



Insights and Experiences of Women Smallholder Farmers in Ghana and Rwanda

**Hidden intersections of women's rights and
climate-resilient sustainable agriculture**

**Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods Project
CONSOLIDATED BASELINE SURVEY REPORT 2014**



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Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands**

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**Cover photo: Aboasa, Ghana- Akua Tudeka with her two-year old daughter Gloria in
Ghana. PHOTO: Jane Hahn/ACTIONAID**

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Definition of key terms

<i>Food security</i>	“Food security is a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life ¹ .”
<i>Leadership</i>	Leadership has been described as a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task or goal. It includes a set of skills and qualities such as being able to listen, think strategically, coach others, mobilise, communicate, collaborate, be assertive, confident and innovative.
<i>Local Rights Programme (LRP) Area</i>	LRP designates a geographical area where ActionAid International is involved in programming over a long-term period (15-20 years).
<i>Unpaid care work</i>	<p>Unpaid care work includes all activities involved in caring for a household when these activities are done by family members for no pay. These activities include cooking, cleaning, collecting water and firewood, and caring for children, older people and those who are unwell. Unpaid care work also includes voluntary community work. The term ‘unpaid’ differentiates this care from paid care provided by employees in the public and NGO (non-governmental organisation) sectors, and employees and self-employed people in the private sector.</p> <p>The word ‘care’ indicates that the services provided nurture other people.</p> <p>The word ‘work’ indicates that these activities are costly in time and energy and are undertaken as obligations (contractual or social)².</p>
<i>Recognition of unpaid care work</i>	This means that the work done by (mainly) women is ‘seen’ and acknowledged. It also means that it is recognised as ‘work’ and ‘productive’. Recognition can take several forms, including provision of compensation for the work, recognising it when determining other benefits such as pension payments, or measuring unpaid care work in national statistics ³ .
<i>Redistribution of unpaid care work</i>	This means that while the overall amount of unpaid care work remains the same within a society, a community, a household or a family, unpaid care work is more fairly shared among different members and between the sexes. This may mean male household members take on a greater share of housework and child care. Government can also take on a greater share of healthcare or child care provision by setting up an effective public healthcare system and child care centres ⁴ .

Reduction of unpaid care work	This means that the overall time spent on unpaid care work is reduced. This can happen through services such as piped water or access to energy that reduces the time women spend collecting water or firewood, and also reduces the physical difficulty of doing this work. Similarly, unpaid care work can be reduced if services are provided closer to where people live and work so that less time is spent accessing healthcare and other social services ⁵ .
Sustainable agriculture	Sustainable agriculture is “A whole-systems approach to food, feed, and fibre production that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. It combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved. Inherent in this definition is the idea that sustainability must be extended not only globally but indefinitely in time and to all living organisms, including humans”.
Women’s rights	Women’s rights are the rights and entitlements claimed for and by women and girls worldwide. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 outlines what is considered in this century to be the fundamental consensus on the human rights of all people in relation to such matters as security of person, slavery, torture, protection of the law, freedom of movement and speech, religion, assembly, and rights to social security, work, health, education, culture and citizenship. Women’s rights are also enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In Africa, the commitment to women’s rights is reiterated in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, better known as the Maputo Protocol.
Reflection-Action	Reflection-Action is ActionAid International’s integrated participatory methodology. Within a Reflection-Action process, ActionAid International is able to support people living in poverty to analyse their situation, identify rights violations and work together and in solidarity with others to bring about change. The process starts from people’s analysis of their own context and builds in a cumulative way, looking at the connections between local, national and international levels. Reflection-Action is the bedrock for building people’s agency, starting with their own conscientisation.

Acronyms

AU	African Union
CAADP	Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women
CFS	World Committee on Food Security
CSO	Civil society organisation
DfID	Department for International Development
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
FASDEP	Food and Agricultural Sector Policy
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FLOW	Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women
FVA	Faith Victory Association
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSDA	Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
LRP	Local Rights Programme
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
METASIP	Medium-term Agricultural Sector Investment Plan
MOFA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PFPN	Plate Forme Paysanne du Niger
PANAP	Pesticide Action Network Asia and the Pacific
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PPIMA	Public Policy Information, Monitoring and Advocacy
PSTA	Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation
RDF	Rwanda Women's Network for Rural Development
Reflect	Regenerated Freiran Literacy Through Empowerment Community Techniques
ROPFA	Network of farmers and producers of West Africa
SADA	Savannah Accelerated Development Authority
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
UCW	Unpaid care work
UN	United Nations
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WIAD	Women in Agricultural Development
WOCAN	Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture
WOM	Widows and Orphans Movement
PFA	Public Financing for Agriculture
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive summary

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded ActionAid International to implement the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project in Ghana and Rwanda between 2012 and 2015. The purpose of the project is to pilot practical solutions to reduce the unpaid care work of women smallholder farmers, increase their access to, and control over, food and resources, and improve the environment in which they farm.

The project aims to help women smallholder farmers to organise, gain knowledge and skills on climate-resilient sustainable agriculture, challenge their existing and disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work, and make their demands heard by decision makers. Ultimately, it is expected that the state will take responsibility for providing resources to support women's unpaid care work, just as donors and development agencies will concretely address unpaid care work in interventions aimed at improving women smallholder farmers' agriculture, and poverty reduction.

Unpaid care work is important because of its role in the marginalisation of women smallholder farmers. As a concept, unpaid care work includes all activities involved in caring for a household when these activities are done by family members *for no pay*. These activities include **cooking, cleaning, collecting water and firewood, and caring for children, older people and those who are unwell**. It also includes community work. There is a connection between unpaid care work (usually performed by women) and paid work (usually performed by men) because a significant portion of the paid male workforce is enabled to go to work each day by a woman who remains at home to provide him with meals, clean clothes, a clean home and child care.

Further, women's child care work is of direct benefit to the government, as these children grow up to provide the next-generation labour force. Women's

unpaid care work therefore sustains and reproduces the current and future labour force for the state and society at large.

However, governments generally perpetuate the invisibility of women's unpaid care work (and thus women's poverty) by excluding it from national accounts and failing to prioritise public services that could help reduce these unpaid care responsibilities. Because women bear a disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work, they are usually denied income (because they have limited time to engage in income-generating activities); food security (because their ability to farm productively is reduced by their involvement in unpaid care activities); human capital (because their workload limits their access to education and undermines their health); and political voice (because the space for them to meaningfully participate in local decision making and political processes is severely limited by the demands of unpaid care work). All these factors reinforce women's subordinate status in society.

To address this situation, the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project is being implemented at two levels: the local and national component of the project has been implemented by national ActionAid offices and their partners – Faith Victory Association (FVA) and Resseau de Femmes (RDF) in Rwanda; and Widows and Orphans Movement (WOM), Bonatadu Nahira Taaba Development Union (Bonatadu), and Songtaba in Ghana. The international advocacy component that targets regional and international bodies has been implemented by ActionAid International.

Successful implementation of the project rests on five outcomes:

- By the end of 2015, 5,400 women smallholder farmers in four Local Rights Programmes in Ghana and Rwanda are organised, and their work as farmers and carers is recognised by the community (Outcome 1).

- 5,400 women smallholder farmers (3,000 in Ghana and 2,400 in Rwanda) meet regularly with local and national policy makers and engage in planning and budgeting processes to demand more resources to support them in food production and unpaid care work by the end of 2015 (Outcome 2).
- Hours spent by 5,400 women (3,000 in Ghana and 2,400 in Rwanda) on unpaid care work are significantly reduced as a result of low-cost pilot interventions such as community-run child care centres, household rainwater storage and community tree lots for firewood by the end of 2015 (Outcome 3).
- 5,400 women smallholder farmers (3,000 in Ghana and 2,400 in Rwanda) have more secure and sustainable access to food, and are generating an increased surplus for sale by the end of 2015 (Outcome 4).
- Greater visibility of women's unpaid care work and farming activities leads to an increase in donor, regional and international commitments to support rural women smallholder farmers by 2015 (Outcome 5).

The baseline data demonstrates that the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project is highly relevant, because poverty for most women smallholder farmers is entrenched by:

- women's disproportionate responsibility of unpaid care work;
- state failure to put in place interventions to reduce women's unpaid care work and promote sustainable agriculture;
- a lack of prominence of the interconnected issues of women's unpaid care work and sustainable agriculture in frameworks and programmes that guide key international and regional donors and agencies.

Key findings on project outcomes

Outcome 1: By end of 2015, 5,400 women smallholder farmers in four Local Rights Programmes in Ghana and Rwanda are organised, and their work as farmers and carers is recognised by the community.

At baseline:

- Existing groups of women smallholder farmers in Ghana and Rwanda were poorly organised and had no clearly defined advocacy agenda. Yet, such groups are critical for building a critical mass of grassroots women 'practitioners' that can demand basic needs and assert their constitutional rights.
- There was no evidence of specific support by community leaders of women's needs to reduce unpaid care work, mainly because the women themselves had never made such demands.
- Though men's recognition of unpaid care work was relatively good, few men in either Rwanda or Ghana actually supported women in doing this work.

Outcome 2: 5,400 women smallholder farmers (3,000 in Ghana and 2,400 in Rwanda) meet regularly with local and national policy makers and engage in planning and budgeting to demand more resources to support them in food production and unpaid care work by the end of 2015

At baseline:

- Women smallholder farmers in Ghana and Rwanda generally had limited leadership skills, despite the value of such skills for women smallholder farmers when engaging and influencing policy makers and community leaders on matters related to unpaid care work and sustainable agriculture.
- Existing women's groups were not organised enough to identify key issues and systematically

make their demands heard, and they were not networking among themselves in order to strengthen their voice.

- About 71% of women smallholder farmers in Rwanda were unable to contribute to decisions at household level. Only 37% were contributing to decision making at community level. There was no evidence that interviewed women smallholder farmers were participating in decision making within households and communities in Ghana.

Outcome 3: Hours spent by 5,400 women (3,000 in Ghana and 2,400 in Rwanda) on unpaid care work are significantly reduced as a result of low-cost pilot interventions such as community-run child care centres, household rainwater storage, and community tree lots for firewood by the end of 2015

At baseline:

- Many smallholder farmers in Ghana and Rwanda who were interviewed were spending three to four hours collecting water for household use, and similar hours collecting firewood.
- A very small number of women (13 percent) in Ghana were able to have time for paid work.
- In Ghana, there was an acute shortage of boreholes, while in Rwanda most of the available water facilities were dry because of lack of maintenance.
- Women smallholder farmers were under-represented in Water Users' Committees (i.e. 20% in Ghana).
- There were no interventions aimed at resolving the energy-related problems of women smallholder farmers in either Ghana or Rwanda.
- Despite the fact that rural, government-supported child care centres were clearly needed so that women smallholder farmers could focus on their agriculture, these were not available.

Outcome 4: 5,400 women smallholder farmers (3,000 in Ghana and 2,400 in Rwanda) have more secure and sustainable access to food, and are generating an increased surplus for sale by the end of 2015

At baseline:

- About 75% of women smallholder farmers in Ghana owned no land, and many had no consistent or secure access to one plot of land over a period of years.
- Most women smallholder farmers interviewed in both Ghana and Rwanda were food insecure, thus not capable of producing surplus for sale.
- In Ghana, there were no government grain or seed banks, while in Rwanda the sole government seed bank was not yet in use at the time of the baseline survey. Yet, good seed and grain banks are a powerful infrastructure that can ensure constant availability of indigenous seeds for the promotion of women smallholder farmers' sustainable agriculture.
- Though a few cooperatives in Rwanda had their own seed banks, they were either poorly constructed or had a poor storage system that risked weevil or other insect infestations.
- Though ownership of livestock is also an important part of sustainable agriculture, in Rwanda few women smallholder farmers had livestock such as cattle, goats, pigs, poultry or rabbits.
- There was a very clear lack of inputs, processing cooperatives and marketing opportunities for women smallholder farmers.

Outcome 5: Greater visibility of women's unpaid care work and farming activities leads to an increase in donor, regional and international commitments to support rural women smallholder farmers by 2015

- The baseline data exposes opportunities for engaging bilateral donors such as the UK's

Department for International Development (DfID), the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); international agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Women, World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); and regional bodies such as the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). These opportunities include contributing to the revision of strategic documents and frameworks.

- ActionAid International will engage the various agencies through a range of strategies, including institutional lobbying; media engagement; and attending major conferences and meetings.

Key recommendations to national governments

- Government to recognise women’s work and contribution as smallholder farmers, and their unpaid care work as key contributors to the economy and society as a whole. Government should also strengthen its commitment to the issues of women’s unpaid care work and access to agricultural resources in order to fulfil women’s rights and address gender inequality.
- Invest in sustainable land and water management systems that boost sustainable agriculture and reduce unpaid care work. This can be done through interventions such as household and community rainwater harvesting initiatives that help farmers respond to reduced and erratic rainfall patterns in Africa. Water availability and management should be improved to reduce the hardship women encounter while collecting water.
- The state must prioritise public investments in areas such as early childhood education, healthcare, energy and water that will help reduce women’s disproportionate responsibility

for unpaid care work – child care and healthcare services help to free women’s time to do work in other productive activities. Lack of firewood should be addressed in order to reduce the burden of, and time spent, collecting firewood as well related risks faced when collecting firewood. This could be done if woodlots were established in villages or if other, alternative sources of energy that can replace or reduce the use of wood were made available at an affordable price.

- Invest in interventions to improve soil quality and production systems that enhance sustainable farming practices among women smallholder farmers and other groups. Governments must reduce smallholder farmers’ dependence on external inputs such as agro-chemicals and pesticides through composts, green manure, mixed cropping, mulching, crop rotation, introduction of trees, and natural control of pests and diseases.
- Support collective, community-based promotion of indigenous seeds to ensure access to quality seeds at the time farmers need them, and reduce external dependence on largescale farms and corporations.

Key recommendations to AU and NEPAD

Ensure continental frameworks including agricultural declarations, policies, strategic frameworks and policies, and work plans promote:

- The recognition and support of women’s farming activities in Africa, including the recognition, redistribution and reduction of unpaid care work.
- Women smallholder farmers representing themselves and their organisations in regional spaces so that their voices and demands are heard in these forums.
- The need to ‘walk the talk’ and support the review, financing and implementation of inclusive, gender-sensitive, multi-sectoral

policies and strategies linked to sustainable agricultural development⁷.

- The stepping up of investments in sustainable agriculture and the development of a national strategy for encouraging larger numbers of farmers to adopt approaches that reduce dependence on external and chemical inputs⁸.
- Agricultural research services that ensure interventions are driven by the need to increase food security and crop productivity, are relevant for women farmers, and are focused on supporting sustainable agriculture.
- Assessment of and support for national agricultural investment programmes so they

provide clearly articulated, effective and accessible participation mechanisms for women smallholder farmers.

- Women smallholder farmers' access to markets, information, capacity building and extension services. This must include promotion of local food agro-processing and value addition, and management of post-harvest losses.
- Clear gender targets and indicators in relation to women's farming activities, as well as reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work within the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP).

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

The Women’s Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project (2012 - 2015) is an innovative four-year intervention designed by ActionAid International and funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It aims to pilot practical solutions to promote sustainable livelihoods and reduce the unpaid care work of women smallholder farmers. The project proposes that achieving women’s empowerment means reducing the demands on their time, increasing their access to and control over food and resources, and improving the environment in which they farm (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Project conceptual framework

The project also takes account of the fact that there is a gendered division of labour affecting women’s use of time, and their access to resources and

sustainable agriculture interventions. The project is unique in that it interrogates the trade-offs between women’s time, sustainable agriculture practices and improved access and control over food and resources. The project asks how these three areas are interlinked and whether they can reinforce each other to enable women’s economic, social and political empowerment. Therefore, through the project, women farmers will be helped to organise, gain knowledge and skills on climate-resilient sustainable agriculture, challenge the disproportionate responsibility they bear for unpaid care work and express their demands to decision makers.

The project contract is signed between the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and ActionAid UK and the project is being implemented by ActionAid International, ActionAid Rwanda and ActionAid Ghana. ActionAid Rwanda is collaborating with two implementing partners, namely Rwanda Women’s Network for Rural Development (RDF) and Faith Victory Association (FVA). ActionAid Ghana is working with three implementing partners – Songtaba, Bonatadu Nahira Taaba Development Union (BONATADU) and Widows and Orphans Movement (WOM).

Table 1 lists the project areas in Ghana and Rwanda that are analysed in the report. In Ghana,

Table 1: Project areas in Ghana and Rwanda

Baseline areas in Ghana (Northern and Upper East Regions)	Baseline areas in Rwanda (Southern Province)
Namumba North district <i>Afayili and Aluurani villages</i>	Nyanza district <i>Busasamana, Mukingo and Rwabicuma sectors</i>
Namumba South district <i>Kakuo and Lankani villages</i>	Gisagara district <i>Kibilizi, Muganza and Gishubi sectors</i>
Talensi district <i>Gbeo and Awardane villages</i>	
Nabdam district <i>Nangodi and Sekoti villages</i>	

communities were carefully selected in order to reflect the different ethnic compositions in the respective districts. In Rwanda, Nyanza district was unique because it is the regional capital of the Southern Province of Rwanda, and has witnessed accelerated economic growth and urban development. By contrast, Gisagara district is a largely rural area in the same province.

1.2 Project objectives' envisaged outcomes

In the long term, the objective of the project is to contribute to an increase in the economic, social and political empowerment of women and girls in Ghana and Rwanda. Its specific objective is to increase food security for 5,400 women smallholders in four local rights programmes (LRPs)⁹ in Ghana and Rwanda, and recognise, reduce and redistribute their unpaid care work. Table 2 describes the five outcomes around which the project is based. All outcomes have detailed outputs and activities that are framed in accordance with the requirements of the FLOW Monitoring Protocol (Logical Framework)¹⁰.

The first four outcomes are directly related to

Table 2: Project outcomes

Outcome 1: By end of 2015, 5,400 women smallholder farmers in four Local Rights Programmes in Ghana and Rwanda are organised, and their work as farmers and carers is recognised by the community.
Outcome 2: 5,400 women smallholder farmers (3,000 in Ghana and 2,400 in Rwanda) meet regularly with local and national policy makers and engage in planning and budgeting processes to demand more resources to support them in food production and unpaid care work as outlined in Outcomes 3 and 4 by the end of 2015.
Outcome 3: Hours spent by 5,400 women (3,000 in Ghana and 2,400 in Rwanda) on unpaid care work are significantly reduced as a result of low-cost pilot interventions such as community-run child care centres, household rainwater storage and community tree lots for firewood by the end of 2015.
Outcome 4: 5,400 women smallholder farmers (3,000 in Ghana and 2,400 in Rwanda) have more secure and sustainable access to food and are generating increased surplus for sale by the end of 2015.
Outcome 5: Greater visibility of women's unpaid care work and farming activities leads to an increase in donor, regional and international commitments to support rural women smallholder farmers by 2015.

country-level interventions being implemented in Ghana and Rwanda, with some variations in country-specific outputs and activities. The fifth outcome is under the immediate responsibility of ActionAid International, so that one reward of advocacy interventions under the project can be an increase in donor, regional and international commitments to support rural women smallholder farmers.

1.3 Relevance of the project to ActionAid International's strategic direction

The project falls within Strategic Objective 5 of ActionAid International's 2012-2017 strategy¹¹, which is to ensure that women and girls can break the cycle of poverty and violence, build economic alternatives and claim control over their bodies. In particular, the project is working on key change promise 10, which states that: *"By 2017, ActionAid International will have supported women to build and advocate gender-responsive economic alternatives at all levels, from cooperative enterprises to national and global policies that recognise unpaid care, guarantee comprehensive social protection and enable the most marginalised women to break the cycle of poverty."* With a focus on sustainable

agriculture, the project also contributes to meeting Strategic Objective 1 on resilient livelihoods. It is directly relevant to key change promise 2, which states that: *"By 2017, we will have supported marginal and smallholder farmers to secure direct support and policies from their government, and effective accountability of corporates, enabling them to gain a good living from climate-resilient sustainable agriculture, improving the food security of 25 million people."*

1.4 Relevance of the project to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' priorities

The project is contributing to the food security component of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' bilateral development cooperation, its cross-cutting theme of women in agriculture, and specific focus areas of strengthening producer organisations, agricultural education, increased access to rural infrastructure and sustainable management of natural resources. Additionally, the project fits the policy aims of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women (FLOW), under which it is being funded. For example:

- The project's focus on improving women's livelihoods and food security is contributing to the achievement of **Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1** (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) as it will directly result in 5,400 women smallholders gaining more secure and sustainable access to food, and higher incomes.
- Through its emphasis on enabling women farmers to hold local and national governments accountable, the project will strengthen women's political participation and contribute to **MDG**

3 (promote gender equality and empower women). At the end of the project, 5,400 women smallholder farmers will become leaders and organise to demand that local and national policy makers put more resources into women's food production and unpaid care work.

1.5 Complementarity of the project with other agricultural programmes

In recent years, many donors (including the Netherlands) have joined with African governments and the African Union to seek ways to revive Africa's agriculture sector. The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) is the focus for donor-government cooperation around these aims. Both Rwanda and Ghana have signed CAADP compacts and developed and costed time-bound investment plans. Generally, national investment plans developed under CAADP suffer a lack of targeted measures to meet the needs of women farmers, in part due to the limited involvement of civil society and women farmers in programme design. The African Union has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for ActionAid International to play a convening and coordinating role in ensuring a stronger civil society voice in CAADP.



Perpetue Mukamuhoza in Nyanza Sector, Nyanza District, Rwanda.

ActionAid International is one of two civil society representatives on the steering committee of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme and it actively participates in the civil society mechanism of the UN Committee on Food Security. The experiences of women smallholder farmers through this project are therefore guaranteed to inform the voice of ActionAid International in various fora. The project also complements ongoing interventions by ActionAid International in ten countries that are implementing two projects on securing women's access to, and control over, land¹². Overall, the project matches wider donor and government programmes that seek to expand access to water, sanitation, early childhood development and clean energy – this is because it will provide learning on how such programmes can target rural women's time poverty in order to maximise impact on gender inequality.

Within ActionAid International, the project is complemented by the Public Financing for Agriculture (PFA) three-year project funded by the Gates Foundation since 2011. The project focuses on strengthening the capacity of farmer organisations and women's organisations in Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda and Uganda to work with government entities and civil society at the local, regional and national level. It looks at awareness raising of budget line items in current agricultural budgets and assessing the effectiveness of these budgetary allocations for women smallholder farmers.

1.6 Rationale for conducting baseline studies

Baseline studies were conducted by ActionAid Rwanda and ActionAid Ghana, as well as by ActionAid International between October 2012 and March 2013. Their purpose was to:

- Inform the monitoring and evaluation framework for the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project.
- Collect high-quality baseline data that could be used to measure the impact of the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project and inform periodic reviews.

- Facilitate evidence-based policy making by demonstrating, to government and other stakeholders, the impact of the project on women smallholder farmers' unpaid care work and sustainable agriculture.
- Make recommendations for changes in project design and implementation by identifying priority programmatic issues.

For ActionAid International, the generation of substantive evidence would be particularly crucial for the fulfilment of its advocacy mandate under Outcome 5, which is '*to realise greater visibility of women's unpaid care work and farming activities – leading to an increase in donor, regional and international commitments to support rural women smallholder farmers*'.

1.7 Methodology for conducting baseline studies

The baseline study in Ghana was conducted in four districts where the project is being implemented, while in Rwanda, it was conducted in two districts where the project is being implemented (Table 1). Both countries engaged national consultants for the exercise, and these were supported by ActionAid International staff. Although the priority target group of the project is women, data was also collected from men, community members and ActionAid Ghana partner staff. In Ghana, the topline criteria for selecting participants were that they were women smallholder farmers, widows, members of female-headed households or persons with disabilities involved in farming, food processing or other activities in the four baseline districts. Other key criteria used for selecting communities/respondents included ethnicity and the existence of Reflect circles¹³. The baseline sample in Ghana was 480 women, representing 16% of the 3,000 women that the project is targeting in the four baseline districts.

In Rwanda, respondents and communities were carefully selected to reflect different socio-economic dynamics. Data collection focused on several domains, namely organised women's groups (including levels of leadership and participation in decision making), smallholder farm productivity

and returns, and women's and men's perception of unpaid care work undertaken by women in rural communities. The sample was 180 women and 60 men in Rwanda's two baseline districts, which is 10% of the target population of 2,400.

The two countries used both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods through the application of questionnaires, focus group discussions and case studies. Questions to guide discussions, which were inspired by project indicators, were developed beforehand by the consultants in collaboration with ActionAid International country staff. Focus group discussions offered an opportunity to gather information on key issues affecting women smallholder farmers in particular (including access to food resources, and representation in leadership at various levels), and perceptions about unpaid care work and women's roles and responsibilities.

Case studies in Ghana were developed from the use of time diaries in which selected men and women document how they use their time. In Rwanda, the consultants also analysed good practice case studies in assessing issues related to women smallholder farmers' access to land and sustainable agriculture.

Also in Rwanda, a transect walk was done in order to visualise and ascertain the difficulties that women encounter in accessing facilities that have a big socio-economic impact on their lives, including water sources, schools, hospitals and sources for wood (forests location). A transect walk is a walk across a defined path in a community to map the distribution of resources and physical landscape.

The baseline study that was conducted for Outcome 5 by ActionAid International used methodologies such as: review of strategic documents, policies of UN agencies, strategic documents of donors and African Union Declarations; interviews with ActionAid staff members directly involved in advocacy on agricultural financing, land rights, sustainable agriculture, and engagements with UN agencies;

direct observation during AU meetings; and field visits in Rwanda and Ghana.

1.8 Structure of this report

This report consolidates the baseline studies conducted by ActionAid Ghana, ActionAid Rwanda and ActionAid International in order to guide the systematic implementation of the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project.

- Chapter 2 analyses conceptual, policy and legal issues relating to women smallholder farmers and climate-resilient sustainable agriculture.
- Chapters 3 to 6 articulate baseline findings from Ghana and Rwanda. Chapter 3 sets out findings on the extent to which women smallholder farmers are organised, and how their care work is recognised by community leaders, men and the women themselves. Chapter 4 discusses baseline findings relating to women's leadership to engage with local and national policy makers on planning and budgeting processes in order to demand more resources to support them in food production and unpaid care work. Chapter 5 contains baseline findings that reflect the scale of women's unpaid care work and the availability of labour and time-saving interventions. Chapter 6 focuses on baseline findings that expose on-the-ground issues related to climate-resilient sustainable agriculture and the situation of smallholder women farmers in Ghana and Rwanda.
- Chapter 7 describes baseline findings on the extent to which the issues of unpaid care and climate-resilient sustainable agriculture work are visible in donor and UN agencies' programming, and how such visibility could be enhanced by ActionAid International at these levels, including within AU and NEPAD.
- Chapter 8 analyses the links between the project outcomes, key conclusions on indicators, key challenges related to common indicators and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

Why focus on unpaid care work and women smallholder farmers' sustainable agriculture? Conceptual and policy issues

“Care must emerge from the private realm and become a public issue. The state must thus take responsibility for the provision of resources to support care work.” UNRISD Report, 2010¹

This chapter puts the Women’s Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project in context by clarifying the concepts of unpaid care work, unpaid work and paid work. As unpaid care work and sustainable agriculture are the focus of this project, the chapter discusses in particular the implications of this type of work for women smallholder farmers. In recognition of the project’s aim to address issues of unpaid care work so that women smallholder farmers may engage in productive agriculture, the chapter proceeds with an analysis of the concept of climate-resilient sustainable agriculture. In this context, critical issues discussed include ActionAid International’s approaches to advancing climate-resilient sustainable agriculture, why this mode of agriculture is an important strategy for food security, and why it is a viable alternative to Green Revolution approaches.

The green revolution approaches often include the development of high-yielding varieties of cereal grains, distribution of hybridized seeds, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides to farmers. Since women’s rights are a key component of climate-resilient sustainable agriculture, the chapter examines how Ghana and Rwanda are fulfilling women’s land rights through legal, policy and programmatic interventions.

2.1. Concepts of unpaid care work versus unpaid and paid work

2.1.1 Unpaid work

An activity is classed as *unpaid work* if it is a

productive activity that has no remuneration and satisfies the third person criterion – that is, the activity yields an output that can be exchanged¹⁴. For example, women living in poverty may find themselves engaging in production for the ‘market’ (i.e. producing goods and services that will be sold to others) even if their work is unpaid (because they are seen as ‘helping’ in a family business)¹⁵.

The implications of non-recognition of unpaid work on economic opportunities, agricultural productivity and food security have already been well documented. Because of the perpetual burden that accrues from unpaid work, women are unable to pursue economic opportunities – including being able to devote sufficient time to produce enough crops to feed their families and secure a surplus for sale. For women smallholder farmers, unpaid care work therefore cannot be separated from the list of well-known challenges to women’s sustainable agriculture, which includes inaccessibility to credit facilities, poor road networks, and lack of equipment, irrigation and storage facilities¹⁶.

2.1.2 Unpaid care work

A 2013 study by ActionAid in Nepal, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya concurs with existing literature that unpaid care work includes all those activities involved in caring for a household when these activities are done by family members for no pay. These activities include cooking, cleaning, collecting water and firewood, and caring for children, older people and those who are unwell.

¹UNRISD research and policy brief 9. *Why care matters for social development, 2010, United Nations, Research Institute for social development, Geneva, Switzerland*

Box 1: Defining unpaid care work

“The term ‘unpaid’ differentiates this care from paid care provided by employees in the public and NGO (non-governmental organisation) sectors and employees and self-employed persons in the private sector. The word ‘care’ indicates that the services provided nurture other people. The word ‘work’ indicates that these activities are costly in time and energy and are undertaken as obligations (contractual or social).”

UN Women, Progress of the World's Women 2000: UNIFEM Biennial Report

Unpaid care work also includes community work¹⁷. Furthermore, in most societies, cooking, cleaning, fetching firewood and water are seen as women's work regardless of women's social class and level of education. For women living in poverty who cannot afford to hire domestic labour, they can only rely on their own labour and that of girls and other women in their household to provide the unpaid care work that they and their families need¹⁸. Women in rural areas are more affected than those living in urban areas due to differences in access to public services and basic amenities, endowment, literacy, economic opportunities and socioeconomic characteristics. Generally, women in rural areas bear primary responsibility for the nutrition of their children, from gestation through weaning and throughout the critical period of growth. In addition, they are the principal food producers and preparers for the rest of the family¹⁹. Therefore, while unpaid care work undertaken by women generates goods and services, it is not accounted for by national policies, and often not valued by households and communities²⁰. Even worse, it usually does not fit into the socially dominant concept of what constitutes ‘work’²¹.

Even though the two are interdependent, different values are attached to women's unpaid care work and men's paid work. A significant portion of the paid male workforce is enabled to go to work each day

because there is a woman who remains at home to provide him with meals, clean clothes, a clean home, and child care²². In this way women subsidise men's paid work through their unpaid care work – without them, men would have to pay someone to do all the domestic work that enables their participation in the paid workforce²³. Women's unpaid care work therefore sustains and reproduces the current and future labour force for the state and private capital. In fact, women are not only subsidising men through unpaid care work, they are also subsidising the state by spending the bulk of their time on services that should be provided by the state (i.e. collecting water, firewood for fuel, providing healthcare). Therefore, keeping women's unpaid care work invisible means that the state does not need to prioritise these public services, with the result that women's unequal responsibility for unpaid care work persists.

Because governments do not measure women's unpaid care work in the national accounts, they fail to assess the contribution made through this work, and do not have the political commitment to identify the impact this has on women's rights and gender equality²⁴.

2.1.3 Implications of unpaid care work on women smallholder farmers

In its programming framework, ActionAid International recognises that unpaid care work is essential to human development and sustaining households and communities. However, it has also been established that unpaid care work greatly contributes to gender inequalities, violations of women's rights and women's poverty²⁵. Women's responsibility for unpaid care work typically makes the length of their total work day (unpaid and paid work combined) significantly longer than the total length of men's work days²⁶. And being regarded as a woman's ‘natural’ work (i.e. as wife or mother), performed in the ‘private’ sphere of the family, unpaid care work hides its economic dimensions and contributions²⁷.

The effect of the ‘non-remunerated’ status of unpaid care work means that (a) it is work that lacks social

recognition; and (b) it reduces women's voice in decision-making and impacts on their ability to accumulate savings and assets. The fact that it is undervalued means that unpaid care work results in a systemic transfer of hidden and unrecognised subsidies to the rest of the economy, imposing a systematic time-tax on women throughout their life cycle. These hidden taxes and subsidies signal the existence of unequal power relations between men and women. Confined in the private sphere as a result of their unpaid care work, women are seen as subordinate to men, and violence is often used to maintain these unequal power relations. It is also a major driver of poverty and partly accounts for why women constitute the majority of the world's poor²⁸.

Box 2: Four ways unpaid care work keeps rural women in poverty and violates human rights

1. It robs women of income: 'Time poverty' resulting from an overload of domestic duties limits the work that women can put into income-generating activities.
2. It robs women of food security: As most of their time is directed towards care and unpaid activities, women's ability to farm is reduced, and they may have only limited access to paid work to cover the costs of buying food thereby increasing hunger among women.
3. It robs women of human capital: Heavy workloads limit women's and girls' access to education, undermine their health, and deprive them of time to rest.
4. It robs women of political voice: Unpaid care work denies women time to participate in local decision-making forums, and perpetuates the stereotype of women as second-class citizens, and men as breadwinners and community leaders.

Additionally, the responsibilities of unpaid care work mean women are often too busy to fully participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives at household, community, district or national levels –

the lopsided participation of men in the national and decentralised local governance systems has been attributed to this²⁹. Where women participate in self-development activities, many are still overstretched because they have to balance this with unpaid care work. For example, a 2013 report by ActionAid International reveals that women involved in Reflect circles in Nigeria spend an average of 4.2 hours a day on child care³⁰. Further, unpaid care work, which is time-consuming, forces many women and girls to give up their rights to an education, a decent job, the acquisition of employable skills and other activities related to their personal development, or even just a few minutes to rest. Therefore, it is a mistake for policy makers to ignore the effect that cuts to public services have on the amount of unpaid care work that women and girls provide³¹.

2.2 The connection between unpaid care work and women smallholder farmers' climate-resilient sustainable agriculture

Stronger efforts must be made to reduce the unpaid care work done by women smallholder farmers if they are to enjoy their rights to food security, an adequate standard of living and political participation. To this end, ActionAid International's approach is to combine strategies that reduce women's unpaid care work and promote climate-resilient sustainable agriculture. This project proposes that sustainable agriculture approaches better preserve the natural environment women smallholder farmers depend on, reduce their dependency on chemical products, and can lead to improved food security and women's economics empowerment. This section examines the concept of climate-resilient sustainable agriculture, as well as the women's land rights situation that impacts on women smallholder farmers' sustainable agriculture in Ghana and Rwanda.

2.3 Key issues behind climate-resilient sustainable agriculture

What is climate-resilient sustainable agriculture?

ActionAid International believes sustainable agriculture should not merely be seen as a set of

practices and technologies that do not harm the environment. Rather, it embodies the resistance of smallholder farmers' movements to the current development model that increases their dependence on external inputs and reduces their autonomy from the agribusiness sector. It represents an opportunity for more equitable and just distribution of income, power, and responsibility³². For ActionAid International, sustainable agriculture has to be climate resilient. Thus climate-resilient sustainable agriculture is a tool for increasing the preparedness of women and men smallholder farmers to face the impacts of climate change.

Climate-resilient sustainable agriculture is based on the identification of major risks faced by local communities now and in the near future. It focuses on the design and implementation of site-specific adaptation strategies aimed at increased productivity, reducing vulnerability and increasing the resistance and resilience of smallholder production systems³³. This is in recognition of the reality that most agricultural practices are site-specific – they depend on the environmental, social, cultural and economic conditions of the place in which they started, and therefore are more in tune with local contexts and needs³⁴. Though there is no 'one size fits all' solution to the complex challenges posed by climate change, exploring local alternatives is a good place to start, as they contain key insights that (combined with scientific knowledge and modern technology) can help design and implement food production systems better adapted to present and future needs.

Some of the main components of climate-resilient sustainable agriculture (which are also a key focus of the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project) are: soil conservation to conserve soil fertility, soil moisture and avoidance of soil erosion; sustainable water management through low-cost irrigation and water harvesting technologies; agro-biodiversity and preservation through local people's control over their knowledge, conservation of local varieties and of seed-through seed banks²;

livelihood diversification through encouraging multi-cropping and crop and livestock farming; improved processing, marketing and market access including value addition; and establishing and strengthening women farmers' organisations and their networks, and their participation in public policy formulation.

The four components to climate-resilient sustainable agriculture

ActionAid International's climate-resilient sustainable agriculture initiative is based on four main components/approaches. All components require the involvement of farmers themselves – and women smallholder farmers' effective participation and resultant gains is only possible when they are not inundated with unpaid care work. The first approach towards climate-resilient sustainable agriculture is the performance of a participatory appraisal to identify local potential, and political and technical challenges. A well-conducted participatory appraisal should inform present and future challenges faced by communities, as well as the existing local knowledge and alternative practices on climate change adaptation. It should also pay special attention to the equilibrium of gender and women's participation, since men and women have very different knowledge and views on issues relating to production processes, sustainability, access to market and food security³⁵.

The second component to climate-resilient sustainable agriculture requires identifying, documenting, testing and diffusing local knowledge and alternative practices, and encouraging local innovation. This is centred on the realisation that farmers are very knowledgeable in their selection of new ideas that can be tailored to suit to their local environments; and that farmers are always on the lookout for alternatives that can be used to improve their systems. Organising farmers' dialogues is one of the best ways of encouraging them to identify and test out alternative solutions. It also helps them to measure the impacts of the alternative solutions on food production, food security and sustainability

²A seed bank is a facility used to store seeds of various crops and wild plants, in an effort to maintain biodiversity. A seed bank is established to save samples of crop variations, so that they do not disappear forever and also helps communities preserve their seeds and reduces dependence on external sources of seeds.



Vegetable gardens in Rwanda. PHOTO: ANIKA VAN DEN BERGH/ACTIONAID.

through participatory appraisal, planning, monitoring and evaluation. Once validated, these alternatives have to be formally documented and systematised so as to preserve the knowledge and spread it more widely through mechanisms such as farmer-to-farmer exchanges. Farmer-to-farmer exchange programmes designed specifically for women can be very effective in empowering them and encouraging their participation in the identification and documentation of local knowledge³⁶.

The third component is promoting sustainability through appropriate agricultural research and extension services based on technologies that reduce dependence on external inputs and agro-chemicals, help adapt to climate change, and build on and reinforce local knowledge. This recognises that generating alternative solutions that adequately address the challenges of food security and climate change adaptation requires combining scientific knowledge and modern technology with local, traditional knowledge that has been passed down through generations. Partnerships with agricultural research centres and agrarian universities are critical in this approach in order to impart knowledge and insight on developing sustainable alternatives, and to build the credibility of ActionAid International's policy and advocacy work.

The fourth component requires empowering farming communities to promote sustainable agriculture through local, national and global campaigns that can lead to positive policy and budgetary changes in favour of smallholders³⁷. This is an important approach for women smallholder farmers because – for it to be a real alternative for farmers' autonomy – climate-resilient sustainable agriculture also needs to promote women farmers' empowerment.

Climate-resilient sustainable agriculture as an alternative to Green Revolution approaches

Green Revolution refers to a series of research, development, and technology transfer initiatives that took place between the 1940s and the late 1960s, which increased agricultural production worldwide (particularly in the developing world), beginning most markedly in the late 1960s³⁸.

The initiatives, led by Norman Borlaug, the 'father of the Green Revolution', are credited with saving over a billion people from starvation and involved the development of high-yielding varieties of cereal grains, expansion of irrigation infrastructure, modernisation of management techniques and distribution of hybrid seeds, synthetic fertilisers and pesticides to farmers³⁹. The Green Revolution also placed reliance on heavy irrigation to increase crop

yields⁴⁰. Both positive and negative impacts of the Green Revolution have been documented, with most of the negative impacts primarily having a bearing on the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. For instance, Mwanze, 2010⁴¹, contends that the Green Revolution has marginalised many smallholder farmers and has not been environmentally sustainable because of the extensive use of inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides and irrigation to push yields up. As a result of the Green Revolution there are many areas where croplands have been overexploited and water tables depleted, and the replacement of traditional varieties with new high-yield varieties has eroded biodiversity⁴². Researchers attribute an increase in stillborn babies, and ailments such as renal failure, to the misuse of pesticides. Widespread use of pesticides has contaminated drinking water supplies and is linked to other life-threatening diseases⁴³.

Green Revolution approaches have also perpetuated inequalities. Although the methods have increased yields in agriculturally optimal areas, they have been less effective in marginalised and resource-poor areas where farmers, especially women, have no access to modern inputs and technologies⁴⁴. And though conventional farming promoted by Green Revolution approaches has sometimes benefitted landless people by providing work opportunities on farms, it has also displaced many smallholder farmers as production has been consolidated into large, more concentrated farming systems⁴⁵. In some areas, inequalities between regions and farmers have also increased as millions of farmers have become heavily indebted due to loans taken out to buy expensive external inputs⁴⁶. To this extent, Green Revolution approaches are unsustainable.

Why climate-resilient sustainable agriculture is an important strategy for food security

Sustainable agriculture increases yields when farmers practice agriculture that conserves natural resources, particularly soil fertility, and optimises the material cycle of the farm – thereby enabling intensive and permanent use of the same area of land⁴⁷. Even in direct comparison with farms that

are reliant on agro-chemicals and high-yield seed varieties, small farms using sustainable methods and no expensive material inputs whatsoever can achieve equally high yields. Since their costs can be reduced, farmers who use crop varieties and techniques suited to the local area can have greater benefits for their investments. Sustainable agriculture can demonstrate its superiority over conventional methods in arid areas in particular, as it enables stable yields even in drought years. This is particularly significant in view of climate change⁴⁸.

Many traditional farming practices can provide ways to address modern climate change by improving food security in times of climatic variability. They can be drawn upon to enhance food security and to prevent the proliferation of energy-intensive cropping practices, many of which contribute significantly to global warming and environmental degradation⁴⁹. ActionAid International's pursuit of climate-resilient sustainable agriculture is compatible with the recognition that as global temperatures increase, farming systems will have to change, in some cases radically. This is because poor rural people everywhere will be affected, with women, indigenous groups and youth likely to face particular threats⁵⁰. For example, Ghana is already witnessing the negative impacts of climate change, and there are concerns over declining agricultural yields in the country. A 2012 report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) revealed that almost all nutrient balances in Ghana show a deficit as more nutrients are removed by harvesting or are lost to erosion than are inputted in the form of fertilisers. This represents a loss of potential yield and progressive soil improvement⁵¹. Climate change therefore poses significant threats to the livelihoods and food security for smallholder farmers, many of whom are women.

Through its interventions, the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project will work towards promoting practices and technologies that would allow women smallholder farmers to be self-reliant in terms of their food security by depending less and less on expensive external inputs, and increase their autonomy from the agribusiness sector. It is

worth noting that the success of agro-ecological interventions hinges on the full inclusion of women as custodians of indigenous agricultural knowledge. Many women are repositories of knowledge about cultivation, processing and preservation of nutritious and locally adapted crop varieties. Such knowledge can almost be exclusive to women, often directly related to their specific roles within food production, and allows women to play a leading role in promoting agro-ecological innovations⁵².

The crucial role of local agricultural knowledge of seeds, weather conditions, soils, and other areas in securing women's and community rights to the production process cannot be overemphasised. Such knowledge is important for building food sovereignty and security, as well as climate resilience. The revival of women's and community-wide knowledge on traditional seed diversity promotes ecological agriculture and local food sovereignty as the most effective and ethical way to feed the growing population and cope with climate change. But most importantly, it concentrates on the central role of indigenous, locally adapted seed and traditional knowledge –especially women's knowledge.

Despite their wealth of knowledge and capacity, women farmers are not recognised as productive farmers by their own communities or by policy makers. Neither do they have equal access to natural and productive resources compared to men. Their time is also constrained by the dual responsibilities for unpaid care work and agricultural labour, and in many cases, structural gender inequality impedes their participation in agriculture and enterprise⁵³.

This is why ActionAid International acknowledges that women's land rights are a key tenet of climate-resilient sustainable agriculture. This implies a focus on improving women's access to and control over productive resources; promoting group dynamics and collective action among women farmers; increasing women's contribution to household incomes through training in financial literacy and marketing skills; and optimising or reducing women's time spent on care

work⁵⁴. The next discussion exposes how women's land rights, being one key component of climate-resilient sustainable agriculture, are being respected in Ghana and Rwanda.

2.4 The state of women's rights in Ghana and Rwanda

The interest in improving women's rights within the context of climate-resilient sustainable agriculture is particularly driven by the lack of synergy between legal rights and substantive rights for women in both Ghana and Rwanda – if to varied degrees.

2.4.1 The situation in Ghana

Key laws and policies promoting women and gender mainstreaming in agriculture

In Ghana, while laws and policies make relatively progressive provisions on paper that promote women's rights, in reality women enjoy few day to day benefits on this. Ghana has a number of laws and policies dedicated to protecting rights of women and empowering them to effectively contribute to community and national development. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana prohibits discrimination against any person on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed, or social or economic status⁵⁵.

As an expression of its commitment to unequivocally prohibit discrimination against all women, Ghana ratified the Convention for the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1986. Among other provisions, CEDAW calls upon states to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on the basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development. Particularly, rural women should enjoy the right to participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels; to have access to adequate healthcare facilities including information, counselling and services in family planning; and to participate in all community activities⁵⁶. The diligent fulfilment of these obligations would be a gateway for achieving



Mukasina Theresa, 46 (right) with some members of her cooperative in Rwanda.
PHOTO: ACTIONAID

the objectives of the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project in Ghana.

On the policy front, the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSDA 2010-2013) and the National Gender and Children Policy all contain provisions on the rights of women aimed at removing inequalities between men and women. However, even the GSDA acknowledges that major gender inequalities prevail, with women and girls performing worst against all social indicators in the country. One clear indicator of women's marginalisation is their significant under-representation and exclusion from decision-making processes and governance at both the local and national levels. In the 2012 general elections, only 28 women (10%) won seats in a 275-member legislature. In the 2008 District Assembly elections, women constituted of only 11% of those elected. These numbers are disheartening because women's full participation in decision making is crucial for the realisation of aspirations for women to enjoy the same rights and opportunities as men, including in accessing and using natural resources such as land.

A review of agricultural policies in Ghana reveals that the need for gender mainstreaming in policies

and practices is widely acknowledged, but it is not done holistically or systematically. One of these is the Food and Agricultural Sector Policy (FASDEP II, 2007), which is part of Ghana's national plan to achieve CAADP. However, FASDEP II fails to provide sound mechanisms for tracking progress in relation to women farmers⁵⁷. Recent policy interventions include the Medium Term Agricultural Sector Investment Plan (METASIP 2011-2015). METASIP highlights the need to integrate gender equity issues in all agricultural activities and has specifically assigned this role to the Directorate of Women in Agricultural Development (WIAD). METASIP thus presents opportunities for agencies working with women to be supported with access to resources for agricultural productivity. Further, the 2010 Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) strategy aims to provide opportunities for poor peasants, especially women, to own assets, sustain their food production and protect the fragile ecosystem of the northern savannah. All these are significant opportunities for smallholder women farmers to increase their agricultural productivity. But the difficulty lies in a society that is highly patriarchal, where similar interventions in the past only benefitted men.

The position of women's land rights

In terms of women's land rights, a 2006 shadow report submitted to the CEDAW Committee on women's property rights in Ghana revealed that women do not have access to, or control over, land or family income. In addition, women suffer marginalisation in decision-making⁵⁸. Ghana operates under two systems – a customary land tenure system and a formal land administration under statute⁵⁹. There have been some challenges for women's land rights under the customary land regime, a situation that has contributed to limiting access to land (including agricultural land) for women. In Ghana, it is estimated that women account for 52% of the agricultural work force, 70% of subsistence crop production, and 90% of the labour force involved in marketing farm produce. Yet, women have more limited access to resources than their male counterparts, especially with regard to access to, and control and ownership of land⁶⁰. ActionAid International's observation during an August 2012 field visit in Ghana discovered that most women have access to land based on the goodwill of the husband, son or village chief. Land rights for most rural women in Ghana can best be described as secondary – in other words, they are mostly claimed through husbands or lineages that are largely headed by men. This poses a challenge to sustainable agriculture interventions, because under traditional customs there are gender-segregated patterns that tend to limit the land rights of women compared to men. In some cases, women's access is temporary – limited to one or two seasons. Security of customary land tenure is also fragile, though there have been several attempts to improve the land tenure system and to protect spouses from exploitative relations. The Intestate Succession Law (1985) is an example of one such law that seeks to protect widows in matters of inheritance by providing a uniform succession law in circumstances where there is no Will, regardless of the class of the deceased person and the type of marriage contracted by him or her⁶¹. However, lack of enforcement, knowledge, poverty, illiteracy, and fear that family members may hurt women are other factors that make the law ineffective. This law is further weakened by the fact that Ghana's

social conventions, particularly in patrilineal areas, gives men greater access to, and control and use of property, and relegates women to a position of dependency⁶².

2.4.2 The situation in Rwanda

Key laws and policies promoting women and gender mainstreaming in agriculture

The Government of Rwanda has demonstrated a strong commitment to the economic empowerment of girls and women through the National Constitution of 2003, Vision 2020 and Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) 1 and 2. The legal and policy steps that have been taken in Rwanda to improve the status of women are consistent with the country's international obligations under CEDAW to end discrimination against women and ensure women's full enjoyment of their rights both in the public and private spheres⁶³. The measures should also be aimed at facilitating the implementation of ILO Convention No. 56 which requires signatories to adopt policies that enable workers with family responsibilities who are engaged, or wish to be engaged, in employment to exercise their right to do so without being subject to discrimination and, to the extent possible, without conflict between their employment and family responsibilities. In addition, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and its Optional Protocol (2006), urges states parties to ensure the full development, advancement and empowerment of women with disabilities⁶⁴.

The Constitution reinforces the principles of gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, and provides a very strong platform for gender mainstreaming in all sectors. It prohibits discrimination based on sex⁶⁵, and guarantees equal rights to spouses⁶⁶. It also provides for quotas for women, ensuring that they are granted at least 30% of posts in decision-making bodies⁶⁷. Consequently, Rwanda has been lauded for the high number of women political representatives in Parliament (64% in 2013). However, these women are still influenced by a small number of men because of cultural beliefs, patriarchal attitudes

and behavioral norms. In the public sector, very few women are in strategic positions compared to men. According to 2010 statistics, 65.2% of permanent secretaries are men, 87.5% of directors general are men, 69.6% of directors of units in ministries are men, 73.9% of directors of units in all institutions are men and 66% of experts and professionals are men. Women are predominantly employed as support staff at 60.9%⁶⁸.

Rwanda also has a National Gender Policy (2010), which, together with its Strategic Plan, gives direction to the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), line ministries and all stakeholders on interventions that can help achieve gender equality in Rwanda. The policy is in line with the Vision 2020 in terms of creating an environment conducive to the promotion of social security, democratic principles of governance, and an all-inclusive social and economic system that involves effective participation of all social groups within the population.

The implementation of the National Gender Policy down to the lowest level of Umudugudu (village) is facilitated by the National Decentralisation Policy. This policy ensures that gender concerns are effectively addressed throughout the planning cycle and that a sense of community ownership by different social groups is enhanced. Such grassroots gender mainstreaming makes it possible to foster a better and deep-seated appreciation of gender equality as a critical component of national development.

Vision 2020 considers the modernisation of agriculture and animal husbandry as one of six pillars for building and integrating a more vibrant, competitive and dynamic economy. The Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), which will be implemented between 2013 and 2018, recognises agriculture as one of the four priority sectors that will both stimulate economic expansion and make the greatest contribution to poverty reduction, beside other sectors such as health and education. The EDPRS aims both to increase economic growth and to reduce the incidence of poverty. However, the EDPRS does not include any specific programme to tackle women's

unpaid care work – a glaring gap that ignores the family as one avenue where comprehensive programmatic interventions are needed if agriculture is to be a true catalyst for women's empowerment and development.

The fact that Rwanda's Long-Term Investment Framework (2006), which is the current national investment strategy, considers the mainstreaming of gender into investment as integral offers an opportunity for investment programmes to support women smallholder farmers. It is also anticipated that Rwanda's Skills, Employability and Entrepreneurship Programme (SEEP)⁶⁹, which focuses on enhancing access to economic opportunities, (especially off-farm) skills development, entrepreneurial skills and local business advisory services will have a positive impact, especially for women in the informal sector⁷⁰. This programme could equally be relevant to women smallholder farmers who want to produce surplus food for sale. However, targeting these as a class of entrepreneurs demands solid interventions to ensure that unpaid care work does not continue to get in the way of productivity.

It is good that Rwanda has different institutions whose mandate is compatible with the goal of ensuring women smallholder farmers are not undercut by unpaid care work and a lack of interventions to promote their climate-resilient sustainable agriculture. MIGEPROF is responsible for promoting gender equality and equity, children's rights and family promotion. The National Women's Council is mandated to mobilise women and identify their needs and constraints in development processes from grassroots to national level. The Gender Observatory is tasked to hold public, private sector, civil society and donor community actors accountable for the implementation of gender issues. Additionally, at the operational level, all departments have appointed directors of planning as the Gender Focal Points so that they can lead the effective implementation of the National Gender Policy within individual government departments at national and district levels.

The position of women's land rights

Women's land rights are specifically protected under Organic Law N° 08/2005. This law determines the

use and management of land, and guarantees equal access to land for both men and women. Land in Rwanda is held under customary, leasehold and freehold tenure systems. The customary tenure is probably the oldest system of land holding in rural areas, and is governed by customary and cultural values on traditional and hereditary rights to land⁷¹. Overall, the influence of cultural values, customary norms and laws, religious institutions and statutory law continue to affect Rwandan women's access to property, including land⁷².

In relation to ensuring security of tenure, Rwanda is one of the few countries in Africa where women's land rights have been placed at the heart of policy. A lot of work is being done to implement and translate land reform interventions into practical and fundamental solutions that benefit women in terms of having greater control over household incomes, improved agricultural production and enhancing their position in the wider community.

Recently, a nationwide land tenure regularisation programme was rolled out in Rwanda that systematically registered over 10.3 million parcels of land. The results were more than encouraging, with about 66% of women gaining security of tenure either individually or jointly with their husbands. Overall statistics indicated that in Rwanda, 93% of

women own public land either singly or jointly – the latter mostly as agricultural cooperatives⁷³. Other key laws that have a bearing on women's land rights and progressively promote gender equality include Law N° 22/99, related to matrimonial regimes, liberalities and successions (giving women the same rights of succession as men). This law obliges spouses, upon marrying, to choose between the regimes of community of property, limited community of acquets (things acquired after marriage) or separation of property.

If no provision is made, the spouses are regarded as being married under the regime of community of property⁷⁴. This is the most common choice made by married couples as it is based on joint ownership of all their property and their present and future charges. In transactions related to property, the consent of both spouses is required only when spouses were legally married under the regime of community of property or limited community of acquets⁷⁵. This means those who are not legally married cannot benefit from this provision.

The provisions related to inheritance under Law N° 22/99 outlaw discrimination against all legitimate children of a deceased person (male and female) in inheritance matters⁷⁶. Similarly, parents can split their property between all their children without distinction⁷⁷. While this law offers a good foundation for the protection of women's land rights, its distinct application to "legitimate" children means that Rwanda still accords other children the status of being "illegitimate".

This means there are other classes of females that may not enjoy the same type of protection from non-discrimination. This is contrary to the spirit of the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, which



Nyirakanani Severine in field in Rwanda. PHOTO: ACTIONAID

asserts that “all Rwandans are born and remain free and equal in rights and duties⁷⁸, and that all human beings are equal before the law and shall enjoy, without any discrimination, equal protection of the law”⁷⁹.

To be generally noted is the reality that women in Rwanda have traditionally been in a weaker social position. In spite of political efforts and concrete legal advances in promoting gender equality, this deeply entrenched social discrimination, together with traditional norms for women in Rwandan society, still bears consequences today for Rwandan women and particularly for their access to land. As women were traditionally denied education, many remain illiterate and suffer a lack of self-confidence and self-esteem. Even being formally married does not necessarily guarantee that women can fully enjoy the rights acquired by marriage. This is due to persistence of socio-cultural attitudes that consider the husband to be the one who has the last word on the use of property. Their position in their families and communities being inferior to those occupied by men, many women are afraid to defend and claim their land rights. This is often out of fear that they would be considered as the source of conflicts within their families; that they would be resented by their communities; and also because of sheer lack of knowledge of their land rights.

2.5 Conclusion

Women smallholder farmers play a fundamental role in agriculture, and at the same time they perform unpaid care work which is very time-consuming and difficult – particularly in rural areas that lack basic infrastructure and services. Despite the fact that women’s unpaid care work generates goods and services, it is not usually factored into national policies, and is often undervalued by households and communities. This situation creates the invisibility of women’s unpaid care work, with the state taking no responsibility for prioritising public services that could act as enablers for women smallholder farmers to sustainably increase their agricultural productivity.

As a direct consequence of the invisibility of women’s

unpaid care work, women’s poverty and gender inequalities are perpetuated. When governments neglect to measure unpaid care work, it means that they cannot be in a position to evaluate the impact of economic and social policies on household work, as commonly performed by women. The lack of prominence of unpaid care work in policies and strategies also deprives women of their voice in decision-making, which is one way of cementing unequal power relations between men and women. Other impacts include women being deprived of income, and food security.

The latter impact is of significance because, as women are the major agriculturalists in Africa as smallholder farmers, their food insecurity has far-reaching consequences on the food situation across the continent. However, even where unpaid care work is addressed effectively, it is important to recognise that women smallholder farmers’ food security cannot be guaranteed unless there is recognition that climate-resilient sustainable agriculture is an effective way to ensure food security.

There is pressing need to ensure that approaches towards the promotion of climate-resilient sustainable agriculture have women’s land rights at the centre. The legal, policy and programmatic situation in Ghana and Rwanda reveal that opportunities exist for improving women’s land rights and agriculture. However, Ghana would still need to implement existing progressive laws, and strengthen its land laws, which are currently skewed against women. Rwanda would also need to work harder on aspects of its laws that have discriminatory effects on some population groups in relation to their land rights, as well as the substantive implementation of laws that promote gender equality at traditional level. As for programmes, though the frameworks relevant to agriculture in both countries create an enabling environment for gender mainstreaming, they do not factor in unpaid care work as a specific programme component. It is therefore up to the Women’s Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project to influence programming trends in the two countries in the agriculture sector.

This chapter focuses on Outcome 1 of the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project, which is '*to have a total of 5,400 women smallholder farmers in four Local Rights Programmes (LRP) organised, and their work as farmers and carers recognised by the community by the end of 2015*'. In order to achieve this outcome, there has to be clarity in respect to: the processes that will take place in Ghana and Rwanda;

the extent of organisation of women smallholder farmers; the existing opportunities and barriers to the recognition and reduction of women's unpaid care work by men, women, local and national authorities; and the synergy between baseline findings, project activities and relevant project objectives and indicators.

CHAPTER 3

Women as smallholder farmers and carers: are they organised and is their unpaid work recognised?

“Society has overlooked the care economy and the enormity of women’s role, contributing to perpetuating a culture where resource allocation within households tends to show the same bias against women.”ActionAid International

3.1 What is expected to happen in Ghana and Rwanda between 2012 and 2015?

As depicted by Figure 2, the Women’s Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project will use multiple strategies in order to enable women smallholder farmers to organise and have their unpaid care work recognised.

A total of 180 women smallholder farmer groups, who have been mobilised, meet twice a month in Reflect circles. Reflect was chosen because of its focus on literacy and participation.

It is expected that by the end of 2013, each Local Rights Programme will have one platform that will bring together women smallholder farmer groups, community leaders and men in Ghana and Rwanda. In turn, these community-wide platforms will be linked to national farmers’ associations and women’s rights organisations by the end of 2014. To generate evidence, 2,500 women in both countries will be asked to complete time diaries to track changes in their time use, and these will be analysed over the course of three years. Similarly, a selected number of

men (400 per country) will be trained and expected to complete time diaries. The purpose will be to compare the men’s and women’s time diaries for purposes of advocacy and community sensitisation. The time diaries will also be used to track the impact of interventions such as child care centres, water harvesting, and woodlots on women’s time use.

Table 3 shows that Ghana and Rwanda have common project indicators for achieving this intention (with a few variations in terms of numbers of beneficiaries or targets). These indicators are meant to facilitate the meticulous tracking of Outcome 1.

3.2 How are women smallholder farmers currently organised?

It is important to know the extent to which women smallholder farmers in the project areas in Ghana and Rwanda are organised, the issues around which they are organised, and the level of recognition of women’s work as farmers and carers both by the women themselves, and men. At baseline, it was observed that:



Figure 2: Getting the care work of women smallholder farmers recognised

Box 3: ActionAid's Reflection-Action model

- Reflection-Action is a diverse and innovative approach to adult learning and social change
- It links adult learning to empowerment.
- It now creates a democratic space to strengthen people's ability to speak for themselves at all levels.
- Reflection-Action projects are diverse but they all focus on enabling people to articulate their views.
- The development of literacy and other communication skills is closely linked to the analysis of power relationships.
- Groups develop their own learning materials by constructing maps, calendars, matrices, and diagrams or using drama, story-telling and songs to capture social, economic, cultural and political issues from their own environment.

Table 3: Indicators for Outcome 1

5,400 women smallholder farmers in four Local Rights Programmes (LRP) organised and their work as farmers and carers recognised by the community by the end of 2015.

Indicators (abridged)	Ghana	Rwanda
Establishment of women smallholder farmer groups.	100 groups	80 groups
Gaining public support of community leaders for women smallholder farmers' demands to reduce their unpaid care work.	At least 40% of community leaders	At least 40% of community leaders
Recognition and support by men of women's demands to reduce their unpaid care work by the end of 2015.	At least 1,000 men	At least 1,000 men
Organising women smallholder farmers in Reflect circles.	100 Reflect circles	80 Reflect circles
Increasing the capacity of community facilitators in the Reflect methodology.	Staff from four partner organisations	Staff from two partner organisations
Women smallholder farmers' annual meeting.	1 meeting	1 meeting
Active engagement by women smallholder farmer groups in raising awareness and advocacy actions.	40 percent	40 percent
Involvement and representation of women smallholder farmers in decision making, including making advocacy demands in community meetings.	3,000 women	2,400 women
Meetings between leaders of smallholder farmer platforms and regional/national associations.	2 annual meetings held in each LRP	2 annual meetings held in each LRP
Key issues raised by the communities to district/regional and national farmer associations.	At least one key issue per year in each country	At least one key issue per year in each country

- Though both Ghana and Rwanda already had some smallholder groups for women, these were poorly organised.
- In Ghana, there were a total of 44 smallholder farmer groups (1,240 women) in the four LRPs. Nanumba North had the highest number (16), followed by Nabdam (12). Nanumba South and Talensi had eight groups each.
- The LRPs in Rwanda had 16 unorganised groups. The project added 64 more women's groups to make a total of 80 groups with 30 women each.

- Previously, women smallholder farmers in both countries were not deliberately organised in their existing groups in order to actively engage in advocacy, including for the reduction of their care burden or for their farming activities. Instead, in Rwanda, the majority of women's groups were involved in Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCO), or unofficial savings and credit schemes (Ibimina)⁸⁰. Further, another group of women living with HIV and AIDS from Muyira was engaged in mushroom and vegetable cultivation – which has close resemblance to the issue of sustainable agriculture that the project is pursuing.

For groups to be effective and cohesive, attendance at meetings and participation in group activities are critical. In Ghana, though there was an arrangement that the groups should meet weekly, attendance by women was inconsistent and low, averaging about 38 percent of the women. One reason that was provided by women for their inability to regularly attend group meetings was that there are often competing demands on their time – indicating that women perform a lot of unpaid care duties that leave them with little opportunity to undertake other endeavours. Since structures and systems play crucial roles in defining group cohesion and robustness, it is reassuring that many of the groups have some kind of system(s) in place. The groups in both countries had leadership structures that they

recognised for guidance. Baseline data in Ghana suggested that 75% of all groups kept attendance registers. Some women's groups in Rwanda also reported keeping records of the proceedings of their meetings, though several newly formed groups still organising themselves had no such system yet. Groups from Dukundane, Abishyizehamwe and Duteraninkunga claimed that they could not even afford to buy a records book.

Only 38% of women's groups in Ghana had group bank accounts. In Rwanda, most groups were using informal savings and credit systems (Ibimina) and not banks. One group in Gishubi sector engaged in banana farming had opened an account with SACCO, and they expect to use this avenue to borrow money in the future to expand their farming. Some groups were keeping their money with one trusted group member – though there is a high risk that it such money can get stolen, as happened with one group in Gishubi sector.

3.3 How do community leaders recognise and support women smallholder farmers' demands to reduce their unpaid care work?

In the baseline study in Ghana, the term 'community leaders' referred to opinion leaders that are recognised as such in their community, and who play a leading role in community decision-making processes. In Rwanda, the term was applied to



Members of the Wupuni group in Ghana. PHOTO: JANE/HAHN/PANOS/ACTIONAID

elected public officials responsible for representing a particular community (village, cell, sector and district) in decision making meetings at local level, i.e. extension workers, development officers and council personnel.

At baseline, there was no evidence of specific support by community leaders of women’s demands to reduce unpaid care work. This is not surprising, since there had not been any specific effort by women to make such demands. In Ghana’s Talensi district, three out of the eight women’s groups had received the support of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA) to undertake block farming through the supply of inputs and extension services, mostly at subsidised rates. In block farming, farmers cultivate their fields as a group to reduce overall costs and to offer support across the crop-growing spectrum. This support could also be attributed to the efforts of ActionAid Ghana, which has been active in sensitising government agencies on the need to support smallholder groups.

In Rwanda, women in Akagali cell reported that the local sector agronomist provides them with technical farming support, while sector executive secretaries give support on administrative issues, including providing meeting rooms for women’s associations at the sector premises. The local leaders also help in conflict resolution, capacity building, and creating links to markets. In an isolated case, a group of women in Mukingo sector was given wetland to grow maize. It can be deduced from this data that while the provision of agro-inputs was mentioned in both Ghana and Rwanda, it was only in Ghana that the provision of extension services was mentioned. The provision of space for women’s association meetings

as well as conflict mediation was unique to Rwanda.

3.4 Do men recognise and support women’s demand for reduced care work?

The findings of the baseline studies in Ghana and Rwanda revealed that each country used a unique approach in order to get information on the extent to which men recognise and support women’s unpaid care work. ActionAid Ghana sought data from men themselves, while ActionAid Rwanda asked the women. Figure 3 represents a summary of the findings (analysed below).

Though the figures cannot strictly be compared to each other because they were not from the same sample, they illustrate where both men and women in Rwanda and Ghana stand on the general issue of men’s attitudes towards unpaid care work. According to findings, while men in Ghana believed strongly that they recognise unpaid care work, in Rwanda, the number of women feeling that men recognise women’s unpaid care work was lower. The number of women with the view that men support the reduction of unpaid care work was even lower in Rwanda. This points to the need for the Women’s Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project to be conscious of the different perceptions women and men may have of unpaid care work within and across different communities and countries.

3.4.1 From men’s mouths: how is women’s unpaid care work recognised and supported?

Findings in Ghana indicate that while a high number of men recognise the fact that care work is an enormous burden on women, this is not necessarily translated into supporting women to ease their

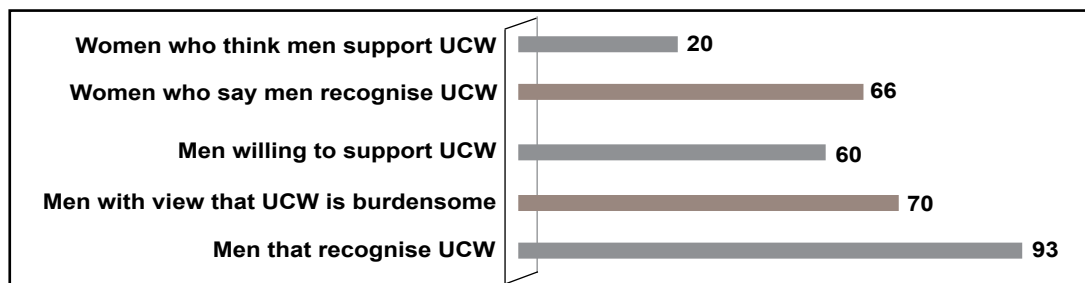


Figure 3: Men and unpaid care work—views from men and women (%)

unpaid care work. There were still pockets of men that regarded women as only undertaking work traditionally reserved for them, and did not see any burden arising. For those willing to support unpaid care work, the findings demonstrate that mainly, men's support would be limited to the provision of firewood. There was unanimity that women spend substantial amounts of time on care duties:

- About 93% of men interviewed in the Kukuo community recognised that women undertake critical work such as child care, fetching water, cooking for large families and taking care of sick relatives.
- 70% of male interviewees in Nangodi community accepted that care work is burdensome for women.

However, deep-rooted stereotypes and cultural beliefs/practices were still holding some men from absolute acknowledgement of the burden imposed by unpaid care work. For instance, in Ghana:

- About 70% of the male respondents in the Nangodi community said it is out of place for a man to perform tasks that are customarily the responsibility of a woman.
- Only 30% of men in the Sekote community admitted that they support or provide help to women in performing care work.
- In Kukuo community, where there is an overwhelming recognition of care duties of women (93%), only 60% of the interviewed men were willing to support women to undertake these important duties. This means that while 30% of the remaining men were empathetic towards women's heavy responsibilities, they could not make a link between the women's situation and the need to address rigid gender roles in society.
- In the Gbeo community, many men (85%) blatantly saw women as procured labour and said that *"we pay huge sums of money to marry women, and therefore we do not see*

any justification for us to support women to undertake their tasks".

3.4.2 Women's perception: how do men recognise and support unpaid care work?

Through responses varied, female respondents in Rwanda generally painted an unflattering picture of the level of men's recognition and support of unpaid care work. In Ghana, focus group discussions of female respondents expressed an opinion on the type of men that help with care work, and 85% intimated that relatively educated men are more likely to support women with care work than their non-educated counterparts. This fact was supported in Ghana's Kukuo community, where it was discovered that 60% of men support women with care work – albeit only through fetching firewood. The community, which is very close to the district capital (Bimbilla), and has long firewood collection distances, has a lot of relatively educated people.

This is applicable in Rwanda too, and more specifically in urban areas where, if both spouses are educated, they mostly share responsibilities. Alternatively, they hire a household worker if both are employed. Findings from Rwanda show that generally, a majority of the interviewed women (66.3 percent) held the view that men do not recognise unpaid care work, compared to 33.7% who said they did. About 80.2% of the women interviewees took the position that men are not supportive and do not play a role in reducing women's unpaid care work.

Similar to the views of men in Ghana, women felt that reasons for this lack of support include culture, which dictates that women should be occupied by domestic work such as cooking, water fetching, firewood collection, weeding and planting seeds, and looking after children.

Also, traditionally, some men fear they will lose societal respect because it will appear that they are under the influence of women should they be seen to perform 'women's chores'. However, this is not to say that there is a complete absence of men in the unpaid care work domain in Rwanda. The findings

Box 4: Nature of men's support

Some husbands have been known to support their wives' unpaid care work by:

- participating in firewood collection
- looking after children when women have other activities
- cooking
- planing seeds
- transporting seeds to the fields

show that 31% of women interviewed in Rwabicuma sector attested that their husbands offer some help. For example, one woman mentioned that sometimes her husband takes care of the children and other family activities (including cooking) when she is attending meetings or social gatherings. Though this practice is not consistent, it is a good indication of how her husband cares for their family. Other women who affirmed that they receive various support added that their husbands' involvement helps to strengthen their relationship. Box 4 contains examples of ways in which men support unpaid care work.

In Rwanda, there was an increase in the number of female-headed households after the genocide. A demographic survey conducted by the government in 1996 estimated that 54% of the population was female and that 34% of households were headed by women. In five of Rwanda's 12 prefectures⁸¹ the percentage of widows heading households was higher than 60% – Byumba (66.5 percent), Kibungo (65.7 percent), Butare (65%), Gisenyi (63.5%), Ruhengeri (62.9%) and Cyangugu (61%)⁸².

In Rwanda, women who received no support from their husbands confessed that this can be a source of conflict, particularly if a woman has requested help with some care responsibilities. The fact that some women ask their husbands for support signals that the women themselves feel the need for respite. In fact, evidence from the baseline suggests that husbands who attempt to help in unpaid care work have a better appreciation of how hard this care work is. As one woman in Rwanda remarked, “*several*

times, after helping me to look after children or cook when I am away, my husband will explain how difficult it is to perform such activities”.

Such first-hand experience can be useful if men are to fully support the a reduction in women's unpaid care work. It is therefore important that the project has included a small percentage of men in the time diary collection process so that these could be periodically compared to women's time diaries.

3.5 Do women themselves recognise the value of unpaid care work?

The baseline findings illustrated that generally, women in the project districts did not perceive their own unpaid care work as work. To change this, the project will use a participatory method whereby women will fill in time diaries in order to help them to remember activities that they may forget, or think unimportant. The data will be collected, systematically analysed and findings shared with Reflect groups for discussion on a quarterly basis. They will then discuss why they spend so much time on each of the activities. A related risk of women's subsequent awareness of their burden would be that they could start redistributing work to young girls in their homes, thereby compromising the girls' development. It is therefore imperative that the project works out ways of minimising or avoiding this risk.

3.6 Increasing the capacity of community facilitators in the Reflect methodology

Ghana and Rwanda started at different points in relation to the project indicator that aims to increase the capacity of community facilitators in the Reflect methodology, though there were similarities in some areas. In Nanumba, there was some level of knowledge by community facilitators of Reflect because ActionAid Ghana had been running Reflect circles in previous years. However, at baseline, facilitators recruited in the Upper East region had no knowledge. Similarly in Rwanda, the 80 facilitators that were enlisted had no knowledge about Reflect methodology, unpaid care work or sustainable agriculture.

3.7 Conclusion: How do the baseline findings connect with relevant indicators?

The baseline data has ably presented the state in which women smallholder farmers' groups in Ghana and Rwanda were at baseline – with most groups being incohesive; having leadership structures that were mainly providing guidance on issues related to credit and savings; and doing no advocacy work. This data would make the indicator for 'establishing women farmers' groups' easy to track. Data demonstrating the non-existence of support from community leaders in meeting women smallholder farmers' demands to reduce their unpaid care work is present, thus providing a clear baseline on the action towards gaining public support for these demands. Data that displays the extent to which men recognise and support women in the performance of unpaid care work is visible. However, further, data is required to explicitly demonstrate the baseline position of the men in supporting advocacy demands of women smallholder farmers for the reduction of unpaid care work.

In relation to the indicator denoting 'an increase in the capacity of community facilitators in Reflect methodology', the term 'increase' suggests some measure of pre-existing knowledge. The baseline in Ghana demonstrates that only community facilitators in Nunumba had prior knowledge of Reflect methodology and the rest did not. However, the depth of this knowledge for community facilitators in Nunumba (including on issues of unpaid care work and sustainable agriculture) at baseline is still unknown, making difficult any effective assessment of how facilitators' knowledge advances as a result of the project. In Rwanda, the baseline data clearly

spells out that the community facilitators had no knowledge of the Reflect methodology, unpaid care work or sustainable agriculture.

Critically, the baseline findings lack data on the nature of regional/national platforms and farmer associations being targeted for advocacy. Some of the information that could be beneficial in effectively tracking the indicator relating to interface meetings between 'leaders of smallholder farmers' platforms and regional/national associations' could be obtained from these questions: What platforms and associations are relevant to the advocacy work of the project? What has been their response prior advocacy interventions by women farmers, if any? What is their level of influence at local and national levels? How critical is their mandate to women smallholder farmers and their agenda to achieve unpaid care work reduction and promotion of sustainable agriculture?

In the absence of data in the baseline reports, for ActionAid Ghana, reference will have to be made to the existing advocacy strategy that documents key advocacy platforms and associations for ActionAid Ghana. These include CSOs such as Faith Victory Association (FVA), Resseau de Femmes (RDF), Widows and Orphans Movement, Bonatadu, Songtaba, Oxfam, SEND Ghana, FoodSpan, Northern Ghana CSOs Network on Agriculture, Peasant Farmers' Association of Ghana, Ghana Trade and Livelihoods Coalition and the Economic Justice Network. Other advocacy targets are Parliament and government ministries, departments and agencies (MOFA, Gender and Social Protection, Ministry of Works and Housing, etc)⁸³.

CHAPTER 4

Women taking action to gain support for food production and unpaid care work reduction

The Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project realises that if the empowerment and development of women smallholder farmers is to be attained through improvements in their food reproduction and unpaid care workloads, women themselves have to take action. Therefore, **Outcome 2** of the project in Ghana and Rwanda is that *'5,400 women smallholder farmers will meet regularly with local and national policy makers and engage in planning and budgeting processes to demand more resources to support them in food production and unpaid care work by the end of 2015'*. Thus, this strand of the project is linked to women's rights, leadership, voice, and claiming and demanding women's rights from duty bearers. To efficiently perform this role, women smallholder farmers require adequate leadership and advocacy capacity, an enabling environment for them to interact with policy makers and participate in planning and budgeting processes, as well as skills to design strategically planned advocacy campaigns that they can present to duty bearers. There must be a direct connection between the baseline findings, project activities and relevant project objectives and indicators.

4.1 What is planned in Ghana and Rwanda between 2012 and 2015?

The strategies for improving the leadership capacities of women smallholder farmers so that they are able to demand more resources to support them in food production and unpaid care work will target both the women farmers and duty bearers within local and national governments.

Under Outcome 2, over a period of four years, a total of 180 women smallholder farmers in Ghana and

Rwanda will be trained and supported to become leaders of smallholder farmers' groups. In particular, a series of leadership training workshops will be conducted for the purposes of training women's group representatives (100 women in Ghana and 85 women in Rwanda), community facilitators and partner management staff in each LRP. Women who have been trained will then be expected to apply their leadership skills in formal and informal leadership positions in their communities.

Since awareness among duty bearers is essential for any effort geared towards inspiring them to respect the rights that are being demanded by rights-holders, a total of 100 women and men in local and national government in each country will be trained and sensitised to support women smallholder farmers' demands for public services and infrastructure.

These trainings will also involve media representatives. The overall aim will be to build the capacity of these stakeholders to respond to women smallholder farmers' demands on unpaid care work and sustainable agriculture in each county by the end of 2014. The climax of the interventions will be when the trained women start participating in policy processes through a workshop specially organised for them so they can contribute to the budgets and annual work plans of their District Assemblies.

A further dialogue workshop will be arranged between government and women farmers on planning and budgeting processes. Each year, an annual meeting will also be organised for 40 women smallholder farmers' groups in each country so they can develop an advocacy and campaign plan, outlining their key policy demands for government.

Table 4: Indicators for Outcome 2

5,400 women smallholder farmers will meet regularly with local and national policy makers and engage in planning and budgeting processes to demand more resources to support them in food production and unpaid care work by the end of 2015.

Indicators (abridged)	Ghana	Rwanda
Establishment of women smallholder farmer groups.	100 groups	80 groups
Gaining public support of community leaders for women smallholder farmers' demands to reduce their unpaid care work.	At least 40% of community leaders	At least 40% of community leaders
Recognition and support by men of women's demands to reduce their unpaid care work by the end of 2015.	At least 1,000 men	At least 1,000 men
Organising women smallholder farmers in Reflect circles.	100 Reflect circles	80 Reflect circles
Increasing the capacity of community facilitators in the Reflect methodology.	Staff from four partner organisations	Staff from two partner organisations
Women smallholder farmers' annual meeting.	1 meeting	1 meeting
Active engagement by women smallholder farmer groups in raising awareness and advocacy actions.	40 percent	40 percent
Involvement and representation of women smallholder farmers in decision making, including making advocacy demands in community meetings.	3,000 women	2,400 women
Meetings between leaders of smallholder farmer platforms and regional/national associations.	2 annual meetings held in each LRP	2 annual meetings held in each LRP
Key issues raised by the communities to district/regional and national farmer associations.	At least one key issue per year in each country	At least one key issue per year in each country

Table 4 presents project indicators relating to the scheduled activities under project Outcome 2

4.2 Levels of women smallholder farmers' leadership capacities and their ability to apply leadership skills

At the time of the baseline, solid leadership skills that could propel informed advocacy within women's groups in Ghana and Rwanda were lacking. In Ghana, though 75% of the female respondents had previously been trained in leadership by MOFA and ActionAid Ghana, results on the policy front were not visible. Either the women had not gained much knowledge from such trainings, or they were not sufficiently prepared to utilise lessons and

skills learned to influence the policy actions of duty bearers in practice. However, women's groups were active in interacting and collaborating with NGOs in their communities. For example, a women's group in Sekote was trained in composting and stone boundary building for water harvesting through collaboration with TRAX Ghana. Such training tends to motivate women, strengthen their confidence and enhance their willingness to assume leadership roles within their groups.

In general, women's groups in the project areas in Rwanda had obtained no training on leadership skills, but in selected groups a few women had received training at an individual level. For example the Abaticumugambi group leader from Busasamana

sector received some leadership training from Care International, while three women in Kibirizi sector received some women’s rights training from ActionAid Rwanda. In order to meet the objectives of the project, there is need to provide well-structured leadership skills training (e.g. interpersonal relationships, group dynamics, participatory decision-making, types and manifestations of leadership) on a systematic basis over the life of the project. Women also need to be trained on more complementary topics that could enhance their leadership and advocacy qualities, including: accounting, planning and budgeting, project development and evaluation, decision making, networking, farm management and women’s rights.

Once they are knowledgeable, the ability of women’s groups to apply their leadership skills (which at baseline were zero) would very much depend on their capacity to network across groups and speak with a cohesive voice. In Ghana, a critical finding of the baseline was that women’s groups were not networking among themselves. Rather, they were operating as individual groups, concentrating on their core mandates and areas of interest. For example, respondents in Aluurani, Lankani, Gbeo and Awaradane all indicated that though they were aware of the existence of other groups, they had not been in touch with them. Not much was being done to bring together like-minded groups on a common platform to advocate for services from local government agencies.

4.3 Contribution of women smallholder farmers to decision making

“We are not satisfied with our situation, and would like to participate in the decisions that will have an impact on us, even at household level.” Women smallholder farmers in Rwanda”

Since women smallholder farmer groups that have gained increased capacity and knowledge of food

security are expected to be active in decision making and advocacy, there is need to establish the extent to which they were involved in decision making at baseline. Only Rwanda’s baseline study investigated this issue by looking at women’s capacity to contribute to decision making at household and community levels. The household level was of interest because when women are supported by their spouses at this level, it is likely that they would receive the same spousal support and therefore have the confidence to hold positions at community level. Conversely, it is probable that a husband who does not believe in a wife’s right to contribute to decision making at household level could create barriers for her to participate as a leader at advocacy forums within the community.

Figure 4 paints a bleak picture of Rwandan women’s involvement in decision making at both household and community levels, with household participation faring the worst.

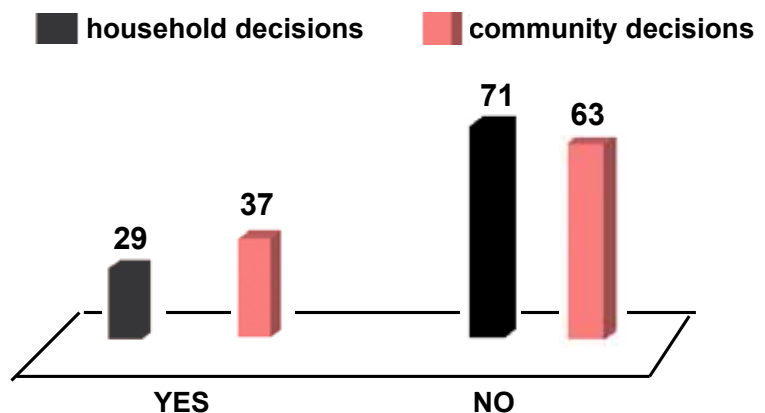


Figure 4: Women smallholder farmers that contribute to decision making in Rwanda (%)

Overall, 71% of interviewed women claimed not to have a say in in decision making on household issues. However, one sector, Muganza, had a high number of women – 63% – who said that they participated in household decision making.

This figure stood at only 6% in Kibirizi sector and 11% in Mukingo and Gishubi sectors respectively, rising to 26% in Mukingo sector and 31% in Rwabicuma sector. Most women claimed that they are not consulted when their husbands decide on something. Women’s views could even be met with hostile reactions, as in the case of one woman in Rwabicuma sector who was divorced by her husband when she refused the sale of family property.

Women in Rwanda claimed it is common for men to force women to accept financial decisions they have made unilaterally in relation to valuable properties such as land, livestock or taking loans from banks

Within the community, women smallholder farmers’ participation in decision making depends on whether they are part of a decision-making structure, or whether they are actively advocating to influence decisions in such structures. At only 37 percent, women’s contribution to decision making at community level was slightly higher than at household level, but still poor. The baseline found that women in the study areas occupied elected community positions such as a cell’s Electoral Commissioner, sector survivors’ coordinator, farm advisor, members of Sector Council, treasurers, were in charge of social affairs in a sector, and health advisors. Although no figures were available on the exact number of women occupying these positions, the state of Rwanda guarantees women at

least 30% of posts in decision-making organs. As depicted in Figure 5, Rwabicuma sector had a high number of women participating in decision making at community level (56 percent), while the lowest numbers were found in Gishubi sector (12 percent) and Mukingo sector (19 percent). Busasamana had 40 %, while Muganza and Kibirizi sectors both had 46%.

4.4 Access by women smallholder farmers to policy making processes

The presence of an enabling environment for women smallholder farmers to interact with policy makers and participate in planning and budgeting processes is critical if women smallholder farmers’ desire to have their demands heard and satisfied is to be achieved. Policy level players, including local government agencies and power brokers, are critical to sustaining interventions. Dialogue and interactions between women smallholder farmers and policy makers is significant in defining both access and participation parameters. For instance, it is obvious that attempts at increasing farm productivity, including market access opportunities, will be given a necessary push if smallholder farmers in Ghana dialogue effectively and collaboratively with MOFA. In the same vein, dialogue with key duty bearers will open spaces on tackling empowerment and reducing gendered stereotypes.

The baseline studies generated no evidence to indicate that policymakers were resistant to advocacy efforts by women smallholder farmers. At the same time, no government official in the project areas had received any training or sensitisation on the need to support women smallholder farmers’ demands. On the part of the women, the main challenge was that they were not organised enough to identify key issues and systematically make their demands heard. Still, there had been some ad hoc efforts. For example, women smallholder farmers’ groups in

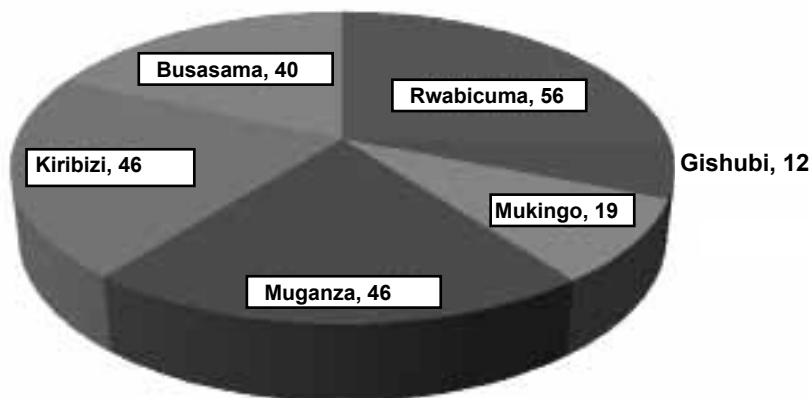


Figure 5: Percentage of women participating in decision making at community level within Rwandan sectors.

Awaredane had successfully engaged with MOFA to acquire a grinding mill for members. They had also successfully lobbied a Member of Parliament (MP) to provide building materials to house their grinding mill. Through ActionAid Ghana, the groups also received small ruminants from Bonatadu Nahira Taaba Development Union. However, these instances of successes in networking and advocacy are few and are mostly driven by NGOs through their own projects. A lot more is required to develop strong and truly grassroots groups that are autonomous and strong enough to take independent advocacy, lobbying and influencing actions.

The good news is that at baseline, women smallholder farmers' groups in both Ghana and Rwanda already had good knowledge about existing grassroots governance structures relevant to dialoguing and networking. In Ghana, women were able to identify assembly men, unit committee members, MPs, chiefs, water and sanitation committees and the District Chief Executive as critical actors in making their demands heard. Some are beginning to take action. In Rwanda, women identified decision makers and decision-making bodies such as local community leaders at sector, village and cell levels, National Women's Councils at sector level, and local meetings.

4.5 Conclusion: How do the baseline findings connect with relevant indicators?

All advocacy issues identified for supporting women smallholder farmers to meet regularly with local and national policy makers and engage in planning and budgeting processes to demand more resources to support them in food production and unpaid care work are relevant. However, there are three areas where the data is not speaking to the indicators as reflected in Table 4. First, there is an expectation that the women leaders 'active in decision making and advocacy in order to demand improved sustainable livelihood options and food security' will themselves have gained increased capacity and knowledge of

food security. Yet, there is no data to track how such food security knowledge will have increased.

The project therefore needs to reaffirm whether this interrelated data is sufficient to satisfy the monitoring of the increased capacity of the women leaders participating in advocacy.

Second, unlike Rwanda, the baseline study in Ghana is missing data on the involvement of women in decision making. For example, the Rwanda study clearly articulates how women are involved in decision making at household level and within some community structures. An understanding of institutions in which women were making or could potentially make decisions is vital for an appreciation of barriers and opportunities that may exist in relation to women's ability to fully engage in advocacy with policy makers.

Third, the project seeks to increase (by 20 percent) the number of local and national officials publicly supporting women smallholder farmers' demands. At baseline, 411 officials were already providing public support to women smallholder farmers' demands.

However, the baseline data does not provide information on how the targeted officials had previously publicly supported women smallholder farmers' demands. Despite the high numbers of women that constitute some electable bodies in Rwanda, there is need to ensure that women smallholder farmers are not only represented, but that they in fact actively participate in influencing decisions. The success of the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project therefore hinges on:

- implementing planned strategies to cultivate a good crop of women smallholder farmers' groups that can be active in decision making;
- advocacy aimed improving their sustainable livelihood options and food security.

CHAPTER 5

Reducing women smallholder farmers' unpaid care work

All actions described in Chapters 3 and 4 and which will be undertaken as part of the project will primarily be preparatory work towards achieving **Outcome 3**, *'significantly reducing the hours spent by 5,400 women in unpaid care work through the introduction of low-cost pilot interventions such as community-run child care centres, household rainwater storage, and community tree lots for firewood by the end of 2015'*.

In order to track the achievement of this foreseen outcome, the baseline situations in Ghana and Rwanda need to be understood in relation to: the scale of women's involvement in unpaid care work; existing interventions to relieve women of unpaid care work; and the needs and capacity of women smallholder farmers in order to reduce, redistribute and recognise their unpaid care work. Overall, the gaps and hardships revealed by the data analysis below underscore the fact that the state has the ultimate responsibility to ensure that development filters equally to women smallholder farmers through the provision of infrastructure and labour-saving technologies that can reduce the time women spend on unpaid care work.

5.1 What will be implemented in Ghana and Rwanda between 2012 and 2015?

A set of interrelated strategies will be deployed to meaningfully relieve the unpaid work of women smallholder farmers. Since the baseline studies revealed that collecting water and firewood are two activities that consume too much of women's time in Ghana and Rwanda, meetings will be held annually between women smallholder farmers and relevant government structures at local and national levels to improve women's control of, and access to, water and managed firewood sources in both countries.

The project also plans to set up two sustainable, reliable and well-managed woodlots in each LRP in Ghana. Further, in recognition of the reality that women invest substantial time in child care, a pilot child care centre will be instituted in one LRP in Ghana and in one LRP in Rwanda, using existing infrastructure. A total of 50 women (20 in Ghana and 30 in Rwanda) will be trained and paid to set up the child care centres. And since the project is moulded around the recognition that unpaid care work grossly interferes with women smallholder farmers' agriculture, it will go further to ensure that with adequate time, women are enabled to engage in climate-resilient sustainable agriculture. To this end, research was conducted in order to identify interventions for sustainable agriculture in each community in 2013. In addition, there will be farmer exchanges between women smallholder farmers' groups from Ghana and Rwanda, focusing on multiple-use water services and conservation by the end of 2014.

Table 5 presents project indicators relating to the planned activities under Outcome 3 in Ghana and Rwanda.

5.2 The scale of women's involvement in unpaid work

The project will generate evidence of women's unpaid care work through time diaries. As explained in Chapter 3, a total of 2,500 women in both Ghana and Rwanda will be compiling time diaries to track changes in their time use, and a sample of 810 women's time diaries will be analysed consistently over the course of project. These time diaries will reveal any changes in unpaid care work patterns.

Table 5: Indicators for Outcome 3.

Significantly reducing the hours spent by 5,400 women in unpaid care work through the introduction of low-cost pilot interventions such as community-run child care centres, household rainwater storage, and community tree lots for firewood by the end of 2015.

Indicators (abridged)	Ghana	Rwanda
Reduction by at least 20% of the number of hours spent by women on unpaid care work – as reflected in time diaries of 2,500 women collected between 2013 and 2015.	1,500 in Ghana (A sample of 450 women and 150 men in Ghana systematically analysed over three years)	1,000 in Rwanda (A sample of data from 360 women and 120 men in Rwanda will be systematically analysed over three years).
At least 2,700 of target women smallholder farmers with access to safe drinking water by the end of 2014.	1,500 women	1,200 women
Increase in government funds for child care centres and rural infrastructure in order to reduce women’s unpaid care work.	No child care centres	No child care centres
Increase in the number of women smallholder farmers active in water user committees.	50% participation from the 3,000 targeted women; and 20% participation from other women	50% participation from the 2,400 targeted women; and 20% participation from other women
Following agro-forestry training for women only, 1,500 women are familiar with agro-forestry techniques and use them regularly.	1,000 women in Ghana	500 women in Rwanda
30% of target women access child care services as a result of one child care centre in each country by the end of 2015.	30% of 3,000 women; establishment of one child care centre	30% of 2,400 women; establishment of one child care centre



Zelia Azumah in Gnani Camp, Northern Ghana.
PHOTO:ACTIONAID

5.2.1 Fetching water and collecting firewood

“Water scarcity or lack of safe drinking water is a problem that disproportionately burdens women. There are no water-harvesting facilities on most farms. Water shortage has a negative impact on agriculture as many depend on water for irrigating their fields. The water facilities are not reliable because many times they run water dry, forcing people to walk a long distance to collect water from rivers and other wells. Also the maintenance of the infrastructure (water tap, pumps and pipes) may require heavy costs that are not always available.”
 Women smallholder farmers in Rwanda

In both Ghana and Rwanda, water collection is done mainly by women or girls, adding pressure and reducing the time they have to develop their

own livelihoods. At baseline, Figures 6 and 7 below illustrate that about 50% of interviewed women smallholder farmers in Ghana were spending more than four hours per day collecting water for household use such as cooking, washing and drinking.

Women in Rwanda were spending an average of three hours. There are also issues of water quality during the dry season, when women may have to spend yet more time to access clean water. Lack of clean water may have impacts on family health, resulting in women using even more time to care for sick family members. Findings in Rwanda, which revealed the exact number of hours women in various sectors claimed to spend, established that women in most of the sectors spend up to three hours, and the least time (one hour) was spent by women in Kibirizi, followed by Rwabicuma (two hours).

Areas such as Nyarusange (Kavumu A and Kavumu B) and Gishubi sector are hillier and water wells lie behind hills that have high slopes, thus increasing hardships for women and girls. The dry season is particularly harsh to women as demonstrated in Ghana’s Kuku (in the Nanumba South district), where women who spend one hour collecting water during the rainy season end up spending 10 hours during some parts of the dry season for the same task. For this reason, the dry season is also the time when women need most help to carry out their unpaid care work.

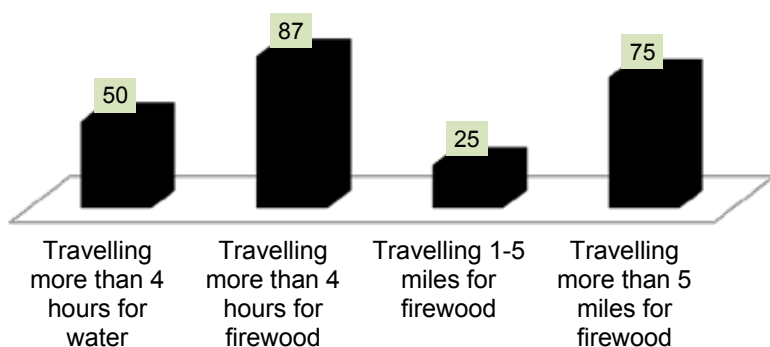


Figure 6: Proportion of women that spend significant amount of time on water and firewood in Ghana (%).

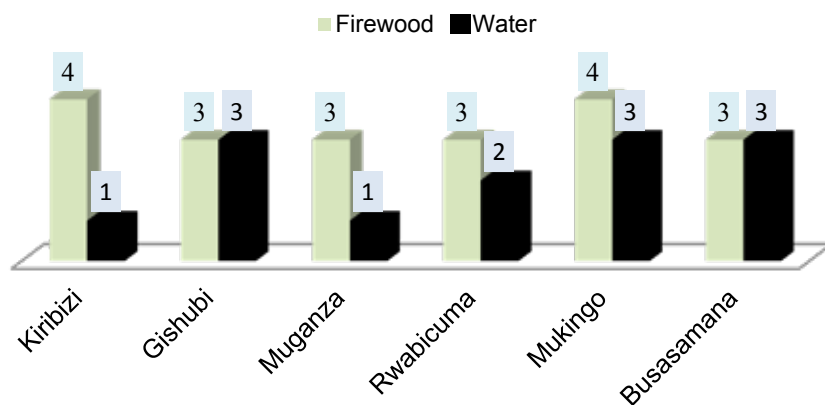


Figure 7: Average hours spent on water and firewood by women in Rwanda (n).

In terms of time spent on firewood collection, it was clear that at the time of the baseline survey, the lack of stable and easily accessible sources of firewood was a serious issue imposing a heavy burden on women and girls. Figures 6 and 7 suggest that at baseline, many of women in Ghana (87 percent) were spending more than four hours a day collecting firewood. Similarly,

in Rwanda, women in the various sectors were spending between three and four hours. About 75% of the women in Ghana were affected by the severe task of having to walk for more than 5 miles a day in order to collect firewood. The remaining 25% were still spending a good amount of time on the activity, since they had to travel 1 to 5 miles each day.

The situation was no different in Rwanda, where women reported that sometimes they walk 6 to 9 miles to reach a forest. Thus, women expressed the concern that the task of firewood collection in wild forests was associated with high risks such as snake bites, injuries and fines. To ease their firewood challenges, it was reported that some women resort to firewood sources that are not environmentally or agro-friendly. For example, women in the communities in Aweredane in Ghana stated that their key sources of firewood are community guinea corn and millet stalks. Equally, women in Rwanda confessed that they resort to crop residuals (rice and dried banana leaves among others), dried grass and, for those with cows, dried cow dung (the use of cow dung, which is also important to women smallholder farmers as manure, is not fuel efficient).

These findings on unpaid care work involving water and firewood collection indicate the timeliness of the Women’s Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project

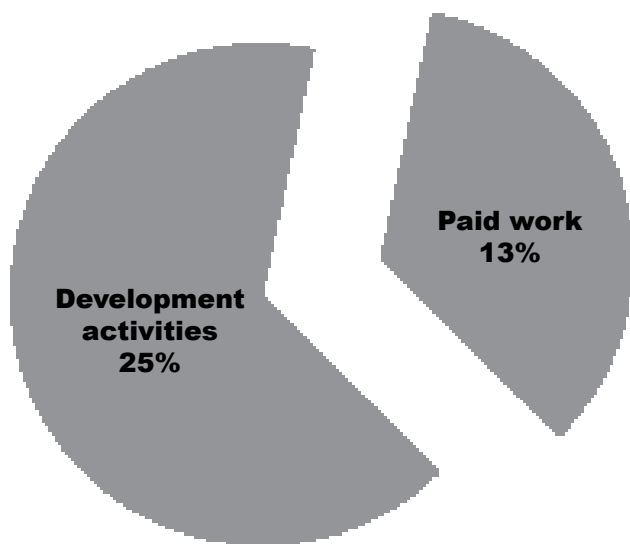


Figure 8: Women and the time they spend on activities outside the home in Ghana (%).

in ensuring that at least half of the targeted women smallholder farmers have access to safe drinking water and that some are equipped with agro-forestry skills. In order to better track progress, what may further be needed in Rwanda is data regarding the exact proportions of women that face particular hardships, over and above the generic data regarding time spent on water and firewood activities per sector.

5.2.2 Time spent on productive activities and leisure

In this context, productive activities refer to activities that are directly remunerative and can potentially bring direct income to women. It also includes subsistence agriculture, which most women undertake on an unpaid basis. For example, women’s groups in Rwanda asserted that they spend between four and six hours in farming, planting, and feeding animals etc. However, they do this at subsistence level, for no payment. Figure 8 displays that in Ghana, 13% of the interviewed women indicated they spend some time on paid work, and 25% shared that they also spend their time on community development activities such as general cleaning, sanitation campaigns and contributing labour to the construction of community schools.

In Rwanda, though precise figures are not available, findings revealed that women spend an average of 28 hours per month on development programmes at cell and village levels. This is a relatively substantial investment for community development activities. Further, the women in Ghana routinely spend an average of eight hours weekly on community functions such as weddings, funerals and naming ceremonies, by cooking, washing dishes and ensuring that households are clean enough for visitors coming for the ceremonies. In the Ghanaian experience, the responsibilities of women in community development works and community functions are a reflection of gendered roles in society, where cooking, cleaning and fetching water for men to construct buildings are normally described as women’s work.

By spending so much of their time on unpaid work, women and girls are often left with little or no time

to dedicate to their own education, acquisition of employable skills, or leisure. In relation to the latter, unlike in Rwanda where 26% of women said they had some time for leisure, none of the respondents in Ghana claimed to have leisure time. However, the data reflects that for women in Rwanda, leisure activities include community tasks such as weddings, social gatherings and church events – which were categorised by women in Ghana as part of their unpaid community work. However, in Rwanda, apart from isolating the occasions as a leisure activity, women smallholder farmers also acknowledged that they performed activities at these events that consumed between three to nine hours a week.

5.3 Presence of interventions to support the reduction of women smallholder farmers' care work

In Ghana, the baseline findings discovered a disconnection between NGOs' views and those of government regarding the existence of efforts to reduce women's unpaid care work. NGO partners of ActionAid Ghana were not aware of any investments by government that help in reducing women's unpaid care work. On the other hand, government agencies were emphatic that the government was providing the needed investments to reduce the burden on women. They cited the construction of feeder roads,

early childhood educational centres (ECDs), school feeding programmes and small-town water supply systems that have been undertaken in Bincheraya, Makayili and Pusiga (all in the Nanumba North district). However, there is evidence that at baseline, these investments had reached less than 4% of the female population in Nanumba North district. Subsequent analysis provides data in relation to the availability of water facilities, woodlots or energy-serving technologies and child care centres in the two countries.

5.3.1 Availability of water facilities

Part 5.2.1 confirmed that water scarcity or lack of safe drinking water is one of the critical problems in the project areas in Ghana and Rwanda. In both Ghana and Rwanda, the presence of boreholes is not always a guarantee of water availability. In Gbeo community in Ghana, where there was only one borehole serving the whole community at baseline, women were queuing for up to two hours just to collect two pans of water. In Rwanda, women mentioned that even where water facilities are installed, these are not reliable because often they run dry, prompting women to draw water from rivers and other wells sometimes located far away from homes. The major cause of this problem is the lack of proper maintenance of water facilities and infrastructure (water tap, pumps and pipes).

This reflects on the absence of (strong) Water Users' Committees that could monitor sustainable use of water facilities, including facilitating the collection of fees that could help to maintain water facilities. Government also has a responsibility to support this infrastructure, particularly in poor communities where it might not be possible to collect fees for maintenance.

At baseline, only 20% of women in the survey communities in Ghana were represented on Water Users'



Alphonsine Mubahabana gives water to a cow in Nyanza, Rwanda. PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Committees. This signals a need for more female smallholder farmers to be actively involved in community water management so that they reach the threshold of 50% as aspired to by the project, and attain a critical mass that can contribute to

Box 5: What women farmers want in order to reduce their unpaid work

- In order to improve the water situation, women smallholders propose:
 - tanks for rainwater harvesting
 - accessible water collection methods (water pumps, ponds)
 - the development of wetlands
 - adequate participation in water users' committees.
- In order to improve the firewood problem, women smallholder farmers want:
 - sustainable woodlots
 - cultivation on-farm of multipurpose trees
 - labour-saving energy technologies, i.e. cooking stoves.
- In terms of child care support, women smallholder farmers propose:
 - reliable child care centres that can serve even younger children below four years.

decisions regarding water as a critical resource in their lives. It was also apparent from the baseline findings that apart from the absence of proper or adequate water facilities, women's water collection burdens were being aggravated by the absence of strategies for water-harvesting facilities that could store rainwater during rainy seasons to be used during the dry season.

The lack of water facilities for most smallholder women in Ghana and Rwanda had led to unsustainable coping mechanisms by women smallholder farmers. For example, women smallholder farmers in Ghana were resorting to their own ways of redistributing care work. Thus, elderly women (normally mothers-in-law) would normally take responsibility for children while younger women went to collect firewood or fetch

water. However, the mere redistribution of unpaid care work among women of different age groups does not in aggregate terms contribute to reducing its burden on women. Women in Rwanda mentioned that women living far from water sources may hire young people, especially men, to fetch water on their behalf. However, this exerts a financial burden on the women that they cannot consistently endure.

In order to cope, some women resorted to prioritising water usage, so that the little available water within their homes is used for the most important activities/ services while others are left out. This is not a viable option for reducing women's care work, as it only increases their concerns regarding home management, and undermines their right to water. Therefore, the setting up of reliable community facilities/structures that directly contribute to reducing unpaid care work by women smallholder farmers in Ghana and Rwanda is a vital step.

5.3.2 Existence of woodlots or energy technologies

In Ghana, where there is a plan to develop woodlots, women smallholder farmers were found to be lacking agro-forestry skills that could enable them to develop and manage reliable and sustainable woodlots for firewood. Energy and labour-saving technologies were also not available. In Rwanda, few farmers had woodlots on their farms.

Though some natural forests belonging to the government and individuals exist, community members were not allowed to collect firewood from them. As alternatives to the firewood problem, some women smallholder farmers were proposing the use of biogas, energy-saving stoves and planting more trees on their farms.

However, the concern is that using biogas requires large amounts of biomass that a farmer may be unable to get on a regular basis. Besides, the cost of installing and maintaining supporting infrastructure might be out of the reach of ordinary smallholder farmers.

The most feasible strategy would be for women smallholders to integrate multipurpose trees and

plant leguminous plants on their farms that can provide fodder for animals as well and nourish the soil. They can also reduce the demand for firewood by using the available firewood in a more efficient way (a firewood-saving stove, for example) such as those made from clay and promoted by the government in Rwanda. Ideally, women can also combine both, planting multipurpose trees and using energy-saving stoves. Of course, this would depend on the level of access and control that the women farmers have on their land. Lack of access would mean there is no land on which women can plant trees. Lack of control may mean that a woman cannot have decision-making power over what to grow on the land. This is why the project should seek to improve women's low capacity to contribute to household decisions in Rwanda, as described in section 4.3. In addition, the baseline findings show that the majority of the women smallholder farmers in Ghana do not own farm land, although most of them have access to it by borrowing from friends and relatives.

5.3.3 Presence of child care facilities

No rural child care centres that are supported by government were reported to exist in the targeted LRPs in either Ghana or Rwanda at the time of the baseline studies. In Rwanda, sectors such as Kibirizi and Muganza reported that child care centres previously existing had been closed because government had stopped paying salaries for care givers/teachers. The expectation that parents would



Sumaya Abraham and Azaratu Alhassan mix shea butter in Tamale, Northern Ghana at the same time performing some child care. PHOTO: JANE HALM/PANOS/ACTIONAID.

take over the initiative and support the centres by paying fees had not materialised. In Gishubi sector, a few nursery schools attached to primary and secondary schools were noted. However, it would appear that for women smallholder farmers, nursery schools as currently implemented are not effective because they charge fees, are located far away or are targeting children preparing for primary school (4 years+). This means that challenges facing women with younger children are not resolved. Women smallholder farmers in Rwanda also feared that the issue of distance would further exacerbate women's work when they have to take the children to and from the nursery schools every morning.

5.4 Conclusion: How do the baseline findings connect with relevant indicators?

Baseline findings in Rwanda and Ghana provide the necessary data for following up on the implementation of various activities. However, there are a few disconnections between the indicators and the findings. For example, though indicators set out to ensure an increase in the number of women in Waters Users' Committees, only Ghana has baseline data on women's involvement in such committees. Even the baseline on access to safe drinking water is not available for both countries. Child care centres are also pushed as one solution that could relieve women of their care responsibility, but there is no candid discussion of how accessing such facilities itself might consume women smallholder farmers' time. In Ghana, women who are participating in Reflect circles have, subsequent to the baseline data collection process, indicated that they spend more than four hours a day on child care. In Rwanda the situation is not known.

Though the baseline in Rwanda contains some relevant statistics (contained in the report analysing the situation of women's sustainable farming), it is still hard to distinguish the amount of child care time from the figures, because the issues of child care, preparing food and feeding animals are lumped together.

CHAPTER 6

Climate-resilient sustainable agriculture and the situation of smallholder women farmers

Under Outcome 4, the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project in Ghana and Rwanda anticipates that the culmination of efforts to reduce women smallholder farmers' unpaid care work responsibilities will be that '5,400 women smallholder farmers should have more secure and sustainable access to food and produce increased surplus for sale by the end of 2015'. Various issues will influence this outcome, namely: whether women have land and livestock or have a say on what they are going to plant; how they are going to store, consume or sell their harvest; whether they have access to seeds, inputs and relevant infrastructure and services to support climate-resilient agriculture; and whether they are organised in order to process produce, access markets and conduct other group initiatives. First though, it is necessary to outline what the project has set out to do.

6.1 What interventions are being promoted in Ghana and Rwanda between 2012 and 2015?

Figure 9 shows five interconnected interventions to reach a point where women smallholder farmers' production in Ghana and Rwanda is sustainably improved. The project intends to enhance access by women smallholder farmers (1,000 in Ghana and 600 in Rwanda) to seed and grain banks by the end of 2014. Action will be taken to set up seed and grain banks in each LRP where they do not exist, and to support and strengthen them where they do exist. The project will facilitate the setting up of grain bank management committees in Rwanda and restructure existing grain bank management committees in Ghana. Capacity building for women and other stakeholders will be used as one of the

main strategies. For example, a total of 600 women smallholder farmers (100 in Ghana and 500 in Rwanda) will be trained in setting up and managing food processing cooperatives by the end of 2015. A total of 83 women smallholder farmers have already been trained in setting up and managing food processing. Additionally, a series of trainings on sustainable agriculture practices and veterinary services were conducted for 180 lead women farmers (100 in Ghana and 80 in Rwanda), agriculture extension workers, partners and ActionAid International staff in each LRP in 2013. Another 180 women will be trained in livestock rearing practices so that they can train other members

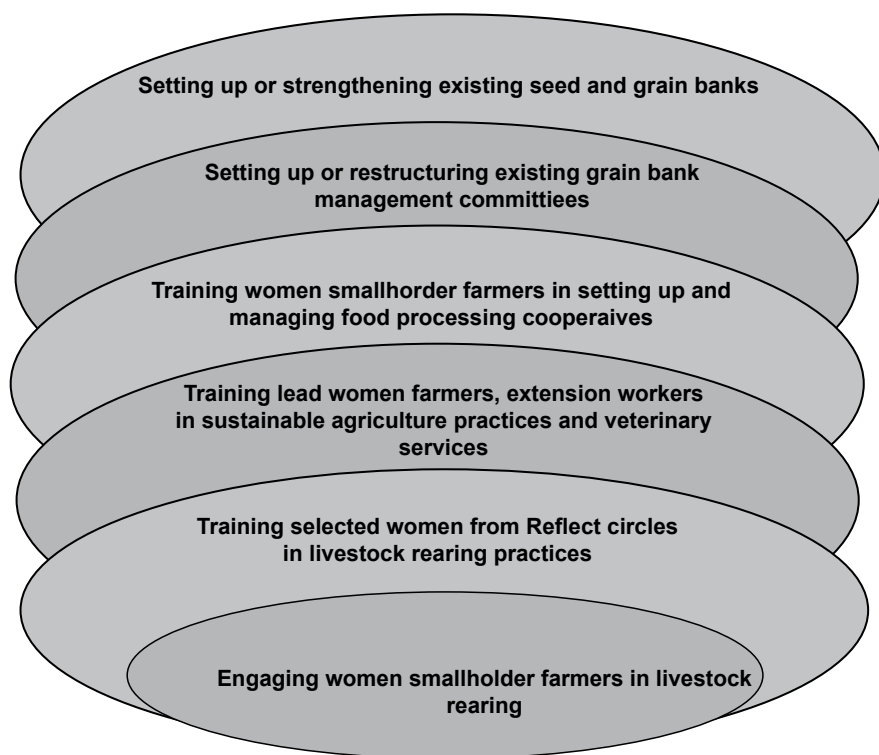


Figure 9: Strategies towards promoting women's climate-resilient sustainable agriculture.

Table 6 : Indicators for Outcome 4.

5,400 women smallholder farmers should have more secure and sustainable access to food and produce increased surplus for sale by the end of 2015.

Indicators (abridged)	Ghana	Rwanda
At least 2,700 Women in Reflect circles where sustainable agriculture is discussed improve their food security by the end of 2014.	1,500 women	1,200 women
2,700 women whose capacity has been built to access farming inputs, resources, knowledge, means and markets are actively applying this by the end of 2014.	1,500 women	1,200 women
At least 2,700 women smallholder farmers in the target groups attest that their soil conditions and production systems are improving through the use of terraces, contour strips, cover crops, green manure, composting and mulching by the end of 2015.	1,500 women	1,200 women
1,600 women smallholder farmers either set up or participate in an existing seed and grain bank in their own right by the end of 2015.	1000 women	600 women
At least four seed banks established by the end of 2015.	A seed bank in 2 LRPs	A seed bank in 2 LRPs
40% of seeds in seed banks are indigenous to the area by the end of 2015.		
Participation by women in food processing collectives that have been set up and managed by women smallholder farmers' group members by the end of 2015.	100 women	500 women
Women smallholder farmers acquire two goats each and women smallholder farmers take up and improve livestock rearing by the end of 2015.	250 women smallholder farmers in Ghana	450 women
At least 100 women smallholder farmers participate in grain banks in their own right by the end of 2015.	100 women in Ghana. This activity has changed due to changing needs in communities in Ghana.	80 women in Rwanda

of their Reflect circles. In fact, it is planned that a total of 700 women smallholder farmers in Rwanda and Ghana will engage in livestock, 400 women smallholder farmers should have more secure and sustainable access to food and be producing increased surplus for sale by the end of 2015.

Women smallholder farmers will also be trained on livestock rearing by end of 2015. Table 6 contains project indicators relating to the planned activities, as well as country specific target numbers under Outcome 4.

6.2 Do women currently have land to increase their food production?

Securing the right to land is an important aspect of ensuring food security as it can give women smallholder farmers the confidence to make a long-term investments in their own land. In Ghana, baseline findings indicate that the majority of women do not own land, echoing the women's land rights situation noted in Chapter 1. About 25% of all respondents said they are able to borrow farmlands from friends and relatives. This is not a sustainable situation, as it creates uncertainty regarding whether or not women will gain timely access to farmland. As a result, the timing of farming activities is often affected because women end up accessing land at the wrong time of the season. It also creates uncertainties about long-term investments in alternative practices for erosion control and fertility improvement, which are essential for sustainable agriculture.

The situation in Rwanda was more positive as most of the interviewed women claimed to have land. The land registration exercise that has taken place in Rwanda in recent years has given the women confidence that they had full rights to their land and would not be dispossessed. In Gishubi, 11% of women interviewed said they had inherited their land and 46% had bought part of their land from neighbours or government. In Nyanza LRP, about 66% of the interviewed women had acquired land through inheritance.

Some groups of women smallholder farmers in the project have been proactive in requesting land from appropriate authorities in order to pursue sustainable agriculture as part of the project. In Ghana, a total of 30 group members in Gabulja were allocated fertile land to cultivate rice by a chief. During a field visit by ActionAid International in 2012, some local district authorities in Ghana also clearly indicated their willingness to support women who would approach them for land as a group. In Rwanda, two women's groups in Rwabicuma sector were given wetland field plots for their vegetable cultivation. Local leaders also promised to increase the land available for the women's groups, since the Rwandan

government is promoting agricultural collective work on consolidated land.

6.3 Are women smallholder farmers food secure?

In project areas in Ghana and Rwanda, many women smallholder farmers do not have food security. Researchers in Rwanda observed that women interviewees saw food security as having a full stomach, and not involving bigger picture issues such as food availability, food access, food quality and food use. In Ghana, 90% of interviewed female-headed households were food insecure, compared to 65% of male-headed households at baseline. Food insecurity in the country is more pronounced between May and August.

In Rwanda, the majority of women smallholder farmers interviewed were similarly food insecure. According to the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis and Nutritional Survey (2012), households in the two lowest income quintiles account for 73% of food-insecure households in the country. Districts with the highest share of households with poor food consumption⁸¹ are in the Southern Province where FLOW Project is being implemented. About 70% of households with poor food consumption are in 13 districts that host half of all rural households, including Nyanza and Gisagara LRPs. Women interviewed in Rwanda reported that it was common for them to experience a shortage of main food stuffs such as beans, cassava, sweet potatoes and maize flour from October to November, and from April to May. During the period of food shortage, households may even reduce the number of meals from three to one per day.

In Rwanda, baseline findings expose low involvement of women in the growing of some crops, with the exception of beans. For example, out of 26 women interviewed in Nyanza, only 11.5% were cultivating rice and maize, while 7% were growing cassava. The small proportion of women farmers growing rice was explained by the fact that land in the marshland, where rice is cultivated, belongs to the state, and one has to pay an annual fee to be allowed to use it on a contract basis. However,

there is still need to ascertain why low numbers of smallholder women farmers were growing maize and cassava in circumstances where there were no similar restrictions to land.

6.4 To what extent do women smallholder farmers produce surplus food?

This issue was clearer from the findings in Ghana, where 65% of women smallholder farmers interviewed disclosed that they do not earn any surplus from their farming activities. These women contended that though they may sometimes sell some of their farm produce, this is not surplus food. Rather, they may sell part of the food that was meant for consumption in order to meet emerging financial pressures. Even the money that is generated from such sales is nominal. Women in Ghana linked their inability to generate surplus from farm produce to poor soil fertility, climate change, lack of secure access to land and unpredictable rainfall patterns.

6.5 Do women have access to agricultural inputs?

Data in Ghana established that 80% of women smallholder farmers interviewed had no access to critical farming inputs during the farming season, resulting in very low yields. About 85% of women reported being unable to afford chemical fertilisers and other external inputs. No baseline data was available in Rwanda on the extent of availability of farming inputs among women smallholder farmers.

6.6 Do indigenous seed and grain banks exist?

The issues of quality seed from organic varieties and seed storage are important in sustaining food security. The availability of indigenous seed and grain banks is pivotal to any efforts towards improving women's crop productivity in rural areas. Community seed banks are useful mechanisms for facilitating and enhancing the capacity of smallholder communities to collectively select, store, access, and preserve their planting materials. They help to strengthen and scale up existing local initiatives on seeds – opening up collective possibilities that go far beyond individual farmers' home seed storage capacities, and encouraging the community to take

common responsibility for care of their traditional seeds and mutually benefitting from them.

At the time of the baseline in Ghana, there were two grain banks in Sheaga and Nangode, constructed by ActionAid Ghana. There was no government grain or seed bank. Most of the interviewed women farmers (80%) said they preserve their seeds using traditional methods at home⁸⁵ or they purchase seeds for a given planting season. In the surveyed communities in Rwanda, the Rwanda Agricultural Board had financed the construction of a storehouse for purposes of conserving bean and maize seed in Rwabicuma. Improved cassava planting materials, which could be accessed free of charge at any time, were being multiplied on newly made bench terraces.

Further, there was government seed and grain bank in Rwabicuma, Nyanza, newly constructed by the national project in partnership with Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources to respond to people's demands. However, there was nothing stored in this bank during the baseline survey. In Gisagara there was one poorly constructed cooperative seed bank. During a climate-resilient sustainable agriculture workshop in 2013, it was revealed that the current seed banks have no sustainability judging by the poor way in which they preserve seeds – resulting in damage by insects.

Generally, the scarcity of widespread seed and grain banks means that few women smallholder farmers have access to quality seeds that can produce optimal yields. Many women farmers in Ghana and Rwanda complained about the difficulty of storing seeds because of insects, and lack of adequate collective and individual seed storage facilities. This problem has affected the storage of cowpea, maize and other seeds. In particular, women in Ghana said this was a critical problem and sometimes women farmers lose all the seeds they have to insect attacks. While some women's associations in Rwanda were maintaining seed storage for priority crops (such as beans), such innovation was not identified in Ghana. The baseline uncovered that a women's association in Gikuyu village, Gishubi sector⁸⁶ which had hired a room to store bean seed

every season. Each member has to put aside 10kg of beans after harvest that is returned to her or him during planting. However, seed is stored in jute sacks on the floor, thereby increasing the risk of weevil invasion and seed damage. Still, such initiatives in remote rural areas need support, particularly to strengthen them through the construction of proper seed storage facilities, as well as enhancing the capacity of members to preserve seed quality for a variety of crops for a long duration.

The quest to achieve expert preservation of organic seeds by women smallholder farmers is compatible with agro-ecological interventions, which fully recognise the role of women as fountains of knowledge about cultivation, processing and preservation of nutritious and locally adapted crop varieties. As mentioned in Chapter 2, such knowledge is vital for building climate resilience and ethically feeding growing populations. It is therefore encouraging that at least 62% of smallholder farmers interviewed in Rwanda's Busasamana's area were



Euphrasia Akimana works in a field with members of the Abishyizehamwe Cooperative, Rwanda.

PHOTO: LAURA ELIZABETH POHL/ACTIONAID

already using indigenous seed varieties at the time of the baseline.

The Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project intends to see women participate in seed and grain banks in their own right. This means that women should not participate merely as appendages of men or other influential leaders. Rather, they should be acknowledged as legitimate rights holders/leaders to participate in the seed and grain banks. Additionally, they should be able to make decisions in matters related to the seed and grain banks independently, without undue influence, coercion or fear.

6.7 Do women own livestock?

While baseline data from Ghana did not reveal the extent to which women smallholder farmers own livestock, in Rwanda it was confirmed that in some areas the majority of women smallholder farmers owned poultry. Livestock ownership is semi-urban areas fared not so well. The findings were:

- In Busasamana, located in a semi-urban area, only 10% of interviewed women had livestock such as cattle, goats, pigs, poultry and rabbits.
- In Gisagara (Gishubi), of the 53% of women interviewed that claimed to own livestock, very few had cattle (22%) or a goat (24%), while the majority (54%) owned indigenous poultry which cannot provide enough manure.
- In Rwabicuma, some women had pigs (32%), cows (21%), poultry (20%), and goats (17%).

Major challenges in keeping animals were poor housing, shortage of animal feeds, poor veterinary care, and poor milk production. Nevertheless, it is timely that the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project has planned to conduct trainings in livestock management and veterinary services for these groups. An increase in the number and quality of women smallholder farmers' livestock could add value to women's food production both through the generation of adequate manure and the selling of livestock (and milk) to boost income, including for various agricultural ventures.



Bintugib Duut feeding her guinea fowls in Northern Ghana. PHOTO: ACTIONAID.

Such knowledge-building is also pertinent amidst evidence that, at the time of the baseline study, there was resistance by many smallholder farmers in Gishubi (Rwanda) to keep animals in a common shade. Yet, this arrangement has several advantages. For example, smallholder farmers can collectively take care of their animals, thus contributing to the reduction of hours that women spend on unpaid work. A common shade can also help farmers transfer to each other good animal husbandry skills and practices. It can also provide easy access to many animals, resulting in reduction of costs of vaccination and other services. In addition, a common shade can facilitate largescale milk collection as there is one central place to collect the milk, thereby increasing women smallholder farmers' incomes.

6.8 Are soil conditions appropriate for climate-resilient sustainable agriculture?

Soil fertility has largely been recognised as a major factor determining food production in sub-Saharan Africa⁸⁷. In Ghana, 90% of the women smallholder farmers interviewed asserted that soils are of weak quality and largely infertile, leading to very low yields. Some minor improvements in yields have been gained when chemical fertilisers have been applied. However the majority of the interviewees (85 percent) indicated being unable to afford chemical fertilisers. At the same time, focus group discussions in all communities in Ghana displayed

an awareness of the fact that chemical fertilisers are not eco-friendly. They noted that *“not only are they expensive, but chemical fertilisers are also detrimental to the regenerative capacity of soils by destroying organisms crucial to breaking down animal matter into fertile soils”*.

Alternatively, most of the respondents use a mix of indigenous approaches to enhance soil fertility. These include using animal droppings, terraces and cover-crop farming. Whilst these have proven useful in addressing issues of poor and infertile soil, most respondents indicated that these practices are cumbersome, take a lot of time, and are difficult to apply over big fields. There is evidently need for the project to build the capacity of women to produce organic manure through more efficient and time-saving techniques.

In Rwanda, farmers in Nyanza and Gisagara reported poor soil fertility, soil erosion and landslides as factors contributing to soil depletion. As part of initiatives to increase food production as well as mitigate poor soil performance, women use compost, animal dung, crop rotation and mixed farming. These are good organic practices that are compatible with climate-resilient sustainable agriculture. However, it has been noted that there is a lack of appropriate techniques for making compost. The low number of women that compost in Busasamana sector (31 percent) attests to this finding. Nevertheless, in Rwanda, baseline data revealed the optimism of women smallholder farmers that the government's 'one cow for each poor family' policy could improve access to farmyard manure. The Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project therefore comes with the added value of strengthening the capacity of such beneficiaries to manage their livestock so that adequate manure can be produced.

There is hope that with available resources, women can invest their energy in sustainable agricultural practices because they already recognise that in the past their soils performed much better with their natural regenerative abilities. This knowledge is significant for programming work that targets sustainable agricultural practices. Further, the knowledge could increase women smallholder farmers' enthusiasm to learn and adopt planned

technologies such as the use of terraces, contour strips, cover crops, green manure, composting and mulching. In these efforts, leguminous trees would also be vital as they are important to sustainable agriculture.

6.9 Are there enough processing cooperatives and marketing opportunities?

If women smallholder farmers are to gain from interventions that reduce their unpaid care work in order to release them to engage in sustainable farming, then the farming has to be productive not just in terms of producing a surplus, but also in selling the surplus profitably. In both Ghana and Rwanda, there were no food processing cooperatives being run by women smallholder farmer groups at the time of the baseline study. This gap had led to poor marketing opportunities and other losses by some farmers. For instance, women smallholder farmers from Nyanza and Gisagara who were involved in a crop intensification programme and were cultivating rice complained that:

“We have to sell our rice at the Gikonko rice mill, which is relatively far away from the production site – resulting in higher transport charges. The payment system itself is another challenge. The factory first collects rice from farmers and payment is only effected upon processing the rice. We farmers are not happy with such a payment system since we are not in a position to personally check the quantity of the processed rice. But since this milling factory is the only rice processing facility in the area, we have no other option than to sell our rice there.”

Women smallholder farmers suggested that the problem could be resolved by building small milling factories near production sites in order to reduce transaction costs. Similarly, in Busasamana sector, where a few milk and butter processing units are operating, women felt that more processing units near production sites could help. These views endorse the relevance of food processing

cooperatives that could add value to women farmers' produce. There were some initiatives of collective processing and marketing in Rwanda and Ghana observed by ActionAid International during the study. Although many of these initiatives are not yet cooperatives, they have great potential to be cooperatives in the near future if adequately supported. There are country-specific regulations to create cooperatives, and Rwanda seems to have a simpler process by which to create a cooperative than does Ghana. It is worth noting that some of these groups may have their day-to-day lives greatly improved by very simple and low-cost changes and trainings.

6.10 Conclusion: How do baseline findings connect with relevant indicators?

To a large extent, the baseline findings carry relevant data that could help to track most of the indicators listed under section 5.1. Further data that could be helpful relates to the need to establish the extent to which farmers, particularly in Rwanda, have surplus food. This could help to monitor improvements in women smallholder farmers' food security and production. Data regarding women's access to inputs in Rwanda is also missing. In this regard, the nature of inputs needs to be explained in the context of climate-resilient sustainable agriculture. Equally, baseline information on women's access to markets is sketchy in Rwanda, and totally absent in Ghana.

In Ghana, only 2%⁸⁸ of women in the sample participated in grain banks in their own right. In Rwanda, there is no baseline data on the number of women participating in existing grain banks in their own right. To be well organised, seed and grain banks need strong management structures. Data on women smallholder farmers owning livestock at baseline is lacking, yet this would be helpful in tracking the indicator to provide two goats to selected women. Even in Rwanda, where some statistics on livestock ownership are available, the baseline data on women smallholder farmers and extension workers that had livestock management skills prior to the project intervention is not clear.

CHAPTER 7

Galvanising strategic support for unpaid care work reduction and women's smallholder agriculture

Outcome 5 of the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihood project intends to accomplish '*greater visibility of women's unpaid care work and farming activities, leading to an increase in donor, regional and international commitments to support rural women smallholder farmers by 2015*'. As is evident, at this stage, project interventions will have high-level targets at bilateral donor, African Union, NEPAD and UN levels, and be led by ActionAid International.

To help achieve the project's objectives, a baseline study was conducted by ActionAid International to explore: the visibility of women's unpaid care work in bilateral donors' programming; the basis of the mandate for donors and governments to address unpaid care work; the opportunities and bottlenecks related to support for women smallholder farmer's sustainable farming, and recognition of their unpaid care work at NEPAD and AU levels; and the current responses by UN agencies to unpaid care work and its impact on women's economic empowerment. Approaches that would be adopted by ActionAid International's lobbying and advocacy efforts were also discussed.

7.1 What will the project set out to do between 2012 and 2015?

The strategies to be used by ActionAid International to ensure that the reduction of women smallholder farmers' unpaid care work and promotion of their climate-resilient sustainable agriculture permeate donor and institutional programming will include:

- The production and dissemination of well-researched policy briefs on the impacts of

women's unpaid care work on their economic resilience and political participation.

- Organising a research symposium to bring together feminist economists, food security specialists and agronomists to discuss new learning and policy solutions on unpaid care work.
- Participating in annual lobby meetings with AU and NEPAD officials to raise awareness of women smallholders' work in agriculture and unpaid care work so that it is included as part of the CAADP framework.
- Sensitising international development organisations (i.e. bilateral donors, AU, NEPAD and UN) working on agriculture and gender to address women's unpaid care work through meetings, workshops that aim to push for more resources, programmes and research to recognise and value the work of smallholder farmers and address their heavy and unequal workloads.
- Compiling and disseminating programme model and best practices on monitoring and evaluation to inspire replication across ActionAid International offices, partner NGOs, and international development organisations.
- Conducting a programme development workshop across Africa on food security and women's unpaid care work that will involve other ActionAid International country programmes, partner NGOs and international development organisations.

Table 7: Indicators for Outcome 5

Greater visibility of women's unpaid care work and farming activities, leading to an increase in donor, regional and international commitments to support rural women smallholder farmers by 2015.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three bilateral donors include women's unpaid care work in their strategy papers on gender equality, food security and agriculture by 2015.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• African Union and NEPAD include support to women smallholders for agricultural production, processing, marketing, and recognition of their unpaid care work in relation to nutrition and agricultural production within the CAADP framework by the end of the project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UN Women, and FAO, as well as other UN agencies address gender inequality facing rural women, including disproportionate burden of unpaid care work and its impact on women's economic empowerment programming and research from 2013-2015.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two policy briefs developed on unpaid care work for economic resilience and political participation by the end of 2014.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least one symposium held by the end of the project where new learning solutions on unpaid care work are adopted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least one meeting attended per year of lobby meetings with AU and NEPAD that discuss and adopt unpaid care work and sustainable agriculture issues related to women smallholder farmers between 2012-2015.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least five international development organisations working on agriculture and gender that consider sustainable agricultural practices and unpaid care work in their programming between 2013-2015.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least 10 ActionAid International members adopt the programme model by 2015.

Table 7 contains project indicators relating to the planned activities under Outcome 5. These show that ActionAid International's major approach will focus on making care visible in regional and international policy spaces.

7.2 The state of visibility of women's unpaid care work in bilateral donors' programming

The project will engage four bilateral donors, namely the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DFID, SIDA and USAID. These donors were selected because of their existing work on women's rights and food security issues. They also have the capacity to raise the visibility of women's farming activities by directly supporting project efforts through technical and financial resources, and by engaging other like-minded donors. In addition, these donors have strategies that have capacity to absorb the issues of

unpaid care work and/or women smallholder farmers' climate-resilient sustainable agriculture. Table 8 gives a picture of how these donors have so far embraced the two issues.

It is clear from the baseline findings that the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has demonstrated recognition of women's rights issues through its funding for work on food security, sustainable agriculture and unpaid care work being undertaken by ActionAid International, ActionAid Ghana and ActionAid Rwanda. Through this support, the Women's Rights to Sustainable Agriculture project will endeavour to ensure that issues of unpaid care work are considered in strategies, and that there is improved production by women smallholder farmers that could enable them to purchase (rather than fetch) essential household commodities such as water and firewood.

Table 8: Issues focused on by selected donors in relation to unpaid care work and sustainable agriculture.

Donor	Relevant interventions
Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<p>The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided funds for this project, and has supported the Women’s Land Rights (WOLAR) project in southern Africa, which focused on MDG3.</p> <p>The Dutch government’s priorities are on use of water for sustainable food production, safe deltas, safe management of river basins and improved access to drinking water and sanitation, and may assist in more advocacy work by ActionAid International on women smallholder farmers, and the need for improved access to water.</p>
DfID	<p>DfID is currently funding an unpaid care work programme at the Institute of Development Studies where ActionAid International is the lead NGO partner.</p> <p>Its strategic document, ‘A new strategic vision for girls and women: stopping poverty before it starts’ includes the objective of getting economic assets directly to women and girls.</p>
SIDA	<p>SIDA’s strategy paper on ‘Women economic empowerment: scope for SIDA engagement’ (2009) prioritises the promotion of a more equal sharing of unpaid care work between men and women, gradual increase in affordable child care options, and promotion of infrastructure investments that reduce tedious household work. It also has an interest in women’s economic empowerment in land and user rights, and agricultural and rural development⁸⁹.</p> <p>Though its gender policy strategy (2010-2015) notes that women are often responsible for both paid and unpaid work (including as providers of maintenance and care work in the household for children, older people and those who are unwell), this is not strongly stated in programming activities⁹⁰.</p>
USAID	<p>The USAID policy on Gender Equality and Empowerment of 2012 mentions unpaid care work, but this is not explicitly stated as an outcome and may become obscured by other women’s rights issues. It is also not stated in the indicators of progress.</p> <p>Together with the Bill Melinda Gates foundations, USAID is implementing the WASH for Partnership Initiative to support development ventures, including those aimed at testing new and cost-effective solutions to water challenges around the world. It is also introducing some new technologies through shallow water pumps in Kenya for 800,000 farmers. USAID is also working on the Feed the Future Initiative which aims to reach farmers with new agricultural technologies.</p>

SIDA

SIDA has made an overt commitment to unpaid care work and women's economic empowerment and is already implementing another project – the Public Policy Information, Monitoring and Advocacy (PPIMA) initiative – in four districts in Rwanda. Although the project does not have a specific gender focus or include unpaid care work, community score cards have prioritised water and agriculture as areas of community engagement with local authorities. This is an area of mutual interest with ActionAid International, although the SIDA project areas in Rwanda did not include Nyanza and Gisagara⁹¹.

DfID

ActionAid International engaged DfID on unpaid care work through a meeting in October 2012. This meeting confirmed the need to reframe the debate around unpaid care work so that is not just about getting women into the paid economy, but also ensuring that women access their right to leisure and political participation.

DfID has targeted Rwanda as one of the countries to benefit from its planned intervention to provide financial services for 50 million people, including 18 million women; provide job access to 2.3 million people; and secure access to land for 6 million people, including 4.5 million women.

USAID

USAID interventions are focused on improving women smallholder farmers' farming, increasing access to safe water and reducing the time women spend in fetching water. USAID is keen to use new technologies to change discriminatory social norms and stereotypes and empower women and girls to wield greater influence in society. USAID has supported the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves for applied and operational research into how people use improved stove technology, and how indoor air quality and sanitation interventions can improve household environments and promote economic opportunities for women⁹³. This can be an opportunity to engage more substantially on issues of women smallholder farmers paid, unpaid and unpaid care work.

7.3 Current responses by UN agencies towards unpaid care work and sustainable agriculture

A review of policy and strategy documents of the main UN agencies working on areas relevant to the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project focused on UN Women, WFP, FAO, UNICEF and IFAD. Broadly, the findings exposed that ActionAid International's engagement with UN agencies needs to be more systematic. Table 9 illustrates how UN agencies are focusing on areas of women's unpaid care work and/or sustainable agriculture. The UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty presented a report on unpaid care work, poverty and women's human rights to the UN General Assembly in 2013⁹⁴.



Members of Abishyizehamwe cooperative in Kibilizi, Rwanda. PHOTO: ACTIONAID.

Table 9: How UN agencies are focusing on women smallholder farmers and sustainable agriculture.

UN agency	Areas on interest
FAO	<p>FAO has clear targets for increasing agricultural aid and reducing women's work burden. In its strategic framework for the period 2012-2019, FAO will work with countries, other UN agencies, CSOs and private sector partners to reduce women's work burden by 20% through improved technologies, services and infrastructure; and to ensure that at least 30% of total agricultural aid is committed to women/gender-equality related projects by 2025. It will ensure, at a minimum, that by 2017, 30% of its operational work and budget at country and regional levels is allocated to women-specific, targeted interventions, including those aimed at incorporating women's knowledge of agriculture into programmes and projects, and ensuring the development of technologies and services that reduce women's work burden⁹⁵.</p> <p>FAO has recognised and pledged support for CAADP as a framework through which support for agriculture and food security could be coordinated. FAO also has a new strategy for engagement with civil society which creates spaces for further engagements.</p>
IFAD	<p>Gender equality and women's empowerment have been at the core of IFAD's efforts to reduce rural poverty and improve food and nutrition security since its founding in 1978. Through its loans and grants portfolio, IFAD works with smallholder farmers, many of whom are women.</p> <p>Results reported in 2011 showed that 19 million poor rural women participated in IFAD-supported programmes and projects. Women made up 60% of all people trained in business and entrepreneurship, and in community management topics, and accounted for more than 50% of users of rural financial services.</p>
UN Women	<p>UN Women national and local initiatives to include gender perspectives in budgeting processes, and to use sex-disaggregated data in public policy formulation to ensure that macro-economic policy frameworks address women's priorities.</p> <p>It also works to strengthen women's economic empowerment (rights to land and inheritance, access to credit and decent work) so they can take on leadership roles and participate more fully in political processes and formal institutions.</p> <p>UN Women is currently collaborating with FAO and IFAD in a five-year joint programme to empower poor rural women through economic integration and food security initiatives.</p>
WFP	<p>WFP is concerned with food security and reducing malnutrition, and puts women at the centre of its efforts⁹⁶.</p> <p>Its Purchase for Progress (P4P) project helps smallholder farmers, particularly women, become competitive players in the marketplace by producing food for sale and for use in WFP programmes.</p>

The summary below illustrates the opportunities that the respective agencies offer in advancing the intersection between unpaid care work and sustainable agriculture.

Food and Agriculture Organization

The data reviewed shows that FAO recognises women's multiple responsibilities and is taking critical measures to globally address women smallholder farmers' unpaid care work, as well as their agricultural development. FAO and the World Committee on Food Security (CFS) have made some high-level commitments, including ensuring that member states have agricultural investment plans, policies and programmes that recognise and suit the different commitments of women and men to household economies and child-rearing. These high-level commitments need to be followed up by clear demands from women smallholder farmers with support of civil society. The need for ActionAid International to engage FAO is even more pressing given that an evaluation of FAO by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2011 showed that between 2002 and 2010, only 13% of the total of its field programme resources had paid attention to women's needs or incorporated a gender perspective. IFAD is another important player in addressing issues of women's rights and agriculture. IFAD's loan programme regularly works on a bilateral basis with initiatives of the other agencies⁹⁷.

UN Women

UN Women has produced reports on unpaid care work, though these are linked more to issues of economic than political empowerment. The agency also promotes women's political empowerment so that they can take up leadership roles and participate fully in political processes and formal institutions. This is relevant to the ActionAid International project, whose outcomes include 'building women's leadership and engagement with political leaders'. UN Women has partnered with FAO and IFAD to implement a five-year programme on 'Accelerating progress towards the economic empowerment of rural women' in several countries, including Rwanda. However, ActionAid International is mindful that UN Women has already prepared its strategy plan for 2010-2013. The plan will be updated to cover 2014-2017.

World Food Programme

While WFP programmes benefit women, unpaid care work is not well integrated in its policy documents. WFP works in partnership to build capacity with national governments, NGOs, private sector companies, small-scale farmers and all members of the community to empower rural women. WFP believes that food in the hands of women is most likely to reach the mouths of children in need.

7.4 Support for women smallholder farmers' sustainable farming and recognition of their unpaid care work at AU and NEPAD levels

AU and NEPAD policy framework

The objectives of the African Union's gender policy⁹⁸ include elimination of gender stereotypes, sexism and all forms of discrimination. The AU also has a protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women, the Solemn Declaration of Gender 2003⁹⁹, and is guided by other international commitments on gender such as the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA)¹⁰⁰, United Nations Resolution 1325 (2000) on peace, democracy, economic and social development, and human rights. Care work and its integration in social policy is part of the AU gender policy under Commitment No. 7. The African Union gender policy provides for gender mainstreaming in all sectors where it states that a multi-sectoral approach will be promoted in gender mainstreaming. Under the roles and responsibility of AU organs, Regional Economic Communities (RECS) and member states, the AU commission will "*Develop joint programmes to introduce parliamentary debates on gender and social policy, women's care work in Africa and linkages to gender equality issues*"¹⁰¹. Much still has to be done in this area and there is a need to move from the rhetoric of policy commitment to real action that impacts on women smallholder farmers' lives across Africa. This is particularly important considering that women contribute 43% of all agricultural Labour and contribute 60 to 80% of food production in Africa¹⁰².

Unpaid care work, though it is an integral part of societal wellbeing, has not been factored into any of the key discussions and declarations of the African Union or NEPAD. There is a risk that some AU member countries may not be willing to integrate unpaid care work in the CAADP policy documents because of cultural and traditional beliefs that marginalise women's labour.

At baseline, the voices of women smallholder farmers were marginalised in AU processes¹⁰³. Only the Network of farmers and producers of West Africa (ROPPA) had a specific reservation for women smallholder farmers at AU level. ActionAid International anticipates that a Regional Women's Assembly, which is being set up by ActionAid International's Public Financing for Agriculture (PFA) project, funded by the Gates Foundation, could facilitate women smallholder farmers' engagements with regional and international organisations¹⁰⁴. Since PFA is also working in Rwanda, this would offer a good opportunity for beneficiaries in the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project to engage at regional level.

Agricultural policy in Africa is largely governed by the Maputo Declaration of 2003. In July 2003 in Maputo, African Heads of State and Government endorsed the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa. The Declaration contained several important decisions regarding agriculture, but prominent among them was the "commitment to the allocation of at least 10 percent of national budgetary resources to agriculture and rural development. The declaration also targeted a 6% annual growth rate for the agricultural sector. The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme CAADP), which was conceived by the African Union in 2003 and is the main framework governing agriculture policy in Africa, has let women smallholder farmers down. In its conceptualisation, it focuses on farming as a business at the expense of food security. Further CAADP structures are geared towards working with organised farmers and do not have a mechanism for working with unorganised farmers, the majority of whom are women. The CAADP policy

framework fails to analyse the specific needs of women and smallholders, as well as the best policy mechanisms for meeting their needs¹⁰⁵. Therefore, in collaboration with the ActionAid International Public Financing for Agriculture project, the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project will lobby for increased support for agricultural resources, market information, access to water, land and other resources that could help to improve women smallholder farmers' food security, as well as reduce their unpaid care work.

The fact that CAADP plans are weak in relation to climate change is an important gap. There may therefore be resistance to promote climate-resilient sustainable agriculture at the expense of crop production that uses chemical inputs given the current focus on Green Revolution approaches in Africa and the drive towards privatisation and commercialisation.

As for NEPAD, the role that the institution can play in supporting women smallholder farmers is to ensure that the four pillars of CAADP (land and water management, market access, food supply, and hunger and agricultural research) are made gender sensitive in line with AU policy on gender. Since NEPAD also coordinates national investments plans, it can play a significant role in facilitating the integration of gender into these plans. In order to achieve this, corresponding national, multi-stakeholder consultation processes must be participatory, allowing organised and unorganised women farmers (among other key stakeholders) to make inputs on issues affecting them, such as unpaid care work.

7.5 Conclusion: How do the baseline findings connect with relevant indicators?

For now, donors are dealing with issues of food security, women's economic empowerment and unpaid care work – but not as one package. In fact, several donors that have recognised unpaid care work in their strategies have not programmed for interventions to deal with the challenge. Efforts by

ActionAid International to influence NEPAD have already started, with the view that the links between unpaid care work and climate-resilient sustainable agriculture can be addressed within the CAADP framework. Apart from external mechanisms,

ActionAid International is also expected to have proper strategies for internally influencing other ActionAid International members to adopt the programme model, and this would need to be systematically documented for learning purposes.

CHAPTER 8

Key links, conclusions, challenges and recommendations

This chapter sets out the interconnections between outcomes, the key conclusions in relation to indicators for each outcome.

8.1 Links between project outcomes

The Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project examines how reducing the amount of women's time spent on unpaid care work, sustainable agriculture practices and improved access to, and control over, food and resources reinforce each other to enable women's empowerment. By showing the interconnectedness, the project asserts that care must emerge from the private realm and become a public issue; and the state must take responsibility for the provision of resources to support care work. The project is based on the premise that the poverty of women smallholder farmers cannot be reduced unless unpaid care work (as a major obstacle to their agricultural productivity) is addressed by empowering the women themselves through multiple interventions. And once women smallholder farmers have enough time to dedicate to farming, their agriculture can best mature if they have the skills and resources to practice climate-resilient sustainable agriculture.

Further to these links, there are notable connections between all five outcomes of the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project. The first outcome is to have a total of **5,400 women smallholder farmers in four Local Rights Programmes organised and their work as farmers and carers recognised by the community by the end of 2015.**

One key activity under this outcome is to empower women through Reflect and advocacy strategies. This activity is already linked to Outcome 2, whose target is that **5,400 women smallholder farmers will meet regularly with local and national policy makers and engage in planning and budgeting**

processes to demand more resources to support them in food production and unpaid care work by the end of 2015. The linkage is apparent because the Reflect circles will be the entry points for organising women smallholder farmers, building their leadership skills, and empowering them to engage in advocacy efforts to influence planning and budgeting processes, as well as make policy demands to their governments.

The baseline findings have also noted that under Outcome 1, selected men and women will fill out time diaries in order to track changes in their time use over a period of three years. This activity is directly linked to Outcome 2, because it will generate the evidence that will be needed for women to make advocacy demands at local government and other policy levels. These advocacy efforts will directly contribute to the achievement of Outcome 3, which aims at **significantly reducing the hours spent by 5,400 women in unpaid care work through the introduction of low-cost pilot interventions such as community-run child care centres, household rainwater storage and community tree lots for firewood by the end of 2015.**

The evidence from the time diaries should also reveal how women's sustainable agriculture and food security is impacted by lack of technologies for reducing unpaid care work and promoting climate-resilient agriculture. Therefore, such evidence will be informative to the attainment of Outcome 4, aiming to ensure that **5,400 women smallholder farmers should have more secure and sustainable access to food, and produce increased surplus for sale by the end of 2015.** Another significant link is that the evidence from the time diaries will be used in higher level advocacy under Outcome 5, which is about accomplishing **greater visibility of women's unpaid care work and farming activities,**

leading to an increase in donor, regional and international commitments to support rural women smallholder farmers by 2015. Even within the project activities under Outcome 1, evidence from the time diaries will be very useful for purposes of informing community dialogue meetings between women farmers, men and community leaders.

8.2 Main conclusions on project indicators

Outcome 1: 5,400 women smallholder farmers in four Local Rights Programmes organised and their work as farmers and carers recognised by the community by the end of 2015.

Ghana and Rwanda have clear numbers of Reflect circles that they will establish under the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods project – 100 in Ghana and 80 in Rwanda. The key baseline conclusions for this outcome are that:

Organisation of women

- All existing groups for women smallholder farmers (44 in Ghana and 16 in Rwanda) were poorly organised and had no advocacy agenda.
- Attendance at weekly group meetings was low (38% in Ghana; Rwanda had no exact baseline figure).
- About 75% of all groups in Ghana kept attendance registers. In Rwanda there was no exact baseline but it was generally suggested that some of the 16 existing women's groups kept records of meetings. Newly formed groups were still organising themselves.
- Only 38% of women smallholder farmers' groups in Ghana had group bank accounts. In Rwanda, most groups were using informal savings and credit systems and not banks.

Recognition and support of women smallholder farmers' demands to reduce their unpaid care work by community leaders

The baseline studies found no evidence of specific support by community leaders of women's demands

to reduce unpaid care work, possibly because there was no prior effort by women to make such demands in the area of unpaid care work.

Recognition and support of women's demand for reduced care work by men

At baseline:

- In Rwanda, 20% of women said men supported them in performing their unpaid care work. About 66% asserted that men recognised unpaid care work. About 80.2% of women interviewees felt that men were not supportive and did not play a role in reducing women's unpaid care work.
- In Ghana, 60% of men were willing to support women in performing unpaid care work. About 70% of the men viewed unpaid care work as burdensome, and 93% recognised unpaid care work. Only 30% of men admitted they supported or provided help to women in performing care work.
- In Ghana, 85% of women felt that educated men were more likely to support women with care work than their non-educated counterparts. Though these sentiments were also present in Rwanda, there were no exact statistics. However, most male help in Ghana (60%) was limited to fetching firewood.

In both countries, there was no data on the specific issue of whether or not men would support women's demand for reduced care work.

Increasing the capacity of community facilitators in Reflect methodology

- In Ghana, there was prior knowledge of Reflect methodology only by community facilitators in Nanumba. However, the extent of this knowledge, including in issues of unpaid care work and sustainable agriculture, was not documented at baseline.
- In Rwanda, no community facilitators had prior knowledge of Reflect methodology, unpaid care work or sustainable agriculture.

Outcome 2: 5,400 women smallholder farmers will meet regularly with local and national policy makers and engage in planning and budgeting processes to demand more resources to support them in food production and unpaid care work by the end of 2015.

Levels of women smallholder farmers' leadership capacities and their ability to apply leadership skills

At baseline:

- Women smallholder farmers in Ghana and Rwanda generally had no leadership skills that could support their advocacy. This was despite the fact that 75% of female respondents had previously been trained in leadership in Ghana.
- Women's groups were not networking among themselves.
- Contribution of women smallholder farmers to decision making

The baseline findings in Rwanda revealed that:

- About 71% of women interviewed claimed not to have a say in decision making on household issues, with variations across different locations.
- At community level, only 37% of women were contributing to decision making.

There was no data on women's participation in leadership from Ghana.

Access by women smallholder farmers to policy making processes

- At baseline, no government official in the project areas in Ghana and Rwanda had received any training or sensitisation on the need to support women smallholder farmers' demands.
- Women smallholder farmers were not organised enough to identify key issues and systematically make their demands heard. A few advocacy interventions had been implemented by a small number of women's groups, but these were driven by NGOs through their own projects.

Increasing the capacity of officials to support demands by women smallholder farmers

The baseline data did not provide information on how the targeted officials had previously publicly supported women smallholder farmers' demands, though there is an assertion in the FLOW monitoring protocol that at baseline, 411 officials were already providing public support to women smallholder farmers' demands.

Knowledge of women smallholder farmers in food security issues

Though the women who will be involved in advocacy are set to have increased capacity and knowledge of food security, there is no data showing their level of food security knowledge at baseline.

Interface between leaders of smallholder farmer platforms and regional/national associations

The baseline findings did not reveal data on the nature of regional/national platforms that will be engaged. However, ActionAid Ghana has a separate advocacy strategy that documents key advocacy platforms and associations

Outcome 3: Significantly reduce the hours spent by 5,400 women in unpaid care work through the introduction of low-cost pilot interventions such as community-run child care centres, household rainwater storage, and community tree lots for firewood by the end of 2015.

Time spent by women on water and firewood collection

At baseline:

- About 50% of women smallholder farmers interviewed in Ghana were spending more than four hours per day collecting water for household use.
- Women in Rwanda were spending up to an average of three hours on water collection.
- In Ghana, 87% of women were spending more than four hours a day collecting firewood. In Rwanda, women were spending between three and four hours.

- In Ghana some women stated that their key sources of firewood are community guinea corn and millet stalks. Women in Rwanda said they resort to crop residuals (rice, dried banana leaves), dried grass and dried cow dung.
- Data on women that have access to safe drinking water was not available.

Time spent by women on productive activities and leisure

- In Ghana, 13% of women indicated that they spend some time on paid work. About 25% claimed they also spend their time on community development activities such as general cleaning, sanitation campaigns and contributing labour to the construction of community schools.
- In Rwanda, women stated that they spend an average of 28 hours per month on development programmes at cell and village levels.
- In Rwanda, where 26% of women said they had some time for leisure, none of the women in Ghana claimed to have leisure time.

Knowledge of presence of interventions to support the reduction of women farmers' care work

NGO partners of ActionAid Ghana were not aware of any investments by government that would help reduce women's unpaid care work. However, government officials cited some investments, but these had reached less than 4% of the female population in Nanumba North district.

Availability of water facilities

- In the Gbeo community in Ghana, there was only one borehole serving the whole community at baseline.
- In Rwanda, it was claimed that available water facilities were not reliable because many were dry.
- In Ghana, only 20% of women in the surveyed communities were represented on Water Users' Committees. No similar data was available from Rwanda.

Existence of woodlots or energy technologies

- No baseline data was available on the extent of existence of agro-forestry techniques among women smallholder farmers.
- At baseline, the majority of the women smallholder farmers in Ghana did not own, although most of them had access to, farmlands. This would limit their capacity to grow woodlots or trees at household level.

Existence of child care centres

- At baseline, there were no rural child care centres supported by government.
- Women in Ghana indicated that women spend more than four hours a day on child care. In Rwanda the situation is not clear.

Outcome 4: 5,400 women smallholder farmers should have more secure and sustainable access to food, and produce increased surplus for sale by the end of 2015.

Availability of land for increasing women's food production

At baseline:

- In Ghana, baseline findings indicate that the majority of women did not own land. About 25% of all female respondents in Ghana said they were able to borrow farmlands from friends and relatives.
- In Rwanda, most of the interviewed women claimed to have land. Further, 73% of the women were also able to borrow land.

Food security of women smallholder farmers

- In Ghana, 90% of interviewed female-headed households were food insecure, compared to 65% of male-headed households.
- In Rwanda, the majority of interviewed women smallholder farmers were food insecure, though there were no exact figures.

- In Rwanda, there was low involvement of women in the growing of some crops (i.e. out of 26 women that were interviewed in Nyanza, only 11.5% were cultivating rice and maize; 7% were growing cassava).

Capacity of women smallholder farmers to produce surplus food

In Ghana, 65% of women smallholder farmers interviewed disclosed that they did not earn any surplus from their farming activities. There were no statistics from Rwanda.

Existence of indigenous seed and grain banks

At baseline:

- In Ghana, there were two grain banks in Sheaga and Nangode, constructed by ActionAid Ghana. There was no government grain or seed bank.
- Most of the interviewed women farmers (80%) said they preserved their seeds using traditional methods at home¹⁰⁷ or they were purchasing seeds for a given planting season.
- In Rwanda, the Rwanda Agricultural Board had financed the construction of a storehouse in Rwabicuma, Nyanza, to conserve bean and maize seed. Also, there was an empty new seed and grain bank in Rwabicuma constructed by the national project in partnership with Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources to respond to people's demands. In Gisagara, there was one cooperative seed bank but it was poorly constructed and not used.
- While Rwanda had some initiatives run by women's associations who were maintaining seed storage for priority crops (such as beans), the storage system was very poor and risked insect infestation.
- At least 62% of smallholder farmers interviewed in Busasamana area, Rwanda, were already using indigenous seed varieties at the time of the baseline.

How women were participating in seed and grain banks in their own right

In neither Ghana nor Rwanda was there any baseline data to show the number of women participating in existing seed and grain banks in their own right.

Ownership of livestock by women smallholder farmers

Ghana had no data on livestock. Baseline findings on Rwanda showed that:

- In Busasamana, located in a semi-urban area, only 10% of interviewed women had livestock such as cattle, goats, pigs, poultry and rabbits.
- In Gisagara, Gishubi, of the 53% of women interviewed who claimed to own livestock, very few had cattle (22%) or a goats (24%), while the majority (54%) owned indigenous poultry, which cannot provide enough manure.
- At least in Rwabicuma, some women had goats (17%), poultry (20%), cows (21%) and pigs (32%).
- There was no baseline data on women smallholder farmers, extension workers and staff from partner NGOs that had prior knowledge good animal husbandry skills and practices.

Soil conditions and their appropriateness for climate-resilient sustainable agriculture

- In Ghana, 90% of women smallholder farmers interviewed asserted that soils in their gardens were poor quality and largely infertile, leading to very low yields.
- In Ghana, the majority of women smallholder farmers interviewed (85%) indicated that they were unable to afford chemical fertilisers.
- There was awareness by women smallholder farmers in both countries of the fact that chemical fertilisers are not eco-friendly.

- In Rwanda, only 31% of women in Busasamana sector were composting. In both countries, women farmers were noted to collect crop residues and use them as natural fertilisers.

Presence of processing cooperatives and marketing opportunities for women smallholder farmers

- In both Ghana and Rwanda, there were no food processing cooperatives run by women smallholder farmers' groups. There were several collectives and self-help groups of women processing and accessing the market collectively in both countries. These groups are a good starting point for cooperatives.
- In Rwanda, poor marketing opportunities because of the lack of food processing technology among women farmers' groups were identified as a specific gap, but not in Ghana.

Outcome 5: Greater visibility of women's unpaid care work and farming activities, leading to an increase in donor, regional and international commitments to support rural women smallholder farmers by 2015.

Three bilateral donors to include women's unpaid care work in their strategy papers on gender equality, food security and agriculture

Information on the availability of strategy papers and/or gender policies is available for DFID, SIDA and USAID. However, the dates of expiry are not known for the purpose of assessing if the revision processes are the most strategic opportunity to lobby for the inclusion of women's unpaid care work.

African Union and NEPAD to include support to women smallholders for agricultural production, processing, marketing and recognition of their unpaid care work in relation to nutrition and agricultural production within the CAADP framework

- ActionAid International is already engaging both AU and NEPAD in achieving this indicator.

- However, the extent of pre-existing efforts by the two institutions to address unpaid care work is not documented. At the same time, the data is clear that at baseline, the voices of women smallholder farmers remained marginalised in AU processes. There were no clear gender targets for gender equality.

UN Women and FAO, as well as other UN agencies to address gender inequality facing rural women, including the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work and its impact on women's economic empowerment programming and research

- At baseline, there was information that FAO and UN Women have strategy papers, the latter being due for review to cover the period 2014-2017. There was no documentation of strategies by WFP and IFAD.
- Data on the types of programmes that the agencies are funding was available.

At least five international development organisations working on agriculture and gender that consider sustainable agricultural practices and unpaid care work in their programming

Data is available to signal that most of the international organisations in the baseline have left unpaid care work at the margins of their programming, thus separating it from interventions related to women's agriculture. However, FAO has set aside funding to ensure the introduction of technologies to reduce women's work burden.

At least 10 ActionAid International members adopt the programme model by 2015

At baseline, projects that expressed a link between women's unpaid care work and their climate-resilient sustainable agriculture were only available in ActionAid offices in Ghana, Rwanda and Uganda.

8.3 Recommendations

The following is a summary of recommendations made by the three baseline reports analysed in this report:

Strengthen the capacity of women smallholder farmers' structures

- Assist and train women's associations in sustainable agricultural practices. Where possible, extension services should play an active role in disseminating relevant technologies and offering necessary trainings to groups of women farmers.
- Support vibrant smallholder groups of women as a way of promoting the emergence of 'communities of practice' in which women are able to share their experiences and build a critical mass of 'practitioners' able to meet basic needs and assert their constitutional rights.
- Facilitate strong women's groups who can make clear demands at the national and regional level. The women's groups need to be linked to local, national and regional women's movements, national and regional farmers' networks and also ensure that they make direct presentations at the African Union.
- Promote the participation of women in farmers' organisations and women groups as a way of developing smallholder skills, broadening networks and enhancing the self-confidence of women.
- Support women's cooperatives that have already been formed with the technical ability to register with competent authorities so that they conduct their activities legally.
- Sensitise women's groups to open bank accounts as part of prudent financial management. This requires training the women not only in leadership, but also in financial management.

Build knowledge among women smallholder farmers

- Build the capacity of women to influence policy and decision-making process at all levels of society through training, foster experiential learning with women engaged in similar work across different African countries, and strengthen women's groups so that they can run their own affairs and manage project activities over time.
- Strengthen the capacity of women to demand the protection of their rights through the implementation of sensitisation programmes that raise awareness for women of the issues that affect their lives, including in the context of unpaid care work and sustainable agriculture.
- Use Reflect and other participatory methodologies to raise awareness and influence, and create the necessary space for tackling gender-based violence and discriminatory practices in relation to agricultural resources. These same processes could prove useful in tackling land tenure problems created by gendered-rights relating to access to land.

Support women smallholder farmers' interest in climate-resilient sustainable agriculture

- Mechanisms to ensure sustainability of agricultural production should be identified by considering products with comparative advantages in each location, and by addressing the key issues related to access to seed availability and quality, agricultural processing and marketing. The issue of market access, proper understanding of market roles and mechanisms should be given due consideration.
- Mulching, integrating agro-forestry technologies, use of green manure and integrating a livestock component in the agricultural system are essential practices that should be promoted to ensure a sustainable agricultural system.
- Encourage collaboration between local knowledge-holders in communities and research institutions to investigate indigenous seeds

that are known to be drought resistant and very effective in producing yields under varying climatic conditions.

- There is need to build on women's traditional knowledge of the seasons, locally adapted farming practices (including protection of indigenous seeds), and supporting women to negotiate access to land, inputs and farm services. This could be one of the ways of coping with dwindling yields attributable to poor soils and an inability to acquire expensive chemical fertilisers and other external inputs.
- Holistically address the critical issue of input shortage, bearing in mind women's knowledge of ecological farming techniques, affordability and sustainability of dependence on fertiliser, pesticides, tractors, etc.
- Strengthen the distribution of livestock to women smallholder farmers because of their multiple benefits (i.e. livestock provides manure to improve soil fertility, income and help reduce malnutrition through milk consumption).
- Set up small processing/milling machines closer to production sites to allow women process their harvests.
- Support interventions that add value to the production of women smallholder farmers in order to attract better prices.
- Link women smallholder farmers' associations to potential markets to ensure the sustainability of their agricultural activities.
- Support women smallholder farmers to establish appropriate food storage facilities.
- Given the challenges in Ghana and other African countries where most of the land is owned by men, advocate for change in national land policies since the success of sustainable agriculture interventions hinges on secure access to, and control of, the same land by women. A short- to long-term advocacy strategy for women to have secure tenure is required.

Improve water and energy resources

- Address the problem of water access through sustainable water management, and by the construction of dams or pumps to pull water from subsoil.
- Promote affordable technologies such as planting multipurpose agro-forestry in order to alleviate the problem of firewood.
- Disseminating simple technologies of water collection both at household or village levels.

Advocate for the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work

- AA and women's groups should advocate for the re-opening or establishment of children care centres, and parents sensitised to send their children in the centres.

Strengthen the commitment of government in women's unpaid care work and access to resources

- Government statisticians and economists should devise ways of measuring the 'economic' or 'monetary' value of unpaid care work to determine the true opportunity costs of the lack of amenities like day nurseries, bore holes, community woodlots on the GDP.
- Reducing women's unequal responsibility for unpaid care requires both urgent ameliorative interventions, and long term strategies to promote equity. In the short-term government investments in time saving facilities such as child care centres will offer relief to women who had to care for children and undertake agricultural productivity at the same time.
- Government policy makers and traditional institutions should define, codify and secure women's participation in decision-making processes that affect their lives, particularly in terms of access to resources. This should involve the development and implementation of advocacy strategies at local, regional and national levels.

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75. Ibid. Article 21.
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78. All Rwandans are born and remain free and equal in rights and duties.
79. Article 16 the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

80. The money collected from such schemes is shared or lent for use in a small business or any profit-making activity. Members are charged interest.
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85. This involves selecting the best crop and applying preservatives such as ashes, applying smoke, and using organic pesticides and herbicides as necessary. Seeds are allowed to dry for years.
86. Comprising 75 women and members (20 men and 55 women).
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100. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995, Fourth World Conference on Women
101. Ibid.
102. The state of the world food insecurity, FAO, 2012
103. Some progress was made in 2013 with some platforms being created for women farmers to articulate their issues to policy makers.
104. Notes from discussion with David Adama and Shanaaz Nel.
105. ActionAid (2011) 'Making CAADP work for women, a review of six countries'.
106. After tremendous success in her homeland, Anggun (Anggun Cipta Sasmi) started an amazing international career. She made history for being the first Asian artist to break into the international music scene by releasing her first international album, 'Snow on the Sahara', in Europe, Asia and America.
107. This involves selecting the best crop and applying preservatives such as ashes, applying smoke, and using organic pesticides and herbicides as necessary. Seeds are allowed to dry for years.

**ActionAid International Regional Office
4th floor, AACC building, Waiyaki Way,
P.O. Box 354-00606,
Nairobi, Kenya
Telephone + 254 20 4250000
Website : www.actionaid.org**