

ASIA AND AFRICA CASE STUDIES SUMMARIES USED TO ILLUSTRATE SNV PRACTICES IN THE GENDER AND AGRICULTURE PRACTICE BRIEF

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Find here the summaries of the 12 case studies used to illustrate SNV practices and which contributed to the writing of the practice brief N° 4 focusing on Gender and Agriculture. The summaries provide an insight of the gender issue and what practices SNV implemented to address to this specific constraint. The document also offers you hyperlinks at the end of each summary to enable you read the full intervention.



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Asia



Women's empowerment in agriculture: Creating impact in the Lao rice sector

by Sengthong Phothisane and Daovanh Sotouky, SNV Lao PDR

Lao PDR is highly dependent on rice production for food security. Having identified rice millers as a key driver of change in the rice value chain, SNV focused its support on strengthening the capacity of rice millers to provide better services to their networks of smallholder rice suppliers.

SNV also contributed to the strengthening of producer groups with special attention to promotion of women in steering committees, strengthening business linkage between farmers and rice millers, and enhancing the policy environment by linking rice miller groups with concerned national and provincial agencies.

Between 2010 and 2011, SNV's support contributed to an improvement in paddy rice yields of up to 50 %, which resulted in increased income for 20,000 smallholder farmer households. In parallel, the support provided to 20 rice millers, half of whom were women, enabled them to triple their rice production capacity from 12,400 to 36,523 tonnes. Some of the women-led rice miller groups subsequently organised numerous public-private dialogues, leading to improved rice production and trading both locally and regionally.

Four other development agencies are currently in the process of, or have committed funds to, replicate and upscale this approach. With support from Rabo Bank, SNV is also expanding the programme to two more provinces with the aim of reducing food insecurity, and enhancing inclusive development of the rice sector.

[Read the full case study](#)



Women's empowerment in public land agroforestry: Evidence from Central Terai, Nepal

by Anil Shrestha, SNV Nepal

Caste and gender-based discrimination are still widely practiced in the central Terai region of Nepal. Women within the marginalised Madhesi community face double discrimination as they are traditionally not allowed to own land and other productive assets.

SNV supported APLFUN (an umbrella organisation of forestry user groups) to provide a package of services specifically targeting women and members of the *Dalit* (untouchable) caste. The measures facilitated access to public lands (on lease) for *Dalits* and female members of the Madhesi community and encourage them to take up leadership positions in forest user groups. The capacity building approach took account of cultural sensitivities with regard to women's involvement in public life, working with female role models and male leaders to influence and encourage women's participation.

Out of over 400 public land forestry (PLF) groups formed so far, 110 groups are made up exclusively of women members, while 133 have mixed male and female membership and are chaired by women. This has contributed to a significant rise in women's participation, surpassing the national target of at least 30% female participation in development activities. More broadly, there are signs of a gradual shift in the status of Madhesi women, with increased opportunities for them to participate in public land agroforestry activities and to market their produce.

[Read the full case study](#)



Enhancing gender relations in the vegetable value chain in Svay Rieng, Cambodia

by Ly Sereyryth, SNV Cambodia

Vegetable production is one of the main sources of income for poor rural households in Svay Rieng province of Cambodia. However, smallholder farmers still practice traditional cultivation methods with ineffective use of agricultural inputs, leading to low productivity. Moreover, traditional extension approaches have not only focused on male farmers, they have had limited impact due to their failure to address the specific knowledge and skills that men (and women) need to perform better in their role.

It is within this context that SNV provided capacity development support to the Cambodian Farmer Association Federation of Agricultural Producers (CFAP). A key goal of the intervention was to enhance the quality of agricultural advisory services by focusing more explicitly on the differentiated roles of male and female farmers within household vegetable businesses and developing women's entrepreneurship, marketing and leadership skills. SNV also facilitated better market linkages between commune farmers' associations and agricultural inputs suppliers and vegetable buyers.

SNV's support contributed to improved incomes for 175 households of between 4 and 15 US\$ a day per household by the end of 2011. In addition, the capacity of female farmers to make decisions on how and when to harvest and sell their produce was enhanced. More broadly, the collaboration with CFAP enabled the expansion of gender-sensitive advisory approaches to other agricultural sub-sectors. Without further support from SNV, CFAP staff successfully replicated the approaches used in the vegetable value chain project to rice production and chicken raising projects in three other provinces of Cambodia.

[Read the full case study](#)

East and Southern Africa



Empowering women in the oilseeds business: The case of PKWI women's cooperative, Uganda

by Michael A. Opio, SNV Uganda

Sunflower production is an important source of livelihood for smallholder farmers in Bukedea district in the north east of Uganda, an area still recovering from decades of conflict. However, while women provide most of the labour men control the income earned from the sale of the oilseeds, which has a negative impact on food security and the wellbeing of their families.



In order to enhance women's access to and control over productive resources, SNV supported a local farmers' cooperative, PKWI, to develop an inclusive extension services model. PKWI's 2,500 members - 1,500 of whom are women - were able to access a basket of agricultural services including seed loans, animal traction services, market information, agronomy skills and an interactive learning demonstration plot. The extension approach encouraged discussions between women and men on gender-specific roles and how to improve joint decision-making on sunflower production and marketing. SNV further encouraged PKWI to participate in an oilseeds multi-stakeholder platform (OSSUP), set up to advocate for an enabling policy environment and increased public investment in the sub-sector.

As a result of the productivity increases achieved, PKWI members now earn an additional annual income of 350 to 750 US\$ from sunflower alone. The focus on empowering female

PKWI members has enhanced women's control over the returns from sunflower production and encouraged them to engage more actively in decision-making processes at the cooperative and community levels. PKWI's experience suggests that the involvement of male spouses in PKWI groups played a crucial role in accelerating acceptance of women's changing roles at the household and community level.

[Read the full case study](#)



Enhancing women's participation in beekeeping in Zambia through technological innovations

by Claire van der Kleij and Malani Simukoko, SNV Zambia

Beekeeping in Zambia has traditionally been a male dominated occupation, due to a mix of cultural and social factors, as well as practical constraints that limit women's participation. A value chain study conducted by SNV in collaboration with other partners in 2005 revealed

that despite the potential of the honey sector in improving rural livelihoods there was minimal upgrading of beekeeping practices. Building on the study findings and comparative experiences in Ethiopia, SNV saw an opportunity to stimulate technological and market innovations that would also enhance women's participation and poverty reduction.

In collaboration with the North-Western Beekeepers Association (NWBKA) and Mpongwe Beekeepers Enterprise (MPE), the SNV intervention introduced modern top-bar beehives that can be installed close to the household and easily managed by women. Linked to this, SNV facilitated awareness raising on the importance of enhancing women's involvement in the sector and supported the two associations to mobilise women beekeepers to form groups so as to facilitate access to credit as well as technical and management support.

One of the immediate outcomes of the intervention has been an increase in the number of women beekeepers, from virtually none to around 450 women beekeepers at present in North-Western Province alone. So far, MPE has achieved 33% women participation in its supply chain, of which slightly more than 60% are organised in producer groups.

The use of top-bar beehives has contributed to higher household incomes not only due to the higher yields achieved but the higher quality of the honey produced. This has led to growing demand in the market and new opportunities for upscaling the SNV approach into areas beyond North-Western and Copperbelt Provinces. To achieve sustainability, however, there is need for continuous innovation to ensure that the technology remains affordable, and to link technical training and support with the means for poor women producers to get their products to the market.

[Read the full case study](#)



Empowering pastoral women producers and traders in the Kenya camel milk value chain: The Anolei women's camel milk cooperative

by Morgan Meitamei Siloma, SNV Kenya

Camels play an increasingly important role in improving food security and livelihoods in Kenya's drylands. While women in pastoralist societies had limited access to livestock, they were traditionally granted rights to use the milk as a source of food for their families. Due to the growing demand for camel milk in recent years, women are increasingly involved in selling the

surplus milk to generate an income for their households. This provided a unique entry

point for SNV to explore how to enhance women's involvement in the thriving camel milk value chain in Isiolo District of north eastern Kenya.

One of SNV's objectives was to strengthen the capacity of the Anolei women's camel milk cooperative as a catalyst for the development of the dairy value chain. In addition to facilitating business development services and marketing activities such as food fairs, SNV provided capacity development support to the Kenya Camel Association (KCA) to advocate for an enabling policy environment for the commercialisation of camel milk.

So far, SNV support has contributed to improved incomes for female traders and producers, averaging about 60,000 Kenya shillings (750 US\$) a month per household and benefitting about 300 households (of which 65% are headed by women). The project has also contributed to better coordination of the camel milk sector through SNV's partnership with KCA. Beyond these successes, a business model is emerging that revolves around the establishment of a women-led cooperative to guide further upscaling.

While the initiative is still in its early stages it highlights the importance of adopting a value-chain approach to stimulate the growth of the sector as a whole. SNV Kenya has received new funding from EU KRDP and USAID REGAL programmes that will partly be used to expand the approach to three new hubs. A key challenge in upscaling the model will be attracting more private investment due to continuing insecurity and poor transport links to the remote region.

[Read the full case study](#)



Investing in women farmers to improve household food security: The case of women dairy producers in Kapchorwa, Uganda
by Peter Okaye Olupot, SNV Uganda

In addition to playing a central role in dairy and agricultural production, women in Kapchorwa district are increasingly involved in agricultural businesses. However, they continue to face major barriers with regard to access and control of production resources and dairy markets.

Through a partnership agreement with the Kapchorwa Community Development Association (KACODA), SNV contributed to the strengthening of 13 dairy producer groups (with 300 female members) in improved dairy and food production techniques, leadership and milk marketing skills. An important component was the training of 20 female community animal health workers (CAHWs) to provide extension services to dairy farmers. This created local employment for women but most importantly, made extension services more accessible to women producers. These initiatives have led to substantial improvements in milk productivity and quality enabling the cooperative to increase the price paid to producers (from 600 to 1200 Uganda shillings per litre).

The focus on women's empowerment has enhanced their economic and social status and encouraged women to become much more proactive in identifying, and investing in, other critical areas of improvement, such as biogas for domestic energy.

[Read the full case study](#)

West and Central Africa



Adding value to village women's savings groups through cooperative development in Ghana by Eric Banye, SNV Ghana

In northern Ghana the main source of income for most rural women is the production and sale of shea nuts and butter, providing employment and income for approximately 900,000 women in three regions. A value chain analysis facilitated by SNV found that women smallholder producers are strongly disadvantaged as they are compelled to sell off their produce to intermediaries at the end of the harvest season when prices are lowest.

SNV and its partners supported the adaption and upscaling of community-based micro finance initiatives. This enabled the women to collectively stockpile their shea nuts and sell them when prices were more favourable. SNV's also facilitated the strengthening 480 women's groups with a total membership of 13,260 women and 180 men, turning them into viable business enterprises and enhancing their links to the market.

As a result, shea incomes for the women's groups rose from 326.4 US\$ to 459 US\$ per metric ton in 2011 alone, while the cumulative assets are valued at nearly 2.5 million US\$. More members have been able to send their children back to school and to pay for health insurance. Moreover, female producers have become more assertive in engaging with buyers and middlemen.

One of the key lessons learnt is that with adequate support the process of transforming women's groups into cooperative societies can enhance women's enterprises by binding group members into a business unit and enabling them to engage in (and meet the requirements of) contractual agreements.

[Read the full case study](#)



Women's land inheritance rights in Islam: The case of Niger by Youssouf Boubacar Cissé, SNV Niger

In the Zinder region of Niger, customary land inheritance laws - governed by local religious leaders known as *marabouts* - traditionally denied ownership rights for women. *Marabouts* used their leverage to interpret the religious passages in favour of male descendants, contrary to guidance in the Quran.

Consequently, women had to rent or borrow land from third parties, or even their husbands, to produce food and cash crops.

In collaboration with the Land Commission, a public body, and an NGO, the Nonviolent Conflict Management Network (GENOVICO), SNV conducted a diagnostic study in four agricultural council areas to collect testimonies from women and facilitate consultations with a broad cross-section of local stakeholders. Following the consultative process, a focus group was created comprising representatives of land commissions, *marabouts*, the Islamic Association (ANASI), women's associations, and administrative and traditional authorities, among other interest groups. With support from SNV the focus group prepared a practical guide on women's inheritance rights that was endorsed by the National Islamic Association. Follow up awareness-raising sessions were also held to sensitise *marabouts* on the re-interpretation of the relevant passages in the Quran and encourage them to adopt the new guidelines. To date, at least two women have claimed and obtained their share of land in accordance with the new laws.

The broad-based consultations organised as part of the SNV initiative provided an important forum for women to voice their concerns to decision makers at the municipal, departmental and regional levels. However, sustained impact can only be achieved if there is a critical mass of empowered women leaders who can continue the dialogue with administrative and traditional authorities and land commissions and serve as role models for other women.

[Read the full case study](#)



Droits de succession du foncier pour les femmes en islam, par Youssouf Boubacar Cissé, SNV Niger

Dans la région de Zinder au Niger, les femmes n'ont pas accès à la propriété de la terre. Le droit de propriété leur est refusé au moment du partage de l'héritage, opération gérée par les marabouts, selon une interprétation erronée des versets du coran en faveur des hommes. Ceux-ci le faisaient soit par

ignorance soit par appât du gain car ils se partageaient illégalement les parts de terre des femmes. En conséquence, les femmes se doivent de louer ou d'emprunter des terres avec de tierces personnes ou généralement avec leurs maris pour la production vivrière nécessaire à l'alimentation de la famille et certaines productions de rente. Ces pratiques aggravent leur vulnérabilité et leur appauvrissement au sein de la société. Or, selon le coran, la femme tout comme l'homme hérite de la terre selon des proportions définies. En effet, la succession est faite en termes de ration à savoir 2/3 pour l'homme et 1/3 pour la femme mais peut varier selon les situations.

L'intervention de la SNV, démarrée en 2007, vise à permettre aux femmes d'accéder à la propriété foncière. Les opérations d'héritage étant gérées par les marabouts, la stratégie choisie a été de travailler sur la base de ce qui est prescrit dans le coran. C'est ainsi que la SNV, en collaboration avec les commissions foncières (structures étatiques du code rural chargées de la sécurisation des droits fonciers des opérateurs ruraux) et le réseau de Gestion Non Violente des Conflits (GENOVICO), a réalisé une étude diagnostique dans quatre communes agricoles. Cette étude diagnostique, qui a recueilli de nombreux témoignages de femmes, des chefs traditionnels, des maires, etc., a permis de confirmer que les marabouts n'octroyaient pas de terres aux femmes lors des partages de l'héritage. L'approche adoptée a permis de mettre en place une large concertation avec les différents acteurs et un groupe de réflexions composé des représentants des commissions foncières, des marabouts membres de l'association islamique (ANASI), des associations des femmes, des autorités administratives et coutumières. Enfin, sur la base des résultats du groupe précédent, un groupe de travail restreint composé de marabouts, de trois membres de GENOVICO, appuyé par un conseiller SNV a élaboré un guide sur les droits de succession des femmes sur tous les biens laissés par un(e) défunt(e) y compris la terre. Les différents versets du coran relatifs à la succession constituent l'essentiel de ce document. Les travaux ont été sanctionnés par l'élaboration d'un guide validé par l'association islamique nationale et prêt à être diffusé et vulgarisé. D'ores et déjà, la SNV a édité plus de 2000 copies distribuées aux acteurs de la région de Zinder et les autres régions. Par ailleurs, l'on note une prise de conscience de tous les acteurs et un engagement des marabouts suite à leur implication et leur responsabilisation depuis la restitution des résultats, à procéder dorénavant au partage de l'héritage selon le guide.

A ce jour, au moins deux (2) femmes des communes où l'étude diagnostique a été menée ont pu réclamer et obtenir leur part de terre en héritage.

A travers cette intervention, l'opportunité a été donnée aux couches défavorisées de participer aux débats organisés à différents niveaux communal, départemental et régional et de ressortir en toute liberté leurs problèmes par rapport à l'héritage. Toutefois certains facteurs sont fondamentaux en vue du maintien et de la réplication de l'intervention. Ce sont entre autres le renforcement du leadership des femmes qui pourront porter les demandes des autres femmes de la communauté, vers les autorités administratives et coutumières et les commissions foncières. La diffusion du guide sur les radios

communautaires de même que l'organisation de caravanes de sensibilisation permettront d'étendre cette démarche et l'application de ces nouvelles pratiques dans d'autres régions.

[Lire le cas complet](#)



Creating competitive market models in Burkina Faso: The case of Nununa women's shea butter federation
by Lassina Konaté, SNV Burkina Faso

Shea butter is Burkina Faso's fourth largest export after gold, cotton and livestock products, providing the primary source of income for nearly 500,000 women involved in the collection and processing of shea nuts. However, women are largely excluded from higher-level processing and marketing activities within the value chain where there are more opportunities to benefit from the growing international demand for shea products.

It is for this reason that SNV explored strategies for building sustainable women-owned businesses in the shea value chain. The Nununa Federation, which brings together 92 women's groups representing around 4000 members, was experiencing difficulties in meeting delivery schedules and guaranteeing quality due to a mix of high production costs, poor management and unreliable supplies. With SNV support, the Federation conducted a strategic assessment in 2009, which concluded that the business model in use was not competitive and demonstrated the potential advantages of creating a single semi-industrial processing unit. The Federation subsequently acquired funding from the Agridius Foundation, to establish a new factory, enabling it to double production capacity to 600 metric tons while substantially cutting costs.

Thanks to the introduction of more efficient production methods, Nununa's members did not only earn more for supplying shea kernels, they were also able to diversify their income-generating activities due to the reduced workload. Increased commercialisation of shea butter processing has benefitted more than 24,000 individuals.

SNV's support has had a direct impact in securing increased income for female shea producers and the emergence of a well-managed women's cooperative with an increasingly market-oriented outlook. However there is need for sustained support to enable the Federation to continue to innovate and maintain its competitive advantages in a complex market environment.

[Read the full case study](#)



Multi-actor platforms for facilitating women's access to productive resources: A case study of the shea women's association of Houet
by Aurokiatou Traoré, SNV Burkina Faso

As the principal users of shea resources women have an important stake in accessing and managing shea trees in protected areas, village sacred forests and (male-owned) family farms. However, this

often leads to conflicts between female shea harvesters and male landowners, traditional authorities and environmental protection agencies.

It is against this backdrop that SNV helped to facilitate access and control to five shea parks by the 300-member Shea Products Women's Association of Houet. SNV started by facilitating a diagnostic study to identify all actors involved in the management of shea parks and the power relations between them. This led to the establishment of a multi-actor platform to initiate dialogue on more equitable sharing of natural resources. SNV also

provided capacity development support to enhance women's negotiation, leadership and management skills. The association successfully lobbied the environmental services department and traditional authorities for the right to harvest nuts from shea trees in the protected areas. The women also obtained ownership rights over 10 hectares of public land located in four municipal areas.

With enhanced access to these resources, women had greater incentives to invest in reforestation and maintenance of the parks, which will contribute to increased production and income over the medium term to long term. Moreover, the creation of a consultative multi-actor platform has provided a fresh impetus for joint reflection and dialogue among the different interest groups. This has helped to reduce conflict and opened up opportunities for inclusive and sustainable management of productive resources in the Koundougou area and beyond.

[Read the full case study](#)



Les plateformes multi-acteurs, une alternative pour l'accès des femmes aux parcs à karité : Cas de l'union des groupements de productrices du Houet (UGPPK/H) au Burkina Faso, Aurokiatou Traoré, SNV Burkina Faso

Le karité (*Vitellaria paradoxa* C.F. Gaertn) est une ressource stratégique pour le Burkina Faso de par sa contribution à l'économie, à la sécurité alimentaire et

fournissant un revenu à plus de 500 000 femmes. Cependant, on constate un accès limité des femmes aux arbres à karité situés dans les zones protégées, dans les forêts créées villageoises et dans des champs familiaux. Ces zones qui abritent l'essentiel des pieds de karité constituent les lieux d'approvisionnement des femmes en noix de karité. Cette situation cause des conflits de diverses natures entre des acteurs aux perceptions et intérêts divergents : conflits de genre entre hommes propriétaires et femmes collectrices ; conflit entre collectrices et coutumiers ; et entre collectrices et services de l'environnement. Le faible accès aux parcs à karité limite le revenu des femmes et influence négativement le rendement des parcs qui ne sont pas entièrement valorisés. Dans ce contexte, la SNV a contribué à la facilitation de l'accès et du contrôle des femmes de l'Union des Groupements de Productrices des Produits du Karité du Houet (UGPPK/H) sur 5 parcs à karité dans la Province du Houet. Analysant les principaux facteurs limitant l'accès des femmes aux arbres à karité et liés principalement à des pesanteurs socio-culturelles et politiques (traditionnellement la femme n'a pas un droit de propriété sur les terres), une étude diagnostique a permis l'identification des acteurs impliqués dans la gestion des parcs à karité et les relations de pouvoir entre ces acteurs. L'intervention de la SNV a facilité le processus de concertation entre ces acteurs. Cette plateforme a impliqué tous les acteurs prenant part à la gestion des ressources naturelles notamment le karité dans la zone de Koundougou : les maires des quatre communes que couvrent l'UGPPK/H, les services déconcentrés de l'Etat chargés de l'Agriculture et de l'Environnement, les Directions provinciales de l'enseignement de Base et de l'Alphabétisation, les coutumiers et les femmes de l'UGPPK/H. Les activités de la plateforme sont basées sur le dialogue, sur des ateliers et des journées portes ouvertes. Des actions de renforcement de capacités de négociation, leadership et management ont été aussi conduites à l'endroit de l'Union. Cette approche participative et consultative a permis une dynamique de réflexion et d'action au niveau de tous les acteurs. Des résultats palpables ont été obtenus grâce à cette intervention. La capacité de négociation et le leadership des femmes dans le processus ont été améliorés, ce qui a conduit les femmes de 5 groupements membres de UGPPK/H représentant 300 femmes à demander aux services déconcentrés de l'environnement un droit d'exploitation des arbres à karité sur les espaces protégés chaque année. Elles ont également obtenu des chefs coutumiers un droit de propriété sur 5 parcs d'une dizaine d'hectares (environ 550 pieds de karité) situés dans 3 communes (elles sont désormais propriétaires de ces parcs). Cet accès sécurisé incite les femmes à investir dans l'entretien et la reforestation de ces parcs, ce qui accroîtra leur productivité à moyen terme. Par ailleurs la plateforme multi acteurs

créée en début d'intervention travaille sur un projet de convention locale collective qui permettra la régulation de la gestion des parcs. Toutes ces actions qui ont permis de réduire les conflits entre les acteurs, auront un impact durable sur la gestion et l'exploitation des arbres à karité au profit des femmes et de la communauté entière. La création d'un espace de dialogue via la mise en place d'une plateforme de concertation multi acteur a été un des facteurs de succès de cette intervention. Cette plateforme permettra la poursuite du dialogue entre acteurs et les résultats obtenus inciteront à la réplication du processus par d'autres organisations.

[Lire le cas complet](#)



Reducing gender inequalities in Benin's agricultural sector: The role of cotton producer organisations

by Abibath Hayeth Idrissou, SNV Benin

Although women provide the bulk of agricultural labour they have limited access to revenues from the sale of cotton, the main cash crop in Benin. Women, however, play a more active role in the production of food crops such as maize and rice. SNV provided support to the Programme for Strengthening Cotton Producer Organisations (PROCOTON) to conduct a

gender analysis of producer organisations in its intervention area in order to develop strategies strengthening women's producer groups for crops other than cotton.

Initiated at the end of 2010, this approach has been adopted in 10 council areas in Benin, including Djougou and Coby in northern Benin and is already producing encouraging results. In Djougou, PROCOTON provided support to a 26-member women's group involved in producing and selling maize. Before receiving support the group had been unsuccessfully in building up group stocks to sell when prices were high. In 2011, the group raised a capital of about 160,000 CFA (about 315 US\$) to acquire an initial stock of about two metric tons of maize, resulting in a net profit of about 35% when the maize was sold. In Coby council area a women's group with 64 members received practical training on improved cultivation practices combined with support to access farm inputs, enabling them to nearly double average yields of paddy rice from 1.2 tonnes a hectare to 2 tonnes a hectare.

This pilot intervention shows the potential for developing women's groups as successful small businesses, creating new opportunities to improve the incomes of their members. However, additional efforts are needed to enable the groups to consolidate good management practices and defend the interests of their members participating in decision-making organs of the umbrella cotton producers' organisation.

[Read the full case study](#)



Réduction des inégalités de genre : les organisations de producteurs de coton engagées pour l'empowerment économique des femmes

Abibath IDRISOU – Bénin

Au Bénin, l'économie est essentiellement basée sur l'agriculture avec comme principale culture de rente le coton produit par des exploitations familiales paysannes cotonnières (EFPC) en milieu rural. De par leur participation dans la quasi-totalité des opérations culturales, le rôle des femmes dans le

développement des exploitations est incontournable. En effet, elles représentent environ 42% des actifs agricoles en milieu rural et assurent plus de 70% de la main d'oeuvre. Toutefois, force est de constater que cet effort reste peu valorisé car on assiste à un faible accès des femmes aux revenus issus de la vente du coton, revenu entièrement contrôlé par les chefs d'exploitations, qui sont des hommes, en charge de la vente du produit final.

A l'inverse de la culture du coton où les femmes sont faiblement positionnées, ces dernières sont mieux valorisées dans la production des spéculations vivrières. Dans le but de contribuer à réduire ces inégalités et pour améliorer de façon durable le revenu des femmes membres des EFPC, la SNV-Bénin à travers le Programme de Renforcement des Organisations de Producteurs de Coton (PROCOTON) a entrepris une analyse genre de ces organisations dans sa zone d'intervention. Vu que le programme vise également à promouvoir les autres cultures produites dans les exploitations cotonnières, l'analyse a permis d'orienter les interventions sur trois axes :

- promouvoir l'empowerment économique des femmes en renforçant les groupements de femmes (GF) sur les spéculations autres que le coton dans les exploitations cotonnières : production, achat/stockage, transformation et vente groupée
- appuyer la gestion interne des groupements
- renforcer le leadership des femmes pour une meilleure participation dans les instances de gestion d'organisations de producteurs.

Les interventions sont menées au niveau des groupements de femmes, membres des unions communales de producteurs. Les unions, interlocutrices directes de la SNV ont joué un rôle déterminant dans ce processus, d'une part en coordonnant et participant (Conseil d'administration et techniciens) à toutes les rencontres d'analyse et d'autre part en facilitant la mise en œuvre et le suivi des actions de renforcement des groupements de femmes. Démarrée en fin 2010, cette approche développée dans 10 communes du Bénin dont Djougou et cobly au nord (90 femmes bénéficiaires) respectivement sur le maïs et le riz montre déjà des résultats intéressants. Il s'agit notamment de l'amélioration de la productivité et de la production, l'augmentation des taux de transformation, l'obtention de meilleurs prix de vente par la promotion de la vente groupée, la dynamisation des groupements de femmes, le renforcement de la confiance des femmes en leur potentiel de développement.

Plus spécifiquement, à djougou, le groupement de femmes avec ses 26 membres dont l'activité est le stockage-achat-vente du maïs n'avait auparavant jamais pu constituer un stock de groupe. Chaque femme commercialisait son maïs de façon individuelle. En 2011, le GF a pu constituer un capital social d'environ 160.000 FCFA et acquérir un stock initial de maïs d'environ 2 tonnes dont la vente a permis d'effectuer un bénéfice net d'environ 35% par rapport au capital investi. Dans la commune de Cobly, le groupement de femmes avec 64 membres qui a bénéficié de formations pratiques sur l'itinéraire technique et un appui pour l'accès aux intrants, a amélioré son rendement moyen de riz paddy passant de 1,2t/ha à 2t/ha avec un volume de production de 5,6 t à 10 t. Ces réalisations technico-financières sont soutenues par un appui organisationnel afin de garantir une gestion adéquate et transparente de ces ressources.

Cette intervention pilote montre des possibilités de développement des groupements de femmes en petites entreprises performantes ainsi que l'opportunité de l'amélioration des revenus de leurs membres. Ces résultats contribuent à améliorer les conditions de vie des ménages par une meilleure satisfaction des besoins pratiques en santé, éducation, alimentation etc. fortement pris en charge par les revenus de ces femmes.

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