 this figure had more than doubled to 1,070,500 CFA francs (about 1,630 Euros). This year, our yields have improved significantly. And although my husband was sick almost all of last year, we were able to cope. I'm already able to make the first repayment of the loan.

Expanding rabbit breeding business

'My name is Gisèle Sonon, I am 43 years old and I graduated from secondary school in 1988. My passion for agriculture, particularly for livestock breeding, dates from a

young age. So my parents directed me to an agricultural training centre, where I got a degree in tropical poultry. Today I am married with two children. I have a 2ha farm and livestock 2km from Zogbodomey. I am a member of the Tègon village pineapple producers' group (GVPAT) and in 2007 I was chosen to join the LSGT training programme.

'After the training I received a loan, repayable over three years, to expand my rabbit breeding business. At that time I had 22 rabbits (20 females and 2 males). With the funding, I now have 52 baby rabbits for breeding and 150 for consumption. I made a profit of 103,500 CFA francs (about 160 Euros). The funding allowed me to restart my activities and thus improve my social and economic welfare. And I can maintain my family, and pay for my children's education, more easily.'



Work Area 2

Institutional Development

The agriculture sector is increasingly in the spotlight, following significant rises in global food prices and the emergence of international and national markets for vital food commodities. Attention is focused on farmers' organisations too. It is recognised that they cannot provide everything needed by their members without establishing relationships with other key players, in the agricultural sector and beyond. It is in their interests to build and consolidate strong, often structural, alliances with other players. And they have to take a clear stance when dealing with their governments, the private sector and other civil society organisations.

Farmers Fighting Poverty helps farmers' organisations to make these vital connections, using different strategies to create or consolidate a stronger institutional setting.

Under this broad area of support, farmers' organisations are helped to occupy and formalize strategic positions in agro-food chains and in society. Links to research institutes are particularly important, as access to new technologies, new practices and new market opportunities will be better where farmers' organisations are closely involved in setting research priorities.

In order to work successfully with other organisations, farmers' groups need themselves to have reached a certain level of development. Their internal democracy needs to be strong and they need a professional approach. Since the work of Farmers Fighting Poverty focuses on improving farmers' organisations in these very ways, it can be said that all of its projects contribute to this process. However, some particular examples are highlighted below.

Converging on sustainable agriculture – PAKISAMA, NATCCO, KAMMPIL and FFF, the Philippines

Farmers' organisations in the Philippines are clustered under four umbrella networks.²³ Established between 1956 and 1992, their main role until recently was advocacy on behalf of small farmers and they lacked resources and capacity to broaden their activities. The Philippines' Farmers for Food (PFF) project changed this emphasis, introducing an element of business development and bringing them together to help small farmers pursue diversified and integrated organic farming systems (DIOFS).²⁴ This approach allows farmers to increase their yields without inorganic fertilizers, which they often cannot afford. The project also established commodity clusters, and set up an investment fund that would be available to cluster members via their umbrella organisations. The aim was to enhance and diversify agricultural production, improve marketing practices and achieve better governance of the agriculture sector.

The PFF was implemented over two years (2009-2011) and even after such a short time there were some 'observable quality results'. The project has undoubtedly inculcated the idea that 'farming is a business' among the farmer participants. And a shift to organic farming was seen in all areas visited by an evaluation team. The project provided one farmer technician to

each of the 245 clusters established. These technicians voluntarily promoted organic farming within and beyond the clusters. As a result, more than 7,000 farmers adopted the diversified organic system, or about 1% of the membership of the four farmers' organisation. This could well be a critical mass sufficient to influence other members, especially since young people from households that had shifted to organic farming became advocates in school, promoting the organic approach.

All commodity clusters had adopted at least one improved farming practice or new crop, and food insecurity was not mentioned as a problem. Indeed, surpluses were noted in several crops including bananas, vegetables, root crops and citrus fruit. The project has improved food security of more than 44,000 Filipinos, who now eat three meals every day and have at least five sources of food. Of the 254 commodity clusters, well over half (162) were active. And although 92 were inactive or struggling, 35 of them had developed business or marketing plans. Only two of the farmer organisations had tapped into the Business Development Advisory Trajectory or the Agro Investment Fund, but this was not considered surprising in organisations that had been set up primarily as advocacy networks. By the end of the project, the national organisations were all reconsidering their initial reluctance to engage in business.

The clusters were not yet fully aware of the connection between organic farming and wider environmental issues, but the technologies they learnt to use are in fact forms of climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation. Adopting organic farming methods led farmers to discover other natural farming techniques such as diversification by raising livestock and using locally grown materials for pest control. Families claimed that their children's health was better, and this health benefit was a major factor triggering the increased market demand for organic produce.

Beyond the business objectives, PFF wanted to build on the existing strength in policy advocacy of the farmers' organisations. At national level there were excellent results, with the organisations showing a strong influence in policy formulation and advocacy. They had representatives on bodies such as the National Anti-Poverty Council and the National Organic Agriculture Board. PAKISAMA lobbied actively for the Organic Agriculture Act and associated regulations, and the national organic agriculture programme.

Similar successes were noted at local level, with partners taking an active part in local bodies or official

23 *The National Confederation of Cooperatives (NATCCO), the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF), Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA) and Kalipunan ng Maliliit na Magniniyog ng Pilipinas (KAMMPIL)*

24 *AIN 5519, Agriterrra, with funds from the EU Food Facility Programme*

agricultural structures and mechanisms. More than a quarter of the clusters reported having representation on local government bodies. Some clusters influenced decisions such as the ban on burning rice hay (which instead would be composted).

An unplanned benefit from the project was a clear contribution to peace-building. The cluster demonstration farms became places where farmers from different cultural backgrounds (Muslims, Christians and indigenous groups) came and worked together with good community spirit.

Now that the national farmers' organisations are converging to pursue agro-enterprise via sustainable agriculture, the alliance and its synergy will be worth sustaining. Added momentum comes from the fact that the project complements work being done by other development agencies (such as USAID, UNDP and IFAD-RUMEPP), which have supported some project activities in collaboration with local partners. Cluster members themselves are producing healthy, cost-effective organic products with surpluses that are beginning to provide extra income for households.

Philippine farmers benefit from organic methods

Macario Castillote, 46, married and with three children, is the focal person of one of the commodity clusters in the PFF project. As his parents were farmers too, he grew up with a coconut farming cycle that harvested and processing them into copra every three months. More recently, he found that planting maize under the coconut trees and

applying commercial fertilizer was unprofitable. Trying again, this time with high value tomato and bell pepper, and again using commercial fertilizer, he was equally unsuccessful, so he stopped undercropping completely.

Still looking for new opportunities, Macario was interested in the PFF project when it was launched in 2010. As an active member of the organisation PASAKA, he attended meetings, field trips and seminars on diversified integrated organic farming systems. In May 2010 Macario and his wife, Annalie, received two pairs of kabir hens, 2kg of composting worms and a 30kg breeding sow. Nine months later he weaned 12 piglets – one went to PASAKA in return for the original sow and another he kept as a boar. He tried undercropping once more, this time using the worm cast, together with used pig bedding, as fertilizer for peppers and tomatoes. This time Macario was more optimistic. The vegetables were growing well and the fertilizer had cost nothing.

After 14 months, the couple sold all 10 pigs and harvested the pepper and tomato crop. Macario admits that he did not record his expenses, but thought he had gained an extra net income of 2,400 pesos (about 40 Euros) – an amount not easy to raise in rural areas, he said. He says the soil is becoming more fertile through steady addition of worm cast and pig bedding.

Finally, Macario said that the family now benefits from the free, healthy vegetables growing in their backyard. With the extra income the couple are planning to buy a cow so they can have their own milk. They are also saving for their children's education.

Jayson Sale, 32 years old • Farmer – Bulajo BFFI

Before PFF:

Farming practice based on father's methods:

- Planted fruit trees without fertilizer
- Average income was P2,000 (about 35 Euros) per month

Now applies bio-farming methods:

- Experiments and applies own mixture of organic fertilizer/foliar feed
- Planted 475 bananas supplied by PFF and earns an extra P5,000 (about 85 Euros) per month

Anecita Rabina, 58 years old • Farmer – Paraoma ADC

Before PFF:

- Used inorganic fertilizer costing about P12,000/ha (about 200 Euros/ha)
- Generated average sales of P60,000/ha (about 1,000 Euros/ha) from rice growing

Now applies organic farming practices

- Fertilizer costs reduced to P5,400/ha (about 90 Euros/ha)
- 10% higher yield and sales of P81,000/ha (about 1,345 Euros/ha) of rice during this season

Links to financial services – USAWA, Tanzania

Commercial banks are generally not interested in moving into remote rural areas. Their potential customers have little disposable income, there are few opportunities for economies of scale, and infrastructure is generally poor. The seasonality and inherent risks of agriculture make the sector unattractive for investment, and many banks are reluctant to serve the sector and finance small and micro-enterprises. Government banks tend to fail, for various reasons. Insecure property rights (for example title deeds in rural areas) make it hard for farmers to provide collateral for a loan. For all these reasons and more, serving rural areas with financial services is a costly and risky venture.²⁵ Yet without access to credit, small farmers cannot hope to develop into entrepreneurs.

It is this challenge that led to the creation of savings and credit cooperative societies (SACCOs) throughout the developing world. And in the example given below, a partnership between the Kilimanjaro union of SACCOs (USAWA) and the Financial Sector Deepening Trust (FSDT) has brought more access to credit for the rural poor and entrenched a culture of saving.²⁶ The Trust granted about US\$1.2 million (about 863,000 Euros) to support the USAWA network of SACCOs for the years 2008-2011.

The project has already made USAWA a stronger organisation. In December 2010 it had 28 member SACCOs with more than 11,000 members, of whom 44% were women. USAWA provides a range of services to its cooperative members, including capacity building, helping them develop operating systems, providing loans, and developing credit and savings products. They also support internal audit and improvements to their buildings and equipment. The fact that the SACCOs now have secure offices where assets are safely kept has been a key incentive for potential members to join.

The SACCOs belonging to USAWA now have more internal capital (which had increased 67% between 2007 and 2010) and are more profitable. More women take part in and trust SACCO activities, and better governance meant that SACCOs are reliable holders of members' investments. Individual farmer members of

SACCOs have learnt business management skills, and they had more household assets such as vehicles, milling machines, power tillers and dairy cows. Other members have built or renovated their houses, set up kiosk businesses, educated their children, or bought land and farm inputs.

Coalition promotes organic standards – Boyolali Organic Rice Farmers Association (APPOLI), Indonesia

In Indonesia, members of the Boyolali Organic Rice Farmers Association (APPOLI) and the Indonesian Peasant Alliance (API) were members of a coalition (started by the Indonesia Organic Alliance) lobbying for a community organic standard. The aim was to make organic certification processes affordable and culturally acceptable to farmers without compromising the needs of consumers.²⁷ Learning from similar approaches in Brazil, the networks developed a local participatory guarantee system to ensure farmers get a fair price, while consumers are able to buy organic goods at lower cost.

Agriterra supports API's efforts to strengthen business development services and cooperatives in five districts, including Boyolali, where APPOLI is based.²⁸ Boyolali district, in central Java, is home to 272,000 farmers, of which 48,000 grow rice organically. Average plot size is 0.35ha. Two or three crops can be harvested each year, and total production in 2007 was 244,000 tons, of which 20% was organic. The area is well-suited to organic farming, with abundant spring water and plenty of cow dung for fertilizer. So far at least 2,000 farmers belonging to 78 peasant unions have started organic farming. Using organic rather than chemical fertilizer has reduced production costs significantly, and the higher price commanded by organic rice is further encouragement to change production methods.

A survey in 2011 found that more producers had switched to organic production, more of them were supplying supermarkets, and the range of organic food available to the consumer had become wider. Organic produce commanded a premium in the shops, up 18% from the previous year, and in supermarkets organic items were being sold at two or three times the price of conventional vegetables in traditional markets.

25 IFAD (January 2011) *Financing Smallholder Farmers and Rural Entrepreneurs through IFAD supported Operations in the Near East and North Africa paper from the conference on new directions for smallholder agriculture*, Rome

26 AIN 4967, FERT

27 Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy and the Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (October 2011) *Agroecology and Advocacy: Innovations in Asia (Study partially funded by Agriterra)*

28 AIN 5560, Agriterra



Strong links to local government and the Ministry of Agriculture have helped the move towards organic production. The head of the district council and ministry extension officers are convinced of the benefits to the environment and small farmers, and this support may result in better facilities for compost making.

Demonstrating new techniques – the Fruit and Vegetable Research and Training Centre (CEFFEL), Madagascar

CEFFEL is one of two horticulture research centres in Madagascar. Fruit and vegetable growing is concentrated in the Hautes Terres region, where the climate favours these crops. The main production areas support 150,000–200,000 small family farms, and the project aimed to support fruit and vegetable growing by consolidating the work done by CEFFEL as well as improving farmers' access to technical information.²⁹

Demonstration plots have been set up on individual farms, where other farmers can come and see the results of different growing techniques. CEFFEL itself has a 2oha showcase plot which is used for experiments and as a teaching tool in training courses. There are important links with other scientific and private institutions including the World Vegetable Center (AVRCD) and the University of Turin.

After the four-year project (2007-2011), 60 groups and more than 1,700 beneficiaries from 11 regions had received training or other support from CEFFEL. More than 6,300 visitors had come to see the showcase plot, and the on-farm demonstration plots had given good results. Women are strongly involved in horticulture and this is reflected in their participation in the management and organisation of CEFFEL.

Sharing expertise on animal traction – farmers' organisations in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Guinea

There is no tradition of using draught animals in the Mai Ndombe region of the DRC. But across the continent in Guinea, bullock-drawn ploughs are vital tools for land preparation. To allow Guinean farmers to share their expertise with Congolese counterparts, farmers' organisations in the two countries came together for a month-long training course in Mai Ndombe.³⁰ The course was presented by Guineans – an agricultural engineer, a blacksmith and a farmer – and Congolese participants were a mix of herdsman, blacksmiths and farmers. As well as learning how to train and control the animals, farmers also were taught how to manufacture cultivation machinery (ploughs and harrows) and simple bullock carts.

Local blacksmiths are now fabricating ploughs and harrows, while herdsman are training animals to work the fields. Everyone involved appreciates the great advantage of replacing human by animal power. One woman exclaimed, 'Since our ancestors, cattle have been used only for food, while now they can obey and work for us.' Another man added, 'This is incredible, these animals that sometimes devastate our fields can actually contribute to growing our crops!'³¹

A story of change – impacts from institutional development

From sacks to tonnes – SYDIP, Democratic Republic of Congo

In 1998, producers in the market garden area of Lubero faced a shortage of seed potatoes. They had to divide tubers into fragments for planting and, since they did not know about degeneration, disease and treatment, the yield dropped significantly. Many children born in this period had never seen a potato. But in 2000, SYDIP signed an agreement through Agriterra to bulk up five varieties of potato. This increased the range of seed potatoes in the region and allowed an increase in production, because producers learnt to plant healthy, undamaged tubers. Now, after more than a decade of engagement between Agriterra and SYDIP, farmers are more productive and have seen their living standards rise.³²

29 AIN 5509, FERT

30 Trias (six-monthly PLATS report, Jan-June 2011)

31 <http://www.triasngo.org/trias-worldwide/dr-congo/>

32 AIN 5689,5603 & 4914, Agriterra

By improving the handling of seed potatoes, yields reached 3 tonnes/ha for small producers and 7 tonnes/ha for large producers. Most households could plant 30-250kg and expect the yield to be twice or three times the planted weight. After several training sessions from the SYDIP technicians and consultants from Holland, production has increased to 22 tonnes/ha. Potato growers now produce for the market, and they measure yield in tonnes rather than bags.

More than 60% of farmers who lived in grass houses have replaced them with sheet metal. Several have bought motorcycles and almost a third of farmers now use outside labour as well as the family to cultivate their potatoes.



Work Area 3

Policy elaboration and advocacy

Farmers form the majority of the poor, but their voices are rarely heard in public. However, farmers' organisations can legitimately speak out for the rural poor, and they can and should have a direct influence on public and private sector policy in developing countries. Farmers Fighting Poverty supports farmers' organisations to lobby effectively on behalf of agriculture and rural development, while taking care to ensure that the voice remains genuinely that of the farmers themselves.

Most farmers' organisations already lobby to some extent on behalf of their members, but these activities can be scaled up. Farmers can be more closely involved in setting the lobby agenda (this might require increased awareness), and can be encouraged to take part in the analysis and design of policy positions and advocacy strategies. Better coordination with other stakeholders will also broaden support for the farmer-led lobby agenda.

Responding to the global increase in food prices, most governments are keen to boost agricultural development and reduce the risk of potential conflict over land rights and climate change. Agricultural policies have evolved in response to this changing backdrop and are now more proactive. They tend to be part of wider regional policies, and take into account the needs of those who live and work on the land. Farmers' organisations are playing an increasingly significant role in defining agricultural policies and directing them towards supporting family farms.

To contribute to political proposals, farmers' organisations need to gather the views of their members and make sure they communicate these to the wider public. They also need to engage sufficiently with policy makers for their positions to be taken into account. There is a complex set of activities needed for this to be successful, so policy change is often slow. However, examples below show that farmers' organisations are increasingly making a difference for their members through advocacy at different levels.

Successful lobbying for new farming laws – FOPAC, REPAM and others, Democratic Republic of Congo

Seventy per cent of the Congolese population depends on agriculture. No other sector contributes more to the gross national product. However, farming is not yet seen as a proper job and the lack – until now – of a cohesive agriculture policy meant that 640,000 tonnes of food were imported every year. Until recently, Congolese farmers were not organised, partly because their immense country was involved in a long-drawn-out conflict and partly because infrastructure was rudimentary. But now there are many active farmers' organisations, and there is finally a legal framework within which the Congo can begin to develop the agriculture sector and improve food security.

New legislation on agriculture, the Code Agricole – which became law in May 2011 – shows the growing strength of farmers' organisations and a shift in attitude of policy makers. The agriculture sector had been largely neglected for years, despite its national importance, and Congolese policy-makers believed that prosperity could only come from large-scale plantations rather than small family farms.³³ Thanks to intensive lobbying by many groups of Congolese farmers, it is now recognised that family farming is the cornerstone

³³ <http://www.triasngo.org/trias-worldwide/dr-congo/>

of the economy and that agriculture will play a decisive part in the country's development.

The Code Agricole gives legal force to the country's agricultural policy. It makes provision for an agricultural register and a national foundation for agricultural development, as well as an agricultural advice service. And government will be obliged to construct and maintain the transport infrastructure so vital for trading bulky agricultural products.

Lobbying for the new legislation was a joint effort. FOPAC, the farmers' organisation in the province of North Kivu, was one important player. REPAM, active in the west of DRC, was another.³⁴ Collaborating closely with other farmers' organisations and with the Ministry of Agriculture, they kept up pressure on members of parliament not to overlook the Code Agricole in the run-up to parliamentary elections. Using a slogan 'No law, no vote', the advocacy group, with its increasing capacity to mobilize support, was finally successful and the Code was enacted in May 2011.

North Kivu is one of the provinces where farmers are best organised. Strengthened by their success in lobbying for the Code Agricole, FOPAC dedicated itself, with Agriterra's support, to setting up a national umbrella organisation of farmers: the Confédération Nationale des Producteurs Agricoles du Congo (CONAPAC).³⁵

Lobbying success is not confined to national politics. In the remote Mai Ndombe district, some of the local farmers' movements are also active. One focus of attention is maintaining the roads and other transport links (such as diesel-powered barges for river transport) so important for access to the outside world. But the remoteness itself makes it hard for farmers' organisations to reach and connect with members. To help communication and give farmers a voice, project support has encouraged local radio stations to air programmes of interest to farmers. Farmers' organisations in turn have set up 'listening groups' which discuss matters aired on the radio and provide feedback.

The National Rice Producers' Platform – PNPR, Mali

Rice is an important staple food in Mali and other countries in the region. Although some rice is grown in West Africa, production amounts to less than half of what is consumed, so instability in global prices is

³⁴ *Trias* (six-monthly PLATS report, Jan-June 2011)

³⁵ AIN 5776, Agriterra

reflected in local markets. Rice consumption in Mali is above the West African average, exacerbating the domestic shortfall in supply. Mali's rice imports have increased dramatically since 2002.

Malian rice producers felt that the sector needed restructuring and decided to create a national platform uniting the rice producers' organisations. It was also seen as a framework for dialogue, advocacy and capacity building for member organisations, who could then take a larger part in defining and carrying out the actions needed to develop rice production in a sustainable manner. Thus the national rice producers' platform is seen by its members as a means of ensuring that Malian rice producers earn a decent income from their farms.

The National Rice Producers' Platform (PNPR-Mali) was finally established in January 2008. The Malian government strongly encourages sectoral organisation, and there was political will to establish collaboration frameworks between different actors. The sub-regional Network of Peasant Organisations and Producers in West Africa (ROPPA) is an active player in the consultation process. Developing 'rice advocacy', ROPPA encourages rice producers in each member country to meet in the national platform. The African Rice Centre (Le Centre du Riz pour l'Afrique) is also an active distributor of information in the sub-region and supports national control of this strategic market.

AgriCord supported this platform through a project to strengthen the lobbying and advocacy capacities of the rice producers' organisations.³⁶ The rice market and price movements in Mali were analysed, and a workshop held to share experiences of how best to stabilise prices. There were contributions from Senegal, Canada and France. Afdi shared the experiences of French grain producers who worked under the European Union Common Agricultural Policy. Recommendations from the workshop were circulated to government ministries.

The PNPR is now a strong organisation that speaks for rice growers at national and regional meetings. There are good connections between the platform and public structures involved with Mali's rice policy – such as the office of food security and the ministries of trade and agriculture. Mali was also chosen for the establishment of a regional framework for cooperation between rice producers' organisations (CRC-OPR) in January 2011.

³⁶ AIN 5564, Afdi and UPA DI

Cotton farmers get a better deal – the Cotton Association of Zambia

Zambia has a quarter of a million smallholder cotton farmers, many of them outgrowers for big cotton companies. By effective lobbying and negotiating contracts with the companies, the Cotton Association of Zambia (CAZ) has strengthened the position of its members, who were hitherto relatively weak players.³⁷

Five CAZ Board Members were trained in contract negotiations under the project and the Association has built an effective negotiating team. Farmer members now have a good understanding of cotton pricing mechanisms, and there has been a reduction in side-selling and an improvement in the understanding of contracts. With better awareness of the environment in the cotton sector, farmers can now engage better with the contract farming companies.

The Association's negotiated agreements with cotton outgrower and ginning companies was more effective in 2010 than in previous years - the cost of input packages reduced by 38%. Final seed cotton producer price increased on average by 40% in the 2009/2010 season, which encouraged more farmers to grow cotton the following year. Despite the overall increase, there were sharp price variations between and within districts, so mechanisms are needed to minimize these. For instance, farmers could be made more aware of the role of CAZ in price negotiations and the need for them to follow its recommendations on when to market their seed cotton. The Association also needs to ensure the prompt sharing of information on the producer price to farmers through radio announcements and sms messages as well as through written bulletins. Information systems enabling CAZ to inform cotton farmers on negotiations are being developed

Policy lobbying activities are mainly undertaken by the CAZ secretariat, responding to issues identified by member organisations. In 2010, the Association had significant influence on policy decisions relating to cotton production and marketing. It argued in favour of the introduction of common cotton buying points and for farmer-owned ginning facilities. And an important breakthrough has been persuading the Zambian government that the Association should be recognised as the representative of smallholder cotton growers and compensated for some of its expenses. Negotiations between the government's Cotton Board and the Association led to agreement that the Board would

³⁷ AIN 5485, SCC, co-financed by Agriterra and MTK Finland. More information on this project appears under Cross-cutting concerns.

collect and remit the Association's share of the cotton levy³⁸ within 2011 at a rate of 0.25%. This type of financing arrangement could provide the solution to the otherwise meagre financing of similar member-based commodity organisations in other countries.

Ongoing lobbying covers policies on a price stabilisation fund and the elimination of contamination in cotton. Amendments to the Cotton Act (2005) have been approved by Cabinet and are due for presentation in the next parliamentary session.

Small victories – FPAKI, FOPBG and CNOP-G, Guinea

Two particular advocacy-related events – one local and one national – resulted from the Trias support to farmers' organisations in Guinea.³⁹ In response to an increasing local problem of artisans and micro-entrepreneurs setting up business without permits in the state of Kindia, the organisation FPAK worked with representatives of the city council to reach a peaceful solution. They determined the size of this informal workforce and guided comprehensive discussions on how to achieve successful resettlement.

After Guinea's first democratically elected President, Professor Alpha Condé, came to power, he presented his vision for the agriculture sector to a national stakeholder meeting for 700 representatives of farmers' organisations, and national and international NGOs. Using this ideal opportunity to bend the President's ear, the leaders of the farmers' organisations FOPBG and CNOP-G outlined the ways in which these groups could boost agricultural development.

As a result, the President became more committed to agricultural development, the farmers' organisations were closely involved in developing programmes that affected the rural sector, and the budget allocation to agriculture was increased.

Lobbying at global level – Unicafe Nacional, Brazil

Unicafe Nacional has been in active communication with the newly created World Farmers' Organisation (WFO).⁴⁰ Unicafe wants to focus attention, at the global level and through the WFO, on the economic situation and livelihoods of producers, their families and rural communities.⁴¹

Seizing the opportunity for global influence, Unicafe suggested establishing a discussion group among Latin American organisations. Unicafe is convinced that the WFO could represent the interests of family farmers in Brazil, and if Unicafe becomes a member of WFO, they will have access to more information to present at strategic meetings, and new opportunities for advocacy. Trias supported Unicafe to participate. Representatives of 13 other farmers' organisations, mainly from Africa, were supported by MTK Finland to take part in WFO meetings.⁴²

Securing land rights – FIFATAM, Madagascar

About 14 million people (three-quarters of Madagascar's population) live in rural areas, but rapid population growth (3% per year) and uneven distribution of arable land creates strong pressure on land. There are many challenges facing agriculture, not least soil erosion and rapid environmental degradation in some areas. These were compounded by a political problem related to land ownership. Until 2005, when major legal reforms on landholding were made, all land belonged to the state. Individuals could apply to become 'landholders', but the procedure was bureaucratic and expensive. Hardly any documentation relating to land registered in the colonial period (1896-1960) had been updated, and in 2000 the whole system ceased to function.

The idea of land reform was born in 2003 as a civil society initiative. The national federation for farmers' development (FIFATA), in the context of a project to support federated movements funded by Agriterra and FERT, held workshops and meetings under the heading, 'Securing land and rural development: encounters between farmers and institutions'. There was strong partnership between FIFATA and the government in this initiative, which aimed to make land registration

38 Levy collection is a British colonial system used in many countries. The government provides inputs/extension services etc to farmers for export crops and collects an export levy to recoup its costs. Similar systems existed in Sri Lanka to support smallholder rubber and tea production.

39 AIN 5197, Trias (six-monthly PLATS report, Jan-June 2011)

40 AIN 5233, Trias (six-monthly PLATS report, Jan-June 2011)

41 <http://www.triasngo.org/trias-worldwide/brazil/>

42 AIN 5746, MTK Finland

simpler and cheaper, and to decentralise its administration so that farmers living far from the capital could apply for land registration locally.

FIFATAM leads the project in the region of Amoron'i Mania.⁴³ It encourages farmers to register their land and acts as intermediary between farmers and the administration, including helping with documentation and speaking up for farmers with the land authorities when necessary. FIFATAM also provides legal advice on topics requested by members, and spreads information and awareness about the laws on land ownership.

The most important impact of land reform is a land certification procedure that can be achieved in six months at a cost to the farmer of about 10 Euros. This is much cheaper and faster than under the old system. For municipalities without electricity, a regional Centre for Land Resources and Information (CRIF) has been established to process and digitize data from paper records. There are now 46 land offices in Amoron'i Mania (with about 400 in Madagascar as a whole).

opinion of our neighbours, we joined FIFATAM. The result is satisfactory because we obtained our title deeds at minimum cost. Today, we no longer fear that migrants will encroach, as we have proof that the land is ours.'

Farmers' voices from Amoron'i Mania:

Mrs. Rasoanirina, from Fokontany de Malakialina:

'In my family we are five brothers and sisters. When a land office was established nearby, I tried to convince my siblings to secure and register the land we have inherited but they didn't seem ready to do it yet. So I decided to secure my part. I sought advice from FIFATAM about support for the legal procedure. After several months I got my land certification from the FIFATAM technicians in our community. I am satisfied because I was able to secure the area I cultivate. I hope that no one, not even my own family members, will be able to take that land away from my children, because they will have that certification as a legal record.'

Mr. Rabenerika Zafimanantsoa, from Fokontany d'Ambohitranaoka:

'In my family we are nine siblings and our parents left us vast tracts of land. Some time ago, migrants came and settled on our land. We wanted to prove that the land belonged to us, but we had no documentary proof of ownership. So we decided to secure our land. After asking the

⁴³ AIN 4800, FERT



Work Area 4

Farmer-led economic activities

In areas of subsistence agriculture, making small family farms more productive and profitable is essential to reduce poverty and enable rural development. Farmers are often isolated physically, economically and institutionally from services, inputs, markets and innovations, but farmers' organisations can break this isolation. They can provide services or help members establish new services themselves. They can also improve links with existing service-providers, and access to markets and innovations. The development and improvement of agricultural services increases productivity and often creates rural employment.

Farmers Fighting Poverty supports farmers' organisations to envision, develop and undertake economic activities, because they have a direct and immediate impact on farmers' incomes. Establishing farmer-led businesses requires analysis of the needs of the farming members and the markets for their products, a bankable business plan, and links to financial and other service providers.

Farmers' organisations serve their members by disseminating ideas, research findings, appropriate technologies, and advice on production and markets. Their layered structure allows them to spread knowledge over wide areas at grassroots level, and local cooperatives and sub-national unions are ideally placed to increase farmers' economic productivity and entrepreneurship.

In a globalised environment, competitiveness is all. But small farmers in the developing world face many hurdles to competitiveness. Transport and transaction costs tend to be high, and small farmers lack the economies of scale that larger enterprises enjoy. One of the greatest strengths of farmers' organisations is that they can help small farmers become rural entrepreneurs. Moving away from subsistence agriculture to a level where a cash income is generated is a big step for the poorest in society, but with carefully planned support it can be done successfully.

Farmers Fighting Poverty has contributed to many projects focusing on business development, so the examples below have been chosen to reflect the diversity of support rather than trying to be comprehensive.

Farm businesses are growing – MVIWAMO and others, Tanzania

Pastoralists access credit and manage resources better despite drought

Tanzania often suffers from prolonged drought – in 2010 there was no rain for 347 days – and pastoralists in the northeast of the country have lost more than 60% of their livestock during the past few years. Livestock is by far the most important asset of the nomadic Maasai, so the herdsmen are highly vulnerable when rains fail. To make them less vulnerable, they are encouraged to pursue a variety of income sources.⁴⁴

These days the herdsmen sell animals in Longido and buy food, such as maize, with the proceeds.⁴⁵ They can keep this safely in one of four new warehouses that have been built. As well as using the grain to feed their families, the Maasai can also sell it when market prices are favourable. With the proceeds they can buy new livestock when the drought is over. Although storing food is somewhat counter-cultural for nomadic people, they can see its value in these difficult times.

Another challenge is the lack of water – for people and their livestock. The Maasai are building small reservoirs and an old pipeline system is being repaired. The pipe brings water from the mountains to several villages to secure a constant supply of water.

Given the above, it is clear that pastoralists' need for credit facilities differ from those of, say, arable

farmers, whose income and outgoings follow a more regular cycle. Four savings and credit cooperative societies (SACCOs) have been set up to provide tailored micro-finance to pastoralists. The model is based on traditional Maasai systems of credit, and so far nearly 90 groups are managing revolving funds. These are supplemented by group funds and they are used to support small businesses run by group members. Business development services are being provided to complement the availability of micro-finance, and over 60 of the groups now have business plans.

Pastoralists can improve their value chains by breeding better cattle, sheep and goats. Communities are bringing in breeding stock from outside the district, and almost 100 calves and over 200 young goats have so far been produced. Twenty-four community animal health workers have been trained and equipped to support the pastoralists. They also work as meat inspectors and provide public education on animal health. Five pastoralist groups have been formed to market their livestock better, and 56 groups have opened bank accounts. A modern abattoir in the area has expressed interest in cooperating with the groups to obtain quality livestock for slaughter.

Devising strategies for economic development based on managing the available natural resources is best done via local structures. All four villages in the target areas have set up a range of committees and councils to make joint decisions about the use of land, resources and livestock. The committees adjudicate if disputes arise, and the project is training committee members on their various roles. Four lobby groups have also been set up, to speak out on behalf of pastoralists when their interests are threatened.

It is worth noting that two-thirds of the members of the 89 pastoralists' groups are women. With the support and encouragement of the project, they now speak at meetings and are confident to express their opinions. Men consult their wives on many household decisions. To reinforce these changes, the project has established links with a variety of organisations working on gender, nutrition, environmental issues, water and sanitation, and HIV and AIDS.

Advisors and trainers support farmers of BFSS Mufindi

A second batch of 140 para-professional agricultural advisors has been trained (in partnership with the organisation Incomet), so each sub-village now has two advisors on hand. Training courses are scheduled outside the growing season so that farmers can attend

⁴⁴ <http://www.triasngo.org/trias-worldwide/tanzania/>

⁴⁵ AIN 5387, *Trias (six-monthly PLATS report, Jan-June 2011)*

without neglecting their crops. A wide range of subjects have been covered, including poultry and pig husbandry, technology and equipment for animal traction, beekeeping, setting up tree nurseries, and river valley soil conservation. Farmers were also provided with various materials needed to build chicken sheds or beehives etc. During the growing season, crop production is the focus of training sessions, so that what has been learnt can be put into practice immediately. Incomet has also been involved with training members of village associations on how to run the groups better.

Producing better poultry

There is a world of difference between a few hens scratching for grubs around the home and efficient poultry keeping, whether for eggs or meat production. With training on proper feeding, housing and especially disease control, farmers can develop a more profitable system. MVIWAMO's poultry farmers are producing better quality birds and are learning how to grow and sell in batches rather than when they need cash at short notice.⁴⁶ To strengthen the value chain, links have been made to restaurants in Babati that need a regular meat supply. Other links to micro-finance institutions have enabled poultry farmers to access credit – five loans of 2,500 Euros each have so far been taken out. Production has not been without challenges, though, especially in raising chicks. Sometimes the eggs are of poor quality, and the erratic electricity supply means that incubators do not reliably keep the eggs at the correct temperature.

Selling maize to WFP

The Gallapo farmers' savings and credit cooperative society has made a three-year partnership to sell 275 tonnes of maize to the World Food Programme. Farmers will be able to sell in bulk at better-than-market prices, and the proceeds from the sale are channelled via the society so loans can easily be recovered.

Improved seed gives higher yields – FNGN and UGCPA/BM, Burkina Faso

The seed industry in Burkina Faso has been subject to a variety of interventions following the food price crisis of 2008. By distributing certified seed free of charge to vulnerable households, the state creates an artificial market. Nevertheless, improved seeds are

seen as a key factor in increasing production and improving food security – in optimal conditions improved varieties can yield up to 40% more than unimproved seed.

Two farmers' organisations – FNGN and UGCPA-BM – had already begun to control their own supply of certified improved seed, and Afdi provided support to develop and professionalise this service to their members.⁴⁷ Each farmers' organisation identified its own seed producers and set up a revolving fund to provide credit to buy the seed initially, plus the necessary inputs and subsequent processing before sale. Seed producers were trained by the country's Environment and Agricultural Research Institute (INERA), and technicians from FNGN and UGCPA-BM provided extra advice to farmers as necessary. The number of growers and the amount of certified seed both increased between 2009 and 2010, as shown in the table below.

	FNGN		UGCPA-BM	
	2009	2010	2009	2010
Number of seed producers	38	75	17	29
Certified seed produced	8,953 kg	21,874kg	49,400 kg	310,700kg

The farmers' organisations buy the certified seed from the producers using credit negotiated with a micro-finance institution, and the seed is then sold on to any farmer who wishes to benefit from improved seed. The benefits are not restricted to members of the organisations.

The importance of clean, graded seed has been stressed, and the quality of the certified seed exceeds national standards. Having established a more reliable source of improved seed, the project also sought to increase awareness of and demand for it. To this end, radio programmes, field visits, theatrical performances and fact sheets were all used to spread the word.

For the time being (because the state intervenes by distributing free seed), to ensure reliable markets for certified seed, the farmers' organisations will need to respond promptly to tenders calling for the supply of seed, especially those put out by the state and by organisations such as FAO.

⁴⁶ AIN 5387, Trias – various activities reported under six months PLATS report, Jan-June 2011

⁴⁷ AIN 5647, Afdi, with funds from the EU Food Facility Programme

The story of Tao Harouna, a member of FNGN and producer of certified seed

FNGN supports producers by providing credit for basic seed, mineral fertilizer (NPK and urea) and treatment products. Even so, producing certified sorghum seed for FNGN, Mr. Tao Harouna's crop exceeded all expectations. In the difficult agro-climatic conditions typical of the northern region, he obtained average yields of more than one tonne per hectare during the last three seasons, for areas from 0.5-3 ha. To achieve these above-regional-average yields, Harouna Tao has two ploughs, cattle, a wagon, a yoke of oxen, a camel, a donkey and three manure pits that allow him to fertilize his land at a rate of 60 cartloads per hectare. He also has a good understanding of the technical means of production and of certification standards. He achieved a gross profit of 728,250 CFA Francs (about 1,110 Euros) per hectare in 2009 (after subtracting all production costs except family labour).

When asked about the positive aspects of belonging to FNGN, Mr. Harouna mentioned several things, including the way his family had been empowered, the availability of advice to deal with potential problems, and the help had had received when negotiating isolation zones with his neighbours to prevent cross-pollination.

Nazi Bicaba, a member of UGCPA, is a user of certified seed in the Mouhoun region

Mr. Bicaba has a family of 11 of whom eight work on his 25-hectare farm. They have a range of equipment, including two ploughs, two manga hoes, a wagon, six oxen and two donkeys. He joined UGCPA-BM in 2007, and since then has been using certified seed to grow maize and sorghum. He is satisfied with the quality and yield potential of the certified seed, and with the timeliness of UGCPA's seed distribution. His yields are shown in the table below.

Year	Crop	Area (ha)	Yield (kg/ha)
2008-2009	Maize	3	2,800
	Sorghum	2	1,500
2009-2010	Maize	4	2,950
	Sorghum	4	1,600
2010-2011	Maize	12	3,200
	Sorghum	2	1,300

Over the last three seasons, the gross margin per hectare of sorghum and maize has risen from 650,000 CFA Francs (about 990 Euros) to 900,000 CFA Francs (about 1,370 Euros). The profit from the 2008-2009 harvest was saved in a credit union and the following year, Mr. Bicaba began building new homes for his family.

This success is partly due to drawing up a plan for the farm (which crops to grow and how many acres of each) and setting a budget. It is also due to good crop management, supported by the Family Farm Advisory Service (CEF) provided by the Union. A further contributing factor is the organic manure, of which the farm produces about 40 cartloads every season. In the longer term, Mr. Bicaba plans to double this amount of manure, to ensure sustainable management of his land.

Dairy now meets European standards – ROVA, Madagascar

Milk production in Madagascar shows seasonal patterns – cows give less milk in the dry weather when there is less forage, and there is a corresponding increase in production during the rainy season. It makes business sense to try and flatten the curve, feeding cows better in the dry season and finding a way of using surplus milk at other times (for instance by making cheese). For small farmers – and the target group here in Vakinankaratra region have on average only one or two cows – this is slowly being achieved through their membership of cooperatives under the umbrella of ROVA.

For these dairy farmers, the weather has not been the only concern. Milk production and cattle numbers have fluctuated widely over the past decade, because of economic and political uncertainty. Until 2009 the milk market in Madagascar was dominated by a monopoly but the market is now fully liberalized. So a project to support ROVA and its members faced many challenges.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the quality of milk and the incomes of farmers have increased.

Milk quality is affected directly by a cow's feed intake, so part of the project focused on the feed mill. The formulation of feed to match the animals' seasonal needs is now computer-controlled, and there is a laboratory to analyse raw materials and end products. Good quality raw materials are now stored ready for use so that sudden changes in formulation are avoided. Cattle feed production has increased steadily, from 69 tonnes in 2009 to 182 tonnes in 2011. The team at the feed mill is now experienced and professional, and feed quality is consistent. Demand for cattle feed is forecast to increase.

In the dairy itself, the pasteurization unit has been replaced with more efficient equipment that is cheaper to run, and a wider range of products is made.

48 AIN 5050, FERT



Standards of hygiene and health are high – the dairy has a motivated, competent and effective team that offers quality products that meet European standards.

Farmers have been able to improve the quality and health of their cattle through selective breeding and with the support of veterinary services. Twenty pilot cattle breeders from 13 cooperatives have been chosen, and two technicians are on hand to give support and guidance as needed. Better farm and breeding records are being kept. The ROVA union produces a monthly newsletter, *RE Lait*, which includes technical fact sheets of interest to members.

Increasing the value of acacia woodland – Thua Thien Hue Cooperative Alliance, Vietnam

Vietnam has adopted a new forest strategy and is handing over state-managed land to smallholders on 50-year leases, with the expectation that family forestry will provide extra income for small farmers. The country is in the top ten global producers of wood products, exporting 90% of its furniture production. But 80% of the raw materials have to be imported. Increasing domestic supply would benefit both the country and the tree growers, if the quality of local timber can be improved and certified – some countries importing timber products now require proof, such as Pan European Forest Certification (PEFC), that the wood has been sustainably produced.

Acacia (mainly *A. mangium*) is the most common tree planted by smallholders. It finds a ready market at factories that produce wood chips for pulp production, but until recently middlemen were able to take most of the profit. A project to support the establishment of several forestry service groups as part of agricultural cooperatives has only been operating for a short time, but impacts are already tangible.⁴⁹

Through a twinning partnership with a Finnish forest producers' association, forestry service groups were established. A 10-day study tour to Finland was followed by a start-up workshop, and members later learned about tree production, nursery techniques and marketing. Demonstration plots were set up and surveys of land and forest areas carried out. Training included how to manage household and cooperative forestry plots, the acacia value chain and timber certification.

49 AIN 5572, implemented and financed by MTK Finland

Cooperatives and farmers themselves are becoming more aware of the business side of forestry. They know that logs fetch a much higher price than smaller stems that can only be used for wood chips. Prices are posted on the cooperative's website so that members can keep an eye on the market. The challenge will be for farmers to forego income from forestry for the 8-10-year period before trees can be harvested.

Cowpeas replace cotton as rainfall diminishes – Union of cowpea farmers of Pissila, Dablo and Pensa, Burkina Faso

Rainfall in Sanmatenga Province in Burkina Faso has become irregular and the traditional cash crop, cotton, has been abandoned because it fails without sufficient water. Successive years of growing cotton have also depleted the soil. As an alternative, cowpea is ideal – new varieties mature quickly (in 50-70 days) and need only 370mm of rainfall. Being a legume, cowpea also fixes nitrogen and thus improves soil fertility. It is also easy to store, there is market demand for it and it fits well into local farming rotation systems. Finally, it is a nutritious food crop that brings protein to the local diet. A project to develop the cowpea sector in the province has been running since 2008 (continuing activities started in 2004), with the beneficiaries being mostly small farmers, all of whom are members of cowpea producers' unions.⁵⁰

Project activities used simple techniques that were easy for farmers to learn, and new methods were transmitted by so-called experimental farmers, who were trained to share knowledge they had learned during training and monitor group activities during the growing season. More experimental farmers were trained each year (40 in 2008, 75 in 2009 and 100 in 2010), and they all recorded the activities and expenses on their own plots so they could calculate gross margins. Gross margins for experimental farmers increased from an average of 95,600 CFA francs to 128,400 CFA francs (from about 150 to 200 Euros), although these gains were not matched by all farmers.

Demonstration plots – about 50 by the end of the project – compared different varieties, fertilizer regimes, integrated soil management and mixed farming with sorghum as well as cowpea. These plots, also known as 'school farm plots', were open for other farmers to view and form their own opinion about different cultivation methods.

50 AIN 5072, FERT

Farmers said they had learned a lot through the project, including better farming techniques, how to store the cowpea crop to prevent deterioration, and how to spray when necessary to control pests and diseases. The great majority (78%) now used improved seed, and 75% used organic manure. More than two-thirds used three-layered 100kg PICS sacks to store the cowpeas after drying them thoroughly.

A marketing committee in each union was responsible for stock control, finding markets and prices, and selling seed, fertilizer and other inputs to farmers. A market information system has been set up and information about sales offers put up on the regional e-marketing platform, esoko, but this has not yet been properly tested.

Almost all farmers have improved their conservation and storage methods, so that 65% keep their crop for two to three months and 35% keep it for four months or more before selling it. The price after four months' storage can be over 40% more than the price at harvest, so although the bags and warehousing cost money, this is more than recouped. Most farmers said that storing the cowpeas allowed them to sell at a profit, with 45% having cowpeas for home consumption throughout the year.

'What has changed positively in our group through the Project is the success of members, especially their well-being and financial autonomy.'

'The direct beneficiaries have a financial autonomy that gives them a [sense of] well-being ... reflected in their readiness to spend money on market days and during the ceremonies in their clothing.'

Agro-tourism taking off – An Giang Farmers' Union, Vietnam

Vietnam's An Giang province lies west of the Mekong Delta and next to Cambodia. With varied topography, historical sites, and traditional festivals and handicrafts, it has the potential to be an attractive tourist destination. The farmers of the province, mostly smallholders whose main crop is rice, are now diversifying into agro-tourism. This is a special type of eco-tourism, based on small-scale, community-led activities that preserve the rural environment and create local jobs. Offering visitors an insight into rural life, agro-tourism involves local farmers in new ventures such as offering accommodation or meals in their homes, and making handicrafts. This project will transform the existing agro-tourist office of the An Giang Farmers'

Union (AGFU) into a rural farmers' tourist centre to support and encourage such households in their tourist enterprises.⁵¹

Tourist numbers (both domestic and international) are already growing. There were 3,000 tourists (500 through the agro-tourism project office) in 2009. In 2011 about 1,000 tourists were received through the office and numbers are set to rise, as agro-tourism is a niche product that has growing appeal as an alternative to mass tourism. Collaboration with travel companies will help promote and market the concept.

A variety of activities are being offered to tourists, including joining community farming activities, experiencing local culture, having meals with farm households, overnight accommodation on farms, and guided village walks. Local handicrafts are also on sale. The project has not been running for long, but there are already farmers whose lives have been improved.

Pension savings from home-stay venture

Ms Ho Thank Van is one of the farmers who started a home stay for tourists with help of the AGFU centre. Single, with no children, she lives with her parents, who produce rice and vegetables. Also sharing the house are an older sister and her brother with his wife and child. Her brother is a weaver with his own business. The family subsists on about 0.60 ha of rice and 0.30 ha of vegetables.

Ms Van completed her secondary education and then worked for a food company for two years. But as her income was not stable she took a one-year tailoring course and later started her own business as a tailor, specializing in traditional clothing for women. She also keeps poultry, using some eggs in the home and selling the surplus.

Supported by the AGFU, she started offering overnight accommodation and a meal to tourists. She now speaks a little English and has a good eye for body-language. She wants to join a training programme to become a coach, and she pays tribute to the agro-tourism centre for promoting agro-tourism activities and helping the members offer professional services.

In her spare time, Ms Van makes small soft toys from fabric remnants. The agro-tourism centre suggested she use them as a promotional gift to her guests, tied to a business card, an idea which she has adopted.

⁵¹ AIN 5651, Agriterra (following from AIN 5002 supporting VNFU from 2007-2010)



Before she started her home stay business, Ms Van had just enough money to live from. Now she is able to support her parents and can even put some money in the bank to earn interest. She is also saving for her pension, because she has no children to support her when she herself is old.

Weaving wedding dresses

Ms Khenh is a widow whose main work has always been rice farming. Belonging to the Khmer minority, she was taught traditional Khmer silk weaving by her mother and has in turn passed this skill on to her two daughters. Ms Khenh's work is particularly appreciated by buyers from Cambodia and Thailand, where it is in demand for weddings and festivals. Her fine quality silk handicrafts have become so popular that nowadays her sons-in-law have to look after the rice fields.

Ms Khenh's silk weaving business provides work for 125 Khmer women in her commune. They spin, dye and weave raw silk from Tan Chau, An Giang. Ms Khenh makes all the export arrangements with the neighbouring Cambodian traders who trust her quality control. Each piece takes two weeks to make and sells for VND1m (about 35 Euros), so the weavers' income is about 70 Euros per month. Ms Khenh and her daughters weave every day, except during the rice harvest, when they help the sons-in-law on the farm.

As a member of the AGFU, Ms Khenh attended training courses in marketing and trading her silk. She joined the Handicraft Cooperative and learned how to make links with markets. When tourists started visiting Van Giao village, her weaving found another outlet.

Now international and domestic visitors increasingly come to the village, brought by the AGFU tourism centre as well as travel agencies. Ms Khenh organises the work and teaches the women weavers in the village. Ms Khenh likes having tourists visit her house to watch her weaving as long as they don't come too frequently. The AGFU are planning to open a small showroom in 2012, which will help relieve the visitor pressure and provide space for the commune's local sales.

Masterchef Vietnam

Mr and Mrs Kim Niên, rice farmers, took the chance offered by the AGFU to set up an agro-tourism enterprise. They turned out to be great hosts and cooks, and their restaurant – which serves authentic local food – is a success.

Before they started the restaurant, Mr Kim Niên rented land to grow rice. During the flooding season his wife sold fish at the market. She also had a small business selling

fruit in front of their house. They both worked very hard for little reward. Even leading a simple life, their joint earnings were hardly enough to live on.

But then, with support from the AGFU, they built a small restaurant in front of their house. Mrs Kim Niên is a good cook and she buys meat, fish and vegetables from neighbouring farmers or in the local market. Their income has increased so much that they can send their son to school (he is now in 9th grade). They are saving a little for the future and for the education of their other son. They also plan to build a larger restaurant with a good bathroom.

Now, with their authentic restaurant that attracts many tourists, they set an example for other farmers in the area. And they contribute to the livelihood of other village farmers by buying the various food products they need to supply the restaurant.

Early days in developing markets – Guinea Fowl Farmers' Association, Ghana

Northern Ghana has poorly developed infrastructure and a high degree of rural poverty. Small-scale farmers have few options to diversify and create new income streams, but producing guinea fowl is an area showing promise.⁵² The Guinea Fowl Farmers' Association (Guiffa) has about 1,000 members and is growing steadily.⁵³ But a major problem is the high mortality rate (up to 80%) of the birds. Free range birds run the risk of being killed by snakes or birds of prey. Young guinea fowl die easily from lack of food or during heavy rainfall, and especially from cold.

The best way to reduce this mortality rate is to raise the birds in sheds. This production method also allows farmers to provide a balanced diet and veterinary care where necessary. To spread knowledge about improved production methods, 30 district-level Guiffa executives were trained by experts from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. These trainees will in turn train other members of the organisation.

Another problem is the lack of established markets. Although guinea fowl meat and eggs are popular, they tend to be sold informally. The fact that producers are not yet able to provide regular supplies of quality products contributes to the marketing problem. Guiffa keeps an eye out for potential markets and puts farmers in contact with traders.

⁵² <http://www.triasngo.org/trias-worldwide/ghana/>

⁵³ AIN 5578, Trias (six-monthly PLATS report, Jan-June 2011)

Vacuum-packed guinea pig tempts consumers - Corporación Señor Cuy, Ecuador

Señor Cuy is a relatively new regional organisation with more than 500 members breeding guinea pigs. There are 130 members in Chimborazo province, more than half of them women, who have formed an association to market guinea pigs (*cuyes* in Spanish). Guinea pigs are traditionally eaten at festive times such as Christmas and Mothers' Day throughout the Andes.⁵⁴

The producers sell their guinea pigs at a weekly market, and many of the women members are generating their own income for the first time. Guinea pigs breed very fast, which means a quick turnover for the farmers. They fetch US\$2 each, and a producer will sell about 10 guinea pigs every week. This US\$20 (about 15 Euros) is an important sum for rural women, helping them provide for their children and family.

To develop the guinea pig value chain, breeders are being trained to improve production, processing and sales.⁵⁵ Their organisations are also learning how to draw up business plans so they can become financially independent. As part of the effort to become independent, Señor Cuy has set up a commercial department, which is a small business with a processing unit. The manager sells her guinea pigs – mainly young live guinea pigs – to regular customers who pay a guaranteed price. Some go to restaurants.

The processing unit is experimenting with processing and packaging, to encourage consumers to make guinea pig a more regular part of their diet rather than seeing it just as a festive food. Guinea pig meat is a healthy product, rich in protein and low in cholesterol. Señor Cuy would like to market different products such as whole vacuum-wrapped guinea pig, guinea pig sausages and nuggets.

Investments are also being made to improve the production units, to train the farmers and to provide veterinary materials. The aim is to help farmers produce guinea pigs as efficiently as possible, so that this valuable addition to their income can be maximized.

54 <http://www.triasngo.org/trias-worldwide/andes/>

55 AIN 5586, *Trias* (six-monthly PLATS report, Jan-June 2011)

Better services for business development – Unicafes Paraná, Brazil

Unicafes Paraná comprises 145 cooperatives. It supports them with training and investment projects in the manufacturing sector, provides management advice, and helps them improve their lobbying and advocacy skills.^{56,57} The organisation became a federation at its 6th National Assembly, which has doubled its monthly income from membership fees to 6,000 Euros in July 2011.

With more income, Unicafes Paraná is able to provide better services to its members. In terms of business development, for instance, Coopafi Santo Antonio was able to expand production. It now manufactures eight varieties of pasta and sells to national institutions as well as locally. Current sales of about 20 tonnes per month are expected to rise to at least 50 tonnes. Another success was support to the dairy chain when agreeing the list of products bought by government. Cheese was added to the list, and fresh products such as pasteurised milk and yogurt kept their place. Now logistics need to be improved to manage the growing demand.

Considering whether to develop an industrial plant for UHT (sterilized) milk and other dairy products, the Dairy Forum of Paraná (which produces over 7 million litres of milk per month) asked Unicafes Paraná to carry out a feasibility study. The outcome was that such an investment would not be the best strategy for the Forum and that the coops should instead focus on developing other types of high quality dairy products in smaller plants spread throughout Paraná state, within the Forum's working area.

Insurance for valuable cattle – Cre\$ol Baser, Brazil

Despite Brazil's economic growth, rural poverty is still widespread. The family farmers in the state of Paraná are amongst the poorest, and the death of cattle is a great calamity, putting their whole farming enterprise under threat. To protect against this risk, Cre\$ol Baser (a savings and credit cooperative governed by farmers) has successfully introduced 'cow insurance'.^{58,59} The insurance has been designed for small dairy farms of about 10-15 cows and 15-20 ha of land. Cattle are

56 <http://www.triasngo.org/trias-worldwide/brazil/>

57 AIN 5215, *Trias* (six-monthly PLATS report, Jan-June 2011)

58 <http://www.triasngo.org/trias-worldwide/brazil/>

59 AIN 5591, *Trias*



expensive to buy and can be a risky investment for a small farmer – an old saying warns, ‘A farmer with live-stock must expect to have deadstock too.’ But now, a cow can be insured against various causes of death for a small percentage of the purchase price.

The insurance was developed out of sheer necessity. Cattle are a dairy farmer’s main assets, and they are often bought on credit. If a farmer loses a cow because of disease, accident, or natural death, he or she loses both capital and a source of income. They would be unable to pay off their loans and business development would come to a halt.

The insurance is in great demand - 10,000 cows have so far been bought with loans obtained with Cre\$ol’s help, and 200 of them have been insured. It is expected that the number of cattle insured will rise steeply. So far, Cre\$ol is the only provider of cow insurance, although other companies have expressed interest in offering a similar product. Cre\$ol’s insurance has been available to non-members since August 2011 and it now covers both dairy and beef cattle.

Stories of change – impacts from economic activities

Rice production, a ticket to a better future – Isoka District Rice Association, Zambia

The Isoka district of Zambia lies in the northeast of the country towards the border with Malawi and Tanzania. Part of Isoka district lies in the Chambeshi River flood plains while the other side is near the Luangwa River valley. Both areas experience seasonal flooding so are suitable for growing rice.

Isoka benefited from donor support to establish rice farming from the late 1970’s to the 1990s. Inputs, draught power (both mechanical and animal), marketing and transport from the farm gate were all provided but, with the liberalization of the whole Zambian economy, the forces of supply and demand have superseded government and donor support. Since the previous processes had protected small farmers, it was difficult for them to participate in a chain that included seasoned and sometimes unscrupulous participants.

The Isoka District Rice Association (IDRA) was formed in 2009, by representatives of more than 700 rice farmers. Its aim is to make rice farmers in the district better able to operate as profitable businesses, and it currently benefits about 1,500 small-scale farmers. The Association spearheads rice-specific issues and promotes efficient production

of high-quality rice. It also connects farmers with higher-paying markets.

For more than 15 years Evelyn Nakasote, 49, has been growing rice on a quarter-hectare farm. Mrs. Nakasote once grew rice simply to feed her family. Today she has turned her rice farming into a profitable business, and a ticket to a better future.

‘Before the IDRA project, I grew only poor quality rice,’ said Evelyn. ‘My rice did not mill well because it was a mixture of so many varieties and was also over-dried.’

In 2009 IDRA began to reach out to rice farmers in Isoka District with support from Agriterra and MTK Finland.⁶⁰ Evelyn attended meetings where she learnt about the improved bargaining power that came from selling rice collectively via the Association. By June 2009 Evelyn had joined IDRA and was attending seminars that showed her how to increase her productivity and improve the quality of rice. Subjects covered optimum spacing for rice planting, applying the right inputs, and choosing the most marketable varieties for planting. Evelyn is now growing three hectares of rice and producing more than three tonnes.

IDRA has helped change the lives of many rice farmers. Its more than 1,000 members sold on average nearly K4.5 million-worth (about 660 Euros) of rice each. The rice farmers accessed more than K125 million (almost 18,500 Euros) in grants from Agriterra in 2011 to help expand their rice production through capacity development. Some farmers have diversified into other business such as sunflower oil, maize and cassava.

For Evelyn the new knowledge, market access and good price for her rice have made a clear impact in her life. With the savings from her higher income, Evelyn is planning to build a new house of bricks and cement to replace her mud-walled, grass-roofed home. She is also planning to buy oxen next year to cultivate a larger area for rice. She has four school-age children and Evelyn is better able to afford their school fees and supplies. And she can provide them with wholesome meals of rice, maize meal and bread.

Apart from growing maize, rice, cassava and sunflower Evelyn owns a sunflower press to produce sunflower oil for sale locally. ‘Everything changed when I joined IDRA,’ said Evelyn. ‘Thanks to the training it provided, I now know how to earn money from my farming.’

⁶⁰ AIN 5614

Counting the cost, reaping the benefit – the Family Farm Advisory Service, Burkina Faso

Mr. Souleymane Sawadogo, a farmer who lives in Somy-anga, is a member of seed producers' group. He was particularly pleased with practical knowledge learned through the Family Farm Advisory Service (Conseil à l'Exploitation Familiale, CEF).⁶¹ 'Before the project, I could not draw up an income statement or plan the farming year. But now I know how to choose which fields will be best for particular crops and what seed to use. I make rational choices. For example, I reduced the size of my fields to reflect the available labour force. My family and I now focus on an area of three hectares.'

Mr. Sawadogo listed his operating costs. He knew exactly what he had spent on ploughing and preparing the land, including labour costs and food for his workers. He said that unfavourable weather conditions after planting had meant he had had to replant. Weeding, fertilizer and harvesting costs were all itemised, giving a total investment of 355,000 CFA francs (about 510 Euros). He said that he had harvested 15 cartloads, each of which was roughly 150kg of millet seed, giving a total harvest of about 2,250kg. Taking into account loss during sorting and cleaning, he had about 1,950kg to sell at a price of 450-550 CFA francs per kilo (a net income of about 1,500 Euros).

Mr. Sawadogo was clearly able to keep track of all his operating costs, thanks to knowledge gained in the CEF activities.

Planning ahead – the Family Farm Advisory Service, Burkina Faso

The Lanpougni group is in the Eastern Region of Burkina Faso, and four of its members discussed what they had learned from the Family Farm Advisory Service (CEF).⁶²

Amadou: We learned how to measure and assess our fields, how to apply fertilizer and organic manure, and about crop rotation. Learning how to measure our family food consumption helps us to avoid waste.

Abdoulaye: Crop rotation has been a very beneficial technique for us to learn.

Marcel: I know how to use organic fertilizer. And I learned how to lay out my fields based on the amount of family labour available.

Lompo: Before, I did not know how much food my family consumed. CEF helped me to work out that my family of six uses half a Yoruba (a plate-like measure that holds about 1.5kg of grain) per day, which is 15 Yoruba per month.

Diabo: I eat about two cereal meals per day, or 60 meals per month.

Marcel: I have a wife and 16 children to feed. Every day, we need three meals of millet, or 90 meals per month.

Abdoulaye: I have two wives and 16 children, and I have worked out that we need 75.5 Yoruba per month. There is now less waste at home.

Diabo: We are now able to control family consumption. We know how much grain we need to store for the year. We also consider other factors such as hosting a marriage in the community. Surplus grain is sold to meet the cost of children's schooling, medical expenses and other social events. We do not routinely sell cereals. In an emergency, we sell an animal rather instead of grain.

Marcel: In deficit years, we have been advised to sell the animals when the market price of grain is low. We can then buy food to meet our needs. In these exceptional cases, we slightly reduce our food intake during the dry season.

Milk: white gold to Unileite's dairy farmers – Brazil

Unileite, an organisation of milk producers, has organised and professionalized the dairy sector in the state of Paraná. Thanks to effective technical support and advice, the association supported by FERT is now independent.⁶³ This is the story of one family belonging to Unileite.

After getting married, Luis Carlos and Neli settled on the family farm. They grew corn and soya beans, and raised pigs. Gradually they bought land from Luis Carlos's father. Neli began milking cows and producing cheese for the household. Then, with the grain crisis, the couple began to consider whether they could live on the proceeds of milk production. Their son was born in 1992 and they needed to find lucrative activities that could be developed on their small farm.

They had no technical knowledge when they started, but they slowly learned about animal health and got to know their herd better. Step by step and with the advice of Lucien from Unileite's technical team, they started to improve their herd by artificial insemination. They also began to

61 AIN 5210, Agriterra

62 AIN 5210, Agriterra

63 AIN 5045, FERT



keep proper farm records. For them, 'It was a real challenge because we had never done it before.' Until 1996, they milked the cows manually, producing about 100 litres of milk per day. Later on they were able to purchase their first milking machine and a cooling tank. In 2001, they bought a larger tank.

'We wouldn't be here without Unileite, and advisors Lucien and Marciano,' say Luis Carlos and Neli. The guidance and advice has become a proper service. And it is reassuring to be a part of a group, because, 'No one can make progress alone. In Unileite everyone contributes to helping others; we set goals and try to achieve them together.'

Marciano provided both technical and economic advice. With his support, they have planted trees to create shade for the animals, improved their pastures and built water troughs where needed. They also worked on the issue of cattle feed and produced more silage. They cut out unnecessary expense and received help from Marciano to apply for a bank loan.

Today, Luis Carlos is the vice-treasurer of Unileite and Neli is the secretary. They travelled to France in May 2009 to see how French agricultural organisations function - from the bottom up, according to objectives set by the producers themselves. They are trying to do the same in Unileite.

Neli and Luis Carlos's milk production has increased hugely. In 1993, they produced an average of 28 litres per day - by 2010 daily production was 460 litres. 'Now, with the milk money, we live much better,' they say. They can afford to pay for their son's university studies in animal science. And in January 2011 they replaced their old wooden house with a well-equipped new home.

'We were sleeping until FERT woke us up!'- Khemisset Chaouia Cooperative, Morocco

Abdjabbar Maghfour, who is president of the cooperative, says, 'We practise what we have inherited from our ancestors, but in recent decades we have suffered recurrent droughts and annual rainfall is steadily declining. Our traditional production systems brought income only twice a year: at harvest and during the sale of sheep for the Aïd El Kebir. This has caused a massive rural exodus and migration of young people, particularly to Italy.

'Contact with FERT and its partners has expanded our vision.⁶⁴ We needed more regular income. We all had one or two cows and we used the milk at home. We gave surplus milk to the poor, to our dogs or simply wasted it. Our tradition says that it is shameful to sell the milk.

'But today, thanks to better milk production and marketing, even the lonely widows, who produce only a few litres per day, have a daily income of at least 15-20 Dh (1.30-1.70 Euros).

'All the fellahs who have joined the cooperative have improved their lives and their herds. Given these advantages, no one could make it without the cooperative and go back to the old ways!'

64 AIN 4951, FERT



Cross-cutting concerns

Gender and the environment

Farmers Fighting Poverty recognises that a number of cross-cutting concerns also need attention if farmers and their organisations are to benefit holistically from the support provided. These include farmers' income and food security; gender equality and the empowerment of women; financial management; and environmental sustainability. Three other cross-cutting concerns describe approaches specific to Farmers Fighting Poverty: farmer-to-farmer cooperation, sharing knowledge and innovation, and planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Most of the cross-cutting concerns have already appeared in the examples under the four work areas. This section draws attention to some specific impacts in terms of women's empowerment. And since environmental concerns underlie all hope of sustainability, examples of environmental impact are highlighted here too.

Safe tea – Thai Nguyen Farmers' Group, Vietnam

Tea bushes are prey to a range of pests including mites, caterpillars and beetles. Traditional methods of growing tea have therefore relied on heavy use of pesticides. This can lead to environmental degradation, particularly in terms of water pollution, not to mention the risk of leaving residues on the tea leaves. An alternative is to grow tea using integrated pest management, which involves early detection followed by judicious use of selected pesticides or biological controls. This project helped set up tea clubs in four communes to produce 'safe tea' using these methods.⁶⁵ There are now 18 clubs with 540 members, of whom 60% are women, and they receive support for marketing activities as well as in growing techniques.

The tea growers now have higher incomes because their costs are lower (material costs are 20-30% lower than traditional production methods) and their tea is sold for a higher price through the tea clubs. Even before the project, tea was vacuum packed, but the project improved its appeal to buyers by helping to design boxes to contain the packs. Tea in the boxes fetches 25% more than unboxed tea. More than 90% of the farmers say that the tea clubs have been helpful and that they now enjoy higher living standards. They say that consumers are becoming more concerned about the environment and are willing to pay more for safe tea.

Environmental impacts have been noticed with the reduced use of fertilizer and pesticide. Biological control is widely used and chemical fertilizer has been replaced to a great extent by microbial fertilizer. And from a gender perspective, the confidence of women tea producers has improved and they take a more active part in production, processing and marketing. Better incomes have allowed them to invest in new equipment and employ more people – an example is a woman who now employs 13 people for each of the eight harvests (picking, drying and grinding the tea leaves). She also employs two tea packers and says

⁶⁵ AIN 5364, Agriterra, financed by MTK Finland

that she benefited from training to develop her tea farm and processing enterprise. Her husband acknowledges her success and status as a tea farmer in her own right.

Conserving the soil and saving labour – the Cotton Association of Zambia

Cotton is a labour-intensive crop that can deplete the soil if grown as a monoculture. It is Zambia's most important smallholder crop, involving more than 250,000 farmers and employing a quarter of the population (2.4 million households derive income from cotton production), so better ways of growing cotton that protect the soil and reduce labour requirements will improve many lives. A project to increase yield and quality of the crop as part of a bigger thrust to improve the functioning of the Cotton Association of Zambia (CAZ) is already showing impacts.⁶⁶

To improve farmers' knowledge on new cotton production techniques, 10 CAZ field facilitators learnt about how to use and conduct 'study circles'. Educational materials - audio recordings in local languages (for those who cannot read or understand English), books and posters on pests, diseases and weeds - covering both conventional and organic production, have been produced and distributed. By the end of June 2011, more than 700 study circle groups had been formed, with about 8,400 members.

The study circles are complemented by on-farm demonstrations and field days, and many groups are now implementing technologies they have learnt. These include crop rotation, targeted fertilizer use, correct spacing and the use of cover crops to protect the soil. Crop rotation is being applied by 84% of study circle farmers in, and 40% of them are applying conservation agriculture methods (reducing soil disturbance) such as minimum tillage, making basins around individual cotton plants, and using hand hoes and ox-drawn rippers. In 2010, there was a 14% increase in yield of A-grade cotton compared with the previous year – according to farmers, this increased productivity was mainly due to the effective extension services provided by CAZ.

On average, the cost of the cotton inputs went down by 38% in 2010, while the average producer price received by members increased by 40%. Figures varied widely because seed cotton is more valuable than commercial cotton. But overall, the average net income of

⁶⁶ AIN 5485, Agriterra, co-financed by SCC/MTK Finland



cotton farmers more than doubled. This reflected the increase in productivity, the reduced costs of inputs and the higher prices paid for seed cotton.

Productivity was mostly higher among male farmers than their female counterparts. But some women's plots in Eastern Province were more productive than men's. These fields belong to women and they can decide when to cultivate, plant and weed. In Central and Southern Provinces, women traditionally help first with their husband's and common household fields before attending to their own. Production activities are thus usually carried out too late, leading to lower yields. Since the project mainstreams gender concerns throughout its activities, these disparities have been noted and appropriate practices (such as the use of the Ultra-Low Volume Sprayer, early planting etc) will be promoted, especially to women.

Smallholder cotton farmers are becoming more aware that both women and men need to be involved, especially in study circles. Volunteer farmers have spread the word widely, and CAZ activities now reach 27 cotton districts, up from 18. More farmers of both sexes are taking part in programme activities, and women - who traditionally took a back seat - have begun to take leadership positions. About 10% of study circle organisers and leaders are now women, and about 35% of the study circle members are women.

Adoption of conservation farming techniques is helping to reduce soil erosion and degradation. Including leguminous crops as part of the cotton rotation may lead to lower use of chemical fertilizer and thus improve the environment.

Although this project has not yet finished, the Association is functioning well, with an efficient accounting system and a database of members. It has used the financial support to deliver more and better services to their members, in order to increase the production of cotton and get a better price. Farmers now demand service and results from the Association, and they are enjoying higher household incomes. To develop a less donor-dependent financial footing, the Association is moving towards individual subscriptions rather than those paid by organisations.⁶⁷ More members are joining and paying subscription fees, as the benefits are tangible.

⁶⁷ This income is in addition to the share of the cotton levy negotiated with the government Cotton Board described in Work area 3 above

Loans for women – NEFSCUN, Nepal

NEFSCUN is the national body for savings and credit cooperatives (SACCOs) and their district unions in Nepal. Established in 1988 with 28 SACCOs, there were more than 680 by the end of 2009. They represent over 350,000 individual members, of whom 45% are female.

A project running through 2010 and 2011 aimed to provide micro-finance services to 65,000 more members, 80% of them poor women.⁶⁸ It was also hoped to create 100 new SACCOs via NEFSCUN. The project uses credit union micro-finance innovations (CUMI) methods, based on a six-month recruitment and training programme for self-help groups. The methods give financial literacy to poor people and encourage them to make regular savings. After training, participants are registered as members and can apply for loan. Borrowing capacity is thus built gradually.

The first year showed reasonable results, with NEFSCUN reaching an extra 19,570 members. The savings unions say that micro-finance is expensive to administer because it is time-consuming to deal with women who are poorly educated and may be barely literate. Despite these difficulties, savings averaged 25 Euros per member, and most loans were used for productive purposes or income-generating activities. Female membership was growing faster than male, and micro-finance was judged to contribute to slightly better family income and better food security. Overall, women were pleased to be organised into groups and have access to loans. The project will continue.

Stories of change – impacts for women and the environment

Fair trade and organic production, CAC Divisoria, Peru

Jose Gonzales, a farmer in Tingo Maria, has seen his cocoa production grow tremendously - in three years it has gone up by more than 1,000kg.⁶⁹ Jose, 58, has been a member of the 700-strong coffee and cocoa cooperative CAC Divisoria since 2008. He has an organic and Fair Trade certified cocoa plantation of 3.5ha. He also grows banana trees, which do well with the cocoa. He has cultivated cocoa all his life, like his father, who was a member of the large Naranjillo cooperative. Jose opted for the smaller cooperative because they pay great attention to quality. They also

⁶⁸ AIN 5513, Agriterra, financed by MTK Finland

⁶⁹ AIN 5733, Agriterra

emphasise knowledge of fertilizers and other agricultural issues, and they run a plant nursery too.

Jose is serious about making compost and liquid manure ('biol'). There are five large blue tanks in his shed and he is constantly seeking to perfect the mixture. Applying fertilizer and proper pruning increased his yield significantly, from 150kg of cocoa in 2008 to about 1,200kg three years later. Jose says he works full time on his cocoa crop, whereas before he spent no more than 20% of his time tending this farm. But he is happy to do this - his production has risen, and his good quality cocoa commands a better price per kilo. An additional motivation for going organic is his wish to pass healthy land to the next generation.

From coca to cacao – CAC Divisoria, Peru

In the 1980s and 1990s, almost the only crop grown in the Pumahuasi region of eastern Peru was coca to supply the illegal drugs trade. But now, many farmers are growing coffee and cocoa instead. Both products seem good alternatives, because of the high world prices for organic coffee and cocoa.

Felipe Cachique, 69, married with four children, lives in La Victoria on the Amazon. He is a member of a farmers' cooperative, CAC Divisoria, and he grows organic and Fair Trade coffee and cocoa.⁷⁰ He and his fellow farmers grow legal crops with confidence and, with the financial and technical support from the cooperative, earn a good income. Felipe bought his 42 acres of land (less than 20 hectares but a fairly large area in this context) in 1987. He used to grow yucca (cassava), citrus and pineapple on most of his land. Cocoa is a new crop for him, and he planted three acres a few years ago when he joined Divisoria. He is lucky, because his land, where herbicide was sprayed during the government campaign to eradicate the illegal coca, has become fertile again. This does not apply to all estates he says - many farmers have land that is still ruined.

Manure is championed by Divisoria and Felipe has improved his land by making compost, a process he accelerates by using micro-organisms. The three acres of young trees yielded only 10kg of cocoa in 2009, but two years later the crop had increased to 400kg.

Apart from the technical assistance offered by Divisoria, Felipe was interested in their way of payment. The cooperative buys cocoa from its members at a price calculated as an average of the (fluctuating) local price. If there is any extra profit after the coffee has been exported, this is paid as a bonus to the peasants. In turn, many farmers help the

cooperative to finance the purchase of coffee or cocoa by allowing the coop to defer payment until export customers have made payment. This saves money for the coop, because it can avoid taking out a bridging loan from the bank to cover the interval between buying in the coffee and exporting it.

Women only – COAMIS RL, Nicaragua

Veronica Maria Betanco Vargaz is a farmer. She lives in the Chinandega region and is member of COAMIS RL, a women's cooperative. COAMIS is part of the Unión Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos (UNAG)-Chinandega). UNAG stimulates and supports grassroots membership amongst farmers and in 2001 women like Veronica joined forces and set up a cooperative for processing jicaro (*Crescentia alata*) seed.⁷¹

Veronica lives with her family (four children and four grandchildren) in the municipality of Villanueva. Neither her husband nor the children have fixed jobs. They work on the land and sometimes find casual work. Veronica grows maize, sorghum and sesame on a plot of two manzana (roughly 2ha). She was able to take a loan from her coop to buy cows and seeds, including vegetable seed. She also grows jicaro, a tree whose seeds are ground with rice and spices and added to milk and sugar to make a popular traditional drink known in Nicaragua as semilla de jicaro. Recently, Nicaragua started exporting this product, mainly to the United States.

Rural women in this area started to form groups a decade ago. Starting as a collective, they later became a cooperative, even though in the early days Veronica and the other women thought that cooperatives could only be set up by men. Now COAMIS has 56 members, and a local NGO provided the machinery to produce semilla de jicaro, and Veronica earns a stable income from jicaro. Veronica and one of her children organise adult education in their neighbourhood; the Ministry of Education donated videotapes to record the lessons and show them on television to a wider audience.

Better health for a woman farmer and her family – PAKISAMA, Philippines

Inday Racaz is a farmer from Sumilao, Bukidnon. Before her involvement in the Philippine Farmers for Food (PFF) project, she hardly considered planning what to grow.⁷² Nor did she think her small plot big enough to venture into farming business. All she thought about were her maize plants.

70 AIN 5733, Agriterra

71 AIN 5633, Agriterra

72 AIN 5519, Agriterra

Given this background, Inday says that the technical farming training provided under PFF in May 2010 made a big impact. It gave her extravagant dreams for her own quarter hectare. She learned the importance of farm planning and was inspired to try organic farming.

After several training courses and visits to observe organic farming processes, Inday admits that she is in for a long haul. She planted various crops in her garden and participated in PAKISAMA's vegetable cluster. Now she boasts a varied source of vegetables - squash, okra, various beans, camote tops and onions - in her own backyard. She has ample for her own daily needs. She produces her own worm-cast compost and other organic inputs which she uses as fertilizer and pesticide for her garden and demonstration area.

Inday also notes another benefit - when the family shifted to organic agriculture and ate fewer processed foods, their health improved dramatically. They hardly ever go to the doctor now for allergies, coughs and colds. These illnesses have become manageable, as Inday has a ready source of vitamin C in her vegetable garden.

Future impacts

The two examples below show an organisation and projects looking to the future. The Kenya Coffee Producers' Association is laying the foundation for environmental improvements in terms of energy use, reducing pollution and a more sustainable way of growing coffee. Women's labour will also be saved for more productive activities.

Coffee waste into energy – Kenya Coffee Producers' Association, Kenya

Rather than dumping waste from pulping coffee into rivers, there are plans to use it to produce biogas. This will fuel machinery in the coffee factory and the residue will be composted.⁷³ Given that a single biogas plant saves the daily workload of three people (usually women) who would otherwise be carrying fuel, as well as reducing indoor air pollution, this will be a good use of a product that would otherwise damage the riverine environment. Twenty coops belonging to KCPA have applied to join the scheme, and work is going ahead to prepare sites for at least eight biogas plants.

Growing coffee more sustainably in the shade – Kenya Coffee Producers' Association, Kenya

In its natural habitat, coffee grows as an understory beneath taller trees. Producing 'shade-grown' coffee in this traditional manner is less productive but more sustainable than modern intensive methods where coffee is grown in full sun. A project to establish coffee within agroforestry systems that will provide fruit, timber and fodder as well as coffee is being set up in Kenya.⁷⁴ Using links to the Kenya Forest Service and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), the best shade trees for each site will be chosen.

⁷³ AIN 5520, SCC/MTK Finland

⁷⁴ AIN 5521, SCC/MTK Finland

Annex I – Inventory of evidence used in the report

Work Area 1 – Organisational strength and inclusiveness

AIN No.	FO* and Country	Agri-agency	Level of support	Type of evaluation	Support period	Quintessence of story
5165	Faso Jigi, Mali	UPA DI	National	Internal	2007-2009 (and earlier phase)	Support to grain and shallot marketing (second phase) – food security improved
5242	FPPD, Guinea	UPA DI	Sub-national	External	2003-2010	Rural population of Middle Guinea benefiting from FO membership – FO better organised and members have higher living standards
5088	MADFA, Uganda	Trias	Sub-national	External	2008-2011?	Participatory agro-enterprise development approach allows farmers to diversify
5526	Selale Dairy Coop Union, Ethiopia	Agriterra & MTK Finland	Local	External	2010-2011	Training and technical support to dairy cooperative – members now have better market access
Several	Almost 20 FOs in 10 African countries	Afdi, FERT, UPA DI, SCC, Agriterra, MTK Finland, Trias	Various	External	2008-2011	Market-Based Agricultural Development through Farmers' Cooperative Business Programme – FOs becoming more accountable to members
5522	Meru Central Dairy Coop Union, Kenya	SCC & MTK Finland	District	External	2009-2011	Computerised financial accounting system (CoopWorks) improving accountability of dairy coop
5671	NDPFU, Vietnam	Agriterra & MTK Finland	Local	External	2011-2012	Aquaculture farmers using better techniques and increasing productivity
5257	Unickor and Coyebo, Ivory Coast	Afdi	Sub-national	Internal	2009	FO provided stability during and after conflict
5146	Maison des Paysans, Madagascar	Afdi	Sub-national	External	2008-2011	Farmers obtain credit against stored grain and can invest in next year's crop
5114	Farmer and Nature Net, Cambodia	Agriterra	National	External	2008	System of rice intensification (SRI) allows higher yields with lower inputs
Not in AIN	Mamiratra Soa, Madagascar	FERT	-	Story harvesting	-	SRI used successfully and farm expands and diversifies
4949	GEA and FUPRO, Benin	Agriterra	local	Story harvesting	2007-2010	Farmers describe benefits of training courses and access to small loans

* FO = Farmers' organisation

Work area 2 – Institutional development

AIN No.	FO and country	Agri-Agency	Level of support	Type of evaluation	Support Period	Quintessence of story
5519	PAKISAMA, NATCCO, KAMMPIL and FFF, the Philippines	Agriterra	National	External	2010-2011	Diversified and integrated organic farming system introduced for sustainable agriculture
5519	As above	Agriterra	National	Story harvesting	2009-2011	Farmers finding organic systems effective and profitable
4967	USAWA, Tanzania	FERT	Local	External	2007-2014	Links to financial services enable farmers to take out affordable loans
5560	APPOLI, Indonesia	Agriterra	Sub-national	External	2011-2013	Organic production benefiting small farmers
5509	CEFFEL, Madagascar	FERT	Sub-national	External	2009-2011	Farmers learn from horticultural research centre
-	Several, DRC	Trias	Sub-national	Internal	-	Sharing expertise on animal traction
5689, 5603, 4914	SYDIP and FOPAC NK, DRC	Agriterra	Local, regional, sub-national	Story harvesting	2007-2012	Farmers bulk up improved potatoes

Work area 3 – Policy elaboration and advocacy

AIN No.	FO and country	Agri-Agency	Level of support	Type of evaluation	Support period	Quintessence of story
Various & 5776	FOPAC, REPAM & others, DRC	Trias and Agriterra	National	Several	Various	Lobbying by many farmers' organisations accelerates the introduction of legislation on agriculture
5564	PNPR, Mali	Afdi and UPA DI	National	Internal	2010-2011	Strengthening the lobbying capacity of rice producers' organisations
5485	CAZ, Zambia	Agriterra, SCC & MTK Finland	National	External	2010-2013	Negotiating prices on behalf of cotton farmers and lobbying on policy issues
5197	FPAKI, FOPBG & CNOP-G, Guinea	Trias	Sub-national	Internal	2008-2010	Lobbying success at local and national levels
5233 & 5746	Unicafes Nacional, Brazil	Trias and MTK Finland	National	Internal	2009-11 & 2011-2012	Contact with newly-created World Farmers' Organisation
4800	FIFATAM, Madagascar	FERT	Sub-national	External	2008-2010	Land reform gives farmers better security of tenure

Work area 4 – Farmer-led economic activities

AIN No.	FO and country	Agri-Agency	Level of support	Type of Evaluation	Support period	Quintessence of story
5387	MVIWAMO & others, Tanzania	Trias	Sub-national	Internal	2007-2009	Better business opportunities for herdsmen; advice and training; poultry value chain; selling maize to WFP
5647	FNGN & UGCPA/BM, Burkina Faso	Afdi	Sub-national	External	2010-2011	Producing certified seed is business opportunity to growers and allows higher yields in wider farming community
5050	ROVA, Madagascar	FERT	Sub-national	External	2008-2011	Cooperative now runs dairy to high standards and has efficient feed mill
5571 & 5572	Thua Thien Hue Co-operative Alliance, Vietnam	MTK Finland	Sub-national	External	2007-2011	Acacia woodland starting to be better managed, timber grown to larger (more profitable) size and meeting certification standards
5072	Unions of cowpea producers, Burkina Faso	FERT	National	External	2008-2011	Cowpeas make good alternative crop to cotton, with lower rainfall and depleted soils
5651	An Giang Farmers' Union, Vietnam	Agriterra	Sub-national	Story-harvesting	2011-2014	Agro-tourism is helping farmers diversify and generate income from various services to tourists e.g. home stay, handicrafts
5578	Guiffa, Ghana	Trias	Sub-national	Internal	2011-2013	Guinea fowl production using better methods to reduce mortality and improve markets
5586	Corporación Señor Cuy, Ecuador	Trias	Sub-national	Internal	2011-2013	Expanding the market for guinea pig meat by offering pre-packed and processed items
5215	Unicafes Paraná, Brazil	Trias	Sub-national	Internal	2008-2010	Umbrella organisation provides training and investment to member dairy cooperatives
5591	Creşol Baser, Brazil	Trias	Regional	Internal	2011-2013	Small farmers able to insure their cattle
5614	Isoka District Rice Association, Zambia	Agriterra	Sub-national	Story harvesting	2011-2012	Rice association improves farming and business skills – female farmer affords school fees and improves house
5210	CEF, Burkina Faso	Agriterra	National	Story harvesting	2008-2010	Several farmers explain how they learnt to keep farm records and estimate family needs
5045	Unileite, Brazil	FERT	Local	Story harvesting	2008-2010	Family farm becomes successful milk supplier
4951	Khemisset Chaouia Cooperative, Morocco	FERT	Local	Story harvesting	2007-2009	Milk production now seen as business, daily income important especially to small producers

Cross-cutting concerns – gender and the environment

AIN No.	FO and country	Agri-Agency	Level of support	Type of evaluation	Support period	Quintessence of story
5364	Thai Nguyen Farmers' Group, Vietnam	Agriterra & MTK Finland	Sub-national	External	2009-2010 (Continuing earlier projects)	Growing tea using integrated pest management to reduce costs and environmental impact, and increase income ('safe tea' attracts higher prices)
5485	CAZ, Zambia	Agriterra, SCC & MTK Finland	National	External	2010-2013	Conservation techniques to protect soil, and labour-saving methods to benefit women
5513	NEFSCUN, Nepal	Agriterra & MTK Finland	National	External	2010-2011	Micro-finance services to 20,000 more members, most of them women
5733	CAC Divisoria, Peru	Agriterra	Local	Story harvesting	2011	Farmers grow organic and Fair Trade coffee and cocoa on land previously used for illegal coca
5633	COAMIS RL, Nicaragua	Agriterra	Local	Story harvesting	2011-2013	Women's cooperative producing the traditional drink <i>semilla de jicaro</i> and have stable income
5519	PAKISAMA, Philippines	Agriterra	National	Story harvesting	2010-2011	Woman farmer growing organic food now has better diet and healthier children
5520	KCPA, Kenya	SCC & MTK Finland	National	External	2010-2011	Plan to create biogas from coffee waste to power machinery and save women's labour carrying fuel
5521	KCPA, Kenya	SCC & MTK Finland	National	External	2010-2011	Shade-grown coffee less productive but more sustainable than coffee grown in full sun

Annex II – Deliverables under the four Work Areas

Deliverables for work area 1 – Organisational strength and inclusiveness:

- Member participation
- Human resources
- Financial management
- Governance
- Membership base
- Specific groups

Deliverables for work area 2 – Institutional development:

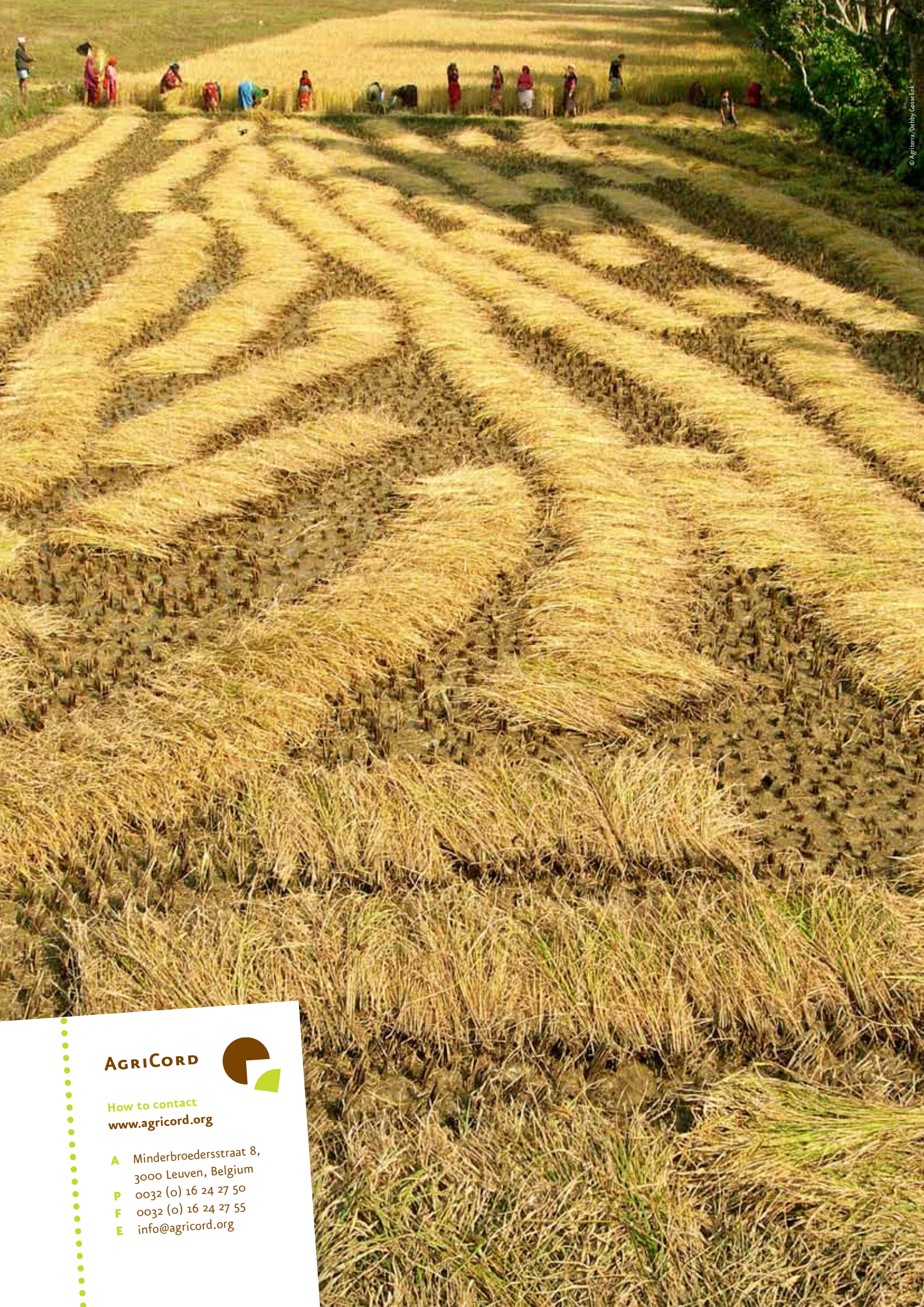
- Networking
- Formal arrangements

Deliverables for work area 3 – Policy elaboration and advocacy:

- Participatory policies
- Joint positions with other organisations
- Policy communication
- Policy adoption

Deliverables for work area 4 – Farmer-led economic development:

- Access to resources (land, water etc)
- Access to inputs
- Processing and handling
- Marketing
- Rural enterprises



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