Strengthening the Capacity of Women Farmers to Influence Agricultural Policy Development in Southern Africa

WOMEN ACCESSING REALIGNDED MARKETS (WARM) PROJECT

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I. CHARITABLE PURPOSE

To increase women farmers’ access to appropriate agricultural inputs by empowering them to express their needs and to generate evidence that is used to align policy research agendas and service institutions to meet women farmers’ needs.

II. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Agriculture is central to the livelihoods of the rural poor and in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Agricultural development is necessary for reducing poverty and food insecurity, and can be the engine of economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa, where it contributes 35% of the gross domestic product (GDP) (FAO, 2009).

According to FAO, women in Sub-Saharan African countries constitute 70% of the agricultural workers and provide 60-80% of the labor to produce food for household consumption and sale. They are also responsible for 100% of the processing of basic foodstuffs; 80% of food storage and transport from field to village; 90% of the hoeing and weeding work; and 60% of the harvesting and marketing activities (FAO Women and Population Division, 2007). These data indicate that women farmers bear more than half of the responsibility for agricultural labor. However, their agricultural productivity and their access to markets is generally very low. Consequently, women-headed rural households tend to be poorer and more food insecure than those headed by men (FAO, 2009).

Meeting the Needs of Women Farmers

Women are already engaged in farming and seeking ways in which to increase their production and earnings (see text box). However, they are often marginalized in business relations and have minimal control over access to factors of production like land, inputs such as seed and fertilizer, credit and technology. Due to a convergence of logistical, cultural and economic factors, they are often not able to benefit fully from assistance programs and services. Worldwide, women farmers still receive only five percent of all agricultural extension services. A recent FAO study found that if women received the same education and similar inputs and assistance as men, overall farm yields could rise by as much as 22 percent (FAO Women and Population Division, 2007).

In many instances, women subsistence farmers are eager to enter agricultural markets but they face many problems. The case of Wilma Maziya, a widow and subsistence farmer in the Eastern Lubombo region of Swaziland, who beat the region’s lack of rainfall by planting sorghum instead of maize, illustrates some of them. Maziya beat the region’s lack of rainfall by planting sorghum instead of maize. But she has little reason to increase productivity. "We will cook this [sorghum] or trade it with neighbours. But where can I sell it? There are no markets here… If I could sell my surplus sorghum, I would grow more," she says. Maziya has never been visited by a representative of the National Agricultural Marketing Board, which was set up to encourage farmers to raise their standard of living by growing cash crops, and helps by trucking their crops to central wholesalers. She added: "Swaziland used to be self-sufficient in food," she said. "I have no doubt that if the women are given the assistance they need - because the nation needs them now more than ever - we will go a long way to making the most of our national potential."


Access to Agricultural Inputs

One major impediment to improved smallholder agricultural productivity in Africa has been limited access to indispensable inputs such as improved seed varieties and fertilizer. This problem is exacerbated by a lack of efficient output markets and gaps in policy which impair the effectiveness of market systems for vulnerable households that have lost productive assets such as manpower, agricultural equipment and cattle for ploughing due to a variety of reasons that include HIV and AIDS and poverty. The immediate need is basic support in the form of seed and fertilizer to produce food for the family. Once this need is met, additional support in the form of assets, inputs, credit extension
services and supportive policies is needed to help these households become more productive and enter commercial markets to generate income and improve their livelihoods.

In recent years, a number of initiatives have been developed to improve rural livelihoods and reduce poverty through better access to input and output markets. The concept of Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P), for example, is currently being promoted by international donors such as the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) (www.M4Pnetwork.org) as an approach to make market systems work more effectively and inclusively for the poor. The Rome based food agencies (WFP, FAO and IFAD) recently launched the Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative that seeks to create reliable markets for small scale farmers. This initiative aims to help small scale farmers by creating a stable demand for their produce and increasing their access to credit, inputs and markets. In June 2008, the food agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) to improve food production, food security and rural incomes, and thus opening up opportunities for small farmers, through P4P.

Over the last four years, FANRPAN has been assessing and promoting policies designed to increase access to agricultural inputs and build input markets. Our studies show that provision of relief seeds and other inputs is a worthwhile and cost-effective investment when done right. Moreover, as demonstrated by the FANRPAN Seed Voucher Study in Malawi, such assistance can be provided while building commercial input markets to sustain agricultural growth in the region (http://www.fanrpan.org/documents/d00566/; http://www.fanrpan.org/documents/d00567/).

Our work has also revealed the importance of targeting inputs and assistance (http://www.fanrpan.org/documents/d00217). All too often, development organizations and government agencies follow a “one size fits all” approach to providing agricultural assistance. Because different households have different needs and different capacities, much of this assistance is under-utilized. This waste can be prevented if assistance is more focused, strategic, and aligned with the challenges and capacities of the beneficiaries.

While market access is a problem for many people in rural Africa, the situation is substantially worse for women farmers. In many instances, policies and programs in rural areas, as implemented at the local level, are not responsive to women’s needs. In part, this is because planners and policy-makers are often not even aware that women farmers face special and specific challenges and that programs need to be designed with their situations in mind.

Even when supportive programs and services exist in their communities, women may lack the information or community support to make use of these services. Women are often excluded from decision-making processes and local governance mechanisms. Groups and leaders that represent community interests do not understand women’s needs and do not believe that women can articulate problems or assist in developing solutions. As a result, women farmers are excluded from most programs and institutional arrangements designed to improve the livelihoods of farmers.

Three things are needed to bridge this gap between what input assistance women farmers need and the services and programs that are currently in place. First, we must empower women to speak up for themselves so they can express their needs and concerns, participate in developing solutions and advocate for appropriate programs and services. Second, we must develop the capacity of researchers and policy-makers and development agencies to collect more fine-grained and practical information from the field, so that assistance can be provided in a more responsive and nuanced way. Third, we must sensitize relevant policy-makers and advocates to the special needs of women farmers to create an environment that is conducive to women farmers.
**Empowering Women Farmers**

The WARM project seeks to inform, empower and mobilize women farmers to express their needs through a culturally appropriate medium and engage their communities in developing solutions to their problems. It does this through Theater for Policy Advocacy (TPA), a form of participatory theatre that encourages improvisation and allows for community participation.

TPA performances are scripted around particular themes and issues (in this case, women's access to agricultural inputs) and serve to sensitize the entire community to that problem or concern. The performance is followed by a series of facilitated dialogues wherein different segments of the community (e.g. youth, working men and women, community leaders, NGO staff, parliamentarians, business community, elders, etc.) work in groups to develop ideas to address the issue. During these dialogues, the community also identifies leaders and spokespersons to advocate for action on these issues. Thus, TPA works to simultaneously express a problem, develop solutions and initiate action towards those solutions.

This model brings together practical knowledge gained from the community with the technical knowledge of specialists, thus bridging a gap that often hinders the development of effective and workable solutions. It uses people from the community to communicate about the issues and empowers them to become agents for social change. The advocates have the support of their community, and access to training, research, and policy expertise to help form and articulate their arguments. Once this platform is established it becomes a permanent communications tool, both for sensitizing the community to development-related issues; and for communicating these issues to internal and external decision-makers.
Advocacy and Information Dissemination at the National and Regional Levels

The information and ideas revealed through the TPA exercise will then be packaged and communicated to policy makers, researchers, development NGOs and relevant private sector actors. Our goal is that this finer grained, practical information from the field will inform the agenda, thinking and programs of these organizations, thereby facilitating women farmers’ access to agricultural inputs.

Research Institutions

The apparent void in relevant and up-to-date data and information concerning women in agriculture gives a distorted view of the real situation of rural women farmers. Policy makers lack the right information needed to inform policy development and more analytical statistics (e.g. gender disaggregated impact data) which can be used to fine tune programs and policies to reach the most vulnerable and needy segments of the population. More participatory, people-centered research is needed to evaluate how existing policies play out in the field, who really benefits from them, and how they can be refined to help the maximum number of people and increase overall productivity and incomes. Few universities have the appropriate tools, orientation and methodology to provide this information. Collaboration with university researchers in this project is therefore necessary to ensure that relevant information about women farmers’ needs is communicated to policy-makers and to inspire the development of appropriate methodologies for collecting and sharing such information.
The WARM project will provide an opportunity for university researchers to communicate “shelf” knowledge (sitting in university libraries and in international journals) to local and community decision-makers so that it can be used to help frame their problems and develop solutions. It also enables researchers to capture community voices to refine their knowledge and research agenda. This will not only benefit the project focal area but will help contribute more meaningfully to economic development and intellectual discourse that helps address regional, national and specific community development imperatives. FANRPAN will make use of the Household Vulnerability mapping tool that it has developed and used in partnership with World Vision International to assess household livelihood strategies, access to inputs and services, and coping mechanisms in three African countries. [www.fanrpan.org/documents/d00600/index.php - 32k]

**Development NGOs**

Development NGOs have been working in rural Africa for decades, and many have made long-term commitments to particular regions and communities. Most of them have concentrated their efforts at local level, with little effort made to scale up or influence policy. However, NGOs are becoming increasingly sensitive to creating long-term dependence amongst beneficiaries of their programmes, and are seeking answers to important questions such as:

1. How best to help communities develop and implement their own solutions rather than foisting readymade solutions on them;
2. How best to influence policies vertically and alter social and institutional factors to achieve national and region wide impact; and
3. How best to create institutions that serve and service the needs of women farmers. The WARM project will help provide some answers to these questions by communicating the special needs of women farmers and home-grown community solutions to the NGOs working in the region. Moreover, the TPA methodology itself and the creation of empowered women advocates can serve as a tool and a model for mobilizing other communities around specific issues.

Despite their best intentions to serve communities, both universities and NGOs often find it difficult to synergize their efforts and positively influence economic development. The TPA process provides a mechanism to enable academics and development experts to learn and feedback their learning to the communities, so as to contribute to better decision making. By breaking down the communication barriers between three key constituencies—women farmers, policy researchers and NGOs, the WARM project will empower women, inform NGO programming and educate researchers to unpack and provide the necessary knowledge to support women farmers’ quest for economic prosperity and improved livelihood. Furthermore, once the communication barriers are broken and a permanent platform for dialogue is in place, women will understand the role of various service institutions, this will enable them to influence these institutions and take up leadership positions in key organisations such as commodity associations, farming unions and all other networks that contribute to economic development.

**Farmer Organizations**

Another important target audience for this project is farmer organizations. National farmers’ groups, such as Mozambique’s National Union of Peasant Farmers (UNAC) in Mozambique and the National Association of Small-holder Farmers of Malawi (NASFAM) in Malawi work to express farmers’ concerns and influence allocation of resources. These groups are, however, primarily dominated by men, and do not give sufficient importance to women’s needs and concerns, thereby neglecting a sizeable proportion of their constituency. In some cases, women farmers are excluded from these organizations because they do not legally own the land they farm or have formal “head of household” status. By sensitizing these groups to women’s needs and by educating and empowering women, this project hopes to raise the profile of women farmer’s agenda at these organizations. Through improved awareness of the specific needs of women, the farming community at large will support and facilitate women to take up leadership positions and so as influence markets and align service institutions to their needs.

**National Policy-Makers**

FANRPAN will leverage its network and influence across the 19 countries of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African region by articulating and packaging the results of the TPA and communicating them to decision-makers at national forums and via appropriate media outlets. Local community leaders and women farmers will be invited to participate in FANRPAN national policy dialogues (held at least four times a year in each of its 13 member countries) and at the annual Regional Policy Dialogue which includes over two hundred senior policy makers from twelve countries. [http://www.fanrpan.org/documents/d00562/; http://www.fanrpan.org/documents/d00358/; http://www.fanrpan.org/documents/d00643/](http://www.fanrpan.org/documents/d00562/; http://www.fanrpan.org/documents/d00358/; http://www.fanrpan.org/documents/d00643/)
FANRPAN has been conducting policy dialogues at national and regional level, since inception in 1997, as part of its broader mandate as a regional platform that brings together governments, policy analysts, farmers, private sector and civil society to work together in policy development while being sufficiently independent to be able to provide objective evidence-based policy research, analysis and advice.

**Characteristics of FANRPAN Policy Dialogues**

1. **Linking research to Policy** - Dialogues are organized to share multi-country research outputs and policy recommendations around specific issues in the region. They serve to bridge the gap between researchers, policy and other stakeholders in the FANR sector.

2. **A 2-tier balancing act** - First level of dialogue takes place at country level. At regional level, the issues emerging from the different country nodes are then synthesized to isolate regional issues of significance to all countries. This is an excellent recipe for policy harmonization.

3. **Convening Power** - Governments have a dual-role in FANRPAN, they are active stakeholders at the same time the primary consumers of the FANRPAN research outputs and recommendations. This has given FANRPAN a very strong convening power for policy dialogues, as government is positioned side by side with CSOs to receive research evidence.

4. **Evidence more than just scientific data** - FANRPAN promotes policy options based on evidence from its own research and analysis, as well as, evidence generated by other stakeholders and ordinary citizens. Thus, evidence for the formation of policies is not only scientific data and analysis, but also voices, views, experience and feedback from various groups of people.

5. **Policy Dialogue – a process not just an event** - FANRPAN Policy analysis involves several activities: (i) researching and analyzing; (ii) designing and recommending; (iii) advising strategically; (iv) clarifying values and (v) recommending policy options.

6. **Pursuing the Issue** - The different FANRPAN stakeholders are strategically placed in sectors and institutions that command sufficient respect and influence to allow them to follow the issues through to the final stages of policy change. FANRPAN’s role, at this level, is to equip the stakeholders with information to serve as verifiable evidence.

Policy dialogues have been used as the tool for engaging the multiple stakeholders at each stage. Policy dialogues have been used, not just as a tool for defining the research agenda, but as a platform for disseminating information, soliciting knowledge from non-researchers and equipping policy advocates with evidence for policy development. The FANRPAN policy dialogues are unique in that they bring together multiple stakeholders from multiple countries to discuss multiple issues from the multiple sectors of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources.

FANRPAN will convene multi-stakeholder policy dialogues to engage all the stakeholder groups- women farmers, NGOs, researchers and policy makers to uncover and document community-based solutions to the challenges women farmers face.

**In Summary:**

- Our ultimate objective is to improve women farmers’ access to agricultural inputs by empowering them to express their needs and creating conducive research, policy environments so their voices can be heard.
- We believe this can be attained by improving both traditional and modern institutional arrangements to serve women better, enabling women to have greater say in the orientation and allocation of agricultural inputs and other supports. We expect, for example, that with additional knowledge and the support of their communities, more women will begin participating in farmer organizations and/or other local and regional policy processes and decision-making bodies.
- We aim to empower women by using theater (specifically TPA) as a tool to educate women about their rights and as a culturally appropriate platform to express their needs and concerns to local decision-makers. At the
same time, we will communicate women’s needs and the outcomes of community dialogues to policy-makers, farmers’ groups, development NGOs and other appropriate institutions so their programs can be better aligned to serve women farmers.

- We will engage policy researchers in this project, to build universities’ capacity for participatory learning and to equip women farmers with evidence for policy engagement. We see the use of TPA in the engagement of women farmers, researchers and NGOs as an innovative approach to truly enable collaboration and participation of all who have a stake in development.
- We will communicate the findings from the TPA to development NGO programs in each country, and encourage them to align their own services to women’s needs while strengthening the capacities of their local women to influence relevant policies and institutions.
- Finally, through a series of national and regional policy dialogues, we will bring the learning of this project to the attention of the national and regional media and decision-makers, so that the lessons can be applied on a larger scale to benefit more women in the Southern African region which has a population of 200 million.

III. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The ultimate goal of this project is to empower women farmers and sensitize relevant decision-makers to women’s special needs so that they can gain better access to support services and input markets.

The project has four objectives:

To provide a platform for communities to dialogue on issues that affect women farmers’ access to input markets
As discussed above, we believe that TPA is a powerful, culturally appropriate medium for voicing women farmers’ concerns, gaining acceptance for their point of view and discussing possible solutions at the community level. To achieve this goal, we will train community members, especially women farmers in TPA techniques and develop a platform for community dialogue.

Empower women farmers to play a more active role in driving the development agenda
Through the TPA training, and through their interactions with researchers, development experts, and partnering development agencies, women farmers will learn more about the policies and programs that should be serving them better and how to advocate for necessary change. They will also learn approaches for engaging policy makers and relevant institutions with a view to addressing short-comings in existing policies and programs. The project will identify community champions who can educate their peers; express women’s needs to development agencies, government service providers, and researchers; negotiate with service providers, buyers, and others on behalf of their peers; and play more active leadership roles in farmer organizations and community forums.

Align development research agenda to women farmers’ issues
Training researchers and development experts to be more sensitive to community needs, especially those of women farmers, is an important part of the project. Moreover, this project supports a two-way interaction between communities and researchers, whereby the research agenda is informed by the community, and the research outputs provide evidence and policy options to the communities, enabling them to advocate for changes that benefit them. Finally, farmers’ organizations, which are a key vehicle for expressing farmers’ concerns, need to better represent the interests of women, who are the majority of their constituents but have little voice in setting their agenda.

Align input supply institutions and programs to women farmer needs
For both Malawi and Mozambique, seed and fertilizer distribution is undertaken by government, the private sector and non-for-profit NGOs. The distribution mechanisms are usually complex resulting in lack of transparency, delays and poor targeting. Through the WARM project information on existing distribution policies and mechanisms will be made available to all stakeholders. The number of households accessing inputs will be on record and data on access and productivity will be analyzed so as to provide suppliers with information on input needs, the available markets for commercial activity and the location for vulnerable households requiring welfare support. Currently decisions on who receives free seed and fertilizer are subjective. However through WARM we will document household livelihood strategies allowing input suppliers to match services to need.
To bring women farmer concerns into national and regional policy debates

In southern Africa, home to more than 200 million people, rural communities do not exist in isolation and, as such, experience similar challenges. Therefore any beneficial program and policy changes achieved in one community should be scaled up and replicated as widely as possible. To this end, this project will (a) commission papers that link the needs of women farmers in our operational sites with broader national and regional policies, (b) convene national and regional dialogues to discuss needed changes at the macro-level, and (c) publicize the needs of women farmers and the methods and outcomes of this project through public media, including newspapers and community radio and television in the two focal countries, and ultimately, the 19 member states of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) with combined total population of 400 million inhabitants, (d) create opportunities for informed and articulate women farmer spokespersons to engage with national and regional policymakers, organisations such as SADC, COMESA and the AU, Regional programmes such as the AU/NEPAD MDG-Africa Initiative’s Business Plan for Agriculture and Food Security and NEPAD’s Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) promote coordinated actions and sharing of experience, and including women’s voices will greatly enhance the impact of these programs. FANRPAN has already been contracted by COMESA to develop a database of women’s farmer organisations and development projects they are involved in.

IV. PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This project is designed as a demonstration project to illustrate how the incorporation women farmers’ needs into discussions of agricultural policies and programs can facilitate their access to inputs and other supports, thereby increasing their productivity and incomes.

Project Sites

The project will be conducted in two countries—Mozambique and Malawi—which offer very different challenges and situations but are, in many ways, representative of other countries in the region which share similar history, culture and strong economic ties. Thus the results and findings from these two countries can be easily generalized and scaled up to other southern African countries. In both countries, agriculture is the engine for economic growth and food security, and this engine is largely driven by smallholder production. The infrastructure is ill-developed; Malawi is land-locked, whilst Mozambique has poor linkages between the northern and southern provinces, thereby creating major challenges in realizing a fully functional market economy. Most households are female headed, with the majority of men working in South African mines. In both countries, there is movement towards promoting and protecting the rights and interests of women farmers.

A Case Study of Mozambique

In Mozambique, the smallholder sector is characterized by multiple plots and multiple crops generally with very low input use, resulting in low productivity. 98% of existing producers belong to the category of smallholder farmers cultivating less than 5 ha each. Maize is grown by 80% of smallholders and covers 35% of cultivated land, it is the main food crop although it is increasingly used as source of cash, thus serving a dual purpose. Total national production in 2006 amounted to 1,400,000 MT. Yields are among the lowest in Africa at less than one MT per hectare, largely due to lack of inputs. Improved seeds are scarcely available and sold at a relatively high price on the market. Post harvest losses are estimated at 30% mainly due to inadequate storage and poor post-harvest handling at farm level. On average, only 11 percent of the maize produced is commercialized. Main factors affecting market participation decision by smallholder farmers include; type of agriculture production technology, implementation of risk mitigation strategies, availability of market information, transport costs and human and physical capital.

In order to address the 2008 food crisis, the Government of Mozambique approved, a Food Production Action Plan for the period 2008-2011. The program was designed with goals and a mechanism to implement the Green Revolution, which was launched in 2007. The Green Revolution is meant to boost production through better use of land and water resources, and use of improved seeds.

In Mozambique, there are laws that safeguard women’s access to land and right to inheritance, although operationalizing and enforcing them has been challenging. In Malawi, through a presidential initiative, government has improved small holder farmers access to inputs and the Initiative for Development and Equity in African Agriculture (IDEAA) is implementing innovative mechanisms to encourage market finance and market information systems. This project will also build on AGRA’s work in Malawi and Mozambique, a project funded by the BMG Foundation that aims to help 4.1 million farm households (80% of which are headed by women) to increase their crop yields by 50 to 100 percent.

**Malawi Productivity Case Study**

The smallholder sub—sector of Malawi comprises about 2.4 million households. Maize, the staple food crop is grown by 97% of farming households on about 1.6 million ha of smallholder farms. Over decades of intensive cultivation in the absence of significant fertilizer use, soils in smallholder fields have been depleted of nutrients. National yields of smallholder maize have averaged 1.3 MT/ha during the last 20 years. More than half of the farming households operate below subsistence. Only 20% of maize producers sell their product and most households purchase maize at much higher prices when stocks are exhausted.

In 2004/5 rainy season, many parts of the country went without rain for up to one month during January and February 2005. This dry spell had a devastating effect on maize production; the national average yield dropped to 0.76 MT/ha. Total maize production for the 2004/5 season was just 1.23 million MT—a decline of 24% from the previous year, and just 57% of the estimated national maize food requirement. The UN issued a “flash appeal” for food aid and agricultural inputs. Donors responded with food aid but were unwilling to support an input subsidy.

The Government of Malawi responded in mid-2005 with a national scheme to subsidize improved seed and fertilizer. The scheme involved the distribution of fertilizer vouchers and seed vouchers that enabled most smallholder farmers to purchase fertilizer and seed at about one quarter of the market cost. The programme reached most of Malawi’s smallholder maize farmers. Resulting harvests in 2006, 2007, 2008 have dramatically improved the level of national and household food security (see below). In the past three seasons, the country’s smallholders have recorded large increases over the 2001-2005 (pre-subsidy). The surplus of over a million MT in 2007 enabled the country to export 300, 000 MT maize to Zimbabwe and contribute to regional food security through World Food Programme (WFP) procurements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Production (mil MT)</th>
<th>5-yearav. (2001-2005) (mil MT)</th>
<th>% above av</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1.98</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.62</td>
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<td>2007</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Malawi’s experience demonstrates the feasibility and value of investing in food crops grown by smallholders as a first step towards sustained economic growth. In a country where agriculture employs 78% of the national labour force and provides food security and livelihoods for over 10 million people, agricultural productivity growth is having a direct positive effect on the broader achievement of the MDGs. The number of Malawians at risk of hunger decreased from 5 million in late 2005 to just over 500, 000 in late 2007.

In 2008, FANRPAN awarded President Bingu wa Mutharika of Malawi the FANRPAN Food Security Policy Leadership Award.


**Local Level Activities**

In each of these countries, FANRPAN will identify a specific location and a development partner program to implement the TPA. The national FANRPAN nodes, CISANET in Malawi and Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique will play an important role in identifying partners and coordinating the work in the field. Partnering with a program that is already in place will help us gain the trust of the community and will also ensure that the advocacy and mobilization of the community is leveraged and sustained. In return, development partners will benefit from the creation of a robust community dialogue platform, the information that is revealed from the TPA and the education and mobilization of women farmers in that community.
Zimbabwe-based Amakhosi Theater Company will be our lead partner for the TPA, and will be supported by other local or national theater groups in Mozambique and Malawi. We chose the Amakhosi theatre company as lead partners because it has special expertise in using theatre as a tool for social change and has successfully applied this tool throughout the southern African region. Amakhosi’s Theater for Community Action (TCA) methodology has helped rural communities in several southern African countries to change their own harmful behaviors and advocate for the services and support that they need. Amakhosi has run various theatre projects whose themes included, among others: community action, environmental action, health, and policy advocacy. These projects were either internally commissioned in response to observed community issues and challenges, or started as a direct response to demands from social development practitioners, private sector organisations, or government departments.

The partnership between FANRPAN and Amakhosi is designed to elevate Amakhosi’s use of theatre as a tool for community action (TCA) into a more powerful mechanism to bring about evidence-based policy advocacy (TPA). There are two important differences between TCA and TPA.

- The first is the incorporation of research evidence in the formulation of messages and arguments to be used in the community theater. The script for community theatre performances will be prepared jointly by theatre professionals, actors and performers identified from the communities, and development researchers from local universities. Thus, the theatrical performance will blend broad policy data and frameworks with locally identified problems and solutions.
- Second, the information and ideas generated through the theatrical performance and the ensuing dialogue with the community will be incorporated into existing policy analyses and discussions to make a strong case for policy changes at different levels of government. They will also be used to influence the work of development NGOs and farmer organizations, so that the voice of women farmers is clarified and amplified for changes at the national level. (See Country-level activities described below.)

Country-Level Activities

FANRPAN will liaise closely with national farmer unions in Mozambique and Malawi to elevate women’s voices. In Mozambique, FANRPAN will work with the Mozambique’s National Union of Peasant Farmers (UNAC) has 625 member organizations and some 49,947 members, most of whom are women. In Malawi, FANRPAN will work with the National Association of Small-holder Farmers of Malawi (NASFAM) which has a membership of 100,000 most of them farming on less than a hectare of land to support an average family of six people. NASFAM has a gender programme that ensures equitable participation of both sexes in farming and Association leadership.

In each country, FANRPAN will collaborate with existing rural development programs (including AGRA and other BMG Foundation Grantees such as Ashoka, CLUSA, AWAL-Net) that are already working to improve the livelihoods of women farmers. This project will supplement their efforts in two ways. First, it will generate much-needed data on the needs of women farmers to guide the design of programs and services. Second, by empowering and mobilizing women farmers via the TPA, and by creating opportunities for them to influence policy-makers, this project will promote policies and institutional arrangements that will complement their programmatic activities.

FANRPAN is also partnering with two major research universities—the Bunda College of Agriculture in Malawi and the Faculty of Agronomy and Forest Engineering at the Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique—to help connect development researchers to local communities, particularly women farmers. Both these universities have made a commitment to work with communities to alleviate poverty and contribute policy research and analysis to national debates. However, researchers are often hampered by inadequate access to unbiased and unfiltered community opinion and lack of appropriate research techniques to incorporate such information into their analyses. By engaging researchers in the TPA, this project will break some of the barriers between researchers and women farmers; encourage development and use of participatory methodologies; and allow researchers to apply their knowledge and expertise to help bring about real changes in the communities they serve. Building the capacity to collect community-level data and link it with national statistics and policy analyses is an important outcome for these universities.

Table 1 below shows the role of each of the participating organizations.
### Partner and Role in the Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Role in the project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FANRPAN Regional Secretariat, Pretoria</strong></td>
<td>• Implementing and overseeing the project; administration and regional coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FANRPAN Malawi hosted by CISANET</strong></td>
<td>• Identifying resources and partners at the national and local levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FANRPAN Mozambique hosted by Eduardo Mondlane University</strong></td>
<td>• Liaising with university partners and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TPA specialist: Amakhosi Theater Company (in affiliation with other theater companies as appropriate)</strong></td>
<td>• Organizing the regional and national policy dialogues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development NGO Programmes in the Field</strong></td>
<td>• Regional, international and national outreach to support the project and disseminate lessons learned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Universities: Bunda College of Agriculture (Malawi), Faculty of Agronomy and Forest Engineering, Eduardo Mondlane University (Mozambique)</strong></td>
<td>• Conducting the TPA – including professional performances, identification and training of local talent, development of script in conjunction with women farmers and development experts; staging performances and facilitating discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Coordinate country theatre groups</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Development organizations with strong local presence; have ongoing programs directed at small farmers in each of the target communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Serve as liaison to the community and participate in setting up the TPA community dialogue platform.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assist in identification of local talent and women farmer champions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Refine their own programs based on impediments identified through the TPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Help empower and motivate women farmer advocates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sustainability and Lasting Benefits

There are three critical components in the WARM project that will ensure that this project leads to some lasting changes and benefits that are sustained beyond the period of this grant.

(i) By partnering with NGOs who have long term development commitments in the communities they serve, the WARM project will leverage resources and complement programs that are already in place. The TPA methodology as well as the information it generates will guide long-lasting changes in how development NGOs work and engage women farmers.

(ii) By basing policy interventions on evidence generated through research, the WARM project will inculcate a learning culture and generate links between the universities and rural communities, particularly women. We expect that the success of this project will inspire our partner universities to continue to work more closely with rural communities and that other universities in southern Africa will follow their lead. Furthermore, as university researchers begin to generate more fine-grained, credible and practical data, their ties with local and national policy-makers will be strengthened and government agencies will begin to use their outputs more.

(iii) By training women farmers in the community to articulate their needs and use evidence to support their case, the WARM project will build social capital and capacity that can be applied to a variety of policy issues in the future. Thus we will leave these communities with a functioning platform for community dialogue and a mechanism to mobilize and organize for change. As mentioned in the TPA examples given on page 7, many participants in prior TPA projects have developed their own groups and outfits that mobilize not only their own communities but also others in the region around key social issues.

### V. POTENTIAL RISKS
VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

FANRPAN is committed to the highest standards of learning and accountability in the pursuit of its mission. This project will use a programme monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework to define systems and processes for meeting multi-stakeholder horizontal and vertical accountability needs, and provide for creating a credible and systematic knowledge base. The framework will also provide broad guidelines for the selection of evaluation methods and agents, and also for the internalization and application of such knowledge. FANRPAN is obliged to be answerable for its actions, decisions and their implications both internally and externally to its stakeholders, and especially, to the women farmers for southern Africa.

Monitoring will consist of tracking the progress of work vis-à-vis the implementation plans to enable timely corrections and adjustments to the project design. In monitoring, the focus will be on reviewing project activities, procedures, resources and outputs – aggregation and comparison of data and information. Monitoring will play an internal accountability function in ensuring compliance with standards, facilitating cost efficiency, prudent use of resources and financial accountability. Cumulative monitoring information, particularly gathered using process documentation research methodology, will serve as an important source for evaluations. Regular monitoring reports will be prepared by the Project Officers under the implementing partners in the three countries, and will be consolidated for the region by the Project Coordinator under FANRPAN for sharing with stakeholders including the Gates Foundation.

Evaluation, on the other hand, will involve tracking progress through involved and systematic research into underlying processes and trends vis-à-vis strategic goals, objectives and change hypotheses. It will also involve critical reflection and deliberation, and triangulating the perspectives of various stakeholders in the project, to facilitate learning. Two evaluations are proposed, the first after one and half years to enable mid-course strategic modifications to the project, the second at the end of the three-year project cycle.

The project evaluation will seek to ensure:

- **Effectiveness**: That the project, together with the work of partners, is contributing to the intended and planned results, and conforms to the project’s objectives.
- **Learning**: FANRPAN and the partners are learning from experience and applying the knowledge gained from the evaluations to make mid-course corrections and enhance programming.
- **Knowledge-based decision making**: The decisions are knowledge-driven, better equipped to respond to a fast changing environment, and more responsive to the project needs.
- **Internal accountability**: The efforts, processes and methods meet high quality standards, and conform to the core values of integrity, transparency, accountability, participation and inclusiveness.
- **External accountability**: FANRPAN is managing the project in a way that assures the highest standards of external accountability – to the primary change agents, partners and allies, including donors, constituents, statutory legal requirements, brand management, and general public.
- **Cost effectiveness**: The achievements are in proportion to the efforts and resources being mobilized and spent.

Methods of evaluation

FANRPAN will use a mix of methods and techniques to determine the impact of the initiative— with emphasis on participatory, qualitative and process-oriented methods, adapted to the project contexts, augmented with quantitative evidence when appropriate. The aim is capturing outcomes and trends, processes and structures that may not always be visible on the surface. Methods will incorporate the participation of the primary change agents (women farmers), and key partners and allies and also the perspectives of different stakeholders. To benchmark the organizational change within the national FANRPAN nodes, FANRPAN will use the Partner Institutional Viability Assessment tool (PIVA). This is a tool that FANRPAN is already employing to benchmark its country dialogue platforms and is most appropriate in the
WARM project and for measuring governance and leadership, operations and management systems, human resources development, financial management, program and service delivery, and external relations and advocacy.

**Fleshing out the framework:** A comprehensive M & E strategy will be developed during the inception phase of project implementation, with the full participation of the project stakeholders. The specificities and context of the project will be kept in mind when developing a comprehensive M & E strategy.

**Evaluating agency:** The mid term project review, learning and evaluation exercise for each country will be carried out by either a peer review–team or an external consultant (individual or team with an institutional affiliation such as a social science research group, applied research institute, or university department), or by a combination of both, as would be warranted by the context in the two project countries. This will mainly be a learning exercise to allow sharing and learning between the two implementing countries. The final end of project evaluation will be externally commissioned in the last quarter of year three and the evaluation team will include funding partners or their nominees.

### VII. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

FANRPAN is a multi-stakeholder, multi-national network that supports the development of better food, agriculture and natural resources (FANR) policies in Southern Africa. It was started in 1997 by a group of ten agricultural policy research institutes and was endorsed by the Ministers of Agriculture in the region. FANRPAN’s founders recognized the need for an independent source of policy analysis and advice related to FANR policies. They created FANRPAN to build the region’s capacity for policy analyses and policy dialogue, and to improve policy decision-making by enhancing the generation, exchange and use of relevant information.

In 2002, FANRPAN formalized its structure and adopted its constitution and by-laws. Since then, the organization has built a thriving multi-tiered network consisting of a regional secretariat and more than 670 members organized into national nodes in twelve Southern African countries. Each node is led by a national secretariat, housed at a respected policy institution that has the ability and credibility to lead the national debate on FANR policy issues and engage all relevant stakeholders in the conversation. The membership network in each country comprises a diverse group of organizations (including universities, farmer organisations, businesses, government agencies and civil society organizations) that have a stake in the FANR policy process. To strengthen its research capacity, FANRPAN has established formal partnership agreements with over twenty international organizations such as the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Michigan State University, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa, International Water Management Institute (IWMI). (Please see the appendix for details of FANRPAN's membership by country and type of organization and a list of FANRPAN's partners). See Appendix G – FANRPAN's network and reach profile.

FANRPAN leverages this network to deliver unbiased, high quality policy dialogue and analyses, particularly on broad trends and cross-country issues that are of significance for the entire region. Some recent and current projects include:

- The first comprehensive, multi-country study of the impact of HIV/AIDS on agricultural productivity at the household level.
- Development of the Household Vulnerability Index (HVI) and its use to target policy interventions and monitor policy impacts.
- A pioneering programme to provide input vouchers to needy farmers, thus using government assistance to develop markets for agricultural inputs (e.g. seeds and fertilizers).
- Development of the CAADP regional compacts for 19 Southern African countries.
- A study of water use in the Limpopo basin to identify policies for optimizing use of this trans-boundary resource to maximize agricultural productivity.
- A five-country study of the true contribution of agriculture to the economy.
- Exploration of the potential to produce and market biofuels.
- Coordinating an Africa wide advocacy programme on climate change policy negotiations for an all inclusive post Kyoto protocol.
FANRPAN’s products are valued by national and regional policymakers because they are developed by professionals who understand the regional context and are subject to review and debate by international experts and engaged membership. Moreover, FANRPAN also uses the network’s voice to disseminate results and provide follow-up support for policy formation and implementation.

In the last three years, FANRPAN has been rapidly expanding its network and its operations. We have organized our work into four major program areas:

- Food systems, especially the impact of policies related to global environmental changes, biotechnology, phytosanitary conditions, and trade tariffs on crop and animal-based food supplies
- Agricultural productivity, particularly as relates to trade and vulnerable groups’ access to technology and inputs such as seed, fertilizer and germplasm
- Natural resources and the environment policies on water, Biofuels, climate change
- Quantifying household vulnerability and targeting Assistance

FANRPAN has already had significant success in informing and influencing the thinking of southern African governments as well as regional bodies like SADC, COMESA and CAADP, especially with regard to these policy areas. This project will draw upon FANRPAN’s expertise in input markets and targeting assistance.

Since FANRPAN launched its new Strategic Plan in 2007, the projects portfolio has grown from 5 to 13. Partnership agreements signed with international organizations has increased from 11 to 16. Recently partnership agreements were signed with Swiss Development Agency for Cooperation (SDC), World Vision and FARA.