



# The food and farming transition: key factors in the emancipation of women

SUMMARY REPORT  
NOVEMBER 2018





**« Protecting the environment is essential. That's why we are acting not only to highlight the key role played by women in the fight against climate change, but also to ensure that women are given greater consideration in environmental protection schemes. »**

*Danièle Kapel-Marcovici*

**Danièle Kapel-Marcovici,**  
President of the Fondation  
RAJA-Danièle Marcovici

## The Fondation RAJA-Danièle Marcovici,

The Foundation has been committed to the emancipation of women in France and around the world for more than 12 years, but it is also involved in areas like environmental protection and the fight against climate change. During the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, we organised a roundtable discussion with women working on climate-related issues. We concurrently conducted a study which showed that women – who make up 40 to 60% of those working in the agricultural sector – are not only the first to be affected by climate change, but also vital contributors to environmental conservation and adaptation to climate change.

To further our understanding, we conducted a study in 2018 on the challenges and opportunities that the changes taking place or that will take place in food and farming are presenting women. The key results of that study revealed that women here in France and around the world are taking action and innovating so that they actively contribute to these changes. More specifically, the idea was to use feedback to highlight possible solutions for getting women actively involved in this transition movement while improving their living conditions and ensuring that they enjoy better recognition within the family and community.

*This document is a summary of the study by Danièle Sexton, an expert in social change, which was conducted with the Fondation RAJA-Danièle Marcovici team and Henri Rouille d'Orfeuil, a member of the French Academy of Agriculture and of the executive board of the Foundation.*



## Women: already a force in the food and farming transition

As sources of knowledge and initiative, women in many settings and countries contribute heavily to promoting more sustainable practices and methods of food and farming production and marketing. With limited access to financial and production resources, they are usually in charge of small-scale activities that revolve around local farming and have small subsistence plots which they cultivate throughout the year. This situation facilitates **their involvement in agroecology and agroforestry projects as well as in the conservation and selection of seed varieties**. The companion planting and rotation they practise are valuable assets in climate risk management and the fight against malnutrition. In forest regions, meanwhile, the focus is on reforesting areas of deforestation or desertification, for instance through the development of agroforestry initiatives involving agritourism and fruit processing.

## The urgent need for a food and farming transition with a greater role for women

The main international agreements highlight the need to set the world on a path to sustainability and resilience. This specifically includes a transformation of production and consumption conditions, a change in agricultural and food-production models, and a greater involvement of women in social and economic life. The **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, for instance, which was adopted in September 2015, developed a transition model for the long-term prosperity of populations and the planet. Organised into **17 Sustainable Development Goals**, the agenda implies a transformation of consumption and production conditions. Such a transformation is also a prerequisite for implementing the Paris Agreement adopted in December 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals place particular emphasis on **the importance of the fight against gender inequality for inclusive, sustainable growth**. One of the major challenges for the future of our planet is to support the implementation of all these pioneering initiatives for food and farming transition and to realign policy to that end.

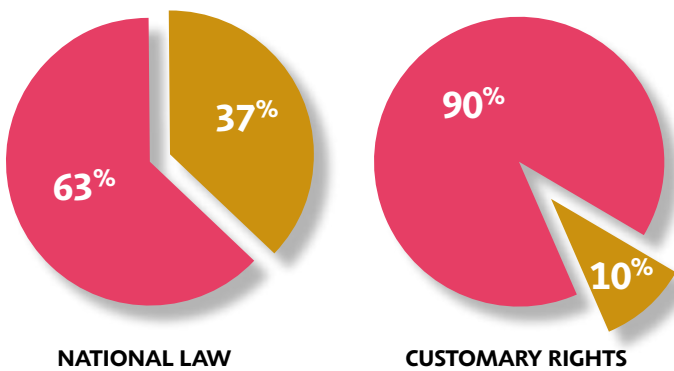


**Agroecology is being explored more and more as a key component of the farming transition and as a means of ensuring food sovereignty against the backdrop of climate change. An alternative to industrial farming, agroecology results in a more sparing use of fossil fuels since it does away with synthetic inputs such as nitrogen fertilisers. It also protects soil cover and soil biodiversity better since there is less tillage.**

## Overcoming challenges and disseminating good practices

**Resources are too limited...** Land access is very often a major limiting factor, because gender inequality is still very prevalent in the rights and customs of many countries. **Land access must be made easier for women, and must be protected in the long term** with the help of local organisations and those involved in the institutions and customs of the region.

### Inequality in inheritance rights in 30 low- and middle-income countries



- No equal constitutional right to land for women
- Equal constitutional rights to land for women

From: Women Gender Constituency, Women in Europe for a Common Future, «Gender-Just Climate Solutions» report, 2017.

### Services are limited or still too discriminative...

In many settings, women have little access to support services for their businesses, particularly in terms of funding. They manage to obtain small loans through alternative funding networks (such as micro-financing), but they need multiple financial services, especially for larger investments, and these need to cater for their revenue models.

### The sharing of housework is still unequal...

In most countries in the world, including France, women do most of the housework and caring and devote two to three times more time than men to this unpaid work. **Freeing up time for women is often indispensable** if they are to develop their business activities. This supposes a reorganisation of roles and cooperation within the family, community and society, a change in mentality in the local and family setting, and a development of suitable services (such as childminding and the supply of water).



ON AVERAGE, A SUB-SAHARAN WOMAN WALKS BETWEEN **1 AND 5 KM** EVERY DAY WHILE CARRYING **AROUND 20 KG OF WEIGHT** THIS REPRESENTS BETWEEN **0.9 AND 2.2 HOURS OF WALKING** FOR TRANSPORTING **WATER AND FUEL**

From: C. Mark Blackden and Quentin Wodon, «Gender, Time Use and Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa,» Washington DC, World Bank, 2006.

**Leadership roles are still limited...** Even if women are increasingly taking part in groups to develop their businesses and further their social and financial autonomy, there are still very few of them involved in the management of professional bodies in the agricultural sector or in political institutions or decision-making arenas. If the participation of women is to be better accepted and diversity is to gradually establish itself in the governance of organisations, **women's involvement in these bodies needs to be qualitatively and quantitatively strengthened at all levels**, while support must be provided and awareness raised among men and women.



## THE OPINION OF HENRI LANDES

Director General of the GoodPlanet Foundation



«For decades, most United Nations reports on sustainable development have been recommending that women be given more responsibility. They rightly point out that it is women who take care of the essential needs of children and of the well-being of families – as well as of the soil, waterways and biodiversity around them. It is mostly women who travel up to 4 hours a day to get water and fuel and who then ensure that food is prepared for the members of the family. In the food and farming transition, there is no initiative more important than supporting the voice, actions and emancipation of women. When the day comes that women have the same say as men in political decisions about food and farming, humanity will have rediscovered its profound respect for Mother Earth.»

# Springboards to further progress

If we are to build a more socially and ecologically viable world, we need to bolster and give greater visibility to the emerging initiatives that are working towards a sustainable food and farming transition and emancipation for women.

**These changes have to be carried through by women themselves, by the men (and women) around them, and by the policies and regulations of the legal and institutional systems in place.**

On the basis of the results of the analysis conducted, we have selected five specific themes that we can act on to support these changes and scale up our efforts. These themes are illustrated below and represent a springboard that partners can use to ensure better mobilisation among women in the food and farming transition and facilitate their achievement of autonomy.

## A SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND FARMING TRANSITION THAT FACILITATES WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENT OF AUTONOMY To boost and scale up initiatives

**1** **SPECIFICITIES**

**LEVERAGE**

- Assessment of gender equality
- Consideration of specific issues
- Global approach

**2** **CAPACITIES**

**LEVERAGE**

- Access to information, training and technical services for women

**3** **RESOURCES**

**LEVERAGE**

- Access to land, equipment, inputs (such as seeds and fertilisers) and funding for women

**4** **SOLIDARITY**

**LEVERAGE**

- Networking and cooperation
- Involvement in community groups and initiatives
- Sharing of experience

**5** **LEADERSHIP**

**LEVERAGE**

- Involvement in deliberative bodies at different levels
- Advocacy work to influence the legal and institutional systems in place

### To conclude

In light of the challenges and possible solutions highlighted in this report, the Foundation has taken note of the importance of promoting projects that contribute to the **food and farming transition** and that make the resulting opportunities for the emancipation of women a reality. The Foundation will take account of the results of this analysis as it develops its work in the areas of **agriculture, food and environment**. Particular attention will be paid to projects that encompass the five themes illustrated above: **Particularities, Capacities, Resources, Solidarity, and Leadership**. Special importance will be given to the demonstration by project initiators (using grid analysis) of the ways in which the specific needs of women have been catered for. Indeed, over the course of 2019 further effort will go into encouraging exchanges and sharing of experience among multiple stakeholders regarding these particular themes.



# WHAT THEY SAY...

## HADAM SILÈYE THIAM

Sheep farmer and beneficiary of the Elevages sans Frontières project (Senegal)

«After the livestock microloan had been fully repaid, the sale of a ram during the Tabaski Festival for 50,000 CFA francs meant that we could buy clothes and shoes for the children and me, and I have put some money aside to pay for school fees next year»

## MASSATO

A young woman trained at the AREJ, partner of Terre & Humanisme (Togo)

«I have already had three births on my farm. I have six animals now. The ewe had one lamb, and the goat had two kids. The herd is starting to grow. Since I got the animals, I've made seven wheelbarrows of compost (around 700 kg) for my little rice field»

## JACQUES NAMETOUGLI

Coordinator of the AREJ, partner of Terre & Humanisme (Togo)

«One of the most satisfying things has been to see the men – the fathers and husbands – and the village leaders getting involved in supporting both the project and the training of young women. There was even one village chief who gathered his entire community together before the animals were donated to ask that the women's herds be respected and to protect them against theft»

## SARAH TOUMI

Director of Dream in Tunisia and project coordinator in collaboration with Women's Worldwide Web (Tunisia)

«The men of the villages tend to encourage the women to join the project because they see the income it generates. It's the potential increase in household income that enables women to take part»

## About the Fondation RAJA-Danièle Marcovici

For more than 12 years, the Fondation RAJA-Danièle Marcovici has devoted its efforts to the emancipation of women. It was set up in 2006 by Danièle Kapel-Marcovici, CEO of the RAJA group, the European leader in packaging supplies and equipment for businesses. Operating under the aegis of the Fondation de France, the Foundation co-finances voluntary projects promoting the emancipation of women in France and around the world while pursuing its work in advocacy and awareness-raising.

Since it was set up, more than €8 million has been allocated to 250 associations. More than 400 projects have been co-financed in 53 countries on every continent to support the emancipation of women and improve their living conditions. These projects have focused on themes such as the protection of women's rights and the fight against violence, education and social action, training and employment, and the protection of the environment and fight against climate change.



For more information : [www.fondation-raja-marcovici.com](http://www.fondation-raja-marcovici.com)

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