

TRENDS



Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Agriculture



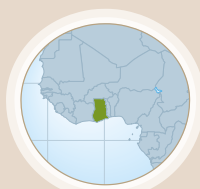
In Kenya, women provide 70% or more of agricultural labor. Despite doing the lion's share of work, women struggle to earn a living from farming. Gender-based barriers like limited access to land and agricultural materials, as well as inadequate opportunities to learn new farming techniques and difficulties in bringing crops to market, keep incomes down. According to a World Bank survey, among the poorest farmers, women still only earn half of what their male counterparts do.

To address this issue, JICA, together with the Kenyan agricultural ministry, is starting a project in September 2014 to improve farmers' livelihoods by promoting gender equality in agriculture.

Efforts are being made to promote gender-equal farm management.

The new project focuses on increasing gender equality and looks to strengthen the role of women in agriculture. This is expected to facilitate effective farm management, agricultural profitability, and livelihood improvement. Worldwide experience has shown that women's active participation in farm management enhances effective and efficient economic performance in agriculture through the efficient utilization of agricultural inputs and the integration of knowledge and experience accumulated by women. Women's economic empowerment and gender-equal farm management also contribute to family well-being.

JICA hopes the accomplishments of this new project will help to bolster its efforts to mainstream gender-equal perspectives in other operations for agricultural development across the African continent.



Improving Food and Nutrition Education in Ghana



In Ghana, the effects of malnutrition on childhood development have become a serious concern. JICA, as part of efforts to support the government's creation of an action plan, hosted training sessions on June 16-26 that brought together members of Ghana's government ministries and a commission and representatives from NGOs and other Japanese organizations involved in dietary improvement efforts.

In Japan, *shokuiku*, or food and nutrition education, is offered to every level of society by both public and private-sector organizations. The JICA-sponsored training program looked to apply Japan's *shokuiku* knowledge in helping

Participants visit a major Japanese food manufacturer that produces a supplement to improve nutritional balance of weaning foods in Ghana.

Ghana to create effective nutritional policies. Participants learned about dietary improvement efforts in Japan and Japanese-government-run food and nutrition education programs.

As part of the project, participants visited Keisen University, which runs a compulsory "farm for education" horticulture course. Participants experienced organic farming firsthand at the school's agricultural facilities. One participant noted: "Experiencing the entire farming process from planting seeds to consuming what is grown gives those involved a new appreciation of the food they eat." Participants also visited a major food and beverage manufacturer, local health authorities, and the Japanese Dietetic Association to increase their understanding.

JICA is considering including dietary programs in its efforts to improve mother and child health in Ghana.



Stakeholders in Peace Agreement Gather in Hiroshima



On March 27, 2014, a peace agreement ended 40 years of fighting on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the government. JICA, which had supported the peace process, hosted the seminar Consolidation for Peace for Mindanao on June 23-25 in Hiroshima. The seminar brought together stakeholders to discuss issues and policies toward inauguration of an autonomous Bangsamoro government. They adopted the Hiroshima Declaration, which includes a clause on gender-responsive governance to provide women with opportunities.

Co-hosted by JICA and the University of Sains Malaysia, the seminar is a platform for

Philippine President Aquino (left) and Chairman Murad at the seminar Consolidation for Peace for Mindanao.

dialogue between all parties involved in the peace process. This was the first time for the seminar to be held in Japan.

At the seminar, Philippine President Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III expressed gratitude for the international community's mediation. After this, President Aquino firmly shook hands with MILF Chairman Al-Hajj Murad Ebrahim and Peace Panel chair Mohagher Iqbal.

Prior to the peace agreement, JICA had since 2003 provided assistance in the region, such as small-scale infrastructure improvements and assistance in poverty reduction. Since 2013, JICA has provided support to the fledgling Bangsamoro government in creating systems and institutions, developing human resources, and designing regional development plans. JICA remains actively involved in promoting peace in Mindanao.