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Farmer-driven research to improve food and
nutrition security

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Promoting local innovation and participatory
agricultural research for development:

The Role of Women

Chris Macoloo, *World Neighbors*.

PROMOTING LOCAL INNOVATION AND PARTICIPATORY AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Role of Women

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World Neighbors

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Introduction

- Agriculture accounts for between 15% and 50% of GDP in sub-Saharan Africa
- 70% to 80% of sub-Saharan Africans depend on agriculture for a living
- Women are the back-bone of agricultural production, practising mainly agroecology (Women produce 80% of the food in Africa)
- Smallholder farmers have engaged in innovation and experimentation from time immemorial.



Attempts at Modernization

- Exogenous policies versus endogenous development/indigenous knowledge
- Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP)
- Maputo Declaration (10% of national budget to be spent on agriculture to achieve 6% growth in the agricultural sector)
- Industrial agriculture: high external inputs, monoculture, plantations, land grabs, biofuels, livestock feed



RISPER OGOGO

Constraints to Women participation in Agricultural Innovation and Research

- Land ownership: patriarchal system and cultural norms.
- Low education: low formal employment, low incomes.
- Limited access to credit: inadequate financial resources.
- Multiple roles: over-burdened and unappreciated.

Examples of Innovation and Experimentation



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Issue: Declining productivity in the face of climate change

Innovation/experimentation: trying new varieties, inter-cropping, integration of crops and livestock.



- Issue: Decreased productivity, scarcity of land
- Innovation/experimentation: efficient land use management, diversification, inter-cropping



- Issue: Food insecurity, declining rainfall
- Innovation/experimentation: small scale irrigation (indigenous vegetables, horticulture), mulching

CHRISTINE KILONZI

- Issue: Can one predetermine the sex of chickens?
- Innovation/experimentation: round headed eggs (cocks), sharp ended eggs (hens)

YEBEYERE ASSEFA

- Issue: Fuel and time used in domestic cooking
- Innovation/experimentation: 3-in-1 sauce cooking pot

LESSONS LEARNED

- Women are at the center of agricultural innovation/experimentation/research
- Need for allocation of resources for smallholder farmers: it is cost effective
- Creativity in documentation of smallholder research initiatives
- Motivation and objectives of smallholder researchers and scientist differ: farmer led joint research to be encouraged
- Need for a shift in paradigm with respect to the processes of research

CONCLUSION

- Agroecology is the main agricultural production system, not industrial agriculture.
- Women smallholders must be supported: legally, socio-culturally, economically, etc. to eliminate world hunger.
- We must go beyond food security and embrace **food sovereignty** as a framework for empowering farmers, not concentrating power in the hands of monopolistic corporates.