One Monday morning in late April 2001, a smallholder farmer – who, as it happens, practices organic methods in the western American state of Washington – commanded the attention of the sustainable development commission of the General Assembly of the United Nations. He presented a list of topics to be included in future global food policies. That list included respect for, and use of, indigenous knowledge systems, the possibility of “peoples’ patents”, and full and open access to scientific research findings. What was new was not the list of demands, nor the fact that the farmer was speaking to such an august body. The novelty – and some say, the great hope for the future – lay in the fact that he was speaking as a member of such a body, through a process known as ‘multi-stakeholder dialogue’ which includes a representative farmers’ group composed of farmers worldwide.

The noble art of policy making has been opened up of late, and it can never return to its magic, secretive lamp. For the disciples of inclusion and transparency, this is progress. But should we fumble around with it a bit less clumsily?
When this is meshed with a country's vulnerability to external volatile forces, from dollar fluctuations to floods blamed upon climate change, there is no sovereignty. Especially not when some essential budget assistance from donor governments comes with the 'conditionalities' of transparency and inclusion.

**Better to build bridges**

Even if someone else says so, it does make sense for agricultural policies to be shaped in an inclusive way, involving everyone from the field to the market stall and grocery shelf. Instead of the frictional losses of conflict and reconciliation, it is better to seek to harmonise from the beginning, however hopeless it may seem to rationally share, for example, stressed land resources or water supplies in a given area.

The process of policy formulation has become decentralised, more open and participatory, although some say noisy, costly, and confusing as well. To many observers, the process has become reminiscent of local level governance in centuries past. To some visionaries, the bringing together of all parties in a multi-stakeholder dialogue where people seek to establish and implement common goals which override 'tribal' differences, therein lies the seed of new, stable yet creative, forms of governance.

We are not there yet. We are in a phase of liberalisation of national economies, with a parallel process of democratisation in a country's governance. Some parts of government are now weak, or non-existent, and in many cases the role of government is now, through regulation, to ensure the so-called enabling environment.

**No more lord and master**

Over the last two decades, agricultural policy making, any policy making, has undergone a shock to its once untouched system. No longer can a particular policy direction be decided on at top level and decreed to be implemented 'throughout the land'. No more the imposition of ill-judged and ill-fated policies such as the groundnut scheme in the East Africa of the 1940s, or the collectivisation of land in Tanzania in the 1970s and Benin in the 1980s.

Rightly or wrongly, and history will probably judge for somewhere in between, there are no truly sovereign nations these days, no single country that can give full meaning to its pride and independence - and no more so than in agriculture.

For agriculture, and this holds way beyond the boundaries of ACP agriculture, there is a dependence on the global market place for earnings and supplies. When this is meshed with a country's vulnerability to external volatile forces, from dollar fluctuations to floods blamed upon climate change, there is no sovereignty. Especially not when some essential budget assistance from donor governments comes with the 'conditionalities' of transparency and inclusion.

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**Newcomers stuck for right words**

This has led to an audible rush of interested parties into the vacuums that were once the centres of economic and political power in a country. A triangle is forming, with massive progress being made along the axes between government and the commercial sector - as witnessed by the public-private partnership approach. Similar progress is being made between government and civil society, who both soundly appreciate the need for each other. The weakest axis in the triangle is between commercial and non-commercial, where the clash of incompatable values is heaviest.

Thus it is that in Senegal and Mali we can see the decentralisation of political authority to local rural bodies and forums; and in Burkina Faso, Botswana or Ghana the management of national parks is being delegated to NGOs. In many countries the prospect of privatisation of agricultural research is causing concern, but privatisations of other sectors of the agricultural economy, such as the emergence of chambers of agriculture, are generally welcomed.

The democratisation of policy making has meant that the stage has changed: there is new scenery and there are more actors. However, the newcomers have not properly learned their lines and some of the old guard, as can be expected, are none too positive about the skills of the inexperienced newcomers.

**Empowerment cannot be given**

It may be one thing to persuade those who previously monopolised policy making to become more open - after all, they have little choice. What is of greater concern is the need to help the new players to adjust to their new position. As NGOs, community-based groups and civil society bodies they have become accustomed to pointing at the faults of others; now it is time for them to share the harder task of designing policies which make no mistakes. Similar patterns hold for the private sector, which has often told the government to govern less, without really understanding how it could share in government.

The last two decades of reforms in governance have seen a fashionable flood of 'toolkits', primarily aimed at helping governments to become inclusive. One famous World Bank toolkit on governance even warns governments against courting the civil society too quickly, since the latter may develop 'consultation fatigue'.

Now, as policy making has opened up, there is an urgent need for toolkits for the new policy actors. Until they can demonstrate their adequate skills, the new generation of policy co-makers will find that they are not properly involved. Indeed, many may shy clear of involvement, since their genetic print insists that they oppose rather than construct. For those who want to make the grade, it will be a hard slog. A recent study on policy design warns that ownership, like empowerment, cannot be given. It must be earned the hard way.

For information sources on Empowerment, see page 10

The effectiveness of inclusive policy making depends on:
- ability of traditional policy makers to accept newcomers
- ability of newcomers to develop the complex skills of:
  - monitoring and analysis
  - policy assessment
  - negotiation and mediation
  - consensus building
  - partnership spirit

These are partly technical skills, and partly attitudes. They can be learned, but they must be nurtured.
Nomads and pastoralist policies

New horizons for nomads

Sedentary and pastoral lifestyles need not always collide, if policies can blend their complementary aspects.

Thousands of years ago, long before we had ever planted a grain of wheat, we used to trek behind our herds from pasture to pasture, from watering hole to watering hole. Where the animals went, we followed. We tamed them and we learned how to milk them, how to spin their hair, how to steer their movements and how to improve their stock by cross-breeding. In those days we were forever on the move. On this mobility we built civilisations where wealth was measured by counting head in herds and where everybody was recognised by their belonging to a family or a tribe rather than by their place of birth.

It takes two to tangle

Nowadays relationships between nomads and other peoples are often marked by rivalries which derive from different perceptions of space and time. The farmer regards the territory which he works as his land. The nomad, on the contrary, does not see such demarcations. His points of reference are not the corners of a field, but a series of watering points; his ‘lines on the map’ are the paths which lead there. His freedom is to move along these routes is paramount. Paramount, but not permanent; for the pastoralist’s needs are subject to change. Nomads have always survived through opportunism: a drought, or an unexpected rains, or a conflict in a region, many factors may provoke a change in direction. Agriculture is one such variable: population growth can lead to the cultivation of land that was formerly pastoralist routes (in Niger, the cultivated area grew by 50% between 1968 and 1980 – see Spore 39).

Of the many conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, some have reached alarming proportions: in Senegal in 1991, thousands of FulBe people had to abandon the forest of Mbegu to make way for ground-sands of FulBe people had to abandon the forest of Mbegu to make way for ground-sands of FulBe people had to abandon the forest of Mbegu to make way for ground-sands of FulBe people had to abandon the forest of Mbegu to make way for ground-sands of FulBe people had to abandon the forest of Mbegu to make way for ground-sands of FulBe people had to abandon the forest of Mbegu to make way for ground-sands of FulBe people had to abandon the forest of Mbegu to make way for ground-sands of FulBe people had to abandon the forest of Mbegu to make way for ground-sands of FulBe people had to abandon the forest of Mbegu to make way for ground-sands of FulBe people had to abandon the forest of Mbegu to make way for ground-sands of FulBe people had to abandon the forest of Mbegu to make way for ground-sands of FulBe people had to abandon the forest of Mbegu to make way for ground-sands of FulBe people had to abandon the forest of Mbegu to make way for ground-sands of FulBe people had to abandon the forest of Mbegu to make way for ground-sands of FulBe people had to abandon the forest of Mbegu to make way for ground.-

“Nothing but trouble”

Pastoral areas often span two, three, or even four, national borders. The mobility of pastoralists makes them hard to control, and they are often treated as foreigners wherever they go. In the eyes of governments, they seem to resist any moves which would rationalise their activity.

Over the years, governments have tried various tactics to deal with the issue. The 1960s and 1970s saw attempts to set up private or public ‘ranches’. In vast enclosed areas – the Ekrafan ranch in Niger covered 110,000 hectares! – herds were shunted from one pasture to another in programmed moves. In Kenya, ‘group ranches’ encouraged Masai herdsmen to own plots of land that were previously communal. These were heavy-handed approaches and few of them survived the first years of drought they encountered.

In Somalia, after the harsh drought of 1974, 120,000 camel herders were “invited” to give up their herds and to set themselves up in coastal villages, switching to agriculture and fishing. Not surprisingly, this attempt at sudden settlement failed.

During this period, it was the technocrats who called the tune. While vets set up veterinary programmes, with costs forced up by the mobility of herds, engineers focussed on digging wells and installing pumps. “It was an approach that benefited the very rich because they could reduce labour costs, and the very poor who had unknown access to abundant water” says André Marty, of the French IRAM. Most normal pastoralists, accustomed to carefully choosing their herds’ paths, gained little: the rush of animals to poorly maintained wells literally crushed surrounding vegetation.

A change came in 1975, when more emphasis was placed on organising pastoralists. Following examples taken from agriculture, they were encouraged to jointly manage watering holes and pastures, cereal stocks and veterinary products. Again it was an improved approach, and it failed.

Pastoralists have a point

The following decade was a troubled one in several Sahelian countries, marked by violence and prolonged unrest. When peace returned, there was a renewed appreciation of the benefits of nomad societies and of how they can complement a sedentary society. Equally the value of their agro-ecological insights was recognised, as was their mobility in aiding sustainable grazing of arid pastures. At long last, the messages of scientists about the favourable impact of pastoral practices on vegetation cover were finally heeded.

Nowadays there is a more mature understanding of pastoral issues. So-called ‘intermediate’ lifestyles are gaining in importance: in Niger and Mali, nomad families are cutting down their movements whilst in Senegal pastoralists are adding agriculture to their livelihoods, and in Kenya and in the Sahel, tourism. In Mali, meetings between sedentary and pastoral communities are part of the agenda of dialogue in a local development project as part of national decentralisation policies. Working together with pastoralists underscores the strategy of setting up national reserves in Chad (Binder Léré), Guinea and Mali (Bafing Falémé). Again in Mali, national land legislation has been amended to include a ‘pastoral charter’ whilst in Chad, the Almy Braha project (“water for the herds”) will provide the heart of the country with a network of wells.

Could these recent initiatives signal, for nomads, a bright spot on the once-darkening horizon? Could it be the right to be different?

For more information:

Iram, Parc scientifique Agropolis, bât 14 34397 Montpellier, France

Living with uncertainty: new directions for pastoral development in Africa.


CTA number 656. 20 credits points

See also review of Introduction to Range Management in publications, page 12
Agricultural equipment

Hoe, harrow, hoe

Simple straightforward technologies and tools still provide the basis for much agricultural production and processing. After decades of dissemination strategies, experimental workshops and small-scale industrialisation, a spade is a spade is a spade. The perfect spade is still a long way away.

Take two proverbs. One: “A woman’s work is never done.” And two: “A good workman never blames his tools.”

With the first one, few people would dare to differ, particularly in the context of ACP agriculture.

The second one is more difficult, even if we replace the word ‘workman’ with ‘workperson’, at least in our thoughts. After all, everybody likes to be proud of, and praised for, their work and regarded as an excellent crafts-person. If the results of your labours are not as good as you want them to be, then it is a bit self-defeating to blame your tools. Far better to improve your technique. That is the ideal, and how we would all like that to be the case.

In reality it is often the tool that is to be blamed for imperfect results and yields in the field or the processing plant, alongside unfortunate timing with inputs and harvests, storage issues and the unpredictable elements of the weather. Just focusing on tools alone, even simple hand tools are poorly designed or badly finished, and this leads to inefficient use. Since much small-scale agricultural equipment is used primarily by women, it is no wonder that their work – as farmers – is never fully done.

**The challenge of designing tools**

Sometimes the apparent simplicity of the task at hand, let us say of hoeing weeds or shelling maize cobs, hides the need for sophistication. Behind the apparent simplicity of a tool, however, for it to be efficient and effective, there lies a complex web of requirements. The issues range from an implement's design, durability and ease of use, to its accessibility in terms of cost and availability and, above all, its cultural acceptance.

The rough-and-ready nature of many agricultural implements belies the importance of scientific precision in their design. Take a simple hoe. There are almost endless considerations at play: the shape of the handle and of the hand that will hold it, its length, weight and centre of gravity, its ease of movement, the angle of the blade to hit and enter the ground and loosen the roots of weeds. These are topics on which many agriculturally-minded designers and village blacksmiths of recent generations have spent much time, seeking to develop a more appropriate hoe. There are many variations on a hoe, varying from locality to locality within a country, and varying even more from region to region, or across a country. The hoe has, after all, been developed by its users literally over thousands of years. Yet, whatever model one takes, its straightforward design is still subject to controversy. To its users, it may be as perfect as can be imagined. There is much to be said for a pragmatic assessment of the scientific correctness of a design which is based on generations of usage. In this sense, the ‘village technology’ approach is a blend of common-sense and scientific sense, and should not be dismissed, as some ‘modernists’ would have us do, as romantic and nostalgic yearnings for days that will never return.

However, to a specialist in ergonomics, which is the efficient use of human or animal energy in manipulating a piece of equipment, the same traditional design may offend all fundamental rules of efficiency in physics. Who is right, and who is wrong? Should the handle be long, and thus allow the user to keep a straight back and avoid pain and discomfort, or should it be short and allow the bent-over user to more easily pick up and discard uprooted weeds? The right answer makes an incredible difference to the health of the user and the speed with which they can work, and also to the yield of the crop (see box).

**Blacksmiths without frontiers**

Many innovative attempts have been made by local artisans to market their small-scale manufacture of hand tools and workshop equipment.

How about promoting their products on the World Wide Web? That’s what several small businesses have done in Cameroon: the Modern Farmers’ Group of Esse (GAME) and the CLAAC workshop now proudly display their wares on the Africadev Website: their boiler pans, hand graters, sieves and presses are there for all the world (with computers) to see, and buy.

And why not? Virtually every transnational corporation worth its salt started off life in a shed or a garage.

Visit: www.africadev.net
GAME, BP 14731, Yaoundé, Cameroon
CLAAC, BP 3723, Douala, Cameroon

Hand tools can carry tremendous force
The age structure of the productive population is of greater importance than the changes underway in weight, but this is a factor of lesser importance than the challenges underlying the age structure of the productive population. Over recent decades, the phenomenon of migration to the town, or to employment in plantations elsewhere, has noticeably changed the population structure of the village. Many rural communities have tilted heavily towards a population that consists predominantly of females, children and adolescent youths and the elderly. The implications of these changes on the design of agricultural implements are as obvious as they are under-estimated.

All this is being exacerbated, as we read these lines, by the slashing intrusion of AIDS on entire populations. The removal of up to 20% and more of the ‘productive’ groups in a community is as deadly for the future as it is for the present. Again – as many specialist meetings have been pointing out of late – there is an urgent need to reconsider the position and the needs of the surviving communities, not least in the types and shapes of tools they can use for working to ensure their food security. The ergonomics of hand-held implements for early teenage girls, for example, may not be the preferred theme on which an industrial designer would like to make a name, but it is a theme that will soon require, no, does require, now, much more attention. Can they rise to the challenge?

From dissemination to sales

Such design issues were perhaps not widely present in the minds of agricultural strategists a few decades ago. In the sixties and seventies of the last century, the emphasis was on replication of small-scale equipment, by drastically increasing the numbers of implements produced in a country in an affordable way for use at village level. The intention: to remove or at least lighten the drudgery of manual agricultural and processing tasks and increase productivity by heightening efficiency and reducing losses. From hoes to small-scale oil presses, hand-shellers to pedal-powered grinders and small bottling and canning plants to hand-carts, the lists of tools were long. This was the time where for those days, amazingly detailed and innovative works such as the Village Technology Handbook, First Steps to Village Mechanisation and Tools for Agriculture opened up access to new ideas. In some novel exchanges of technology transfer, designs were copied and adapted between blacksmiths and agricultural engineers alike in different countries within Africa, and the Caribbean and the Pacific and between continents. Designs from Brazil, India and Japan, to name but the three most notable sources of appropriate agricultural equipment from outside the ACP group, were replicated widely.

The major thrust, up to the 1990s, was to produce equipment with subsidised production facilities, and to disseminate the implements in subsidised distribution schemes, with the intention of building up a market that would, finally, become viable. This route was followed by the Centre for Agricultural Mechanisation and Technology in Tanzania, or the Société africaine d’études de développement in SAED (Sahel, from Burkina Faso to Senegal), and small workshops in, for example, Swaziland, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Cameroon. Often though, the development of the local industrial capacity has been hampered by lack of access to credit for both producers and customers; these shortcomings are being increasingly addressed by credit lines and associated activities from, for example, the Centre for the Development of Enterprise, and the Africa Project Development Facility of the World Bank Group. Competition from manufacturers of machines and equipment from such large markets as the southern United States, India, China and Brazil is now the principal constraint.

The need is, somehow, to nurture local production and ingenuity so that the essential steps of village mechanisation can be of the village, and not at the village. To upgrade the image of local technology by emphasising its cultural connections and its scientific common sense would appear to be the way forward. That would attract the inputs, creative and financial, of designers and investors. These are essential for local production and processing to attain the required levels of quality and quantity.

On a short handle?

A recent study, by FAO and IFAD, on the widespread use of short-handled hoes emphasised that many women complained about frequent pain and fatigue. “Without doubt,” the report says, “short-handled weeding hoes have the advantage of allowing the farmers full control of the hoe while he/she works around the plants, leaving the other hand free to pull out the weeds and shake the roots free of soil.” An alternative was found in the central region of Senegal where women use a long-handled weeding hoe that allows them to stand upright. They have almost totally abandoned traditional hoes that obliged them to work in a squatting or crouched position.

So why didn’t women in other countries adopt long-handled hoes? “Almost everywhere except Senegal,” the report says, “there is a widespread belief that work can be performed only if the worker is bent double and armed with a short-handled hoe. This type of cultural conditioning is an obstacle to the introduction of more comfortable long-handled implements, such as jab planters, since working upright is perceived as laziness.” In Burkina Faso, one women’s group said they would like longer handles on their hoes, but their husbands would never allow it.

The users literally change shape

There is perhaps no single perfect hoe. Even if one were designed to match the requirements of the prevailing physique of its users, it may stumble across cultural issues, or increasingly the changing needs of its users. In many places, the physionomy of the rural population is changing. Dietary changes may be affecting height and weight, but this is a factor of lesser importance than the changes underway in the age structure of the productive population. Over recent decades, the phenomenon of migration to the town, or to employment in plantations elsewhere, has noticeably changed the population structure of the village. Many rural communities have tilted heavily towards a population that consists predominantly of females, children and adolescent youths and the elderly. The implications of these changes on the design of agricultural implements are as obvious as they are under-estimated.

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Growing possibilities for regional trade

When your traditional major suppliers and major markets are five or ten thousand kilometres away, it makes sense to see if there are possibilities to develop trade nearer home, even if your neighbours are one or two days’ sailing away.

Such is the reality for producers and traders in the countries and entities of the Indian Ocean: the Comoros Islands, Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion and Seychelles. Inter-island trade accounts for only 3% of their current commercial exchanges, but there is much to be done to increase it, whilst ensuring that the relevant quality standards conform to those of international trade.

The economies of the Comoros and Madagascar are largely agricultural, with a major focus on the domestic market; for them, many export opportunities remain to be seized. The other three islands are more open to the international market and, partly because of a well-developed upmarket tourist trade, they have a heavy dependence on imported foodstuffs. To switch these imports from the traditional sources of China, Europe, India, Kenya, and South Africa to imports from neighbouring islands could reduce costs significantly.

The catch lies in the perennial issue of quality, in both products and the delivery chain, in particular in the sector of processing raw and fresh foods (fish, meats and fruit and vegetables). It was to address the issue of how to develop and strengthen small enterprises in inter-island trade that the CTA, together with the International Labour Organisation and the integrated regional programme for development of trade exchanges (PRIDE), organised a seminar in Madagascar capital Antananarivo in March 2001. Their painstaking preparations in surveys the state-of-trade, product by product, country by country, provide insights in both end-products and methods that may be of interest to other island groupings.

The thirty participants urged greater harmonisation between countries on food quality and health standards, the removal of tariffs, and accessibility of market information, the latter being more likely if the various information network initiatives in the region, once operational, were to be more closely integrated and regional mechanism more active. Clearly, by working together to improve exports to each other, the five countries concerned will strengthen their ability to trade on the global market.

Spices: part of the pattern of trade since time immemorial

Timber battle in Solomon Islands

The first shipment of eco-timber from sustainably managed forest in the Marovo Lagoon area in the Solomon Islands reached Australia at the end of 2000, opening up a new ‘eco-export-channel’ and marking another phase in the battle to maintain tropical timber in the Pacific.

Decreasing yields of tropical timber species in Indonesia and Malaysia pushed Australian and Asian logging companies in the 1980s and 1990s to explore new territories, and the pristine forests of Solomon Islands were a new target. Thousands of hectares were logged and left bare every year. Local communities started to develop an alternative that would save the forest and at the same time yield long-term benefits for the population. In 1997 the first Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) eco-timber shipment took place from the Islands to Australia.

Apart from raising financial proceeds, the exports constitute a political statement against ecological destruction. Currently, almost 41,000 hectares are FSC certified. Although still small (eco-timber export hardly exceeds 1,000 cubic meters a year at present) the revenues are crucial for local communities. The recent exports to Australia also mark another step in the timber battle as foreign destructive logging continues. The new Solomon Island government has yet to enforce a new Forest Act that restricts industrial logging and promotes sustainable forest management.
Famine threatens DR Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo is facing serious food shortages as a result of years of civil war in the country. Yields of cassava, a staple food for 70% of the population, are particularly affected and its deterioration seriously affects the food security of the country. Famine has already been reported in some regions. A team from the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) visited farmers’ fields in western Congo in December 2000 and carried out rapid assessments of pests and diseases of crops. Every known pest and disease in cassava in the region was found to be present, with cassava mosaic virus seeming to be the major constraint. Over the years, IITA, based in Nigeria, has developed many mosaic resistant varieties, but dissemination in DR Congo has been impossible due to the recent war.

The whole yields more ...

The relatively young Kenyan NGO SACRED-Africa (see Spore 82, page 15) is extending its work to improve maize-legume inter-cropping in ways that can be quickly adopted by farmers. SACRED stands, incidentally, for Sustainable Agriculture Centre for Research and Development in Africa. Their M-BILI programme, which stands for Managing Beneficial Interactions in Legume Inter-crops, is based on the Swahili word for two. It aims at improving yields of legumes such as beans, green gram and groundnut - grown with maize.

The basic approach is to plant one row of maize and two rows of legumes alternately. This creates more favourable light and soil conditions within the under-storey legumes whilst maintaining normal plant populations. SACRED’s field trials compared the performance of various legumes with maize, with and without local ‘DAP’ fertiliser and with yields under mono-cropping. These indicated that, without fertilisers, the two M-BILI rows can improve legume yield and total crop value up to 13% compared to inter-cropping with one row maize and one row legumes. Legumes that require more sunlight, such as green gram and groundnut, perform particularly well. When farmers are able to invest in modest amounts of DAP fertiliser, M-BILI can improve yields by an additional 20%. If sustained these returns could be exciting, even if such increases are not rare in field trials. SACRED-Africa urges realism in interpreting trial results. In many cases, even modest investment is difficult for farmers. The real test of M-BILI rests in its large-scale adoption - and adaptation - by farmers and their willingness to adjust their cropping practices accordingly.

New strains on the way

Supported by the FAO, IITA’s Disaster Relief Unit and tissue culture laboratory will produce disease free planting material without the need for the normal quarantine procedures. In DRC itself the National Institute for Agronomic Study and Research has introduced 200 new varieties, tested by IITA. Of these varieties the most likely to adapt to local conditions will be reproduced and distributed to local farmers. Two existing nurseries near Kinshasa are being equipped to undertake this task.

Clove production rising

After years of decreasing production the clove trade in Zanzibar is firming up again. In the 1960s, the island produced 20,000 tonnes of cloves annually. Then, production declined to an absolute minimum of 204 t in 1998. Their major customer, Indonesia, became self-sufficient in the mid-1980s and ageing of trees, diseases and spells of drought during the 1990s, leaving millions of trees destroyed by fire, did the rest. A couple of years ago production started to recover and niche markets like India, the Netherlands and Thailand have been expanded. Production in 2000 had risen to 10,000 t. According to the FAO, the total world production last year was 89,500 t.

Participation in local development

The “A-Week” is an introductory course on participation in rural development offered by Agromisa, the Dutch support agency. The “A-Week plus” is a second week, building on the A-Week but is practical, focussing on facilitating group processes and developing a participatory development plan. The two successive weeks are now offered three times a year: as well as the traditional week in June, courses are available from September 24 to October 5 and from January 14 to 25, 2002.

Small grants for work in wetlands

The Dutch branch of IUCN is managing the Small Grants for Wetlands programme (SWP). Grants up to US$ 75,000 (€ 82,500) are available for projects in the field of conservation and sustainable use of wetlands that are executed by local NGOs in 26 countries. In the ACP world, these include Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique and Senegal. Deadlines for applications each year: 1 March, 1 July and 1 November.

In brief

Small grants for work in wetlands

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Spread, page 9
Belize boosts its beans

In 2000, Belize's bean exports reached €2.6 million, mainly to CARICOM countries where beans are a staple food. With Brazilian support, the government has approved a US$10.5 million dollar project to develop the soybean industry, including expansion of its production, processing capacity and marketing. A pre-cleaning plant for black-eye and red kidney beans was inaugurated in Spanish Lookout in late February 2001 and negotiations have started to export beans to Jamaica.

Malawian gets food security award

For her work on breeding Open Pollinated Varieties (OPVs) of maize, Malawian scientist Elizabeth Minofu Sibale has won the 2000 award from the World Bank Group and IMF Africa Club. Sibale, who received the award in January 2001, is renowned for her work on various OPVs. These are affordable, high yielding and can be recycled for three years, thus relieving the smallholder farmers from the burden of buying seeds every year.

Organic sesame

Farmers in Burkina Faso have reached another milestone on the organic road. With the support of TROPEX, the organisation for the export of tropical products, more than 3,000 farmers are growing organic sesame. Total production in 1999 – 2000 was 4,000 t., worth 2 billion Fcfa (€ 3 million) and the forecasts for the next season are promising.

Award for irrigation ideas

The Irrigation Association (IA) has launched a competition for innovative irrigation ideas and technologies aimed at the world’s smallholders. The winner receives US$ 10,000 (€11,100) donated by Winrock International. Submit your proposal, no more than 3 pages, before 1 October 2001.

Trade, especially the international variety, rarely brings out the best in people. Competition can be savage and when economic survival is at stake, slashing prices will work better than even the most creative advertising. It’s an ugly rough-and-tumble and one of the not-prettiest is the loss of solidarity between nations.

The European Union recently announced the removal of all import quotas and duties on products from the world’s 48 Least-D developed Countries (most LDCs are ACP States). The measure went into effect on 9 March 2001, in an orgy of praise in Europe at least, but it seems to be far from world-shattering. Most LDCs already benefited from duty-free access on most goods, and preferential quotas on key produce such as bananas. In 1998, the total value of EU duties on goods from all LDCs amounted to a mere 7 million – most of it on a handful of temperate agricultural products. These are principally maize, some cheese, beef, bananas, rice and sugar and sugar derivatives, and the current suppliers, mainly in ACP States, are none happy about competition from other LDCs, in the ACP Group or elsewhere. Whether those 7 million savings will lead to lower shop prices, more demand and eventually get back to the farmer-producer will depend on who runs the supply chain. Without a doubt, some products from some countries are now more competitive for the European market. But the not so simple minds will ask, as the World Trade Organisation is abolishing all import duties anyway, why all the fuss? Whatever. The real value of the decision is in its shock-on effects, the so-called ‘dynamic impact’. It is hoped that some LDC exports will be so energised by the new opportunities to sell on the EU market that they will produce and sell more, and spill over into the North American market which also recently lowered its tariffs for LDCs.

Not, though, without some serious investment in some LDCs’ capacity to deliver: Madagascar’s beef exporters, for example, now stand before an open door, with no herds available to sell. And not, though, before a cacophony of grumbles from pre-March 9 preferred suppliers, whether they be the ubiquitous banana growers, the sugar growers in small ACP island States or Europe, or ACP rice growers. The liberalisation of these three product groups is being taken more gently, aiming at free access by 2006, 2009 and 2009 respectively. But beyond the growls and the vicious back-biting even between ACP States, the real lesson is that in trade, you have to think ahead to get ahead. Now that was worth 7 million of European taxpayers’ money; thanks, EU.

Much ado about very little?

Trends in cassava production

Global cassava production is expected to show continued growth over the next five years with Africa leading the way. Five countries, Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Nigeria and Thailand account for almost 70 per cent of the world's cassava production. In 1996, FAO predicted that over the period 1996-2050 production had to rise by more than 700% in the 21 countries of west, central and eastern Africa where cassava is the staple food.

Diagram source: FAO
Try a little genderness

The pace of genderisation of many agricultural practices may be almost satisfactory, given that many obstacles have been removed with care. There may be recognition, at policy level, of women’s central economic role in agricultural development. There may even be some men who are highly ‘gender-aware’ and are even willing to incorporate that into their professional behaviour.

All the progress being made by women, and by men and women for women, is not going to be enough if it is not tied down in law. Secured, surrounded by a chain-link fence, guarded and protected. Think of women’s land rights, inheritance rights, access to finance and security of collateral – none of these have legislative backing in most ACP countries.

Such was the talk at a co-sinar organised by CTA in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender of Uganda and the Austrian and German development cooperation agencies, in Kampala, Uganda in late February 2001 on the topic of revisiting the legal framework in work to strengthen the economic condition and role of women in agricultural and rural development.

A key problem in many ACP countries in resolving the position of women in the eyes of the law is the dual nature of the law. There is, in each society, the customary law, which is often discriminatory against women. Colonisation then imposed a colonial law on top of customary law, although today’s constitutions often allow the latter to prevail above the laws that derive from colonial times.

Most countries of eastern and southern Africa inherit a legal system based on English common law, and in five southern African countries (Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa and Zimbabwe) there is the added factor of Roman–Dutch law from the era of Dutch influence. Elsewhere, in francophone Africa and the Caribbean for example, or in former lusophone countries, the equation is equally complex but has different components.

While the tools of discrimination differ from country to country, the solutions are often similar, in terms of working towards an enabling legal environment in favour of equity for women. The report of the seminar, due out later in the year, will feature detailed country reports. Heartening examples from the host nation were given at the seminar by ten women members of local councils, who explained progress in women achieving co-ownership rights with the husbands, and the safeguards for maintaining high levels of women’s representation at all levels of governance.

Representation is key since it is increasingly from parliament that pressure must come to achieve law reform. A dual ‘genderisation’ offensive on people’s representatives and on the officers of the legal system is required to create favourable attitudes, with patient and persistent education supported by well-researched arguments.

Where the existing legal system has mechanisms for prising open more doors through test cases, such as the legal aid subsidies practised in South Africa, they should be exploited to the full. Sixty policy makers, NGO representatives and legal specialists from 14 countries and support international agencies, actively made sure that the seminar was just a step, a large step, in the right direction. Networking of experiences and case studies will no doubt continue until the last law is reformed.

This is a case of the economic role of women in agricultural and rural development: the promotion of income generating activities. By G Akello & F Sax, Special paper, CTA, 2000. 10 pp. CTA number 979. 6 credit points

Not so golden

The publicity early in 2001 about ‘Golden Rice’, with its ‘genetically added’ Vitamin A promising to reduce child blindness, has revived interest in so-called ‘edible vaccines’. Golden Rice, which contains a gene added from the daffodil plant, has since been removed from the spotlight by its producer, Syngenta. Levels of provitamin A in a typical daily intake of 300g of rice have been found to be very low and it has become clear, says Gordon Conway of the Rockefeller Foundation, that Golden Rice could not be considered ‘the solution to the vitamin A deficiency problem.

Rather, it provides an excellent complement to fruits, vegetables and animal products in the diet, and to various fortified foods and vitamin supplements.

Work is still underway to share Syngenta’s technology with scientists in public institutions, with support from Rockefeller. In all, scientists are working on more than 30 edible vaccines, but the problems of dosage, delivery, availability and cost are proving hard nuts to crack.

Papaya cures chickens

Researchers at the University of Dschang in Cameroon have discovered that diluted papaya seeds can be used to treat chickens suffering from infestations of gastrointestinal parasites like Heterakis sp. and Eimeria sp. Seeds were dried in the sun for two weeks, pulvurised and diluted in water at concentrations of 10 g/l. Then 0.2 ml of the ‘medicines’ was dispensed to each hen. Once treated, the number of eggs and oocysts of the parasites in the faeces decreased significantly.

M Mpoame and U Essombain
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Université de Dschang
B P 222
Dschang
Cameroon
Fax: +237 45 14 36

Fancy pumpkins

The year 2000 was a very good one for pumpkin growers on the Pacific Island of Tonga. Exports rose by 33% to almost US$ 8 million. The principle market is Japan, which also imports pumpkin from Pacific Islands such as Vanuatu and New Caledonia.

Lake shores dry as dust

In the past 38 years, Lake Chad has shrunk by 95%. A gradual decline in rainfall since the 1960s and increased water use, especially for irrigation, has led to the decrease. The 1980s marked the construction of internationally financed irrigation schemes that diverted water from the Chari and Logone rivers, which carry 90% of the water that enters the lake. At present the lake measures one-twentieth of the 25,000 square kilometres it used to cover in the 1960s. Twenty million people in the seven countries bordering the lake depend on it for their water supplies.

Bridging the technological divide

A policy workshop on research and technology for development was held at the University of Ghana in Legon in late January 2001. Aimed at furthering the ACP-EU dialogue on science and technology policies, it concluded that the key to success lies in institutional capacity development in ACP countries. CTA was requested to become the focal point for an ACP working group on science and technology.
Pathways to capacity building

Participation in agricultural policy making means learning new skills in analysis and organisation: capacity building in short. We look at some of the options.

Just where should you start, when you decide to build up your capacities? Well, the fact that you have taken the decision to do so is the most important step. Beyond that, there are so many places to go that the challenge is to select the right path. If you start to ask around organisations near yours, within a day you will probably have found a hundred. If you start to look on the Internet, you might start off finding the half a million references to ‘capacity building’ that are available. Confused already?

Lesson One: learn to be selective, to find and take the shortest route from A to B, and to trust your own judgement. Become a proper nomad of the information networks; do as a nomad does. Do not wander aimlessly, but go to those places where their NGO Network Service (NNS) is a powerful source of contacts and experiences.

Also ten years’ old, but much closer in origin to the particular needs of non-governmental and civil society bodies is the International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC). If you are anxious about the possible loss of freedom and autonomy which is implied by involvement in policy making, be assured that INTRAC believes in the ‘importance of NGOs as independent actors’ and wants to ‘protect and promote within a wider society the NGO values of social justice, empowerment and participation of the poorest and the most marginalised’.

As well as customised training courses on all aspects of organisation which it organises in partnership with colleague bodies in Portuguese, Spanish, English and, to a lesser extent, French, INTRAC has a superb range of well-focussed publications on various aspects of capacity building such as finance, confidence building, codes of conduct or relationships with the private sector. The newsletter ONTRAC is a good place to ‘meet’ new opportunities and other organisations.

Despite its strong ‘Southern’ approach, INTRAC is located in the North: INTRAC, PO Box 563, Oxford OX2 6RZ, England. Fax: + 44 1865 201852; Email: intrac@gn.apc.org; Website: www.intrac.org.

Another gateway to the world of capacity building is the ‘electronic’ organisation known as Capacity.org whose online services at www.capacity.org provide a wealth of information and links.

With capacity building so high on many agendas these days, it is no surprise that there is a growth in advisory services for NGOs and civil society bodies. One which is notable for its openness and participatory nature, with an accent on organisational development, is the OLIVE Regional Cooperation Programme (21 Saymore Road, Durban 4000, South Africa. Fax: +27 31 2052114; Email: learning@oliveodt.co.za; Website: www.oliveodt.co.za)

An excellent bibliography and organisational guide, which shines for its openness and honesty, has been compiled by the journal Development in Practice, a major forum for people working in the area of capacity building. The guide lists organisations all over the world, working in various languages. Development, NGOs and Civil Society is available on the journal’s Website www.developmentinpractice.org/Readers/NGO's/biblioth.htm

A wide range of organisational tools are described in the toolkit publication Facilitating innovation for development. P. Engels and M. Salomon, CTA-Kit-Stoaas, 1999. 320 pp. ISBN 0 471 96076 4. CTA number 823. 80 credit points

Many organisations working in capacity building thrive through pro-active networking, meaning that they reach out to other organisations in a genuine spirit of cooperation, in order to be able to exchange experiences. You will get the most benefit if you do the same, so do all you can to exude openness and partnership. Some ‘networkers’ are more intense in this than others, and few are more so than the regional committees of development associations. Their stated goals include “to aim towards positive first-hand guidance in policy-making”. They represent a very useful collection of skills and resources; the regional secretariats of interest to most ACP countries are:

- ADIPA (Association of Development Research and Training Institutes of Asia and the Pacific)
  c/o AVIDC,
  P.O. Box 12224
  50770 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
  Tel: +603 651 03 89;
  Email: adivpa@pa.jaring.my

- AICARDES (Association of Arab Institutes and Centres for Economic and Social Development Research)
  c/o IEQ, 27 rue de Liban, Tunis
  Belvedere, Tunisia
  Fax: +216 1 78 70 34;
  Email: eq@ieq.com.tn
  Website: www.sas.upenn.edu/Africa_Studies/codesria/codes_Menu.html

- CODESRIA (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa)
  PO Box 3300, Dakar, Senegal
  Fax: +221 2 24 12 29;
  Email: codresdo@telecomplus.sn
  Website: www.sas.upenn.edu/Africa_Studies/codesria/codes_Menu.html

- OSSREA (Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa)
  PO Box 31971,
  Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
  Fax: +251 1 55 13 99;
  Email: ossrea@telecom.net.et;
  Website: www.ossrea.org

National experiences

The InterAfrica Group (PO Box 1631, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; fax: +251 1 517554; Email: iag@telecom.net.et; Website www.interafrica.org) is very well informed about the ins and outs of partnership building within their region and beyond. Their NGO Network Service (NNS) is a powerful source of contacts and experiences.

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Book marketing where there is no market

Here we have a practical guide to healthy publishing, for organisations where ‘publishing is not the core function’. Often driven by a noble mission, such organisations fail at publishing because they do not know how to meet and satisfy the needs of the market. As a result, they print piles of books for which there is no demand or they miss golden opportunities to get their message out and their sales up.

The book’s eight chapters go through the steps of understanding marketing and the market, making a marketing plan (including getting a mention in Spore), estimating print-runs, sales, finance and strategic planning. Particularly useful sections cover the new skills of selling on the Internet, plus the ins-and-outs of doing business with distributors, rights and co-publications. There are common-or-garden guidelines on understanding a profit and loss account (why nothing on balance sheets?) and even a detailed table for calculating the right cover price, and setting discounts for dealers.

This is a collection of textbook wisdom mixed with homilies from the author’s two decades of bookselling together with some focused remarks about possible donors and co-publishers. All of it is sound advice of use anywhere, but it tilts heavily towards the economic and cultural mindsets of the Caribbean. Would-be publishers outside those regions may feel that their specific needs, strengths and weaknesses have not been done proper justice. The absence of any mention of the colporteur (itinerant salesman) in West Africa is one example of omissions that a second edition could correct. It is not quite ten years since this reviewer, in a report to CTA on technical publishing in Africa, likened the supply and demand of publications to “ships passing each other unseen in the night”, and this book alludes to similar cases today. Much good has happened in ACP publishing since then though, most notably in the growth of lively, independent publishers and booksellers, and their associations. The African Publishers Network now has a Caribbean sister and one on the way in the Pacific, whilst the Pan-African Booksellers’ Association has emerged as an energetic partner. Few of these publishing professionals, however, focus on agricultural and rural development since they do not regard it as a viable market. Bridget Impey’s contribution is to help communicators and publishers within the sector to be business-like in developing that market. One day it will be viable, all the sooner if every budding publisher gets her book, now.


For non-FDS subscribers: Distributed by African Books Collective, 27 Park End St, Oxford OX1 1HU, UK
GBP 11.95 (£19.80)
plus GBP 5 (£8.30) for airmail
fax: +44 1865 793298
Email: abc@africanbookscollective.com
Website: www.africanbookscollective.com

Cooperative granaries

The use of granaries at village level has soared in recent decades as a means of obtaining better prices and mitigating shortages. Since the 1970s they have often been organised as a form of cooperative, in which grains are stored and managed until a later date. Granaries is an easy-to-read practical manual, explaining why and how to establish such a storage cooperative and how to manage it and keep the books and the working atmosphere as they should be. It also discusses a possible transformation of a well-run granary into a cooperative.

Granaries

By M Hoogland & P Holen. co-publication Agromisa – CTA, Agrodok No. 25. 2000. 82 pp. ISBN 90 72746 95 3
CTA number 1009. 5 credit points

II weeds grow apace...

This useful website with databases of the International Survey of Herbicide Resistant Weeds (ISHRW) is a collaborative effort between weed scientists in over 80 countries, who maintain scientific accuracy in the reporting of herbicide resistant weeds globally. It includes announcements of the two publications mentioned below.

ISHRW
PO Box 1365
Corvallis, 97339, Oregon, USA
Website: www.weedresearch.com

Herbicide Resistance and World Grains evaluates the weed and herbicide management systems in major world grain crops such as soybean, maize, rice, and oilseed rape. This book provides the how-to’s of managing resistant weed populations in the major grain crops. All author proceeds go to supplying the book to libraries in developing countries.

Herbicide Resistance and World Grains
US$ 99.95 £113.20
Turpin Distribution Services
Blackhorse Road
Letchworth, Hertfordshire
SG6 1HN United Kingdom
Fax: +44 1462 483 011
Email: custservturpin@turpinltd.com

...and in rice

The title says it all, but the book has its uses for rice researchers in other continents as well.

Prevention and management of herbicide resistant weeds in rice: experiences from Central America with Echinochloa colona
Copies can be downloaded from website:
www.weedresearch.com
**Exodus from Noah’s Ark?**
- The pafuri, jiddu and manjaca are the names of three African bovine animals in Mozambique, Tanzania and Guinea-Bissau respectively. Together with thousands of fellow animals - domesticated and wild mammalian and avian (bird) species - they are listed in the third edition of the World Watch List for animal diversity, the voice of the global early warning system of farm animal genetic resources.

- FAO Sales and Marketing Group, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy.
- Fax: +39 06 57 05 33 60
- Email: publications-sales@fao.org

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**Hay ho, hay hum**
- A fine crop of knowledge about hay, hay meal and silage from the proceedings of an electronic conference with 335 subscribers from 68 countries that examined the various methods, crop residues and geographical locations.

- Silage making in the tropics with particular emphasis on smallholders
- US$ 16 • € 18.25
- FAO Sales and Marketing Group, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy.
- Fax: +39 06 57 05 33 60
- Email: publications-sales@fao.org

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**A loss, but not all is lost**
- A fine analytical framework based on the distinction between proximate causes of biodiversity loss (pollution, over-harvesting, climate change), and root causes (poverty, demographic changes, national and international policies and markets). The framework helps in weighing and connecting the causal factors, what data to collect and how to interpret these. The book serves as a reminder of the complexities faced by policymakers.

- Root Causes of Biodiversity Loss
- GBP17.95 • € 23.30
- For Earthscan’s address see hereafter

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**True home improvement**

- Beating Hunger is an account of a truly interesting participatory programme to reach food security in Chivi district, Zimbabwe. It describes how farmers’ households themselves define viable development alternatives to improve their situation. The description of farmer innovation and technology development uncovers the failure of local extension services to tailor farmers’ real needs. The book describes the change in extension policy, focuses on the strengthening of local institutions, such as farmers’ groups, garden groups and thus sheds a different light on participation. It reduces the project officer, researcher or extension worker to a facilitator of experimentation, a convener of meetings or even a travel agent for arranging visits of farmers to each other’s farm or to research stations. This is a persuasive piece of work based on dedicated research. Lively, not without humour, and to be taken very seriously.

- GBP 12.95 • € 20.95
- IT Publications, 103-105 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4HL, UK
- Fax: + 44 20 7436 2013
- Email: itpubs@itpubs.org.uk

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**Surveying with a bird’s eye view**

- A fence on your land that is not level is not really a problem, although you might get into a dispute with your neighbour. For most other constructions it is no luxury to be able to apply at least the basic surveying methods before starting to dig irrigation canals, saw poles for a small bridge or build a store room or a field school for extension workers. This expanded and revised edition of Agrodok No. 6 provides you with the basic knowledge. It starts off by explaining what surveying is, how to position or map constructions spatially and in relation to other constructions and how to note it down, without causing misunderstandings. The next chapter connects your map with a mathematical framework, for any of your surveying measurements can be restricted to two sorts of geometric quantities: lengths between positions and angles between directions.

- Throughout the manual, measuring instruments, their applications and how to make them are discussed and one chapter is specifically dedicated to measuring instruments.
- The manual has a glossary of technical terms and a list of do’s and don’ts and its texts on what to levelling instruments.

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**Down home, on a different range**

- How can you ‘manage’ rangelands when “from one season to the next you cannot know what will happen next”? This is the fundamental dilemma of livestock politicians.

- Living with uncertainty is the challenge for the rangeland manager in sub-Saharan Africa, and the techniques and practices which have been developed elsewhere in the world do not necessarily apply. This book, originating from the University of Dschang in Cameroon, introduces the practical aspects of rangeland management in the special conditions which apply to different parts of Africa. It is aimed at ranchers, range techni-

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**Publications**

- Email: publications@wwf.org.uk
- Fax: +39 06 57 05 33 60
- Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy.

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- GBP 12.95 • € 20.95
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**Publications**

- Email: publications@wwf.org.uk
- Fax: +39 06 57 05 33 60
- Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy.
How do I get to the market?

A farmer’s life is characterised by making decisions, every minute of the day and every day of the year. When and what to sow, when and what to harvest and when and what to sell. At best a farmer is able to make educated guesses. Most factors influencing farmers’ decisions cannot be predicted. Think about the weather, pests and last but not least the market.

FAO’s Understanding and Using Market Information offers an overview of the risks and opportunities of different sources of market information. It discusses the role of media like the radio, newspapers and market information services, and how to interpret their information. It describes the intermediaries between producers and consumers and their influences on price development, both in the short and the long run. It explains how various costs between farmer and market can be calculated and what farmers can do to get the best price for their product.

The guide is clearly written and amusingly illustrated with cartoons. This handy publication will suit the farmer, student or extension worker. Since it can be put to good use by farmers themselves, how about some editions in ‘local’ languages?

Pests are queuing up to be found

A oil palm and a coconut are quite different plants, but they also have various things in common. Unfortunately, these include pests, mainly insects. This bilingual CD-ROM (English and French) contains fact-sheets on each pest or insect, basic information on its biological features and geographical occurrence, the damage they cause and possible control measures: more than 170 oil palm and coconut pests are covered. Information can be traced through three routes. The CD allows alphabetical searching, by zoological names, and searching by criteria: by type of damage, life stage of the insect and so on. Each fact-sheet is illustrated with colour photographs, and 800 references classed by insect order are included.

How to obtain these publications

The green leaf symbol indicates publications that are on CTA’s list. Subscribers to the Publications Distribution Service (PDS) can obtain them from CTA. All other publications, indicated by an orange square, are available from the publishers listed, or through commercial outlets, but not from CTA.

Publications on CTA’s list are available free-of-charge to PDS subscribers. Subscribers can order publications on CTA’s list up to the value of the credit points available to them. Subscribers can only request publications on the order forms provided.

Non-subscribers who wish to join the scheme should write to CTA for an application form. Applications will be considered from agricultural and rural development organisations in the ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) Group of States; individuals resident in ACP countries may also apply.

If you are not eligible for a free subscription to the PDS, or if you need publications beyond your free credit allocation, you may buy publications on CTA’s list from our commercial distributors: Triops, Hinderburgstrasse 33, D-64295 Darmstadt, Germany, Fax: +49 6151 314 048, Email: triops@triops.de, Website: http://www.triops.de

Check, counter & control

More than 20 institutes, 15 of them African, participated in a joint research programme, the results of which are presented in this rich, solid, but specialised book.

Animal Trypanosomosis: Diagnosis and Epidemiology. Published by the FAO and the IAEA, 2000. 256 pp. ISBN 90 5782 065 x Free of charge

Animal Production and Health Section

Joint FAO/IAEA division

P.O. Box 100
A-1400 Vienna
Austria
Fax: +43 1 260 07
Email: official.mail@iaea.org

Feeding cities

A persuasive introduction for city fathers (and mothers) in urban agriculture, food supply and distribution.


Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome, Italy
Fax: +39 06 570 56 850
Email: agrisignale@fao.org
The Guide can also be downloaded in pdf format at: Website: www.fao.org/ag/agl/agsm/market.htm

A change in management

This collection of Asian experiences has lessons of universal value. It addresses the key issues facing NGO managers and explores areas such as effective leadership, the handling of donor relations, staff motivation and development, and the management styles most appropriate to crises and change.


Earthscan Publications Ltd, 120 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9JN, UK.
Fax: +44 171 278 1142 Email: earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk
New Web service for readers old and new

The first edition of the new Spore ‘Web announcement’ appeared with this issue of Spore, expanding the services offered to our ever-growing readership. We invite subscribers and other readers who have access to the World Wide Web to subscribe to these announcements.

Since 1998, each issue of Spore has been published simultaneously on paper and in electronic form on the World Wide Web. By publishing a Web edition, we are able to help the growing numbers of our core readers in ACP countries who have Web access, and who use it to reprint all or part of each issue.

The Web edition also means that Spore is available free-of-charge to readers who are outside the ACP Group or the European Union, or who work in activities which are not central to our mandate. Spore is dedicated to agricultural and rural development in ACP countries and it is made available only to people working in those fields in the 77 ACP countries, and to people in the 15 countries of the European Union (which provides operating funds to CTA) who support and cooperate with ACP partners. Other people, whom we call ‘secondary’ readers, must purchase a subscription – at least for a printed edition (see p 13).

Reaching a wider world

Thanks to the Web edition of Spore, we can now communicate our information, which means your information, ACP information, to a much wider world than our printed edition could ever do on its own, with the inevitable calling on its budget.

There is, though, a difference between the two editions. The printed edition arrives regularly (we hope!) in your mailbox, is circulated in your organisation, or colleagues and friends pass it on to you. Spore comes to you. The Web edition is simply published on the CTA computer, and a number of others, and

the Web reader must ‘go’ there, by connecting her or his local computer to ours. You go to Spore, and you have to remember to do so. The announcement will remind you to do so.

The announcement of every issue

To announce each Web edition of Spore, our new service takes the form of an email message which summarises twenty-or-so key items in the new edition, with short descriptions and illustrations. Each item is linked to the full Web edition.

The ‘Web announcement’ will be in three versions, English, French and Portuguese, linked to the relevant language Web edition. We shall send it to all subscribers and readers of Spore on request, plus selected and potential secondary readers.

Conditions

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Other services continue

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Mailbox

Better links for subscribers?

Also from Nigeria, in Ado-Etiki, Pastor Emmanuel Akindele asks us to “produce a register of subscribers, to increase information exchange about development opportunities.”

Nice idea Pastor, but a bit impractical since it would be a book with one thousand pages! We’ll study the idea some more, and in the meantime subscribers will have to meet on the pages of Spore.

Safe solar drying

David Visa of Minna, Nigeria, asks “how to maintain the natural colour of sun dried tomatoes and peppers, and avoid blackening. We heard of sulphiting, but do not know the amounts to be safe to consumers”. Several practitioners on the Internet suggest the following. Before sun drying the fruit, make a solution of one gallon (4.5 litres) of clean cold water with one tablespoon (tbs) of sodium bisulphite (or 2 tbs of sodium sulphite, or 4 tbs of sodium metabisulphite). Soak the fruit for 5 minutes, rinse in clean cold water, pat dry and lay out for drying.
The year 2000 saw several circles complete their rounds. At a macro level, the ACP-EC Cotonou Agreement saw the light of day as the successor to the Lomé Convention, and with it a new mandate for the CTA. Within CTA the Mid-Term Plan (1997-2000) reached its conclusion, and the ground was tilled for the Centre’s future harvests.

The CTA Annual Report 2000 includes a commentary by the Director of CTA, Carl B Greenidge, on the new Partnership Agreement and its implications for ACP agriculture and for CTA’s role. He notes that the notion of partnership as expressed in the Agreement, and thus shared by its signatories, has the very particular meaning of “a process of dialogue with stakeholders”, and suggests that the term may have a wider meaning for some.

It is through the Mid-Term Plan that CTA first gave formal expression to a desire to fulfill its mandate in partnership with stakeholders. In 2000, to take but some examples from this comprehensive report, CTA co-organised ten thematic seminars with almost 30 partners, providing opportunities for 85 ACP nationals to share in five study visits, and enabled 177 ACP nationals to attend 47 third-party seminars, the majority in ACP countries. A further 20 training workshops were held with 350 participants on aspects of information and communication management. Five new pilot partnerships were set up with civil society bodies. More than a dozen proceedings, study reports and working documents became available, along with almost three dozen technical co-publications – all featured in recent editions of Spore – and a healthy clutch of independent publications was supported by CTA. In all, more than 80,000 publications were distributed, the great majority on demand from subscribers.

The underlying emphasis of CTA’s work in 2000 was on multiplying the impact of its information, itself an absorbing topic on ongoing studies and dialogues. At the policy level the Centre was involved in multifarious initiatives and dialogues aimed at strengthening the professions of agricultural extension, policy formulation and research management, gaining extra leverage through working in partnership.

The year 2000 also closed the first chapter of being explicitly a learning organisation. From pilot partnerships in book distribution at national level, through a long-term process of creating co-publications with ACP publishers, to supporting regional information and policy networks, many activities have been designed to provide lessons for replication. To propel all these energies forward in a focused fashion will require all concerned to adhere to the definition of partnership which CTA drew up in 1996: to share the risks, the resources and the results. Sharing is hard to learn, and even harder to show.

Support for nurseries

Paulin Fianou, the coordinator of “Matthieu 7,8” group of ORJEDEC (BP 05, Kouvé – Tabligbo, Togo), writes to ask for “support for the group’s work with nurseries of fruit, tea and other agroforestry trees.”

Remember that sun drying will not work well when humidity is above 20%.

Useful books

Richard A Mwanakuluya of the Natural Resources Conservation and Land Use Management project in Iringa, Tanzania, writes of “the way the books you have sent have helped us. In our project villages there are a lot of Digitaria abyssinica weeds, particularly on newly opened land or land which has been fallow for one or two years. Farmers have experienced poor germination and initial crop establishment and we had no clear answer to this. Through your books we learnt that decomposing D. abyssinica stovers have an allelopathic effect (which inhibits growth – ed.) on young crop plants. We therefore advised farmers either to let the dead material decompose completely, or to remove it from the field. Another problem we had was how to reintroduce agroforestry in our villages given the ever increasing shortage of land, trees for construction and firewood, and low farm fertility. The agroforestry systems which were available did not fit well with farmers’ culture and traditions, but through the books you sent we have learnt that alley farming may fit better.
Learn young, learn fair

Permaculture at school

One of Zimbabwe’s major rivers – the Save – is now just a sea of sand. This is happening to many of our rivers and is due to serious loss of top soil and deforestation. A lot of these problems are the result of inappropriate methods of land husbandry in conventional agriculture, which is less and less viable in terms of profitability and sustainability. Children should be taught to think about these issues at an early age and learn what alternatives exist. That does not only concern agriculture, food security and income but also how your environment looks and how it can be maintained.

SCOPE started in 1994 with one primary school and one secondary school in each of Zimbabwe’s nine provinces. The programme is quite straightforward. Two teachers of each participating school are trained in the principles of organic agriculture or permaculture. These can be science teachers or even interested English or mathematics teachers, since agriculture is not a compulsory subject at school. Besides we aim at integrating permaculture in the entire curricula and not treating it as a separate subject. It is meant for the entire school and does not only include gardening or greening the school; it may also involve water harvesting, improvement of health and nutrition, income generation for the school, constructing or growing windbreaks around fields or teachers’ houses. Furthermore, I see the programme also as an entry point into the communities. What the pupils learn is brought home to their families and villages. Parents are more sceptical of new ideas. They, as well as agricultural officers, go back to what they learned at school when they were young. Children are more adaptive and responsive. Besides, the youth are the future farmers. However, we involve parents and local extension officers.

No preconceived plan

Representatives of parents, pupils and staff attend a week-long ILUD (Integrated Land-Use Design) workshop at their school, facilitated by SCOPE. The trained teachers then start to discuss the programme with the other pupils, parents and other staff and a plan is made. We do not have a preconceived plan but work on the basis of different designs for different environments at individual schools. The participants together make a situation analysis, which addresses questions like what are the major problems and what are the available resources. We then ask the group the broad question of how they feel the school should look like in 20 years time. That gives a good inventory of interests and wishes. Some want to see fruits, others a garden, more shade on the school grounds or simply a beautiful place. The next step is the actual plotting of the ILUD map and finally a concrete plan of tasks is drawn up: what class could take up which tasks and when should these be finished. The implementation of this design involves contributions by parents and school staff. Parents for instance can supply seedlings of local plants and in turn learn from what is taught to their children and put this into practice. It is amazing what can be achieved in a couple of year’s time and what differences emerge between schools.

Banana Republic

The Chireka primary school in Bindura is now nicknamed the ‘Banana Republic’ because the school is almost hidden in a wood of banana trees. Bananas are sold to the children during breaks at a much lower rate than on the market. St Vincent Secondary school in Ruwa decided to focus on ornamental plants like flowers and flowering shrubs.

Besides the usual exceptions, the programme caught on well and we now have 54 participating schools, 3 primary and 3 secondary in every province. In 1997, the programme strengthened its partnership with the Minister of Education. They now select the schools, teachers and facilitate finding funds. The government is an important partner, because if you want to change the curriculum, you inevitably need to change the workbooks as well as adapt the exams.

In that respect the programme is of course not all roses yet. Some teachers find it difficult to deal with permaculture and conventional agriculture in the same time. I think it is actually a good idea to try both out and have the students compare them. A bigger problem is that parents get different messages. On one hand, permaculture through their child’s schools, whereas on the other hand the village agricultural extension worker still focuses on conventional agriculture. Farmers depend on the latter for instance for obtaining farmers’ certificates. Agricultural education and extension receives substantial sponsorship from agro-chemical companies. That gives us a new objective. Besides expanding the current programme to at least one primary and one secondary school in each of the 63 districts, we also want to include permaculture training in teachers’ and agricultural colleges, where future staff and extension workers are being trained.

This programme can be implemented in other countries as well. We were involved in a three-week workshop in Zambia to explain our programme and get a similar initiative started.

The opinions expressed in Viewpoint are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of CTA.