

THE TICAD PROCESS: HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY IN AFRICA

Boosting economic growth: Empowering women farmers in Nigeria

Opening new opportunities for women is a key to development, as well to strengthen efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. In Nigeria, where cultural attitudes and traditional beliefs often circumscribe women's roles and hinder access to training and education, a women's project is changing lives.

The initiative supported by the Japan Women-in-Development Fund, established in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is helping women farmers improve their livelihoods. The project is implemented by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and several Nigerian NGOs.

Women in the Onna Local Government Area in the Niger Delta are receiving technical support through the project to improve cassava production and processing. Cassava tuber roots look similar to a sweet potato and are rich in carbohydrates. The leaves provide about the same amount of protein as an egg. Cassava is processed into high-quality starch, flour and animal feed, and is also used to make products such as paper and gum.

The crop is often grown by poor women farmers in Africa, and frequently on marginal land. The crop is vital for both food security and income generation, especially with rising food commodity prices hitting developing countries hard. Nigeria is the world's largest producer of cassava, and the Federal government has set up a presidential initiative to promote cultivation of the crop. The women's initiative builds on this.

An International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) station in the area has supported the effort by facilitating training workshops on cultivation and processing methods, and providing cassava stems to plant, as well as processing equipment. The local community council donated land for equipment storage.

Women farmers and their families are benefitting from higher crop yields and higher earnings from the sale of cassava products. The project also offers training in economic decision-making and technical and entrepreneurship skills. The network of partners involved, from the local to the international level, are helping women in Nigeria gain a brighter future.

Achieving the MDGs: A Millennium Village thrives in Uganda

Africa faces the greatest challenges of any region in tackling extreme poverty, which afflicts the lives of millions on the continent. Despite stronger economic growth, more than 40 per cent of the population of Africa still lives on less than \$1 a day, and education and health systems are inadequate in many areas.

As part of the global campaign to achieve the MDGs by 2015, the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security is supporting the Millennium Villages project, which is implemented by UNDP in cooperation with the Earth Institute at Columbia University.



Working with national governments and local districts, Millennium Villages in 12 poor rural areas in different regions of Africa, comprising 79 villages with a total population of about 400,000 people have been established in cooperation with the local communities to serve as pilots for scaling up the fight against poverty. Plans to establish more villages are under way.

The Millennium Village in Ruhira, Uganda shows how modest inputs can enable communities to improve their lives and livelihoods.

The village has set up 55 project committees and developed 9 community action plans. Overall, 1,500 people participated in community empowerment training events. Twenty-one people have been trained in business management, and 14 banana marketing groups (356 producers) have been formed with the aim of bulking, reducing the line of middlemen and enabling farmers to earn more income.

Also, 11 micro credit groups, many led by women, have been organized into a village bank with a capital base of \$7,000. Women have been trained in making banana beads, enabling them to earn an additional \$1.20 a day, and a women's group built a 500-ton grain storage facility. The community has refurbished or built three schools, and the number of boys and girls enrolled has increased from 1,315 to 2,171, and all students now receive nutritious school meals. The number of girls in school increased from 608 to 1,095.

To control malaria, 3000 bed nets were distributed to all 1,054 households in Ruhira, bringing down the proportion of people ill with the disease from 60 percent to 42 percent. At the health unit, a new out patient block was constructed, new staff recruited and essential medicines stocked. Average monthly attendance at clinic increased from 120 to 920 patients.

To improve diets and reduce malnutrition, the village is growing more corn and beans, as well as other fruits, leafy green vegetables and sweet potatoes. Corn production has increased from 43 to 316 tons, and surpluses are marketed. The village has also constructed 8 new water sources.

The project has revealed two important lessons. The first is that when the villagers feel ownership of the project, they are its drivers, and community contributions of resources, funds and time exceed expectations. The second lesson is that promoting community participation requires careful and consistent efforts to cultivate people's self-confidence and leadership and to earn the community's trust.

Ensuring "human security: Bed net factory in Tanzania combats malaria

Malaria, a deadly disease spread by mosquitoes, kills over 1 million people annually, and infects between 350 and 500 million people worldwide. Africa bears 90% of the global impact of malaria deaths and illness, and an African child dies from malaria every 30 seconds.

Africa loses an estimated \$12 billion each year to the costs of malaria care and reduced productivity. In the hardest hit countries, the disease lowers the growth of GNP (gross national product) by 2% per year. Malaria is a leading cause of death and illness in Tanzania, and accounts for about 40 per cent of all outpatients treated by health services.

Reducing the spread of malaria is one of the Millennium Development Goals, and is a vital step that supports other MDGs, including reducing poverty and child deaths, and achieving universal primary education.

The Arusha net factory in Tanzania is a joint venture by Sumitomo Chemical of Japan and A to Z Textile Mills, a Tanzanian company, that reflects the spirit of the TICAD process.

The factory is producing Olyset long-lasting insecticidal net with technology developed by Sumitomo. The nets are a crucial tool in the fight against malaria in Tanzania and across Africa, and are the only such nets recommended by the World Health Organization manufactured in Africa.

The factory makes 10 million nets per year, and has created over 3,200 jobs supporting at least 20,000 people.

To stem malaria, Africa needs tens of millions of long-lasting insecticidal bed nets every year. The Arusha factory demonstrates that the nets can be produced in Africa, by Africans and for Africans, thanks to a partnership with a Japanese company.

Tanzania is committed to implementing anti-malaria initiatives, including increasing the use of the insecticide treated nets, promoting prompt and effective treatment of malaria, as well as use of preventive treatment of malaria among pregnant women.

Consolidation of Peace: Former soldiers in Sierra Leone trade armaments for development

The recovery of Sierra Leone from a devastating civil war is a vital step for the country and for West Africa. Tens of thousands were killed, and more than 2 million people were displaced during the conflict, which ended in 2002, leaving the country one of the poorest in Africa and the world.

Peace-building activities are laying a foundation for economic growth and strengthening democratic governance, which are essential for enabling communities to improve their lives, reduce poverty, and make progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The Arms for Development project is a joint initiative of the Government of Sierra Leone and UNDP. Japan is supporting the project as part of efforts to promote consolidation of peace and democratization in Africa, which is a major priority of the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV).

The project is promoting conditions for lasting peace, human security and socio-economic development by encouraging former soldiers to turn in weapons in exchange for help with community development initiatives, and is also building two border posts, one on the border with Liberia and the other on the border with Guinea.

So far, the project has raised awareness about the dangers posed by illicit small arms and light weapons in 35 chiefdoms, and helped communities in border areas understand the need to reduce crime. Voluntary surrender of arms in exchange for assistance with development projects is underway in 22 of the chiefdoms.

The project has enabled the Safroko Limba chiefdom to construct four classrooms for 120 pupils and toilet facilities. Local women championed the initiative so that girls can attend senior secondary school within their community rather than in urban areas. The local classes reduce families' financial burden for their children's education. The village of Masingbi also constructed and equipped four classrooms and a principal's office.

Five communities have built community centers to improve recreation facilities for teenagers, providing them with local opportunities for local activities, rather than heading for urban areas. The centers are also used for community meetings.

The project has also assisted the expansion of the Kamabai Health Center with construction of a ward for 20 patients. Plans are underway for the Ministry of Health to provide additional staff and drugs for the health center.

Following the ratification by Parliament of a regional Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons in June 2007, Sierra Leone is establishing a National Commission on Small Arms as provided for in the Convention. In another element of the Arms for Development Project, UNDP is assisting the Commission.

Addressing environmental issues: Improving energy access in Burkina Faso

In rural homes across Africa with no connection to the electricity grid, preparing meals and other work at home are laborious tasks for women. They spend up to six hours a day collecting firewood, fetching water, husking and pounding grain, with no time left for outside employment. Girls often perform poorly in school due to inconsistent attendance, and are forced to drop out to help their mothers.

In Burkina Faso and other countries in West Africa, the Multi-Functional Platform is empowering women and their communities, bringing new economic opportunities. Japan, in cooperation with UNDP and other partners is assisting the initiative, which will be discussed at the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in Yokohama on 28 to 30 May 2008.

The platform is powered by a diesel engine mounted on a chassis, to which a variety of processing equipment can be attached, including cereal mill, husker, battery charger, and joinery and carpentry equipment.

With the platform, tasks such as milling and husking sorghum, millet, maize and other grains become profitable economic activities. The platform also generates electricity for lighting, refrigeration and to pump water, which helps provide clean water to communities along with improved health care and education services.

Women have more hours in the day to develop profitable activities to boost their productivity, enabling them to sell better quality products and increase their income using low-cost, effective technology

In Burkina Faso, a survey found that 19 platforms helped local communities earn more than \$500,000 in one year. Families are escaping poverty, with more money for food, clothing, and children's education.

The platform is bringing big benefits for girls, who can devote less time to work at home and increase their school attendance and improve their grades and academic achievement.

As Burkina Faso sets its sights on achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, the platform is making an important contribution. As a result, plans are underway to expand the pilot project to national scale and install 400 platforms in five regions.

Lessons learned from this initiative can serve as the basis to expand the approach across Sub Saharan Africa, where an estimated 100 million people in rural areas could benefit.

