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Advancing the Social Development Priorities of ECA, AUC and AU-NEPAD Program

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Editorial

THIS INAUGURAL ISSUE of Africa's Social Development Review (ASDR) focuses on the social development priorities of ECA, the African Union Commission and the AU New Partnership for Africa's Development program (AU-NEPAD program). ASDR aims to advocate for social development in the continent, through documenting best practices and evidenced based policy analyses. Particularly, it emphasizes the role of social integration, social protection, social cohesion and harmony in peace and stability for development in the continent. Also, it underlines the high costs of vulnerability, marginalization, and exclusion of social groups from economic and social development activities and services.

In this context ASDR supports the implementation of Social Policy Framework for Africa developed by the African Union Commission and approved by the 1st session of the AU Conference of Ministers in Charge of

Social Development held in Windhoek, Namibia, 27-31 October 2008. Also, it supports the AU-NEPAD program priorities in the areas of social and human development.

This first issue of ASDR contains 5 papers and it covers social development topics on the role of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in management for development, women's social networks in resettlement areas, the role of cooperatives and private sector in poverty reduction, socioeconomic implications of closing the gender gap in education, and achieving food security.

The papers provide evidence based analyses, best practices and lessons of experiences, and policy recommendations that are crucial in assisting policy makers to make informed decisions. We hope for the readers to find ASDR useful for their intellectual activities, and invite them to provide feedback by sending email at hyousif@uneca.org

Promoting the Social Priorities of NEPAD: the Role of Regional Economic Communities in the Management of Migration for Development

By Rose Aderolili*

Abstract

THIS PAPER FOCUSES on the regional dimensions of international migration. It examines the role of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in implementing the African Migration Policy Framework and the African Common Position on Migration in support of two social policy objectives of NEPAD -gender equality and human development. The paper concludes that since migration is by nature international,

there is urgent need to build the capacity of RECs to address migration issues at sub-regional and regional levels. This requires building up of databases on migration, harmonization of migration policies and building capacity to integrate migration into development policy frameworks, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

Introduction

TWO OF THE major priorities of the NEPAD framework are human development and gender equality. The link between migration and these priorities stems from the ability of migration to foster regional integration, reduce poverty, and to contribute positively to both gender equality and human development. Migration, defined as the movement of people, either voluntarily or involuntarily, legally or illegally (undocumented), involves people of all ages and all social categories including refugees, the internally displaced, people seeking economic opportunities, and nomads migrating in search of pastures. In the literature, so much emphasis has been put on addressing migration between Africa and the rest of the world. Yet much of migration is in fact taking place within the continent itself.

Broadly, the objective of this study is to examine the extent to which the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have responded to the African Union Commission's African Common Position on Migration and the African Migration Policy Framework, using the case of Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), Inter-Governmental Development Agency (IGAD) and the Economic Community States of West African States (ECOWAS). In particular, the study highlights challenges and opportunities of managing migration at a regional level, and proposes some policy recommendations. The study indicates the importance of migration and development to NEPAD's agenda and suggests ways in which the RECs can be more effective in promoting regional migration policies in Africa.

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There are several reasons why this study is necessary. Firstly, there is yet little information on the roles, challenges and the full potential of the RECs in promoting development through a common sub-regional and regional migration approach. This study calls for filling in this gap in the context of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Secondly, this study is timely, if not long overdue given the fact that as Africa integrates and there is even talk of a United States of Africa, migration has increasingly become a regional or continental issue which requires a regional or continental approach to its management. Migration plays a major role in achieving the social objectives of NEPAD, especially gender equality and human development, and indeed the MDGs and the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). International migration in Africa grew from about 16.5 million in 2000 to about 17 million in 2005 – half million increase in 5 years. With an annual exponential growth rate of 0.7%, international migration is estimated at 22.6 million in 2009. The majority of migrants in Africa are from neighboring countries. For example, the majority of migrants to South Africa are from neighboring Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland and Malawi. Immigrants to Cote d'Ivoire, for example, are from Burkina Faso, Mali, Liberia, and other neighboring countries (UNECA 2009a).

Thirdly, the heavy flow of migrants from Africa has caused much concern to many African countries that fear the negative impacts of brain drain on development. There is a steady flow of well-trained professionals from Africa to Europe, USA, Australia and the Gulf States, especially health and education professionals. It is estimated that from 1989 to 1997, about 233,000 South Africans emigrated to the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. OECD sources stated that in 2006, 47.9 % of the 342,947 migrants living in the OECD countries were highly skilled (Ibid). Their migration thus left serious social, economic and political consequences in its wake. This sets back the achievement of NEPAD's social goals, amongst others. Indeed Africa is not likely to achieve health-related MDG goals by 2015, and enrolment, especially for girls at post-primary school levels remain very low (UNECA 2009b).

On the other hand, Africa is also experiencing return migration as many refugees and internally displaced people return to their home countries. Some countries, including Sudan, Ghana, and Nigeria, have also reported

return of skilled and professional migrants from outside Africa, a trend that is emerging with the economic and financial crises that have engulfed the countries to which they migrated. African countries have made efforts to encourage their nationals in the Diaspora to return and invest in their home countries, by putting in place incentive policies that include exemptions from customs and land for housing, connecting professional and skilled migrants to relevant institutions at home, and creating an environment of peace and security (ibid P.147).

It is expected that the number of migrants will continue to rise as a result of economic and financial crisis, climate change, food insecurity and lower ability of governments to provide social safety nets for their vulnerable populations. The major challenges for African countries are:

- a. How to manage migration of people at a sub-regional and regional levels so as to enhance its contribution to human development and gender equality goals of the NEPAD, MDGs, ICPD PoA, among others. Although well-managed and may have positive contribution to development of both the sending and receiving countries, it has been proven that mismanaged or unmanaged migration may create serious negative consequences for States and migrants' welfare, including potential destabilizing effect on national and regional security (AUC 2006).
- b. Very rapid migration flows are taking place on the continent, facilitated by regional integration, and yet most African countries have inadequate institutional capacity to address this problem individually and collectively.
- c. Migration in Africa involves usually two or even more countries, the challenge then becomes how to harmonize migration policies. This is when the roles of ECA become very critical.
- d. Since migration involves a number of countries, there is the challenge of sharing the benefits of migration in such a way that receiving countries citizens do not develop xenophobia about the migrants from other countries.
- e. How to integrate or mainstream migration into national and sub-regional development strategies and frameworks such as NEPAD, PRSPs, and MDGs, (IOM, 2005).
- f. Lack of capacity to build up comprehensive and up-to-date data bases on migration and development both at the national and sub-regional levels.

Migration and NEPAD's Social Development Agenda

WHILE AFRICAN COUNTRIES have been encouraged to develop national migration policies, by its very nature, migration affects more than one country. Indeed the linkages between NEPAD and migration were spelled out in the African Common position on Migration and Development by the African ministers responsible for migration. The preamble states that:

“underscoring the importance of various African Development blueprints such as AUC’s NEPAD program which contributes to the solution of many root causes of migration, in promoting social-economic and political development (human resource development, including reversing the brain drain), and the Ouagadougou Extra-ordinary Summit Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment and Poverty Alleviation.....and UNDERSCORING that African inter-state cooperation and dialogue can strengthen the capacity of States in migration management including development of common approaches towards harmonization of policies, laws, and strategies on migration” (AUC 2006 P3)

African governments increasingly recognize that migration needs to be managed at the regional level. Regional processes are a sign of recognition that there is a greater need for multilateral response if migration is to be managed successfully. States are increasingly realizing that the challenges of migration cannot be addressed by one state alone. The need for a collective approach when addressing migration is clearly recognized by the African governments in the form of Africa’s Common Position on Migration, the African Migration Policy Framework, and the various migration policy frameworks of the regional economic communities such as SADC, IGAD, and ECOWAS. Indeed, international migration is, by its very definition, a process involving at least two, and increasingly three or more, states, thus making cooperation an integral part of migration management.

The role of migration and its contribution to regional development is becoming more recognized within the continent. A well-managed migration flow is central to achieving the major social and human development goals contained in the NEPAD, MDGs, PRSP, and national development plans of African countries. NEPAD for example, emphasizes human development – defined as progress in education, health and gender equality. Indeed NEPAD has given priority to Basic Education for

All, distance education and teacher training and development; education in post-conflict environments and building capacity in Education Research and Development in Africa (NEPAD 2006). Attempts have been made to mainstream health, in particular HIV/AIDS into NEPAD priority programs including agriculture, education, ICT and science and technology. NEPAD also is instrumental in the establishment of the African Resources for Health (HRH) platform aimed at harnessing sufficient human resources to address Africa’s health crisis.

In order to achieve the objectives of quality education for all, good health for all and gender equality, NEPAD approach to these goals include:

- a. A broad range of measures to more effectively mobilize and manage public resources, including tax reform, improved fiscal prudence and discipline, improved public debt management; and anti-corruption initiatives and civil service and public administration reform;
- b. Higher savings through modernization of saving institutions, and campaigns to instill the culture of saving, amongst others; encourage Africans to save their wealth within the continent. According to the NEPAD Secretariat, in 2000, Africans held up to US\$400 billion or 35 % of their wealth outside Africa, which is equivalent to the size of Africa’s debt or 92 % of GDP. Clearly migration is relevant here since some of these savings belong to the Africans in the Diaspora. Many of them left in the first place because of lack of peace and security, sound political and economic governance, as well as effective financial markets and attractive economic opportunities.
- c. Boosting intra-African capital flows, improved cross-regional infrastructure connectivity (physical, electronic and financial) as well as harmonizing regular policy frameworks in order to increase intra-Africa investment and trade flows. Movement of capital is often associated with the movements of people. It is therefore necessary that such efforts should also address the social dimensions of such movements;
- d. The need to boost inflow of external capital from outside of Africa to obtain sufficient resources to finance infrastructure development in poorer countries that cannot raise enough domestic resources. The role of remittances from migrant overseas is therefore very critical.

These goals can only be achieved when migration is managed more effectively at the national, sub-regional and regional levels.

However, the role of migration in promoting the social objectives of NEPAD is still not documented in the literature because, despite frequent mention of regional processes and approach to managing migration in Africa, no study has been done on the workings and the achievements of the processes themselves within the context of RECs, which are the major implementers of the NEPAD framework. This has been compounded by the fact that until recently, most African countries had not even put in place national migration policies. For example, in 2006, a UNECA study concluded that African governments' response to international migration was limited as reflected in the limited adoption of migration policies and the convention on migrant workers. Several reasons were proposed to explain the lack of migration policies in most

African countries including the fact that many African countries (excluding South Africa) are satisfied with the levels of migration in their countries (UN Population Division, 2008)¹ and the inability to address those issues due to capacity constraints.

By 2006, however, the interest in development and policy implications of immigration had increased beyond the national governments spheres of influence. Many African countries now have some sort of policy on migration, although not fully and effectively implemented. At the regional level, there is the African Common Position on Migration Framework and the African Migration Policy Framework that Member States are encouraged to adopt in their policy formulation. These documents also contain sets of recommendations at national, continental, and international levels aimed at addressing migration and development issues.

Why a Regional Approach to Migration in Africa?

THERE ARE A number of reasons why a regional approach to managing migration is relevant to Africa. Firstly, migration patterns have undergone a shift in the last couple of decades: irregular migration, including the trafficking of human beings, has increased. Additionally, the sheer volume of flows of migrants between two or more countries now calls for a regional approach to addressing migration at a regional level. Prior to and immediately after gaining independence from colonial masters, most migrants were citizens of former colonies migrating to their previous colonizers and, generally, received some sort of privileged treatment.² Moreover, increased technological aids in the last few decades have also contributed to migration within and beyond the African continent. Mobile telephones, satellite television, affordable air travel and cheap telephone rates, have strengthened the ties between migrants and their home countries considerably, and as a result, migration for family unification has increased in importance, along with chain migration (potential migrants hearing of opportunities from those who have already migrated) (Ghosh 2000b).

At the same time, another element of the new diversity of migration in Africa is the increase in the flow and numbers of irregular migration, especially to the north (Europe, USA, Canada, Australia) and the Middle East: as legal migration channels have diminished in these countries and immigration laws become tougher, and more people seek to leave their homes, there is now more irregular migration as well as smuggling and trafficking of migrants. Human trafficking today is acknowledged again and again as a major problem in Africa. In 2009, the AUC launched the AUCOMMIT campaign to end trafficking in human beings, especially young women, girls and children. Human trafficking and smuggling is controlled by organized crime, meaning that traffickers/smugglers have a wide network into which they can draw to outwit law enforcement authorities. For example, South Africa carried out an investigation into human trafficking in the country and concluded that the practice is widespread and operated by a very complex network of criminals both within the country and outside the continent.

- 1) *Data collected by the UN Population Division showed that the proportion of African countries that were satisfied with their levels of migration increased between 1990 and 2000.*
- 2) *For example, those from the Netherlands Antilles who received citizenship and permanent residence in The Netherlands, as well as welfare and integration training. In Africa, most migrants to France are from French-speaking African countries, and the same is true for Africans from Anglophone countries heading mainly to the UK, although that trend is now changing.*

Secondly, the international system is designed in a different era, with a different balance of power and different focal points in the world. Today, there are many more states involved in migration than before and new focal points of migration have emerged. This system³ needs additional means of managing both regular migration including short-term labor migration, and irregular migration (Widgen 1994). Moreover, the international system, which was developed at a different time, with different characteristics, is perhaps no longer as sufficient as it once was. In general, migration has increased in significance since the end of the Cold War and the significance of the nation-state is said to have decreased, a shift which suggests that the international migration management system might likewise be supplemented by a regional element (Widgen 1994).

Thirdly, the majority of immigration occurs on a regional basis, on the same continent, as well as inter-continently. An important dimension of contemporary migration in Africa is that many African countries are now simultaneously immigration, emigration and transit countries. For example, in West Africa, the main countries of immigration in the sub-region are Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Senegal and Nigeria. The major labor exporting countries include Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Togo. There is a high volume of cross-border movements of many categories of laborers including female traders, farm laborers, unskilled workers and underemployed people who pay less attention to the arbitrary borders.

Rural to urban migration has also intensified as farm laborers have moved in search of jobs and waged labor in urban areas. Conflicts and environmental degradation further aggravate the pressure for migration from poorer to relatively prosperous regions, within and outside Africa. Indeed Africa's experience shows that most migrants today, and the majority of refugees, remain within one

region. It is estimated that, likewise, the majority of trafficking occurs within the sub-regions and regions, with secondary trafficking occurring outside such as in the case of Thai women trafficked to South Africa. Overall, more people are seeking to leave their homes today and to seek asylum elsewhere, generally under the protection of the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and, again, generally within the sub-region and region.

Fourthly Africa has embarked on regional integration, and in the process created building blocks called regional economic blocks or communities. As will be shown later, the creation of economic groups has remarkably facilitated the movement of citizens of member states within those blocks. The NEPAD framework, as well as the Common African Position on Migration and the African Migration Policy Framework addresses development and migration issues at a regional level.

Fifthly, in order to help achieve the goal of gender equality stipulated in the NEPAD framework, a regional approach is needed to address the increasing involvement of African women in international migration. Adepoju (2005) noted that much of the earlier discussion of migration in Africa neglected the role of women and generally assumed that female movements simply followed male migrations. However, he cited increasing number of female migrants who are now also leaving their homes and countries in search of better economic and social opportunities as a new pattern emerging in Africa's migration.⁴ There is also increasing flows of labor migrants from other continent, especially from Asia. Migrants from India, China and the Philippines are increasingly engaged in the mining, energy and construction sectors. For example, in 2008, Seychelles recorded 8,000 foreign workers on both short and long term work permits and employment contracts.

- 3) *international migration management system put in place in the 1950s is composed of (1) ILO protecting the rights of migrant workers, (2) the international system to assist refugees, now embodied in UNHCR; (3) an element to provide for the orderly transfer of migrants, IOM; (4) an element of a regional character; and (5) an attempt by States to "harmonize entry policies with a view to attack irregular migration movements"*
- 4) *The UNECA (2006) International Migration and Development: Implications for Africa, noted that women migrants are no longer just following their husbands and fathers, but migrate independently.*

Regional Migration Patterns

A STUDY ON the SADC sub-region shows that the pattern of migration in the region has undergone major transformation since 1990: after collapse of the apartheid regime in the Republic of South Africa. Every country in the SADC region has seen a dramatic increase in the number of people crossing borders, with the majority of them engaging in migration as a livelihood strategy. Undocumented migration to SADC region has seen a dramatic increase from unstable countries including Zimbabwe, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) into the Republic of South Africa and Botswana, and xenophobia in these countries against foreigners is on the rise. Because of political instability, forced migration has generated a massive population flow in the region. In countries like Angola and Mozambique, post-conflict returnees and their reintegration challenge the ability of these countries to overcome the legacy of civil war.

Table 1 presents the current typology of migration in Southern Africa. Highlights from the table helps to put the discussions into the proper perspective. They indicate

the current role of migration in reducing unemployment, poverty and possibly gender inequality in the sub-region. Labor migration has remained significant as economic fortunes change in the sub-region, with the most buoyant economies of South Africa and Botswana and Namibia, commanding dominance and acting as magnets for large numbers of both skilled and unskilled workers, including undocumented workers. Refugees and asylum seekers have affected virtually all countries in the sub-region either as country of origin or a destination. Furthermore, undocumented and irregular migration in the form of human trafficking and human smuggling, have risen in recent years, causing much headache to the national governments and SADC as a whole. With increased cross border trade by itinerant traders and business persons, albeit not strictly migrants, Southern Africa remains a region of movements that increasingly engage the attention of national governments.

TABLE 1. Typology of current international migration in southern Africa according to characteristics and country of origin/destination

Type of migration	Description of migrants	Country of	
		origin	Destination
Permanent	Permanent residents Naturalized citizens Amnesty beneficiaries	Non-African sources; rest of southern Africa, Asia and Europe	Botswana, South Africa and Namibia
Labor	Unskilled/semi-skilled Skilled/professionals	Rest of southern Africa Rest of southern Africa and Africa	South Africa (for mines and farms) Botswana, South Africa, and Namibia
Refugees and asylum seekers	Fleeing home country	Zimbabwe Namibia Swaziland Botswana South Africa	Botswana, south Africa Botswana, South Africa South Africa
	Repatriated/returning home	rest of southern Africa Rest of Africa	Namibia, Zimbabwe South Africa South Africa, Namibia South Africa
	Clandestine (undocumented, trafficked/smuggled)	Mozambique Zimbabwe Swaziland Non-African sources	South Africa South Africa
Undocumented/ Illegal Clandestine Irregular Unauthorized	Migrants lacking documents authorizing stay/residence; over-stayers Amnesty defaulters for refugee or asylum status	South Africa, Botswana	Rest of the southern Africa Rest of African
International traders and business persons	Women traders; smugglers of goods; drug dealers; small arms dealers	Various countries	Various countries

Note: Temporary contract workers; temporary professional transients, “brain circulation” including clandestine /illegal workers (after Appleyard 1991)
Source: adapted from Ochujo 2006:50 table 3.1

In Western Africa, the pattern of migration established during the colonial era was mainly from the savannah zones in the north (Burkina Faso and Mali) towards the forest and coastal zones in southern Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire. People were moving to areas where they were most productive, given their expertise and both financial and social costs involved (cost of traveling, searching for work, adjusting to new environment, psychological cost cutting family ties, etc).

While emigration from many West African countries still largely follows colonial patterns, there has been an increasing diversification in destinations and in the gender

distribution of migrants since the 1990s. Other studies on contemporary migration patterns and trends in West Africa have shown that although migration in the African continent is generally characterized by tremendous diversity, there are also commonalities in the region. A clear feature in these trends is that although there has been an increase in trans-Saharan and trans-Mediterranean migration to Maghreb and Europe, intra-regional migration within West Africa remains far more important, at least in terms of numbers and significance in people’s livelihood portfolios than migration from West Africa to the rest of the world.

TABLE 2 Regional Migration in West Africa: Receiving Countries of Ghanaian Emigrants

Countries	%
Cote d'Ivoire	32.0
Nigeria	13.0
Burkina Faso	10.0
Guinea	9.0
USA	7.0
UK	6.0
Togo	4.0
Germany	2.0
Liberia	2.0
Canada	2.0
Others	13.0
Total	100.0

Source; Adama K. (2006), *New Patterns of Migration in West Africa*

Table 2 presents destinations of Ghanaian emigrants. It clearly shows that in 2005, only 17% of Ghanaian emigrants went to the USA, UK Germany and Canada combined. The rest migrated within the Western Africa sub-region, with the majority (32.0%) ending up in Cote d'Ivoire next door to Ghana. Contemporary migration patterns indicate the overwhelming regional nature of

West African international migration. In Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Togo, over 67% of emigrants are living within West and Central Africa. For the region as a whole, over the last decade, 61.7 % of emigrants have moved to another part of the region, 8.2 % to Central Africa, 0.3 % to the Gulf, 14.8 % to various parts of Europe and 6.0 % to North America. Thus despite the recent diversification of West African Migration, it is important to highlight that intra-regional migration remains far more important than migration from West Africa to the rest of the world.

The current demographic, economic and political situation in West Africa is likely to continue to fuel emigration both within and out of the region. The diversities and inequalities between countries in the region imply that intra-regional migration is inevitable. The huge and growing economic differentials between the West African sub-region and the North will also continue, for the foreseeable future, to attract migrants in spite of tightened entry requirements and controls, including policing by the European Union (EU) agency FRONTEX. This means that more responsive policy-making that would take these issues into consideration in designing comprehensive migration policies will be needed.

Response by RECs to Regional Migration Challenges and Opportunities

SINCE MIGRATION HAS shifted toward a more multi-national process, so the management of migration can no longer solely be on a unilateral or bilateral basis. For example, States who are members of RECs have facilitated free movements of their citizens within these groups. Increased cooperation and continued consultation among governments needs to be promoted. In Africa, there is now a growing awareness of the importance of sharing migration-related information. Information sharing is central to increased cooperation as well as improved effectiveness and efficient complementary action

The role of African states and regional blocs has been crucial in shaping migration dynamics on the continent. Although many African States do not have clear policies on mobility, the creation of regional blocks such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) the Southern African Development Community (SADC),

the Maghreb Union, and the East African Communities (COMESA, IGAD) - have had an impact on inter-regional mobility and especially on the direction of labor migration flows. The creation of ECOWAS in 1975 has promoted free movement of people, services and capital in the region. However, in spite of these provisions, the free movement of people is still severely impaired by the fact that regional and national regulations are not synchronized, thus impinging on the practical implementation of the migration policies across borders in the region. A number of member states have implemented their own migration policies that remain more restrictive and highly sensitive to the fluctuations in their labor markets (ILO 2008). For example, in 1983 and 1986 respectively, both Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire carried out massive expulsion of migrants from other countries. This occurred soon after the approval of the ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons and the right of Residence and Establishment in

1980, which guaranteed free entry of Community citizens without visas for 90 days.

At the continental level, the African Union's Strategic Framework for policy on migration adopted in 2004, and to a less explicit extent, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), includes the promotion of labor mobility among their key aims and the recognition that migration is an important engine for regional cooperation and integration. These frameworks and policies have the potential to address and manage intra-regional migration in Africa. What appears to be lacking now is the translation of these frameworks into workable programs at national level.

In recognition of the need to address migration at a regional level, a number of the RECs have developed migration policies to address both the challenges of migration as well as exploit and maximize opportunities and the benefits offered by migration. There have been a number of initiatives in Africa to facilitate international population movements among countries within regional economic blocks or communities. One of the first such initiatives was the Counsel de l'Entente among French-speaking countries in West Africa, which if had been implemented, would have allowed for dual nationality and given citizens of member States the same status as citizens of countries in the labor markets of other countries.⁵ In another group of French-speaking countries called Coomunaute Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEAO) and which includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal, (with Togo as observer), an agreement on the free circulation of people was signed in 1978. Similarly, in 1979, a larger and more ambitious project was initiated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to facilitate the free movement of citizens of member states within ECOWAS. The ECOWAS Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment was signed in 1979. The Protocol was to be implemented in three phases, each lasting five years.

a. The first phase became effective in 1980. It guaranteed the right of entry to citizens of member States by stating that community citizens in possession of valid travel documents or international peace certificates

did not need visas to enter other member States provided they did not intend to stay over 90 days.

- b. The second phase commenced in 1986 and it guaranteed the right of residence to community citizens wishing to reside in a member State other than their own but did not grant the right to hold a salaried job.
- c. The third phase started in 1991, and would have granted community citizens the right to establish business ventures in member States other than their own. However, there were concerns about unauthorized migration, and as a result, both the second and third phases were never fully implemented.

In Southern Africa, SADC, revitalized in 1995, set the goal of creating a free trade community with free movement of people by 2000. By 2006, the agreement had been achieved only on the use of visa-free admission for limited durations. However, both South Africa and Zimbabwe have declined to implement the plan for freer movement, worried about its potential to increase unauthorized migration.

In Eastern Africa, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)⁶ was guided by the AU's Migration Policy Framework, and established a Regional Consultative Process (IGAD-RCP) on migration. IGAD's responded to the needs of its member States for greater inter-State Dialogue and cooperation on migration issues. The IGAD-RCP focuses on:

- a. Convening IGAD member states and other stakeholders including countries of transit and destination to hold dialogue on issues of migration and related issue of concern and interest including: migration and development; labor migration; social integration of migrants; protection of migrant rights; smuggling and trafficking, migration data and research, migration and health, migration and trade, migration and environment, migration and security, voluntary return of migrants, mixed migratory flows and protection of refugees, movement of pastoralist communities; brain drain and unethical recruitment, as well as other issues identified by the IGAD Member States.
- b. The focus of IGAD-RCP is also on building capacity of and facilitating implementation of the Migration Policy Framework for Africa, the African Common

5) However, this proposed convention was opposed by Cote d'Ivoire and never implemented

6) IGAD Member States are: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda.

- Position on Migration and Development; the Joint EU-Africa Declaration on Migration and Development, and the Ouagadougou Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings Especially Women and Children, and Africa-EU Strategic Partnership.
- c. Encouraging and assisting member states to integrate migration issues into their national development plans including the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in order to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
 - d. Assisting in mobilizing resources for member States of IGD for the development and implementation of national and regional migration policies and mechanisms in line with the Migration Policy Framework for Africa.
 - e. Developing strategies and programs for implementation of relevant AU regional recommendations on migration, including those emanating from the IGAD-RCP.
 - f. Establishing a follow-up mechanism as well as ensuring regular reporting on implementation of the Migration Policy Framework for Africa and related activities, in collaboration with IGAD Member States and partners.

Challenges of Managing Migration at the Regional Level

ALTHOUGH REGIONAL BLOCKS have the potential to improve the management of migration by coordinating policy formulation and implementation of migration policies in their sub-regions, they are constrained by many factors. Firstly, migration studies in Africa are generally impaired by the lack of consistent statistics. Indeed RECs and all scholars of migration experience the paucity and poor quality of data sources that hamper the study of international migration. This problem is compounded by the varied interpretation of the phenomenon, especially as each of the disciplines studies it according to their tradition.

Paucity of research is very well illustrated by the experience of SADC. Although the Southern African countries keep virtually similar administrative records, they hardly process the data to provide insights into immigration and emigration. Moreover, some of the forms, which are the legacies of colonial times, have simply been adopted without alteration and the information they seek is too outdated to be useful. As a result, these countries do not track immigration accurately. The widespread tradition of failing to analyze emigration statistics of both foreigners and citizens underscores the countries' inability to account for their absent citizens. Needless to emphasize, the SADC

member States are primarily responsible for collecting reliable data for regular or periodic reports that they can all share to factor regional and international migration into regional integration.

Even though all members of SADC collected population data through census, there were variations in the break up of that data. For example, before 2000, all SADC countries, except Botswana, adopted a de facto enumeration procedure that sought information on population encountered on the census night. Botswana stands out as the only country with both de facto and de jure enumeration, the latter asking about the individual's place of usual residence⁷. The advantage of this procedure is that Botswana account for its citizens both within and outside the country. Before the SADC member States agreed to hold their census the same year, beginning with the 2000 round, to standardize census schedules or data collection instruments, generate similar data and make comparative analysis of international migration in the region, each country collected data as it deemed appropriate. Even after SADC framework had been adopted, countries such as Zimbabwe and Lesotho still held their censuses after 2001, in 2002 and 2006 respectively. In future, censuses are bound to be held in staggered fashion unless all SADC

7) According to Oucho (2006), only Botswana gathered data on place, including country, of birth; citizenship; and residence, including usual place of dwelling one year preceding the census and that of citizens residing outside the country. All 11 countries had data on place, including county, of birth. In addition to Botswana, the countries of Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa sought information on citizenship; apart from Botswana, the countries of Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland gathered information on usual place of residence; Tanzania sought information on residence for about a year preceding the census, and Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland collected data on residence five years before the census date. Only Botswana and Lesotho asked about citizens residing outside the country. Neither Angola nor the DRC has been in a position to undertake any censuses, but they might be able to join the 2010 round

member States raise adequate resources and establish a viable institutional base to carry out decennial censuses on schedule.⁸

Secondly, the ability of RECs to promote the social objectives of NEPAD through migration depends on the nature of national policies on migration in their sub-regions. There are difficulties in applying migration agreements and regional treaties, which arises from the absence of harmonized policies on migration. All regional treaties in Africa's sub-regions deal with the important issues of population and labor mobility. As was mentioned earlier, although these agreements provide for free movements of labor and people, they are rarely implemented uniformly across the region. An example is that of the Economic Community of West Africa (CEAO), which was created in 1973, and was the first regional organization to include specific provisions on the international migration and intra-regional migration. In its Article 39, it was stipulated that "movement of people and capital within the member countries is free" while Article 4 stated that the free movements of people guaranteed the ability to work and settle in member countries for nationals of CEAO member States. However, the agreement was only partially enforced until CEAO disappeared in 1994 because of certain clauses that enabled member States to implement

their own migration policies in the case of economic, social and political crises. As seen earlier, the current regional organizations have also ratified agreements on mobility of people that include significant innovations. For example, since 1975 when it was created, ECOWAS has promoted a progressive abolition

Of all obstacles to the free movement of people, services and capital and agreed that the nationals of member States be regarded as the citizens of the community. They are still to enjoy the right of establishment, to work and to settle in the entire region (abolition of visas, right of establishment that enables free entrepreneurship of the citizen in all member States).

Thirdly, regional and national regulations are not yet harmonized, and this poses obstacles to the free movement of people within regional blocs. Migrants still face administrative obstacles and restrictive migration policies. For example, massive expulsions occurred after the approval of regional agreements when both Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire expelled nationals of other ECOWAS countries.⁹ In fact a number of member States implement their own migration policies that remain more restrictive and very sensitive to the fluctuations of their labor markets.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

GIVEN THAT MIGRATION will continue to increase within Africa and between the continent and other continents, and challenges of integrating migration into development, there is a need to design comprehensive migration policies both at the national and sub-regional levels. To start with, it is important that governments take advantage of the current existing regional migration policy frameworks to work out for each sub-region its own approach to migration management that would take account of not only the issues of growing south-south migration, but also issues of intra-regional as well as internal migration and which will take account of the realities in the lives of individual migrants and their families. Such an approach will need to see migration as an important

livelihood diversification strategy. This will require that migration be fully recognized by both northern partners and southern governments as an intrinsic part of broader processes of structural change in Africa rather than just as another development problem to be solved.

In order for countries and regional blocks to develop evidence based policies on migration and development, they need relevant, consistent and harmonized gender sensitive data on all aspects of migration including trends, participants, benefits and management challenges. This is still missing in many African countries. Consequently, a quantitative analysis of the contribution of migration to promoting the social dimension of NEPAD is not currently

8) Oucho, John. O (2006). *Cross-border migration and regional initiatives in managing migration in southern Africa*. In P Kok, D Gelderblom, JO Oucho and J van Zyl (eds), *Migration in South and southern Africa*. Pretoria: HSRC Press, pp 47–70.

9) *Nigeria expelled 1.5 million immigrants after the oil shock in 1983*.

possible. There is also urgent need to build the capacity of RECs as well as Member States to integrate migration into overall development frameworks.

Since more women are now participating in migration, migration policies at all levels should be gender sensitive. For example, although government policies can be crucial in stimulating productive use of remittances, in many African countries legal systems limit or even exclude

women from owning assets including land and access to means of credit or loans and invest remittances more productively. Yet there is growing evidence that female migrants can play a crucial role both in steering and using remittances towards poverty reduction through food security, education and health. Therefore all government policies should protect female immigrants. Policies that are gender insensitive cannot achieve the major objectives of NEPAD.

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Women's Social Networks in Resettlement areas: the Case of Metema Resettlement Site, Ethiopia

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Abstract

THIS STUDY IS designed to understand the existing formal and informal social networks among re-settlers in Ethiopia. Its main purpose is to explore the extent and gender implications of women's participation in different social networks. The study aims to identify options for enhancing the role and sustainability of these social networks for promoting agricultural innovation in the Metema resettlement site in Ethiopia. Using multistage sampling procedure, the study is based on the selection of 2 out of 18 Peasant Associations (PAs) in the district, and on a random sample

of 160 households. The results show significant variations between previous and recent settlers, and between male and female headed households in terms of membership in different social networks. Relatives, friends and neighbors are the most important source of information and mutual support; and of influential networks in the adoption and diffusion process in the study area. The study recommends for government and NGOs to provide genuine support to social networks, to strengthen their organization, and to promote community based self help groups.

Introduction

THE ETHIOPIAN ECONOMY is among the most vulnerable in sub-Saharan Africa (Pankhurst and Gebre, 2002; Devereux *et al.*, 2005). This is partly due to high dependence on agriculture output, which has suffered from recurrent droughts and extreme weather conditions. The number of food insecure households in Ethiopia is increasing since the 1960s. Domestic food production is continuously failing to meet the food requirements in Ethiopia. As a result, food insecurity is seen as the most important feature of development challenges in the country.

In response to the chronic food shortages faced by millions, the Ethiopian Government launched a large-scale intra-regional resettlement program with the objective of enabling 2.2 million chronically food insecure people to attain food security. The program started with a pilot resettlement (access to land) program in the past four years. People from the drought-prone areas have been mobilized voluntarily to the relatively unpopulated fertile low land areas (NCFS, 2003).

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Food security requires recognition and understanding of the settlers' social inter-relationships as 'context' that directly affects their behavior. The types of social context of the settlers include: the settlers' immediate family, those with whom he/she lives and/or works (on a regular basis); extended family or kin with whom there is occasional, possibly irregular contact; neighboring farmers, in close proximity, who may or may not be friends; farming colleagues; and farming friends.

Objective and Research Methodology

THIS PAPER ON women's social networks in resettlement areas focuses on Metema resettlement site as a case study. It identifies the various sex disaggregated formal and informal social networks of previous and new re-settlers in the study area. Also, it studies the extent of women's participation in different social networks and their gender implications, and identification of options for enhancing the role and sustainability of these social networks.

The study is based on information gathered through qualitative methods (semi structured interview with individuals and groups, field observations). Two in-depth interviews were conducted with 8-10 people in each peasant association (PA), consisting of men and women in both previous and new settler areas. Also it is based on quantitative information gathered through household survey covering 160 respondents (123 males and 37 females). This was done through multi-stage sampling design.

Both primary and secondary sources of data were collected for this study. The primary data were collected

Moreover, in a given social system, especially in resettlement areas where social capital is disturbed, it is important to identify influential social networks and their functional contributions to diffuse innovation: health systems, schools, religious and political groups, social clubs, unions, and informal associations and also identify opinion leaders, peers, and targeted media channels.

from respondents through interview schedule, group interview including Participatory Rural Appraisal and focus group discussion. For the household survey and Group interview at community level, Instruments of the Social Capital Assessment Tool (Grootaert *et al.*, 2003) adapted to local context were used to elicit the views and understandings of households as well as the community about the existing formal and informal social networks and their gender implications.

Following data collection and coding, data were entered into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 12) computer program for analysis. Primary data collected from individual and group respondents, through the interview schedule were analyzed using descriptive statistics to find out the importance of groups and associations to their household. Qualitative analysis of data from focus group discussion, key informants were made.

Succinct Review of Knowledge on Gender and Social Networks

IN MANY RURAL communities in Africa where small-scale agriculture is practiced, gender differences have a significant impact on resource allocation and productivity (Alderman *et al.*, 2003). Gender inequalities almost always favor men, with women often being disadvantaged both in the management and ownership of household assets (Fafchamps and Quisumbing 2003) and in the division of responsibilities in the household and in the community.

Generally in developing countries women usually play primary role in food production and processing. Rural women, who often undertake a major proportion of farm

work, are responsible for family food security and home production, and are often involved in post harvest processing and marketing. However they often enjoy lower levels of social status and economic security in the family (Ravula *et al.*, 2006). Women are the most vulnerable groups of every society in Africa. Hence, in order to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development, it is important to understand women's circumstances at the grass-root level.

Particularly, when communities relocate from their point of origin to resettlement site, women lose their social

capital (mutual support, social networks). Social integration cannot be realistically achieved within one or two years after arrival in resettlement site. It usually takes more time for settlers' lives to stabilize. Until this happens, they remain extremely vulnerable to such shocks as seed shortage, crop failure, epidemics, food price fluctuations and critical labor shortage. And they may not have an opportunity to get important support information for their survival.

Also it is costly for women to build and maintain a social network in terms of both time and other resources, imposing a barrier to social capital accumulation (Dasgupta, 2005). Women typically have a high opportunity cost of time that reduces their incentives to participate in certain social networks (Meinzen-Dick and Zwartveen, 2003). They were found to join groups that mobilize fewer resources than men because they are resource-constrained

Analyses of Results

SOCIAL NETWORKS ARE property of groups and communities more than individuals. In a given society, social capital can exist only if individuals come together, create and maintain relationships. Proponents of social capital' approaches maintain that tight communal groups, relationships of kinships, friendship and ethnicity can form dense networks of solidarity, cooperation and communal sanctions that reduce the transaction costs of economic activities. Several studies have found that men and women's personal networks differ in composition, although they are similar in size. Men's networks tend to be more formal since men are more often involved in formal employment. Male networks include more co-workers and fewer kin than women's networks (Moore, 1990).

Understanding the groups and networks that enable people to access resources (such as seed and labor), and collaborate to achieve shared goals is an important part of the concept of social capital. Informal networks are manifested in spontaneous, informal, and unregulated exchanges of information and resources within communities, as well as efforts at cooperation, coordination, and mutual assistance that help maximize the utilization of

(Maluccio *et al.*, 2003). Gender norms in the community may also exclude women from social capital-enhancing activities, such as drinking clubs.

Women are more likely to rely on kin and social networks for access to resources. Because men and women belong to different social networks, the economic and social consequences of technological choices and developmental interventions impact their social networks and associations in different ways. Traditionally, women are responsible for household welfare and child rearing. Reliance on informal exchange networks is necessary among women and their households to share resources, stabilize incomes, and reduce risks. For women in female-headed households networks are also important for their economic activities (Ravula *et al.*, 2006) contribution to economic growth and an equitable distribution of income through reducing information asymmetries and transaction costs.

available resources. Informal networks can be connected through horizontal and vertical relationships and are shaped by a variety of environmental factors, including the market, kinship, and friendship (Dudwick, *et al.*, 2006).

Networks of the Respondent Beyond the Immediate Household

Research indicates that the number of close friends and relatives beyond the immediate household is often positively associated with the household propensity to accumulate organizational or group based social capital. The survey result shows that (Table 1) 50.0% and 22.0% of the total sample households had 2 to 3 people and only 1 close friend, respectively that they can talk to about private matters or call on for help. Moreover, 14.2% of the respondents had more than 5 people in their proximity. About 30% of previous settlers had more than 4 close friends. On the other hand, about 16.2 % of the recent settlers had more than 4 close friends. Clearly, the type of settlement affects the size of social network.

TABLE 1 Percentage of close friends to whom the respondents can privately talk (N=160)

Settlement category	Sex	Number of close friends			
		1 person %	2-3 persons %	4-5 persons %	More than 5 persons %
Previous settlers (n=123)	Males	18.4	48.0	14.3	19.4
	Females	32.0	52.0	16.0	0.0
	Both	21.1	48.8	14.6	15.4
Recent settlers (n=37)	Males	20.0	60.0	8.0	12.0
	Females	41.7	50.0	8.3	0.0
	Both	27.0	56.8	8.1	8.1
Total		22.0	50.0	13.8	14.2

Source: computed from own survey, 2007

However, the number of people beyond immediate household who are willing to assist the respondents in case of a long term support/help (for example: in case of the death of breadwinners or heads of the households) varies among sample households. As shown in Table 2, the majority of previous settlers (43.9%) reported they had one or two people beyond immediate household, who are willing to assist them. However, the majority of recent settlers (48.6%) reported they have no social networks to call on for help with money, food or labor and no one is willing to provide long term support/help. During movement people lose their social networks.

Both previous and new female headed households reported the same trends mentioned above. The majority of female headed households (52.0% of previous and 66.7% of recent settlers), had no one beyond immediate household willing and able to provide long term support/help (Table 2). Compared to female headed households, male headed households have a better social network beyond the immediate household. This is in line with the findings of Katungi *et al.*, (2006) where male-headed households build and maintain bigger social networks with relatives and friends in close proximity than female-headed households in Uganda.

TABLE 2 People who provide long term support (N=160)

Settlement category	Sex	Number of people (not household members)			
		None	2-3 people	4-5 people	More than 5 people
Previous settlers (n=123)	Male	27.6	45.9	17.3	9.2
	Female	52.0	36.0	12.0	0.0
	Both	32.5	43.9	16.3	7.3
Recent settlers (n=37)	Male	40.0	40.0	16.0	4.0
	Female	66.7	16.7	16.7	0.0
	Both	48.6	32.4	16.2	2.7
Total		36.3	41.3	16.3	6.1

Source: computed from own survey, 2007

In focused group discussion with women (previous and recent settlers separately), it has also been confirmed that, women have less number of close friends. They are usually confined to their home and therefore do not participate in most social gatherings, meetings and in different committees. Due to these and other socioeconomic barriers (access to resource such as credit and time constraints), they had limited opportunities to build trust and solidarity with their colleagues. One of the participants, from the previous settlers group named W/ro Zewdie said:

“Oh! We know very well only our husbands and children. Apart from these, probably we may know our neighbors of the same sex, who are always with us in fetching water, market and milling places. But if you ask me about my husband, he is a cabinet member, committee of the “Gode mahber”, and he was also committee member of Kokit multipurpose cooperatives. So, probably he may have more than 10 close friends, can you imagine the difference?”

Decision making is an integral part of every one’s life. Decision can be made alone, with a group, or as an organization. It has become clear that agricultural decisions are not made solely by the individual “head of the household,” but extends to other household and/or community members and is also influenced by other actors in, or even

outside, the agricultural chain (Maarse *et al.*, 1998. cited in Leewis, 2004).

In the group discussion with male settlers (previous and new male headed households separately) , it was also agreed that neighbors, friends and acquaintances were important networks on which every household depends for decision making. They also added the Amharic proverb “*Keruk Zemed Yekirb Gorebet Yishalal*” to mean, “A neighbor is better than far away families or kin”.

Family member’s participation in different social networks

Social networks are made up of more complex inter-relationships in which households are linked to other agents such as individuals, organization or groups through bilateral relationship. As indicated in Table 3, most of the previous settlers’ families participate in at least 5 social networks. However, families of recent settlers were participated in few social networks in the community. It was also hypothesized that households with a higher participation in social networks have better access to information and are likely to use different resources.

TABLE 3 Proportions of households’ participation in different social networks

No	Social networks	Previous settlers (n=123)			Recent settlers (n=37)		
		MHH (n=98)	FHH (n=25)	Total	MHH (n=25)	FHH (n=12)	Total
		%	%	%	%	%	%
1	Kebele social Court	5.1	0.0	4.1	4.0	0.0	4.0
2	Parliament (regional)	4.1	4.0	4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
3	Local Cabinet member	25.5	4.0	21.1	28.0	8.3	21.6
4	Education/family-teacher	9.2	8.0	8.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
5	Church/Mosque	15.3	0.0	12.2	0.0	8.3	2.7
6	Market place	52.0	44.0	50.4	40.0	58.3	45.9
7	Unions/cooperatives	77.6	40.0	69.9	12.0	16.7	13.5
8	Networks of Neighbors, friend	81.6	76.0	80.5	76.0	83.3	78.4
9	Mutual support	41.8	16.0	36.6	20.0	41.7	27.0
10	Development group	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.0	8.3	5.4
11	Committee member of groups	6.1	0.0	4.9	0.0	0.0	0.0

Source: computed from own survey, 2007

Among the previous settlers, 80.5%, 69.9%, 50.4% and 36.6% of family members participated in networks of neighbors and friends, unions or cooperatives, market place and mutual support respectively. Male headed households mostly participate in networks of neighbors and friends (81.6%), unions or cooperatives (77.6%). While, female headed household mostly participate in networks of neighbors and friends (76.0%), market place (44.0%) and unions or cooperatives (40.0%). It is also shown that, relatively male headed households were participating in formal social networks of *Kebele*⁴ social court (5.1%), Parliament (regional) (4.1%) and local cabinet member (25.5%). This implies that males headed households (MHH) have relatively linking social capital than female headed households (FHH).

Likewise, 78.4%, 45 %, 27 % and 21.6 % of families of recent settlers also participated in networks of neighbors and friends, market place, mutual support and local cabinet member respectively (table 3)

In the group discussion held with women, it was also revealed that, marital status could have influence on women's participation in different social networks. Married women are likely to be active in collective decision-making meetings because they are better trusted and respected. They are also able to influence higher-level decisions indirectly through their husbands and their own informal networks. Their marital status allows them access to more networks and thus enables them to generate more social capital.

According to some key informants, most of the re-settlers came to the area and registered as single. However, after sometime, they are married. Even some male recent settlers have wife and children at their origin.

Family membership in different groups or associations

In this study, household's membership in different groups or association was studied. Group membership is found to be varying among settlers (previous and recent settlers) as well as between female and male headed households. Economically oriented organizations such as cooperatives (68.3%), credit and finance group (34.1%) and labor exchange groups (36.6%) and social organizations like religious or spiritual groups (58.5%) were the most popular among the previous settlers. However, in the case of recent settlers, social organization such as religious or spiritual groups (40.5%), mutual support associations (27.0%), economically oriented organizations such as labor exchange groups (54.1%) and politically oriented group (27.0%) were the most popular groups or associations (table 4).

The result of the study reveals that membership in formal organizations (networks) were mostly dominated by previous settlers. However, in case of recent settlers, they are mostly involved in informal trust based exchanges groups and identified as the main sources of labor and other economic benefits. Due to the inability to fulfill the preconditions set by the formal organizations, most of the recent settlers and female headed Households could not be a member of these groups. The varying composition of men and female headed networks was clearly seen in this study. On one hand, the male headed Households networks tended to be more formal usually comprised of fellow farmers who are members of these economically oriented organizations/associations. On the other hand female headed household's networks tended to be informal and included more in religious groups and mutual support associations in contrast to Male headed Household's networks.

4) "*Kebele*" is the lowest level of government administration.

TABLE 4 Proportions of Households belonging to groups or associations in the study area

No	Groups or associations	Family Membership					
		Previous settlers (N=123)			Recent settlers (N=37)		
		MHH n=98	FHH n=25	Total	MHH n=25	FHH n=12	Total
		%	%	%	%	%	%
1	Cooperatives	78.6	28.0	68.3	12.0	16.7	13.5
2	Credit/finance group	38.8	16.0	34.1	4.0	0.0	2.7
3	Farmers group	8.2	0.0	6.5	4.0	0.0	2.7
4	Religious group	63.3	40.0	58.5	40.0	41.7	40.5
5	Mutual support association	30.6	16.0	27.6	28.0	25.0	27.0
6	Political group	22.4	8.0	19.5	32.0	16.7	27.0
7	Women's group	0.0	4.0	4.00	0.0	0.0	0.0
8	Labor Exchange group	42.9	12.0	36.6	60.0	41.7	54.1
9	Ethnic-based group	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	2.7

Source: computed from own survey, 2007

As reported by IPMS (2005), in order to get credit, 5-7 people should form a group and elect a chair person. The chair person controls the group and monitors his fellow group members for any possible misuse of money. Farmers who would like to take credit for the first time will submit request through the Peasant Association (PA). The PA committee composed of (chairman, vice chair, Development Agent, representative from youth, representative from elders, etc) will screen farmers by taking certain parameters given by Amhara Credit and Saving Institution (ACSI). These are: farmers who are believed to be hard working, economically active (18-60 years of age), socially acceptable, motivated, resided at least for 5 years in the PA, ownership of one or no oxen, no outstanding debt etc.

The government's resettlement document says, "re-settlers would be eligible to make use of existing physical and social infrastructure that is already in place in the receiving areas" However, as they do not meet most of these criteria, except few recent settlers (13.5% in cooperatives and 2.7% in credit and finance), most of them in the sample PAs, were not able to join cooperatives and credit and finance groups. In the group discussion held with recent settlers, it was pointed out that, recent settlers had no guarantee to stay in the area and had no fixed assets to be used as collateral and to fulfill the above mentioned criteria set by ACSI. They might leave at any time they feel uncomfortable because the process of resettlement

program involves the temporary separation of families and they would retain their land use rights and other immovable property in the original home villages for up to three years after being relocated. So they can return to their original home villages for good whenever they change their mind. Therefore, other previous settlers do not want to allow them to be a member of their group. Because, they do not want to take the risk of repayment problems that could happen in their group. One of the group participants from the recent settlers, who live in village 2 of *Kokit* PA, confirmed that;

"We want to join groups like cooperatives and ACSI "kuteba" but we were not given opportunities so far. I hope this may changed after some time. Especially, previous settlers are not willing to form a group with us. When we arrived here, the government gave us cotton seed on credit through the cooperative, but because of crop failure, we couldn't harvest in that cropping season and we couldn't repay the credit till now. When we express interest to join the group, they always point out that, we did not repay the old loans and are still in debt".

Among the recent settlers, those who became member of cooperative (12.0% male and 16.7% female headed households) were spouses of previous settlers who could fulfill the preconditions for membership. Recent settlers depend primarily on labor exchange group (54.1%) and their religious or spiritual groups (40.5%) followed by mutual

support associations (27.0%) and political group (27.0%) (Table 4). Some key informants also pointed out that, local government officials insist that settlers be member of political group (cabinet or *Kebele* militia) during the initial process of the program and their arrival to their destination. The probable reason may have the objective of persuading their family members, colleagues who left in their origin to follow their footsteps and to establish their own administrative at their destination. This shows that, the recent settlers have relatively linking social capital than bridging social capital.

As indicated in table 4, sampled male and female headed households had different membership in different groups or associations. In the previous settler's category, most of male headed households were members of cooperatives/cooperative union (78.6%), religious or spiritual groups (63.3%), labor exchange group (42.9%), credit and finance group (38.8%) and mutual support associations (30.6%). However, the female headed households were members of religious or spiritual group (40.0%), cooperatives (28.0%), mutual support associations (16.0%) and credit and finance group (16.0%). This shows that, female headed households were participating primarily in religious or spiritual groups such as "*Senbetie*" and "*Mahber*"⁵ followed by cooperatives and mutual support associations.

On the other hand, most male headed household from the new settler's category, were members of labor exchange group (60.0%), religious or spiritual group (40.0%), political group (32.0%), and mutual support associations (28.0%). Likewise, recent settlers of female headed were members of religious or spiritual group (41.7%), labor exchange groups (41.7%), mutual support associations (25.0%) and political group (16.7%). Table 4 also shows that, among recent settlers, male headed households were heavily depending on their labor exchange groups, religious or spiritual group and political groups based on number of households participating in each group. However, Female headed HHs depends on their religious or spiritual group, labor exchange group, mutual support associations and political groups.

IPMS (2005) report the presence of Women's affairs offices at the regional, zonal, district and PA level. Vice chair of the PA follows women affairs issues. It was

also reported that, 697 rural women have organized themselves in association in the study area. Parents committees have been established at all schools and oversee girl students' issues. And it was also pointed out that, women who organized themselves will be given priority to get credit from ACSI to run small business. However, this study shows that women's groups were not popular among re-settlers. This implies that rural women were not well organized in groups or association. In fact those groups which are claimed to be organized by women's affairs were concentrating in urban and pre-urban areas like *Shehedi* and *Metema Yohanes*. However, unlike other villages included in the study, in "*Gode*" village of *Kokit* PA, there were women's "*edir*"⁶ and men's "*edir*" separately. In other villages, both men and women had the same "*edir*" but with different roles and responsibilities. In this case, women's "*edir*" has its own chairwomen, secretary and rules and regulations. It is managed and operated by women only.

The relative importance of groups and associations

This sub section indicates how sample household heads perceived the importance of the groups and associations of which they are a member. Distribution of groups and associations in terms of importance to the household is presented in Table 5 for previous and recent settlers as well as male and female headed households. The response analysis of Table 5 indicates that cooperatives credit and finance group and religious or spiritual groups were the most important group or associations for previous settlers in general and male headed household in particular. The other probable reason might be that household heads among previous settlers being better educated individuals and having the potential to provide collateral are more likely to join economically oriented organizations. Sample households in previous settlers category also felt that mutual support associations, neighboring or village associations and political groups were important groups for their household (table 5).

For recent settlers, labor exchange groups, religious or spiritual group, mutual support associations and political groups were the most important group or associations for recent settlers. Labor is very expensive in the study

5) *Senbete* and *Mahiber* are religious associations founded by a group of people who belong to the same church.

6) "*Edir*" is a traditional community organization in which the members assist each other during the mourning process.

area, this may require that the recent settlers rely on labor exchange groups. This could be due to the fact that recent settlers had no access to formal organization (co-operatives and credit and finance groups) which require membership fees and collateral that could not be fulfilled

by recent settlers. Membership in cooperatives and credit group were mainly dominated by male headed households from the previous settler's category. Female headed households were primarily participating in religious or spiritual groups.

TABLE 5 Relative importance of groups/associations to the respondent's household (N=160)

No	Groups or associations	Relative importance							
		Previous settlers (n=123)				Recent settlers (n=37)			
		MHH		FHH		MHH		FHH	
		Total Score ⁷	Rank	Total Score	Rank	Total Score	Rank	Total Score	Rank
1	Cooperative	195	1st	19	2nd	2	5th	6	3rd
2	Credit/finance group	84	2nd	9	3rd	1	6th	1	5th
3	Religious group	79	3rd	22	1st	23	2nd	14	1st
4	Labor exchange group	66	4th	5	4th	37	1st	13	2nd
5	Mutual support	42	5th	5	4th	17	3rd	6	3rd
6	Political group	11	6th	0	-	11	4th	0	-
7	Farmers group	9	7th	0	-	0	-	0	-
8	Women's group	0	-	1	-	0	-	0	-
9	Ethnic based group	0	-	0	-	0	-	2	4th

Source: computed from own survey, 2007

Conclusions and Recommendations

THE STUDY REVEALED that economically oriented social groups or associations, such as cooperatives and credit and finance groups, serve mostly the previous settlers and male headed households, which are relatively the well-off groups in the study area. Recent settlers and female headed households are the least beneficiaries of these social groups. These social groups or associations are crucial components in the process of agricultural development in general and food security in particular. Therefore, efforts should be made to involve recent settlers and female headed households, who are the most vulnerable groups, to be food secure through purposeful intervention mechanisms.

The findings of this study confirmed that, due to their strict rules and regulations, formal credit and saving

groups or institutions such as Amhara Credit & Saving Institute (ACSI) are unable to serve the recent settlers. Most of the recent settlers and female headed households could not fulfill the preconditions and parameters set by the institutions. Besides, for recent settlers, their traditional resource pooling systems have collapsed as they relocated from their origin. Therefore, village savings and loans associations would need to be organized for the recent settlers if food self sufficiency among re-settlers in general and recent settlers in particular were to be achieved. The Cooperative promotion office should encourage, follow up and facilitate the organization these associations, and it should provide the necessary support to promote them. In addition, NGOs should take the initiative to provide a revolving fund that could be managed by the members of social groups and associations, with a close supervision of

7) The total weight score in this study is the rank order frequencies multiplied respectively by 3 for first importance, 2 for second importance 1 for third importance

these organizations and Bureau of Agriculture and Rural Development (BoARD).

The results show that women's groups are not popular in the study area. The existing formal groups or associations are mostly in favor of men. Therefore, efforts should be made to encourage women to establish social groups and associations. There is need for transforming the existing

informal social groups into self-help groups (SHGs) with purposive planning of projects and programs that will empower and benefit women. Women's affair at the regional and district level has to lead this initiative with a close and collaborative support of NGOs and BoARD. Organizing women could be done by women's affair of BoARD, and could be supported by the rich experience of NGOs.

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The Role of Cooperatives in Poverty Reduction in Africa

By Kindie Getnet*

Abstract

THIS PAPER ANALYSES the role of cooperatives in reducing poverty and hunger in Africa. It discusses the dynamics and constraints of cooperatives' development in Africa, and draws lessons of experience that are needed to inform subsequent policies and interventions. An overview of the

cooperative movement in Africa provides evidence on the type of cooperative models that are most appropriate for hunger and poverty reduction. The paper highlights the role of cooperatives in delivering poverty reduction impacts for the achievement of the MDGs.

Introduction

DEPRIVATION FROM BASIC needs such as food, water, shelter and clothing, lack of capabilities reflected in poor health and education, and lack of job opportunities, are the root causes of poverty and hunger in Africa. One of the most recommended mechanisms to reduce poverty and hunger in Africa is to enable the poor to participate in productive and income generating activities, for which they would need to have livelihood assets (physical, natural, social, financial, and human assets). In order for the livelihood strategies of the poor people to be productive and sustainable, they should be linked to markets and trading opportunities. The productivity growth and market and trade linkage aspects can benefit from strong institutional mechanisms that represent the poor in both of the product and input markets, as well as in the domestic and international markets. Cooperatives provide an important institutional mechanism for supporting the

poor through linking their production activities to the markets locally and abroad.

Reduction of hunger and poverty is one of NEPAD priorities and is the premier goal of the MDGs. However, the prospect of achieving the MDGs in Africa by 2015 is grim, mainly because of the problems compounded by the global economic crisis experienced since 2008 (UN, 2009; ECA-AU-AFBG, 2009). According to AEO (2010), some African countries are at the risk of falling far off track from achieving the MDGs. The debate on policy options and mechanisms for poverty and hunger reduction continues at all levels. Promoting rural institutions such as cooperatives and enhancing private sector development are among the options that received attention (Bahadur *et al.* 2005). This paper discusses the role of cooperatives as institutions that would allow the poor people to coordinate

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their resources and activities, participate in production and marketing activities, and generate income to help them to address poverty and ensure food security. While the theoretical underpinnings of the poverty reduction role of cooperatives are well known, the paper tries to give a portrait of the empirical evidence drawn from African experience.

The remaining sections of this paper are organized as follows: Section 2 discusses theoretical underpinnings of the role cooperatives in poverty reduction. This followed

by insight about the emerging phenomena that led to the continued presence of cooperatives and their renaissance during the era of globalization and liberalization (section 3). Section 4 provides historical overview of the cooperative sector in Africa, together with a brief account of the contribution of respective cooperative movements (First, Second, and Third Generation Cooperatives) towards social and economic development. Section 5 discusses the empirical evidence available from Africa with regard to the poverty reduction role of cooperatives. Finally, the paper concludes in section 6 with some policy recommendations.

Theoretical Underpinnings: The Role of Cooperatives in Poverty Reduction

WHAT FORMS OF economic and social organizations do the poor need in to address poverty? Cooperatives¹ are considered relevant institutions in addressing the different dimensions of poverty and hunger reduction. Such a role is long recognized by governments and NGOs, and by UN agencies such as FAO and ILO. Some scholars (Birschall, 2003) argue that cooperatives can be relied upon to play a vital role in achieving the MDGs., and that they should be given strategic importance in the national development plans and PRSPs.

On the food security side, cooperatives are believed to help increasing productivity through improving food availability and affordability. For example, consumer cooperatives can be used to serve as yardsticks for price setting in a competitive market. Cooperatives provide services to their members and non-members at fair prices, with positive impact on purchasing power and affordability of food. On the poverty reduction side, cooperatives contribute to income generation through various ways; making it possible for the poor to participate in small and micro-enterprises (SMEs); improving economies of scale for better market access; creating employment opportunities for the poor; providing market information; providing social protection; providing social services such as education and training, which has a long term impact on income generation capacity (human capital) of the poor.

The principles on which cooperatives are based, and by which they are distinguished from other forms of business

organization, show their appropriateness to promote democratic control by the members, the equitable return of economic surpluses, and a desire to share these benefits with other people in similar circumstances. Because cooperatives are open to new members, they do not require people to invest large amounts of capital, they tend to share economic results equitably, and they have a tendency to benefit the poor. In view of such roles, cooperatives have the potential to reduce poverty, provided that their values and principles are respected. They will do this more effectively than other forms of economic organization (Birschall, 2003). According to Mellor (2009), cooperatives play an increasingly important role in economic growth, poverty reduction and democratization in low- and middle-income countries. Lack of vital service provision by other forms of economic organization and low levels of competition among service providers, when they exist, provide a business opportunity for cooperatives to give valuable economic and social benefits.

Generally, cooperatives are trusted to deliver useful results for the poor in terms of improved and equitable access to assets, employment creation,² livelihood development opportunities (income generating economic activities), risk reduction and social protection, improvement of the voice and representation of vulnerable groups in society, and social service provision such as education and training useful for building of human and social capital. As an institution, a cooperative can play a vitally important role in reaching poor communities, where social services

- 1) *A cooperative is defined by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) as an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise (ICA, 1995).*
- 2) *According to the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), cooperatives employ more than 100 million workers and boast 760 million members worldwide, with 450 million members in Asia and the Pacific alone.*

are weak (ESCAP, 2003). Cooperatives tend to promote participatory development through providing apex structures for national level participation in making policies and strategies aimed at poverty reduction, and local structures for wider participation at the implementation level of development interventions and programs.

Cooperative enterprises provide the capacity to transform marginalized and poor communities, through their ability

to raise physical capital based on self-help, and to build human and social capital via their emphasis on education and training. However, much of the promise of cooperatives is spelled on the level of their potential contribution, with limited evidence available on their practical impact on poverty reduction. This paper attempts to address this paradoxical situation.

Emerging Issues: Market Failure and the Renaissance of Cooperatives

THE CONTINUED PRESENCE of cooperatives as economic and social organizations during the liberalization and globalization era proves their capacity and suitability to operate as business enterprises in a new economic and business environment outside government control and support. Their continued presence proves the reliance of development community, national governments, and the member society upon cooperatives as useful forms of organization. Following their continued presence in more genuine forms, cooperatives are considered to be in an era of renaissance and reconstruction to play developmental roles. The liberalization and globalization wave is credited for the emergence of third generation cooperatives which are genuine and characterized by grass-roots based establishment as self-help organizations operating in a more competitive business environment. Following the recent developments in terms of market liberalization and globalization, the role of cooperatives as organizations of social and economic development, including poverty reduction, is emphasized, instead of cooperatives fading away as it was originally suspected to be the case. This is especially so in response to the problem of market failure which is common in poor countries with special problem of exclusion of the poor from participation in income generating opportunities and benefiting from social services.

Two key aspects of cooperatives put them on the list of organizations for achieving rapid development in the era of market liberalization and globalization (Mellor, 2009): First, the solution to poverty in low- and middle-income countries requires accelerated growth of agriculture, which, through direct and indirect effects, is the main driver of employment growth and poverty reduction. Second, rapid urbanization, which is a natural outcome of rapid development, presents new opportunities for the development of cooperatives. Market failure, which is a common phenomenon in both the rural and urban

situations, opens the way for cooperatives to form, prosper and facilitate equity, inclusiveness and democratization.

Market failure provides opportunities for cooperatives type of business organizations and models to fill the gaps in the provision of goods or services. In rural areas, the market fails because there are many low-income families and potential customers usually are spread over a wide geographic area (hence, high cost of service provision). Also, physical infrastructure in rural areas is poor and it increases the costs and results in low levels of competition. There are special risks of agriculture, and local service providers are isolated from national markets and market information.

On the urban side, rapid urbanization creates different types of economic and social opportunities in housing, water, electricity, telephone, and employment in the informal sector. Urbanization is burdensome for low- and middle-income families (Mellor, 2009). With urbanization, new risks arise for families at the same time the ways of meeting these risks - such as through extended families - are weakened. In such an environment, social service providing cooperatives (housing cooperatives and insurance and savings/credit cooperatives) have proven effective in reducing the costs and risks and responding to participants' needs for financial services not otherwise available in the marketplace. According to Mellor (2009), the following deserve special attention among the emerging issues and key dynamics of development that favor cooperatives as social and economic organizations:

Globalization

Although globalization creates opportunities for exporting high value agricultural products, smallholder farmers in the developing countries found it difficult to be integrated

into markets, mainly because of problems related to scale, continuous supply, product quality, and high transaction costs. Cooperatives are often considered to be the appropriate mechanisms through which smallholder farmers can be successfully linked to markets for they bring small farmers together and encourage economies of scale and participant's loyalty, and they foster the discipline needed to meet sanitary standards and other requirements of export markets.

Commercialization of small farms

On the input side of the production process, commercialization could be considered as utilization of more commercial inputs, while on the output side they are producing outputs mainly for markets. Therefore commercialization increases agricultural production as well as the need for production inputs, such as chemical fertilizers, improved seed varieties, and herbicides and fungicides. Market failure, which is common in these areas, is addressed by people organizing themselves in cooperatives for the procurement of farm inputs and for profitable marketing of the farm products.

Overview of the History of Cooperatives in Africa

WHILE THERE ARE strong arguments in favor of cooperatives as institutions for poverty reduction, there are suspicions that they may not deliver to their expectations in terms of poverty reduction. This suspicion stems from the common danger that cooperatives are used as tools for planned development by governments rather than suiting themselves to the needs of the poor, managed and owned by the poor. The history of cooperatives in Africa is not short of such evidence, as it provides an account of three generations. The First Generation Cooperatives were those established during the colonial period by importing foreign cooperative models to the continent. The purpose of such cooperatives was to organize producers of export commodities such as coffee, cocoa, and cotton to supply for European industries and markets in a more organized and cost effective manner, without attention to local development and poverty reduction. Such cooperative models were replaced by the Second Generation Cooperatives in the post-independence period.

The Second Generation Cooperatives were initiated by the governments of the newly independent states in order to promote rural development. However, the cooperatives

Supermarket retail trends

Supermarkets are gaining ground in a large number of developing countries as retail outlets. This makes domestic markets as demanding as export markets in terms of product quantity, quality, supply continuity and reliability. Mostly, supermarkets find it more profitable to import from high-income countries with large farms rather than to buy from local farmers. Agricultural cooperatives provide an effective and low-cost way to meet these new market demands.

Communication revolution

Developments in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) offer new opportunities to rural people. However, such opportunities are more appropriately captured by cooperatives rather than by other forms of business. ICT cooperatives provide technology that benefits low- and middle-income people, as well as cooperative businesses, which helps increase their efficiency.

were mainly state invented tools meant for implementing planned development activities. They became important channels for government-sponsored credit and input supply and marketing programs, and often had to operate under close guidance and control by the state (Hussi *et al.*, 1993). As such, they were not genuine cooperatives in the context of their establishment, management, and control. As a result, the development and poverty reduction impacts of such cooperatives were limited.

Cooperatives were mainly benefiting those who found employment in cooperative development and the more affluent farmers who were in a better position to make use of cooperative services. Following the dismal results from cooperatives, there was a mounting discussion and controversy going in the 1970s around the role of cooperatives as institutional mechanisms to deliver development results and poverty reduction impacts. Most of the studies on African cooperatives up to the 1990s concluded that cooperatives were indeed performing poorly, partly due to their dependent relationship with the state that undermined their operation as business enterprises.

There are no vested mechanisms in cooperatives to automatically deliver pro-poor results; they could only succeed in the right environment. In most of the cases, the pattern of ownership and power that define access to resources was not sufficiently altered through cooperatives. Prevailing land tenure and level of education, together with the existing culture, were not able to generate the resources needed to reduce poverty. The role of policy support in terms of land reform, credit allocation, education and social services were much needed to benefit the poor through cooperative activities.

The Third Generation Cooperatives emerged following the policy reforms that took place in the 1980s in many developing countries. During the liberalization period, state driven cooperatives already in place were considered obsolete models, and were denied budget support from governments. Consequently, they gave way to the emergence of authentic self-help organizations from the grassroots, rooted in local communities and representing local producers. However, cooperatives are still seen as important means of creating employment, overcoming poverty, achieving social integration, and mobilizing resources effectively. But the methods by

which they will do so have changed with a new development paradigm that emphasizes a bottom-up approach. Cooperatives do not help the poor but, by working together, by pooling their resources, by submitting themselves to group discipline and by accepting to combine self-interest and group solidarity, the poor can solve some of their problems by way of organized self-help and mutual aid better than alone.

The history of cooperative development and its impact on poverty reduction shows that cooperatives do not necessarily lead to desirable development outcomes unless they are genuinely established and managed, with considerable participation of the poor. Most of the faults are attributed to government intervention under a twisted role of cooperatives.³ While government support is useful for cooperative development, it should not derail cooperatives from standing as competitive business enterprises operating in a free market context. Yet, cooperatives are considered to be the preferred form of organization and perhaps the only organization with which rural people are familiar (Hussi *et al.*, 1993) for social and economic development in developing countries, including poverty and hunger reduction goals.

Empirical Evidence: Role of Cooperatives in Reducing Poverty in Africa

THE LITERATURE ON the development impact of cooperatives in Africa is generally scanty. Develtere *et al* (2008) provide a good synthesis of available evidence on the poverty reduction role of cooperatives in Africa, with emphasis on the significance of the African cooperative organizations in resolving some of the major challenges the continent is facing, such as employment creation, poverty reduction, social protection and the representation of the interests of the majority of poor people. Whether cooperatives help the effort of poverty reduction equally depends on how they embrace the poor population profile and women as their members. There are strands of hypotheses that claim that cooperative members' profile in Africa reflects the social stratification outside the cooperatives and infers that cooperatives have limited potential for altering social relations in society, with poorer segments of the population not finding their way to the cooperatives and they might even face exclusion from cooperatives. Similarly, women participation is said to be weak.

However, findings from the studies on which the report of Develtere *et al* (2008) is based suggest that cooperatives mainly operate in rural and urban areas where poverty prevails, with the rural poor smallholders constituting the bulk of the members. It is also known that there exist poor-only cooperatives created to enable members to do petty trading and support each other in periods of crisis or when in need for credit. These cooperatives can help to mitigate risks and vulnerability through (mostly informal and ad hoc) self-help practices or other mutually beneficial exchanges. And it can be expected that the poor who participate in these cooperative groups gain important returns from their participation. However, the problem is that most of such types of cooperatives are not able to help their members to graduate from mere subsistence. The cooperatives themselves mostly remain stagnant. The homogeneity of the members constituting such types of cooperatives might be problematic in the sense that members are poor, hence, unable to mobilize capital and other resources to play a significant role.

3) Some of the limitations of cooperatives in terms of their development outcomes are also attributed to the roles of donors.

Employment creation

TABLE 1 Estimated cooperative employment (direct) in selected African countries (2008)

Country	Cooperative staff
Egypt	9,500
Ethiopia	28,000
Ghana	3,130
Kenya	77,400
Rwanda	800
Uganda	2,823
Total	121653

Source: Develtere *et al.* (2008).

Notwithstanding the lack of accurate data on the employment outcomes of cooperatives (direct and indirect), the employment opportunities generated by cooperatives are considered to be significant (Table 1). In six countries cooperatives are estimated to have direct employed 121653. A study conducted Schwettmann (1997) show that cooperatives in 15 African countries provided 158,640 direct jobs and 5,937 indirect jobs, and supported 467,735 self-employed people.

Table 1 show that the employment capacity of cooperatives is high Kenya and Ethiopia, compared to Egypt. The difference may be due, partly, to differences in the structure of the markets and population distribution. In Egypt, the public sector provides services to people in cities, towns and villages high concentrated along the two banks of river Nile and the coasts. Also, Egypt imports most of its food from other countries.

Poverty reduction

Although there is a strong assumption, especially on the part of cooperative promoters and the proponents of the cooperative model of development, that cooperatives do have a significant potential to lift people out of poverty, there is lack of systematic analytic results on the impact of cooperatives on poverty reduction in Africa. Whether cooperatives generate poverty reduction impacts starts, among other things, with whether they embrace poor people as cooperative members. The evidence is that most cooperatives embrace smallholder farmers in the rural

areas as members. Yet, the poorest segments of the population are found excluding themselves or being excluded.

On the other side, some cooperatives favor only the participation of members who are not so poor. Discussions in Develtere *et al.* (2008) with regard to the impact of cooperatives on poverty reduction in Africa are generally positive, including positive impacts in terms of linking smallholder farmers to international markets (for example, the case of Ethiopian Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union), providing cash to be used for different purposes, including social services such as payment for school fees (for example, the case of Jinja Teachers Savings and Credit Society in Uganda).

Policy Recommendations

Cooperatives have the potential to more effectively reduce poverty than other forms of economic organizations, provided that their values and principles are respected. However, the growth outcomes and poverty reduction benefits from cooperatives are not automatic. Cooperatives do not have vested mechanisms to automatically reduce poverty but are important organizational forms to help the poor organize themselves to better mobilize their resources, to get protection, to have better market participation through reduced transaction costs, and to have better participation, which all contribute towards poverty reduction. The poor will have a better chance of success to break out of poverty and hunger cycles under cooperatives than alone. Unleashing the potential roles of cooperatives requires the following actions:

- a. Create favorable policy environment for cooperatives (and group activities)
- b. Maintain cooperative identity based on cooperative values and principles. That is, cooperatives should be genuine in the sense that they are fully owned and managed by members and run on business principles in line with the principles of a market economy⁴
- c. Enable the business environment through investment climate and physical infrastructure such as transport, information and communication, and power supply
- d. Promote viability (successful business performance), with no major internal weakness and managerial problems;

4) ILO underscores the need for equal treatment of cooperatives vis-à-vis other types of enterprises and social organizations if cooperatives are to be useful for promoting social and economic development and to deliver pro-poor results. Moreover, it defines the government's role in creating a supportive policy and legal framework, and in facilitating access to support services and finance without undue interference.

- e. Provide assistance for capacity building (managerial skills for cooperatives)
- f. Embrace the poor as cooperative members and provide special support for entrepreneurs and

entrepreneurship in the informal sector to address the special needs of the poor;

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Socio-economic Implications of Closing the Gender Gap in Education in Africa

By Harry A. Sackey*

Abstract

CLOSING THE GENDER gap in education is appropriate for equity reasons and has long-term implications for socio-economic development in Africa. The gap in gender parity is narrowing for Africa as a whole, and there is some evidence of convergence in the gender education parity ratio. From a cross-country perspective, this study finds that increases in per capita income, government expenditure on education and foreign aid for education are associated with an

increase in the gender parity ratio in primary and secondary education. At the household level, parents' educational attainment, household financial resources, community safety, demographics and school infrastructure are the major determinants of schooling for girls and boys in rural and urban areas. Higher levels of female educational attainment are associated with higher earnings, lower poverty incidence and improved survival of children in Africa.

Introduction

THE IMPORTANCE OF education in human capital formation and subsequent utilization for economic development cannot be overemphasized. The transmission mechanisms of education include increased employability, rising income, increased accessibility to goods and services, improvement in standards of living and well-being, community stabilization, and an enabling environment for the socio-economic development of children.¹⁷ Notwithstanding the envisaged benefits from education, the issue of pervasive gender gap in education in Africa has generated so much concern among non-governmental organizations, donor community and global institutions such as the United Nations.

Closing the gender gap in education is appropriate for equity reasons and has long-term implications for socio-economic development in Africa. The human development impacts make women's education as important as their male counterparts. Unfortunately this is not yet a reality as mentioned in the "Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007". This raises a number of pertinent questions on progress being made within the context of gender education in Africa, notably: how wide is the gender gap in primary and secondary education in Africa and has this gap been narrowing overtime in the light of NEPAD's framework? Is there any empirical evidence on the convergence in the ratio of girls-to-boys enrolments

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1) See Aryes and Simon (2003) for an elaboration on Amartya Sen's capability approach.

in primary and secondary schools in Africa? Has donor funding for education increased since the turn of the century, in line with the call from NEPAD? What are the determinants of the gender gap in education at the macro level and what do they mean for education policy in Africa? At the household level (micro level) what factors encourage school attendance for boys and girls? What are the implications of gender education gap narrowing for standards of living in Africa? These are the core issues addressed in this paper.

In the ensuing section a discussion on data and methodology is provided. Subsequently, an analysis on progress

made so far in connection with gender parity in schooling is presented, followed by an examination of trends in the flow of financial resources for education from domestic (government) and foreign sources (official development assistance). The results from econometric estimates on determinants of gender parity in schooling at the macro level are presented in Section 4, which also includes model results from estimating the determinants of school attendance at the household (micro) level. Section 5 discusses the socio-economic implications for closing the gender gap in education, and provides some conclusions and remarks.

Data and Methodology

CROSS-COUNTRY DATA FROM the World Bank's World Development Indicators and the OECD geographical flows of financial resources to developing countries are used to address the macro issues related to gender education (progress and current situation) in Africa. The database provides authentic and quality information on socio-economic variables such as education enrolment ratios, per capita income, government disbursements on the education sector and aid commitments to the education sector.

In examining the determinants of Africa's gender gap in education, a regression analysis is carried out with a focus on the following variables from each country: the level of

development (Real GDP per capita measured in constant 2000 US\$ used as a proxy); the commitment of government towards education (Public spending on education as share of GDP used as a proxy); education quality (measured by student-teacher ratio at the primary level); and donor commitment to education (represented by foreign aid commitments to education sector expressed as a share of the recipient's GDP). The selection of 20 countries (listed in table 2) for this study is conditioned by availability of data on the major variables used in the empirical models. Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for the core variables are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for major variables used in the study: 1999-2007

Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum	No. of countries
Girls to boys in primary and secondary ed. (%)	81.22	12.46	55.75	102.31	20
Real GDP per capita (constant 2000 US\$)	312.40	139.53	125.81	687.47	20
Govt. Expenditure on education (% of GDP)	3.74	1.28	1.64	7.17	20
Student-to-teacher ratio	48	10	32	70	20
Education ODA (% of GDP)	0.90	0.62	0.08	3.09	20
Correlation matrix	.				
	Girls-to-boys education ratio	Real GDP per capita	Govt. expenditure on education	Student-to-teacher ratio	Education ODA ratio
Girls- to- boys education ratio	1.00				
Real GDP per capita	0.49	1.00			
Govt. expenditure on education	0.45	0.02	1.00		
Student-to-teacher ratio	-0.33	-0.18	-0.30	1.00	
Education ODA ratio	0.10	-0.05	0.10	0.17	1.00

The correlation matrix shows that per capita income, government education expenditure ratio and education ODA ratio are positively associated with the ratio of girls-to-boys in primary and secondary education. On the other hand, there is a negative association between the student-to-teacher ratio and the ratio of girls-to-boys in primary and secondary education, real GDP per capita and government expenditure on education. In examining what factors increase the ratio of girls-to-boys in primary and secondary education in Africa, the following equation was estimated by ordinary least squares:

$$1: \quad \text{EDR}_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{PCI}_i + \alpha_2 \text{GOVEDS}_i + \alpha_3 \text{STR}_i + \alpha_4 \text{EDODA}_i + \alpha_5 \text{WADUM}_i + \varepsilon_i$$

where: EDR_i is the ratio of girls-to-boys in primary and secondary education for the i^{th} country; PCI_i is the real GDP per capita for the i^{th} country; GOVEDS_i represents government expenditure on education expressed as a share of GDP for the i^{th} country; STR_i is the student-to-teacher ratio for the i^{th} country; EDODA_i is the education ODA ratio for the i^{th} country; WADUM_i is a dummy variable for West African countries included in our sample; and ε is the error term.¹⁸ A double-log specification is used to allow for model interpretation in terms of elasticity.

In the case of estimating the determinants of current school attendance at the household level, a probit model is used. The empirical model estimated is based on empirical models commonly used in the literature. Glick and Sahn (2000) point out that current schooling status modeling has an edge over grade attainment in that it allows current schooling choices to be related to contemporaneous aspects of any given household such as income and household structure. The probit model estimated is of the following form:

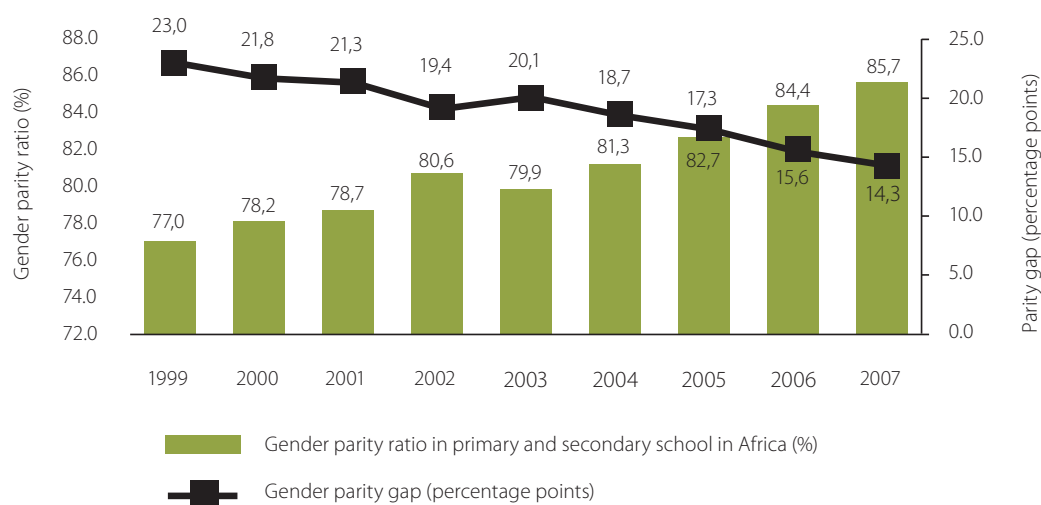
$$2: \quad \begin{aligned} y_i^* &= x_i \beta + \varepsilon_i, \quad i = 1, \dots, n \\ y_i &= 1 \text{ if } y_i^* > 0 \\ y_i &= 0 \text{ if otherwise} \\ \varepsilon &\approx N(0, 1) \end{aligned}$$

Where: y_i , the current school enrolment status, is a binary response indicator of the i^{th} individual determined by the underlying latent variable y_i^* ; x_i is a vector of explanatory variables (personal, household, and regional characteristics), β is a vector of unknown parameters to be estimated, and ε_i is the error term. The coefficients obtained in the probit estimation only serve to provide a sense of the direction of the effects of the covariates on the dependent variable, and cannot be used for magnitude impact analysis. To examine the magnitude of impact, the marginal impact of the explanatory variables on the probability of current school enrolment are provided.

The set of variables representing household and personal characteristics in our empirical model on current school attendance includes school attainment of the head of the child's household, the welfare status of the household, age of child and health status. Community safety and school infrastructure proximity are also included in the model. The data comes from the Ghana Statistical Service's 2003 core welfare indicators (CWIQ) survey, a nationally representative survey. The CWIQ survey covered 49,003 households obtained through a district-based probability sampling technique. The sample used in this study comprises 73,139 children aged between 6 and 18 years. In terms of gender, girls made up 48% of the sample are in terms of locality, 68% of the girls and boys resided in rural areas.

2) Our a priori expectations are that: $\alpha_1 > 0$; $\alpha_2 > 0$; $\alpha_3 < 0$; $\alpha_4 > 0$; and $\alpha_5 < 0$.

FIGURE 1 Gender parity ratio and parity gap in primary and secondary education in Africa



Source: Author's calculations based on data from the World Bank's World Development Indicators

Progress in gender parity in primary and secondary education

THE GENDER PARITY ratio in primary and secondary school is often used as a proxy measure for the relative accessibility of schooling for girls.¹⁹ Secondary education is commonly viewed as “laying foundations for lifelong learning and human development, by offering more subject-or skill-oriented instruction using more specialized teachers” (WDR 2006, p.302). Gender parity ratios in primary and secondary school in Africa have increased overtime. In 1999 the gender parity ratio for Africa was 77%; this increased to 81.3% in 2004 after a slight slippage in 2003, and then increased again to 85.7% in 2007 (Figure 1). At the same time, the gender parity gap fell from 23 percentage points in 1999 to 14.3 percentage points in 2007. These gender ratios suggest an improvement in female schooling incidence, and a tendency towards a narrowing of the gender gap in education.

Extending the analysis to include per capita income thresholds and country specific performance, Table 2 provides another perspective on gender education in Africa. The average gender parity ratio in 2007 was 82.6% for countries with relatively lower average annual per capita income in Africa (i.e., real per capita income of less than \$400 during the eight year period spanning 1999 through 2007). In the case of the countries with average annual real per capita income of between \$400 and \$699, the gender parity ratio

was 94.6% in 2007, as shown in Table 2. The data suggests that for the 8-year period under consideration, the gender parity school ratio increased, on average, by about 10 percentage points for the group of relatively low income countries (from 72.9% in 1999 to 82.6% in 2007), while for countries above the \$400 per capita income threshold the gender parity ratio increased by 4.5 percentage points (from 90.1% in 1999 to 94.6% in 2007).

However, it must be pointed out that there are marked differences among countries in the extent of achievement as far as gender parity in schooling is concerned. Between 1999 and 2007, Kenya experienced a reduction in the gender parity ratio by 1.5 percentage points; Eritrea experienced no change in the gender parity ratio; and Ethiopia experienced almost 21 percentage point increase in the gender parity ratio. Overall, 20% of the countries included in this study experienced either no change or a decline in gender parity in primary and secondary education; 50% had a single-digit increase in the gender parity ratio; and 40% had a double-digit increase in the gender parity ratio in primary and secondary education. Generally, countries that have experienced civil strife, severe drought and famine, political instability and poor macroeconomic performance, among other adverse factors, tend to have performed poorly as far as closing the gender gap in education is concerned.

3) *The gender parity ratio in primary and secondary education is measured by the ratio of female gross enrolments in primary and secondary school to the gross enrolments of males.*

TABLE 2 Gender parity ratios in primary and secondary school in Africa: 1999-2007

	Less than \$400 annual per capita income			\$400 - \$699 annual per capita income			
	Gender parity ratio in primary and secondary school (%)				Gender parity ratio in primary and secondary school (%)		
Countries	1999	2007	Difference	Countries	1999	2007	Difference
Benin	62.3	73.5	11.2	Cameroon	82.4	84.5	2.1
Burkina Faso	68.4	81.8	13.4	Kenya	96.7	95.2	-1.5
Chad	53.3	64.3	11.0	Mauritania	95.3	102.6	7.3
Eritrea	77.8	77.8	0.0	Senegal	81.5	93.6	12.1
Ethiopia	61.7	82.6	20.9	Zimbabwe	94.6	97.2	2.6
Ghana	88.3	95.2	6.9				
Guinea	57.9	76.1	18.2				
Malawi	90.5	99.8	9.3				
Mali	65.9	76.0	10.1				
Mozambique	73.5	85.4	11.9				
Niger	65.6	71.5	5.9				
Sierra Leone	81.5	86.4	4.9				
Togo	67.1	75.2	8.1				
Uganda	90.0	98.5	8.5				
Zambia	90.1	95.6	5.5				
<i>Average</i>	72.9	82.6	9.7		90.1	94.6	4.5
<i>Median</i>	68.4	81.8	13.4		94.6	95.2	0.6
<i>Coef of variation (%)</i>	17.3	12.9			8.3	7.0	

Note: The gender parity ratio in primary and secondary education is the ratio of female gross enrolments in primary and secondary school to the gross enrolments of males. The average annual per capita income is calculated for the period 1999 to 2007 based on constant 2000 US\$. The most recent year in terms of data on gender parity ratio for Benin was 2005 and for Zimbabwe this was 2006 and these have therefore been used for these two countries in 2007, as the closest approximation.

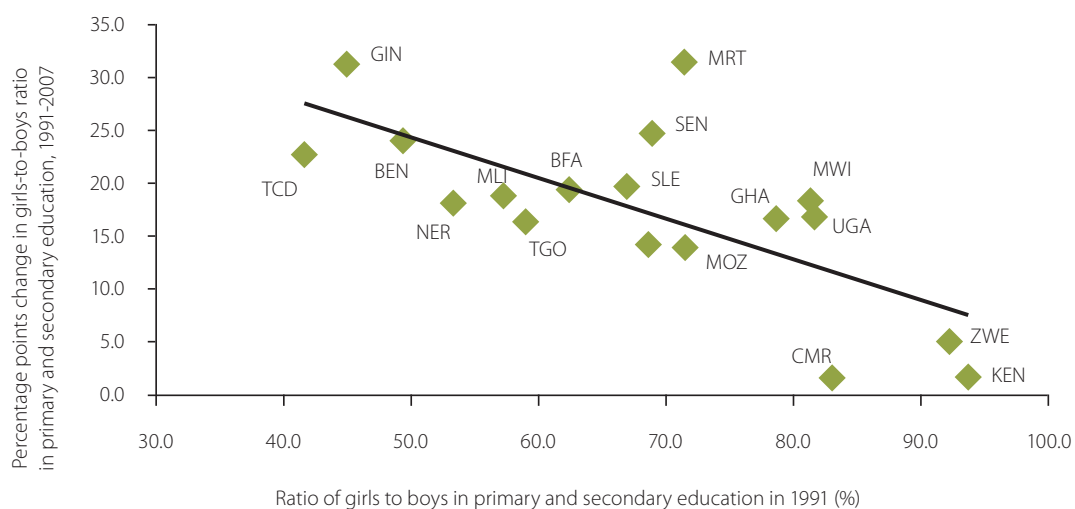
Source: Based on World Development Indicators

The data suggests that in the eight year period under consideration, the gender parity school ratio has increased much faster for relatively lower income countries, compared to countries with annual per capita income of \$400 or higher. Is there a convergence in the gender parity ratio in Africa? In order to answer this question a scatter plot on the relationship between the gender parity ratio in primary and secondary education in 1991 (the initial year for which data was obtained) and the change in the gender parity ratio between then and now (between 1991 and 2007) has been generated and displayed in Figure 2. The correlation coefficient of -0.64 suggests an inverse association between the two variables. Thus, there seems to be an indication of convergence in the enrolment ratios of girls-to-boys in primary and secondary education in Africa (based on the sample of countries used in this study). Countries that started off with relatively low gender parity enrolment ratios in 1991 (such as Chad, Benin and

Guinea) have in the last 16 years or so, experienced faster growth rates in the gender parity indicator, while those countries that started off with relatively higher ratios in 1991 (such as Cameroon, Kenya and Zimbabwe) have experienced relatively lower growth in the gender parity ratio. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go for countries that started off with relatively lower gender parity ratios, as far as gender parity attainment is concerned.

The current situation regarding parity attainment in primary and secondary school is shown in Figure 2. For countries such as Chad and Benin it has taken them 8 years to realize 11 percentage points increase in the ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education (based on Table 2), and assuming this scenario prevails, then gender parity is unlikely to occur before 2020. Countries that are very close to realizing gender parity in schooling include Mali, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

FIGURE 2 Convergence in girls-to-boys ratio in primary and secondary education in Africa

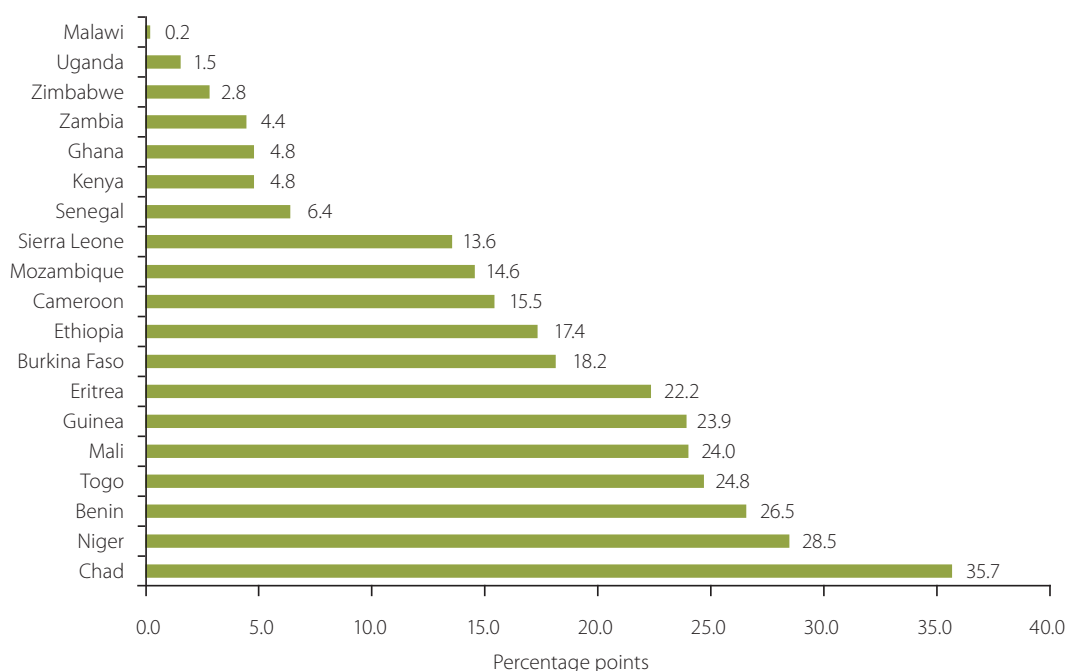


Source: Based on data from World Development Indicators

A discussion on gender parity progress and current situation will not be complete without considering the financial resources for education. Generally, government spending on education has been less than 4% of GDP, though from a trend perspective there appears to have been a modest improvement in budgetary allocation towards education. In the case of donor support for education in Africa, this has generally been less than 1% of Africa’s GDP. Expressed as a share of GDP, public spending on education in Africa

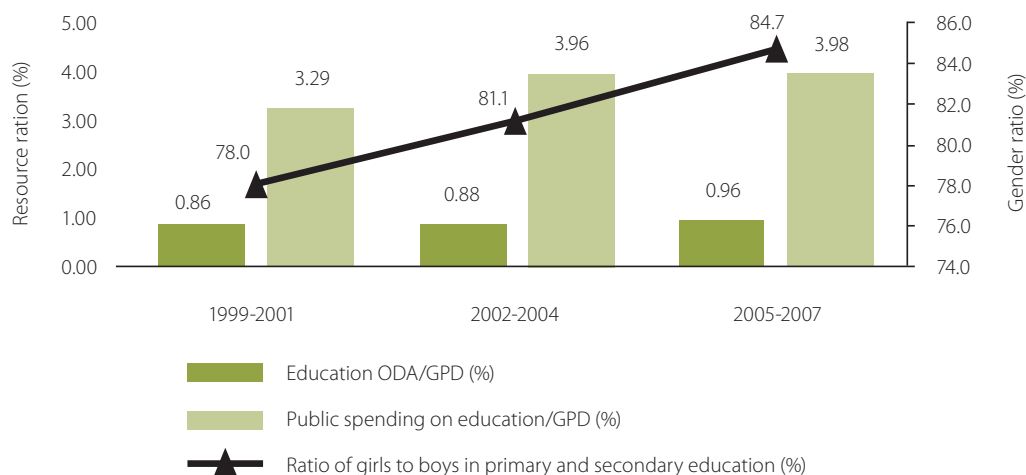
increased from 3.29% in 1999-2001 to 3.98% in 2005-2007. On the other hand bilateral ODA commitments to education from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors increased from 0.86% in 1999-2001 to 0.96% in 2005-2007. The (modest) increases registered in the flow of official financial resources to education are consistent with NEDAD’s call for additional financial resources towards education.

FIGURE 3 Gender parity gap in primary and secondary education in Africa, as of 2007



Source: Based on data from World Development Indicators

FIGURE 4 Education financial resources and gender enrolment in primary and secondary schools in Africa, 1999-2007



Source: Authors calculations based on data from World Development Indicators and OECD databases on aid distribution

Results from empirical estimates

Cross-country results on education gender parity determinants

Table 3 shows the results from cross-country education gender parity regressions for a sample of 20 African countries. Three-year averages for the period 1999 through 2007 (leading to 3 groups) were created. This gave rise to a total of 60 observations. Time dummy variables were created for each of the three groups in order to account for the time-effects on school enrolment, as summarized in the gender parity ratio. In model 1, an exclusive focus is given

to the role of economic growth in enhancing female access to primary and secondary schools, and therefore increasing the gender parity ratio. Model 2, adds the government spending on education variable; model 3 then adds education quality proxied by the student-to-teacher ratio; and finally model 4 provides a more complete picture by adding foreign aid contributions towards education. The adjusted coefficient of determination shown in model 4 indicate that the set of variables included in our regression explain about 60% of the variation in the gender parity ratio. This is fairly high for a cross-country regression.

TABLE 3 Determinants of gender parity in education in Africa

Dependent variable: Log(ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education) Estimation technique: OLS								
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Coef	t-value	Coef	t-value	Coef	t-value	Coef	t-value
Log (GDP per capita)	0.142*	3.45	0.148*	4.06	0.120*	3.53	0.131*	4.24
Log (Public education expenditure ratio)			0.189*	4.31	0.154*	3.54	0.117*	2.89
Log (Student-to-teacher ratio)					-0.257*	-3.00	-0.363*	-4.36
Log (Education ODA ratio)							0.069*	3.51
F-statistic	5.24		8.7		10.49		12.78	
Adj. R-squared	0.223		0.399		0.504		0.596	
No of observations	60		59		57		57	

Note: * indicates statistical significance at the 1% level. The models were estimated with a constant term, a regional dummy variable and time-effect variables.

Generally, per capita income, government expenditures on education and foreign aid commitments to the education sector have significant positive effects on gender parity ratio. In other words, increasing per capita income, government expenditures on education and foreign aid for education tend to be associated with increases in female enrolments in primary and secondary schools, and subsequent increases in the gender parity ratio. More specifically, holding all other factors constant: a one percentage point increase in per capita income improves gender parity by 1.3%; a one percentage point increase in government's budgetary allocation towards education increases the gender parity ratio by 1.1%; and finally a one percentage point increase in donor aid allocation towards education tends to increase the enrolment ratio of girls-to-boys in primary and secondary education by about 0.1%.

These findings are important for African countries and suggest that policy efforts tailored towards the realization of growth tend to create an environment which facilitates school attendance by girls. A growing economy eases the financial burdens on parents and reduces then urgency for children especially girls, to drop out of school in order to work to support their families, *ceteris paribus*. In a way, it seems to be the case that a "growing economy" is also more likely to be a "schooling economy" with greater opportunities for participation by girls, all things being equal.²⁰

A major concern for most basic education institutions in Africa is inadequate public funding. There are cases of inadequate school infrastructure or deterioration of such infrastructure by virtue of limited capital budget allocation.²¹ These tendencies could serve as a deterrent for school attendance, especially in rural areas in Africa. The estimated results show that additional flows of budgetary allocations towards education help to reduce the gender gap in education.

Unlike the three factors discussed above, an increase in the student-to-teacher ratio tends to be associated with a reduction in the gender parity ratio, holding all other factors constant. Having too many students per teacher could lead to over-stretching of the teacher in terms of the attention each student can get when needed. In the early stages of schooling, the interest of students in schooling can be sustained when the teacher is able to pay attention to the students through words of encouragement and building of trust. Unfortunately, very large class size makes it difficult for these to occur. The need to have more teachers trained in addition to more school infrastructure cannot be overemphasized.

- 4) This notion of growth-enhancement effects on female schooling incidence should not be misconstrued to be contradictory to the counter-cyclical effects on post-secondary education attendance commonly observed in advanced countries.
- 5) This issue was reaffirmed in NEPAD's action plan.

Cross-sectional results on school attendance determinants: Ghana case study

The Ghana Living Standards Survey Reports 4 and 5, published by the Ghana Statistical Service in 2000 and 2008 respectively show that school attendance for females aged between 6 and 25 years increased from 58.4% in 1999 to 84.5% in 2006, while that for males increased from 66.2% in 1999 to 87.8% in 2006. These numbers suggest that in 1999 the gender gap in school attendance was 7.8 percentage points, while in 2006 this fell to 3.3 percentage points. This suggests a narrowing of the gender gap in school attendance. What factors account for school attendance in Ghana? In order to answer this question an econometric analysis on school attendance was carried out using data from the 2003 CWIQ survey carried out by the Ghana Statistical Service. The results from probit regression models on school attendance determination in urban and rural areas are shown in Table 4.

Current school attendance for girls in urban areas is about 1.2 times higher than their counterparts in rural areas (81.65 vs. 68.6%) in 2003. For boys on the other hand attendance rate in urban areas is 1.23 times higher than what occurs for boys in rural areas (87.1% vs. 70.8%). The models predict a gender school attendance gap of 5.3 percentage points in urban areas and 2.4 percentage points in rural areas.

The age group 6 to 18 years is the typical age cohort for primary and secondary education in Ghana. In relation to those aged between 15 to 18 years, the models suggest that the probability of attending school peaks much earlier for girls than boys. In the case of girls, school attendance reaches a peak for those aged between 9 and 11 years (just at primary school completion threshold), while for boys the tendency to attend school reaches a peak for those aged between 12 and 14 years (a junior secondary school age category). This portrait is consistent with the observation of relative dominance of boys at the secondary education level.

There is a positive association between the educational attainment of the household heads (parents) and the probability of children's current school attendance. In relation to those with no school attainment, the effects of relatively lower levels of education on children's school attendance is higher for boys than it is for girls but at higher levels of educational attainment for parents, the effects on girls school attendance exceeds that of boys in both urban and rural areas. In fact in rural areas the effects of parental educational attainment on school attendance appears to be stronger than in urban areas.

TABLE 4 Determinants of current school attendance for children aged between 6 and 18 years in Ghana; 2003

Dependent variable: Current school attendance (dummy variable: 1=attends school; 0=otherwise) Estimation technique: Probit								
	Urban areas				Rural areas			
	Female children		Male children		Female children		Male children	
	Marginal effect	z-value	Marginal effect	z-value	Marginal effect	z-value	Marginal effect	z-value
<i>Child's age</i>								
6 to 8 years	0.168*	23.62	0.102*	17.89	0.209*	27.64	0.115*	16.45
9 to 11 years	0.189*	25.94	0.121*	20.60	0.255*	33.31	0.174*	24.42
12 to 14 years	0.165*	23.49	0.122*	20.96	0.226*	29.14	0.179*	25.09
<i>Child's health status</i>								
Has a disability	-0.096*	-3.50	-0.082*	-3.75	-0.152*	-6.19	-0.127*	-5.97
<i>Household welfare status</i>								
Second quintile	0.096*	8.21	0.069*	8.39	0.117*	15.33	0.121*	17.91
Third quintile	0.105*	8.82	0.077*	9.08	0.150*	16.87	0.135*	16.63
Fourth quintile	0.118*	9.90	0.079*	9.27	0.139*	13.98	0.134*	14.30
Highest quintile	0.094*	7.54	0.072*	7.86	0.101*	8.74	0.106*	9.53
<i>Household head's educational level</i>								
Some primary	0.027***	1.65	0.032*	2.68	0.124*	10.41	0.124*	11.50
Completed primary	0.043**	2.27	0.013	0.81	0.109*	6.44	0.093*	5.73
Some secondary	0.046*	3.31	0.042*	3.83	0.126*	9.69	0.150*	12.76
Completed secondary	0.094*	11.71	0.064*	10.08	0.199*	26.40	0.195*	28.50
Post secondary	0.090*	8.60	0.083*	10.29	0.217*	13.22	0.206*	13.00
<i>School infrastructure proximity</i>								
Primary school over 1 hour from home	-0.081	-1.56	-0.013	-0.36	-0.223*	-16.00	-0.220*	-18.07
Secondary school over 1 hour from home	-0.052*	-4.07	-0.040*	-3.86	-0.113*	-16.70	-0.100*	-16.59
<i>Community safety</i>								
No violent attacks on members	0.023***	1.93	0.016***	1.69	0.029**	2.17	0.010	0.80
Chi-square	1548.3		1223.9		4560.1		4757.8	
Pseudo R-squared	0.138		0.137		0.157		0.149	
No. of observations	11736		11604		23309		26490	
Observed probability for schooling	0.816		0.871		0.686		0.708	
Predicted probability for schooling	0.849		0.902		0.718		0.742	

Note: *, ** and *** indicate statistical significance at the 1%, 5% and 10% levels respectively.

Household financial resource (using household expenditure per capita quintile groups as proxy) is seen to be a statistically significant determinant of school attendance of girls and boys in urban and rural areas. In relation to the lowest welfare quintile, belonging to a household in higher quintile groups increases the probability of schooling. The lowest quintile group is typically made up of household that fall below the national poverty threshold. What this means is that the poor tend to stand the risk of having their children not attending school, which in the absence of policy interventions, could create an intergenerational cycle of low school attendance for this vulnerable group. The financial resource effects on school attendance for girls and boys are higher in rural than in urban areas.

Generally the results are consistent with theoretical expectations. Card (1999) points out that, there is a strong intergenerational correlation in education. The quantity and quality of time devoted by parents to their children is positively related to parents' education status. The attributes of parents also influence family income which in turn affects the quality and quantity of goods which bear directly on home investment (Leibowitz, 1974). The amount of family income or household resources allocated to children and the timing of their distribution ultimately affects the schooling attainments of children (Haveman and Wolfe, 1995).

Socio-economic Implications and Conclusions

IT IS BECOMING increasingly clear to policy makers that productive employment with sustainable earnings is a key strategy for poverty reduction. Schooling is integral to this approach as it enhances the adaptability and efficiency of workers. Barro and Lee (2001) observed that a greater amount of educational attainment implies more skilled and productive workers, who in turn increase the output of goods and services. An abundance of well-educated human resources also helps to facilitate the absorption of advanced technologies. Moreover, the level and distribution of educational attainment has a strong impact on social outcomes such as children's education, child mortality and income distribution. NEPAD explicitly recognizes the fact that socio-economic development manifested through lower incidence of poverty can be achieved through human and physical resource development and gender equality, among other factors.

Having a disability (hearing or speech, moving, convulsion, seeing, learning and other disabilities), compared to not having one, is negatively associated with school attendance. In both urban and rural areas the disability effect on school attendance is higher for girls than boys, and the effect is higher for rural areas than in urban areas.

Community safety also determines school attendance. The absence of violent attacks on girls, compared to the presence of such attacks, increases the probability of school attendance by 2.3% in urban areas and 2.9% in rural areas. In the case of boys in urban areas the absence of violent attacks is associated with a 1.6% probability of school attendance. In rural areas, however, this variable appears to be statistically insignificant.

While there is some empirical evidence that education benefits individuals and community, obstacles to schooling such as school infrastructure could prevent the realization of such benefits. The distance to schooling is associated with a reduction in the probability of school attendance in both urban and rural areas, but much more in rural areas. The effect of this variable on school attendance tends to be relatively higher for girls than it is for boys.

Women's education is generally expected to have a positive impact on labor market participation, and at the same time to reduce the number of children born to the woman.²² This essentially derives from the high opportunity cost of having many children and not participating in the labor market, after having acquired higher education. School attainment has a positive impact on earnings.

Recent empirical work on returns to schooling in sub-Saharan Africa includes the analysis on: South Africa by Keswell and Poswell (2004); Nigeria by Aromolan (2006, 2004), and Okuwa (2004); Kenya by Kimenyi *et al* (2006); Zambia by Nielsen and Westergard-Nielsen (2001); Ghana by Sackey (2008), and Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana by Schultz

6) See Schultz (1994) for further elaborations

(1999). These studies suggest that schooling pays off.²³ For example, in the case of Nigeria, Aromolan (2006; 2004) found the returns to an additional year of schooling at the post-secondary level were 10.4% for male and 12.2% for female wage earners; and 13.7% for self-employed male and 15.4% for self-employed females. Generally, the wage returns to an additional year of post-secondary education were found to be between 10% and 15% for workers in the labor market in Nigerian. However at the primary and secondary levels, these returns were quite low, ranging between 2% and 4%.

Similarly, in the case of Kenya, Kimenyi *et al.* (2006) found a positive relationship between the level of education and the associated returns. Taking into account human externalities, the returns to an additional year of schooling increased from about 8% for primary school to 23% for secondary school and then to 25% for university level of education. The authors concluded that: "... public policies

that expand schooling opportunities for underprivileged social groups benefit the whole society via the externality effects of education. The benefits are in terms of improved productivity and earnings" (Kimenyi *et al.*, p.510).

Rising income for females by virtue of higher schooling attainment and productive employment will help reduce the incidence of poverty in Africa, especially among female-headed households. Data from national household surveys conducted in 10 African countries between 1997 and 2003 suggest that, on average about 23% of households in Africa are headed by females. What does higher school attainment and narrowing of the gender gap in education imply for female headed households? To answer this question Table 5 is provided to highlight poverty incidence in Africa, the share of national consumption accruing to the poorest 20 % of households, the relationship between school attainment and household consumption and the proportion of households headed by females.

7) Sackey (2008) found that for female workers in Ghana, "the return to an additional year of secondary schooling increased from 7.3% in 1992 to 12.3% in 1999. In the case of tertiary education, the change was from 11.4% in 1992 to 18.4% in 1999. For male workers the return to an additional year of secondary education decreased from about 7% to 6%, while the return to tertiary education increased from about 13% to 19%. Generally, the rising rates of return at higher school levels have coincided with a similar trend in school attendance rates for female and male children." (p.1)

TABLE 5 Incidence of poverty, female household headship incidence and the marginal impact of education on poverty

Countries	Survey year	Poverty headcount ratio (%)	Poorest 20 % share of national consumption		Female-headed households (%)	
			Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Burkina Faso	2003	46.4	3.8	5.7	5	13
Cameroon	2001	40.2	2.4	4.3	23	25
Ethiopia	2000	44.2	3.6	4.2	24	41
Ghana	1999	39.5	2.3	3.9	30	36
Kenya	1997	52.0	1.8	4.2	31	21
Malawi	1998	65.3	1.1	3.7	26	16
Mozambique	1997	69.4	2.9	2.8	21	22
Sierra Leone	2003	70.2	3.5	5.3	14	21
Uganda	2003	33.7	3.5	5.1	24	38
Zambia	1998	72.9	1.2	2.9	23	20
<i>Average</i>		53.4%	2.6%	4.2%	22.1%	25.3%

Share of household consumption expenditures in Ghana national consumption in 2003, based on educational status of household head								
	Female-headed households				Male-headed households			
	Household head's educational attainment				Household head's educational attainment			
	No schooling	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	No schooling	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Rural Ghana	4.7%	4.9%	5.4%	6.4%	4.2%	5.2%	5.6%	6.1%
Urban Ghana	6.4%	6.5%	7.1%	8.5%	6.4%	6.6%	7.3%	8.7%
<i>Total</i>	11.1%	11.4%	12.5%	15.0%	10.6%	11.8%	12.8%	14.8%

Dependent variable: Poorest 20 % incidence in Ghana (dummy variable: 1= household belongs to poorest 20 %; 0=otherwise)								
Estimation technique: Probit								
	Rural Households in Ghana, 2003				Urban Households in Ghana, 2003			
	Female headed		Male-headed		Female headed		Male-headed	
	Marginal	z-value	Marginal	z-value	Marginal	z-value	Marginal	z-value
Household head's education								
Primary education	-0.040*	-4.24	-0.153*	-15.69	-0.005	-1.23	-0.014*	-4.90
Secondary education	-0.072*	-9.11	-0.230*	-34.07	-0.020*	-5.97	-0.034*	-13.78
Tertiary education	-0.089*	-4.14	-0.206*	-15.39	-0.018*	-2.91	-0.027*	-9.75
LR chi squared	1055.1		7064.5		186.6		796.8	
Pseudo R-squared	0.170		0.256		0.116		0.207	
No. of households	7960		22758		6367		11893	

Note: * indicates statistical significance at the 1% level. The omitted category for the schooling levels specified in the above models is "no schooling". The models were estimated with a constant term, household head's age, household size and employment status variables.

Source: Data on poverty incidence in countries listed and female-headed households were obtained from the World Bank's "Africa Development Indicators 2006: From Promises to Results".

The sample of countries listed in Table 5 shows that on average, about one-half of households in Africa were below their national poverty thresholds between 1997 and 2003. Household wellbeing was lower in rural areas compared to urban areas. On average, the consumption ratio for the poorest 20 % of rural households in Africa was 2.6% of the national consumption, while in the case of urban households this was 4.2%. The educational attainment of household heads in both rural and urban areas tends to be an underlying factor in determining the share of household consumption ratios, based on evidence from Ghana. The higher the educational attainment of the female household head, the higher is the share in national consumption, and therefore the better the wellbeing of the household, holding other factors constant. This pattern prevails in both urban and rural areas and it is also found in male-headed households. Thus, education benefits all-males and females; urban and rural localities.

In order to examine the impact of female educational attainment on poverty incidence, household level models were estimated for Ghana, using data from the 2003 Ghana CWIQ survey. As expected, in relation to “no schooling”, higher levels of school attainment by females are associated with lower poverty incidence, holding other factors constant. Generally, higher levels of schooling create opportunities for employment and with the associated earnings the ability to meet basic needs of life is enhanced. The impact of higher levels of schooling on poverty reduction is higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Given the fact that a larger proportion of the population resides in rural areas, and also the fact that poverty is more prevalent in rural areas, this finding suggests that there is much to be gained in wellbeing (both at the micro and macro levels) when the gender gap in education is closed and beyond that when higher levels of educational attainment are realized particularly for women in Africa.²⁴

Higher school attainment of females helps (through employment) to reduce the incidence of poverty and to improve the survival rate of children. The relationship between the health status of children (using infant mortality rates) and educational attainment of mothers is presented in Table 6. The results clearly show that infant mortality

rates are higher for mothers with no education, and reduce to smaller numbers as higher educational attainment of mothers is reached. Thus, there is an inverse relationship between higher levels of schooling for mothers and the infant mortality rates of their children.

From a nutritional perspective, Sahn (1994) has underscored the contribution of income to consumption in terms of improved nutrition. He notes that income is a critical determinant of long-term nutrition in both rural and urban areas, and as such efforts at raising expenditure levels is one of the salient prerequisites for reducing chronic malnutrition, and therefore, poverty levels. He further observes that raising consumption or expenditure levels is best accomplished via increasing household asset ownership and raising their productivity through education. In this regard closing the gender gap in education and increasing the average years of schooling can make a difference in terms of improving the health status of families in Africa. Through the various channels discussed, it is apparent that closing the gender gap in education is a step in the right direction.

In conclusion, there are indications of progress as far as closing the gender gap in education is concerned. The observation of convergence in the gender parity ratio suggests that countries that started off with huge gender gaps in education are experiencing faster growth in the relative enrolments of girls and in a way closing up the gender gap. However, it seems unlikely that the gap will be closed soon. However, it is important to ensure that the gains realized so far are sustained. The NEPAD framework has provided a policy thrust orientation for governments in Africa and the role of education in that framework is explicit. Growth and development depend primarily on the stock of physical and human capital and technological improvements. The human capital of a nation comprises the education, skills, experience and adaptability of human resources to the production process. The human resources include both males and females and it is through education that Africa’s potential can be unleashed. Closing the gender gap in education is vital and the benefits of education are not only personalized but also tend to spillover to society at large.

8) *The favourable impact of education on household wellbeing has been pointed out in empirical studies on poverty such as Mukheerjee and Benson (2003) on Malawi, Appleton (2002) on Uganda, and Sackey (2004) on Ghana.*

TABLE 6 Health status of children by mother's educational attainment: 1997-2002

Countries	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)		
	Mother's educational level		
	No education	Primary	Secondary or higher
Cameroon	103.9	74.1	49.9
Chad	112.7	101.6	74.9
Ethiopia	119.1	85.0	63.5
Ghana	67.5	70.3	51.3
Guinea	112.0	78.4	75.6
Kenya	82.2	79.7	40.0
Malawi	116.6	114.3	65.4
Mali	130.0	122.4	51.7
Mozambique	155.6	143.9	72.5
Niger	140.9	99.6	70.1
Senegal	76.1	52.1	28.7
Togo	87.4	72.1	54.4
Uganda	106.7	88.4	52.6
Zambia	108.1	98.8	70.3
Zimbabwe	81.1	60.6	54.0
<i>Average</i>	<i>106.7</i>	<i>89.4</i>	<i>58.3</i>

Source: World Development Report 2006 (Table A3, pp. 282-283).

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Achieving Food Security in Africa

By Haregewoin Cherinet*

Abstract

Food insecurity and hunger are widespread in developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and the problem has gained prime attention in the MDGs, whose first goal is “hunger and extreme poverty”. The approaches taken to address food insecurity have often focused on increasing production and to some degree reducing food losses, improving in-country distribution, and addressing poverty to enhance overall access to food. These approaches are crucial, but in order to be more effective and sustainable other equally imperative variables should seriously be considered; which include processing, preservation, preparation of foods as well as intra-household distribution; women’s decision making capacity in spending household income on family food, and the ability to decide on family

planning. There is thus need to define food security at the household level for effective consideration of all variables that interplay in food security, and their gender dimensions. This paper has analyzed the gender dimensions of food security at all stages of the food system, starting from production and going through harvesting, storage, processing, preservation, preparation and consumption. The wider impact of inadequate access to food processing and preparation facilities on environmental conservation and the well-being of women and the family has been explored. Lessons learnt and challenges have been identified, and appropriate approaches for mainstreaming gender in food security forwarded.

Introduction and Context

AFRICAN POPULATION IS largely rural leading a life of poverty, with more than 50% of the Sub-Saharan Africans (SSA) living on less than one Dollar a day (NEPAD, 2009). According to Chukwuemeka L. Iwunna (All Africa.com, 2009), hunger still persists especially in SSA; essentially slowing down progress towards all other MDGs. The International Federation of Red Crescent in its Five-year strategic framework on food security for Africa 2008-2012 has reiterated that, Africa is not on track to achieve a single Millennium Development Goal, and is the only

region in the world where malnutrition, an outcome of food insecurity is not declining. The NEPAD 2009 has also indicated that, while most countries of the world have shown a significant drop in rates of hunger and malnutrition; little improvement is recorded in Africa. One-third of the continent’s population (the highest proportion), suffers from chronic hunger, most widespread and persistent in SSA; with the efforts at reduction being hampered by natural and human-induced disasters including HIV/AIDS.

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Taking sustained agricultural growth as crucial to cutting poverty in the region, African Heads of States have endorsed the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP); a vision for the restoration of agricultural growth, food security and rural development (NEPAD, 2009). The CAADP aims to stimulate agriculture-led development that eliminates hunger and reduces poverty and food insecurity. Pillar III of CAADP the Framework for African Food Security (FAFS) addresses (a) inadequate food supply, (b) widespread and persistent hunger and malnutrition, and (c) inadequate management of food crisis. The Maputo declaration on gender mainstreaming (2003), as regards agriculture states

that (a) Member States adopt and implement policies and legislation to ensure equal access to, and control and ownership of land by women; (b) the introduction of measures to facilitate women's access to credit, information and skills training; (c) Member States acknowledge that food security strategies imply necessarily the empowerment of rural women; and (d) the establishment of an African food bank reserve to be used in cases of emergency.

This paper is prepared within the context of the FAFS particularly principle (7), which refers to the gender dimensions of hunger and malnutrition, and the Maputo declaration on gender mainstreaming.

Concepts of Gender and Food Security

GENDER DESCRIBES WHAT it means to be a man or a woman; expressed in ones behavior and actions that are performed to fulfill society's expectations Hareg Consult (2004). The two categories are expected to play specific **roles** that are socially constructed functions fitting for men and women to do or to be. As a result of these roles, the way men and women relate with each other impacts on how the two groups access resources especially land; receive payment for work, share income, exercise authority or power; all of which have brought about universal female subordination. Women lag behind men in terms of access to education and health services, economic opportunities and income earnings; with limited participation in decision making. This situation has and continues to seriously affect women's and the nations' food security.

Food security is consumption by all members of the household (men, women, boys and girls), **at all times**; adequate in quality and quantity, for an active healthy life (Taye Assefa ed, 1999). Households are food secure when they have year-round access to the amount and variety of safe foods their members need to lead active and healthy lives. At the household level, food security refers to the ability of the household to secure, either from its own production or through purchases, adequate food for

meeting the dietary needs of all members of the household (FAO, 2010). Defining food security at the household level enables the consideration of women in the food system up until food consumption.

The nutritional status of each member of the household depends on several conditions being met: the food available to the household must be shared according to individual needs which for women should consider special circumstances of pregnancy and lactation. The food must be of sufficient variety, quality and safety; and each family member must have good health status in order to benefit from the food consumed. FAO recognizes that healthy, well-nourished people are both the outcome of successful social and economic development and constitute an essential input into the development process.

At the macro level, food security has three aspects; food availability, food access and food adequacy:

a. Food availability refers to supply, which in addition to production is influenced by food losses and the number of people; determining the amount of food that an individual is able to consume, as illustrated below.

$$\text{Available Food} = \frac{\text{Food Produced} - [\text{Food losses (storage + processing + seeds + exports)} + \text{imports}]}{\text{Population}}$$

In order to increase available food, we need to maximize production, minimize loss, and slow down population growth; apparent in each is a gender dimension.

Maximize

Production: (i) Improved agricultural practices with the use of machinery, fertilizers, improved seed varieties, pesticides, etc
(ii) Healthy Workforce

Minimize

Loss: Proper storage, preservation and processing techniques introduced; processes in which women are more involved and need assistance

Slow Population

Growth: Family planning, which requires knowledge and decision making capacity to access services, all of which are dependent on women's status

b: Food access has to do among other things with economic factors and the decision making to spend money on food; both of which are far removed from women, thus showing that food supply does not necessarily guarantee everybody's consumption. Thus, food security is intimately related to poverty, from which mainly women suffer.

c: Food adequacy in terms of quality and quantity to satisfy everyone's needs may not be affordable by all, particularly women. Food security is also a function of food processing, preservation and preparation as well as distribution within a country, and among family members. Furthermore, the body's health status must be such that it can utilize the food eaten to maintain health.

The framework that has guided the development of FAFS, and which appears in the framework document (Figure 2, page 14), shows gender among the variables as impacting overall food access, which in turn influences household food access (care practices: child care, feeding practices, nutritional knowledge, food preparation, eating habits, intra-household food distribution), ultimately impacting on food consumption. The definition of food security used in the FAFS is concerned with physical and economic access to food of sufficient quality and quantity. It is also concerned with the utilization of the food obtained by households and individuals.

Determinants of Food Security and Gender Dimensions

THE AFRICAN CONTINENT faces numerous inter-related challenges in achieving food security, central of which is underdeveloped agriculture. However, agricultural development without programs to enhance direct access to food cannot ensure reduction of hunger, which would be severer among the most vulnerable—the majority women. Other crucial factors; like food losses, poorly developed food processing and preparation methods, high population growth rates, and unfair intra-household food distribution are serious challenges to ensuring food availability; and would have a bearing on NEPAD's priority of increasing food supply and reducing hunger. Increased production needs to be complemented by an integrated post-harvest technology, and women who are largely responsible for food storage, processing and preparation need to be assisted with improved techniques to contribute to enhanced food availability.

Food Production and Storage

Women are critical component of rural economy in Sub-Saharan Africa, playing a crucial role in many aspects of crop production. It is estimated that 60-80% of the total labor force expended on farming activities in Africa is contributed by women. While men are responsible for land clearing, ploughing, seeding and harvesting; women

undertake transplanting, weeding, harvesting, and post-harvest transportation and storage of foods. Women also play a major role in household animal-production, where they are responsible for the husbandry of small animals and ruminants, but also take care of large-animals, herding, providing water and feed, cleaning stalls and milking.

But as modernization reorganizes agricultural production and marketing, women are increasingly marginalized. They continue to work in production, their labor may increase but they loose access to the new resources that are increasing productivity and profitability in food production. Further, as agricultural production in the developing world becomes increasingly devoted to cash crops, women are left to provide food for the family on the least productive land, while men commit to producing cash crops.

The introduction of modern techniques, whether in agricultural inputs, planting and harvesting or storage and marketing have not been gender-responsive. Agricultural services worked with male farmers, credit could only be extended to individuals with land titles and other collateral, namely male heads of households.

Food Processing and Preparation

Women are engaged in the laborious and time-consuming task of food processing; using labor-intensive and traditional technologies which do not meet the needs of the increasing population (Haregewoin Cherinet, 2003). This limited access to appropriate food processing and preservation technologies can have adverse impact on household food security. Food Preparation in rural households involves the use of technologies developed locally predominantly manual. The activity requires facilities and access to household services; water, fuel, grinding mills and other processors.

Women fetch water and fuel wood from long distances, the distance increasing with increased deforestation and desertification, and the tasks for rural women becoming more burdensome. In some cases, women also pass part of the burden of these activities to their children, usually girls. Relieving women from such drudgery as fetching water and fuel wood and food processing would allow them to have more time for self-enhancement and would enable their children to attend school.

Deforestation occurs for different reasons globally; and in developing countries happens for fuel wood, the major energy source for cooking and heating. In Africa, an estimated 90 % of the entire continent's population uses fuel wood for cooking, and in Sub-Saharan Africa, firewood and shrubs supply approximately 52% of all energy sources. Thus, addressing household fuel needs not only addresses gender issues, in terms of saving women's energy and time, but also assists proper natural resource conservation and management.

The provision of water supplies; the introduction of grinding mills and other crop processing equipment are crucial for freeing women's time. Such technologies not only create possibilities for women to enter into more income-generating activities, but also help reduce their stress and improving the health and nutrition of women and children. Women have a predominant role also in processing, particularly milk products and are commonly responsible for the marketing of all types of animal-production systems.

Population Growth Rates

High population growth rates are the principal factors stimulating food demand, putting pressure on food

supplies. UNFPA estimates that with an annual rate of growth of 2.2%, Africa's population is expected to increase from 906 million in 2005 to 1.1 billion in 2010. This rapid population growth, in the absence of increased sustainable agricultural production and reduction of food loss is cause for concern for many countries. African age composition with majority being in the young range will also lead to a continued increase in population growth. Early marriage practices extend the period during which a woman can give birth, thus increasing the number of children born and the size of population.

One of the objectives of the ICPD-POA was to raise the quality of life and to promote human development by recognizing the interrelationships between population and development. It was also to address women's limited access to reproductive health services, including family planning. The POA acknowledges that the empowerment and autonomy of women with the improvement of their political, social, economic and health status is a highly important goal. It calls for the elimination of all discriminatory practices and all kinds of violence, to ensure women's ability to control their fertility. It is apparent that women be empowered to access reproductive health information and services, as well as decide to utilize family planning. This in addition to ensuring that women exercise their rights assists the enhancement of food supplies for the whole society. Men need to appreciate women's decision for FP and work with them. The persistence of social and cultural attitudes had constrained men from sharing in family responsibilities. But recent studies (FHI, 1998), have shown that men are more interested in reproductive health than most people think; and currently men's participation has become the focus of substantial attention.

Intra-household Food Distribution

In most developing countries, culture influences distribution of food within families with the most vulnerable categories, women and children receiving the least food. In many households and communities, women and girls eat only the foods that are left after the males in the family have eaten. This practice has serious consequences during reproductive years, especially during pregnancy and lactation, when women have specific and additional nutrient requirements, which determine theirs and their children's nutritional status, often resulting in chronic under-nutrition (FAO, 2003). For instance nearly half of the women in developing countries suffer from anemia, which limits their activity and greatly increases the

risks that they face during pregnancy and childbirth. Their babies also suffer from much higher rates of infant mortality and birth defects. Food avoidance and taboos are also factors that inhibit women's consumption of certain foodstuff, often the most nutritious. In a study (Haregewoin, 1991) vulnerable groups of childbearing women and children were expected to avoid certain foods.

Gender Equality for Food Security

THE PERSISTENT AND increasing burden of poverty on women is the first critical area of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action UN-ECA (2005); alleviation of poverty is also the first goal in the MDGs and an important goal of NEPAD; poverty is also recognized as a major challenge to the achievement of the ICPD goals; and each of these documents have recognized the importance of considering gender in their strategies for addressing poverty. The UN-ECA (2005) has indicated that African countries have developed poverty reduction programs incorporating also national action plans for gender equality and have been implementing them. Reports of gender sensitive monitoring by African countries indicate positive trends in gender mainstreaming in PRSPs.

Increased agricultural productivity is a vital engine of economic growth in Africa and although not sufficient in itself, increased food availability is a major component of food security. More than three-quarters of the food in-secure in SSA reside in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods; action to eliminate food insecurity should therefore focus on rural areas. The

The greatest consensus about food taboos were found for pregnant women where 33% of the respondents said that they should avoid milk and its products, and 23% should avoid fruits and vegetables. There was no avoidance reported for adolescent boys or adult men.

sub-region is the most vulnerable, where a combination of population pressure, low and declining agricultural production with non-sustainable use of natural resources has induced poverty and degradation. NEPAD's vision for Africa that of attaining food security by 2015, would essentially force it to focus where the worst poverty persists, the Sub-Saharan African region and women.

Women should be focused on, not only because they are the most vulnerable, but also because gender consideration makes part of every aspect of food security: increasing food supply whilst conserving the environment, taking available food through processing, preservation and preparation to make it edible and utilizable. For all these endeavors, women must get recognition and assistance to do it better; in terms of access to agricultural inputs, education and health as well as increasing their capital and assets. Box 1 shows lessons learnt from different African countries showing that food security is achievable only through empowering women and utilizing their potential to the fullest.

1. Increase in productivity through giving women the same input as men

In sub-Saharan Africa women have less access to education and to labor, fertilizer and other inputs than men. When women obtain the same levels of education, experience, and farm inputs that currently benefit the average male farmer, they increase their yields for maize, beans and cowpeas by 22%. In Kenya where the amount of education women receive is extremely low, a year of primary education provided to all women farmers would boost maize yields by 24%.

2. Increasing women capital as one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty

Studies in Egypt and Mozambique have shown that mother's education is crucial to poverty reduction. In Egypt increasing the education level of mothers from none or less than primary to completion of primary school reduces the proportion of the population below the poverty line by 33.7%. Similarly in Mozambique, increasing the number of adult females that have completed primary school in each household by one led to a 23.2% decrease in the proportion of the population living below the poverty line. In both of these studies, female education had a much larger impact on poverty than other factors, including male education.

3. Increasing Women's Assets Raises Investments in Girls' Education and Health

IFPRI research in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and South Africa indicates that although women bring far fewer assets to marriage, these assets play a significant role in household expenditures to education and children's clothing. In all four countries, assets in the hands of women increase the share that households spend on education. Even in patriarchal societies where husbands control most of resources, wives and husbands' assets lead to different outcomes in household welfare. Women's assets increase expenditures on children's clothing and education to reduce the rate of illness among children.

4. Contribution of Women's Education and Status within the Household to reduction of Child Malnutrition

IFPRI recently examined factors that helped reduce child malnutrition by 15% in developing countries between 1970 and 1995. The evidence shows that increases in women's status accounted for 43% of the total reduction in child malnutrition the largest contribution. Improvements in women's status accounted for another 12%. Improvements in food availability came second to women's education, contributing 26% to the rate of reduction.

Conclusions

AFRICA IS LAGGING behind in tackling food insecurity because the continent has failed to acknowledge women's strong direct and indirect influences (a) directly in the food system in terms of food production; processing, preservation and preparation; household nutrition dependent on women's education, the decision to spend money on food); (b) indirectly in the spread of HIV, the main development challenge; either in terms of being victims of GBV, getting infected and infecting others or themselves being forced by poverty to engage in commercial sex work. High vulnerability could induce taking risks to survive which increases their likelihood of contracting or passing on the HIV virus.

The lack of acknowledgement of women's contribution to agricultural productivity has resulted in inadequately investing on them, which is a major constraining factor. Overemphasis on productivity and not giving the required attention to post-harvest handling of foods, where predominantly rural women engage using age-old technologies that are taxing on the women, impacting negatively on the food quality and quantity, as well as natural resources, is another serious problem. Labor-saving technologies for improved quality of food processing, packaging and marketing would have greatly assisted women's well-being and increased food availability in quantity and quality.

Women are also at the centre of the population issue; where in addition to FP practices in which women's decision making is critical, as well as early marriage and its capacity to increase the size of population. The issue of population growth rate, the denominator in the food availability formula, which relies on women's ability to have a say in their fertility is something that requires serious attention. So too, are women's education and access to resources, health care and decision making including their rights to delay marriage and utilization of family planning. Fuel-wood gathering often cause for concern

as a cause for workload, has a dimension of deforestation and environmental degradation, and is a serious issue requiring attention.

In consideration of the factors and issues identified and conclusions reached at, the definition of food security must incorporate a gender dimension; and women's empowerment must be Africa's agenda for sustainable development and food security.

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