



Agricultural policies, employment and women's income in Burkina Faso: How can women's access to productive resources improve their living conditions and stimulate the economy?

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Key messages

- **Improving women's access to agricultural inputs contributes to food security, economic growth and improving living conditions for women.**
- **A policy of subsidizing women's fertilizers, a policy of subsidizing agricultural equipment for the benefit of women, and improving women's access to land are important in order to achieve this goal.**

Women's unequal access to productive resources affects their living conditions

The Burkinabe economy is mainly based on agriculture, which employs about 70% of the working population and its contribution to GDP is estimated at 35% on average. This sector is mainly dominated by women. Indeed, **83% of women work in this sector where they occupy 60% of production activities** (Ministry for the Advancement of Women, 2016) and provide 75% of food production for household consumption (Gender Profile of Burkina Faso, 2016).

However, **they have limited access to productive resources such as land, fertilizer and agricultural equipment.** Indeed, only 8.2% of women own land individually compared to 45.5% of men (SNPEF, 2015) and 32% of married women own land (EDS, 2010). With regard to developed land (i.e., areas that the State develops to make available to farmers), only 8% are exploited by women (GRAF, 2007), even though the Government's current policy is to allocate 30% of this land for women.

Considering the importance of the agricultural sector in the development of Burkina Faso, and the role of women in this sector, **the Government has put in place policies and strategies to improve the living conditions of farming women**, in particular to ensure better access to land and agricultural inputs (e.g. fertilizers and equipment).

The analysis

The objective of this study is to **assess the impact of these policies** - i.e. targeting women's access to land and agricultural inputs (fertilizers and agricultural equipment) on **women's employment and income** in Burkina Faso.

The research team used a Computable General Equilibrium model to simulate three distinct scenarios (to measure their impact on women's employment and income):

- 1. A 70% increase in the supply of "land capital" allocated to women**, a rate calculated on the basis of the policy of granting 30% of the developed land to women.
- 2. A 10% reduction in the cost of fertilizer for women**, a policy proposal to facilitate the purchase of fertilizer.
- 3. An increase in agricultural productivity** through a 10% increase in the supply of "agricultural equipment capital" for women based on current government policies.

The CGE model is based on the 2013 agricultural SAM, developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Hydraulic Development, in partnership with the MAFAP (Monitoring and Analysing Food and Agricultural Policies) of the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization).

Also, to take into account the specificities of the study, the research team used data from the EMC (2014) and the PAS (2013) which provide detailed information on agriculture and demography.

Results

Scenario 1: Greater access to land for women contributes to improved welfare through increased employment for women and therefore higher household incomes.

Specifically, it would contribute to:

- Increasing the level of women's employment in agricultural activities by 2.74%.
- Increasing women's total value added in agricultural activities by 52.79%.
- Increasing total agricultural production by 13.63%.

Scenario 2: The decrease in fertilizer costs for the benefit of women will lead to an increase (average of 8.5%) in the demand of fertilizer by women landowners in all agricultural activities.

- This increase leads to an increase in women's total value added in agricultural activities (4.27%), and ultimately in overall agricultural production by 0.82%.
- This upturn in activity by women landowners generates an increase of up to 5.26% in the demand for women's labour, benefiting more than half of the agricultural sectors.

Scenario 3: The increase in the supply of agricultural equipment for women, leads to an increase of about 10% in the request (i.e. of women for these tools) in all agricultural sectors.

- This leads to an increase in the demand for women's labour of 0.24%, leading to an increase in women's added value and total production in all agricultural sectors.
- There is also an increase in household income from capital and labour, with the exception being poor rural households.

However, the researchers found that the impact on GDP is small in all scenarios and that this is due to the low proportion of women in the production factors. These same effects are reflected in the Government's income and savings, which are also increasing at a similarly low rate.

Policy implications

The results of this study indicate that **improving women's access to agricultural inputs contributes to food security, economic growth and improved living conditions for women** through job creation and increased household incomes. So with this in mind, the research team strongly recommends that the State:

- Make agricultural tools available to women through more accessible conditions i.e. subsidies and donations of at least 10% of the cost of the equipment.
- Continue the policies already in place, in particular the "Operation 100,000 ploughs" with 50% of ploughs allocated to women;
- Ensure the implementation of the quota concerning the allocation of 30% of the developed land for women;
- Carry out a discriminatory practice in the favour of women by subsidizing the cost of acquiring fertilizers by at least 10%.

