

LOCALIZING INTERNATIONAL GENDER POLICY TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY IN EAST AND WEST AFRICA.

by

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ABSTRACT

In Africa, women play an essential role in the agricultural sector. They produce about 70% of the food that is consumed locally. However, women face more constraints than men in accessing productive resources such as land, financial services, information and extension services and education. The voices of women are often excluded from conversations on agricultural production, policies programs, among others. The aim of the study was to understand how localizing international gender policies such as Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) and agricultural practices in East and West Africa impact gender equality and food security in the region. I interviewed 12 key informants from 5 Canadian organizations and 6 local organizations in East and West Africa. The findings indicate that international gender policy such as the FIAP has helped women take more ownership of the projects being implemented in the community. However, social and cultural norms make implementation more difficult.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FIAP	Feminist International Assistance Policy
FPE	Feminist Political Ecology
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
IPCC	The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NNGOs	National Non-Governmental Organizations
RESULT	Resilient and Sustainable Livelihoods Transformation Project
OCA	Oxfam Canada
UN	United Nations
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

GLOSSARY

This section provides a brief description of terms used throughout this thesis, listed alphabetically

Gender: Gender is defined as the socially constructed roles, behaviors and expectations of men and women (Quisumbing, 1996; King & Mason, 2001).

Gender Division of Labor: The distribution of different jobs or roles to women and men according to their gender.

Gender Equality: “The equal participation of women and men in decision-making, equal ability to exercise their human rights, equal access to and control of resources and the benefits of development, and equal opportunities in employment and in all other aspects of their livelihoods” (Nelson et al., 2011).

Gender Equity: The fairness and impartiality in the treatment of women and men in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities (FAO, 2009).

Feminist Political Ecology: It is a subfield of political ecology which uses elements of feminist theory to analyze the power relations in the access and control of productive resources (Kansanga et al., 2019).

Localisation: Most of the literature defines localisation as “the need to recognise, respect, strengthen, rebalance, recalibrate, reinforce or return some type of ownership or place to local and national actors” (Barbelet, 2018).

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

As primary responders, local and national actors are well placed to respond to the needs of poor and vulnerable groups or communities impacted by humanitarian crises or disasters that are a result of climate change, such as drought, floods, rising sea levels. Local and national actors are able to recognize and provide assistance to the community in a timely manner because they understand the needs of the community before and after a disaster. However, a lack of financial and material resources among other factors has hampered the responses of local and national actors. According to Oxfam (2018), local and national actors only receive “2% of international humanitarian assistance directly from donors”. These non-governmental organizations (NGOs) usually receive funding indirectly from the international NGOs they partner with, who might not have prior knowledge of the region. “The lack of cultural understanding and knowledge of the country or affected community can often lead to a situation which can easily turn into chaos and uncoordinated situations” (Ophoff, 2018). For example, Haiti is well known for its exposure to a wide spectrum of natural disasters such hurricanes, storms, earthquakes, etc. Haiti’s ability to prepare for, respond to and mitigate natural disasters are hampered by chronic political instability, inadequate governance, and resource restrictions (Robillard et al., 2020). The lack of ability or capacity of the country has led international organizations to take a prominent and dominant role in both disaster preparedness and response (Robillard et al., 2020). This role has undermined the capacity and willingness of the state and other local actors to manage disasters (Robillard et al., 2020). After the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, an evaluation of the international

humanitarian system response showed how the system was ineffective at engaging with local people and organizations (Yerno, 2017). A key finding from the evaluation suggested that there was limited collaboration between international actors and national institutions both nationally and locally (Yerno, 2017).

Although localization has been looked at in a humanitarian crisis, it can also be applied in long term sustainable projects in agriculture production. Humanitarian crises such as conflicts and natural disasters impact women, girls, men, and boys differently. These impacts tend to disproportionately affect women and girls the most. Governments and humanitarian organizations' interventions during these crises often misinterpret and neglect women and girls. In South Sudan, for instance, women are expected to be submissive to their families, husbands, and in-laws which restricts their ability to make decisions in their lives (Jayasinghe et al., 2020). Even though South Sudanese women have played an active role in bringing peace to the country, their contribution is undervalued or ignored during political negotiations (Jayasinghe et al., 2020). This often exacerbates the existing unequal gender relations and power structures in the society. Oxfam (2018) states that “part of the reason for such results is unequal power and privilege in the humanitarian sector, which is shaped by patriarchal structures and a North-South imbalance, where humanitarian actors from the global North have significantly more power than counterparts from the South, including those from the very places where crises are occurring”.

The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) held in 2016 in Istanbul, many humanitarian actors such as local, national, and international NGOs, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) led a call to make

humanitarian action “as local as possible, as international as necessary” (Barbelet, 2018; ICVA, 2018). The term ‘localisation’ has been one of the most discussed topics in the humanitarian sector leading up to the WHS in 2016. Since then, localisation has gained momentum “both globally and in countries with new or on-going humanitarian crises” (Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships, 2019). Localisation emerged as a “concern over the ‘financing gap’ between rapidly growing humanitarian needs and a slower increase in available humanitarian funding” (Brabant & Patel, 2017). According to Oxfam Canada (2018), in 2016, donors, UN agencies and INGOs came together to make an agreement known as the Grand Bargain that “25% of global humanitarian assistance will go as directly as possible to local and national actors by 2020”.

Localisation of aid shouldn’t just focus on providing financial support to local actors, it should also focus on how crises are managed, enhancing existing partnerships and strengthening the voices of vulnerable groups.

Humanitarian crises such as climate change has major implications on agricultural productivity, food security and livelihoods of vulnerable groups. Africa is one of the regions most affected by climate change due to a heavy dependence on rainfed agriculture, high variability of production, poor and smallholder producers, recurrent food shortages and net importers, low institutional capacity to adapt, lack of insurance and safety nets, and fragile environments (Habtezion, 2012; Zewdie, 2014). About 70% of Africans depend on rain-fed agriculture from small-scale subsistence farming (Connolly-Boutin & Smit, 2016). Extreme droughts in sub-Saharan Africa “impedes people’s ability to grow food and rear livestock” (Connolly-Boutin & Smit, 2016). According to Habtezion (2012), if yields from rain-fed agriculture decreases by 50

percent; “agriculture production including access to food would be compromised; and this would have an adverse effect on food security and exacerbate malnutrition”.

In Africa, women play an essential role in the agricultural sector. Women are the primary producers of food and providers of water, heating and cooking fuel for their households and communities. In Africa, women produce about 70 percent of the food to support their families and communities (Kimani, 2012). Though the roles of women in agriculture vary widely by region, age, ethnicity and social status, women’s participation in the agricultural labor force in sub-Saharan Africa is the highest in the world (World Bank, 2009). Climatic stresses on agricultural production make women particularly vulnerable to food insecurity (Habtezion, 2012). Women have less access to productive resources and opportunities such as land, livestock, education, technology, extension, and financial services compared to men. Since men have better access to these resources, they face fewer constraints than women. As a result, women put more time and effort into attending to the basic needs of their family and community.

As stated above, the gender gap between women and men is caused by irregularities in ownership and access to vital livelihood assets such as land, water, energy, credit, knowledge, and labor (Quisumbing et al., 2014). For example, “In Africa, an average of 15 percent of landholders are women; the range in relation to land ownership is considerable – from less than 5 percent in Mali to over 30 percent in Botswana, Cape Verde and Malawi” (Habtezion, 2012). Quisumbing et al. (2014) states that “women typically have weaker rights to land within the same household than their husbands because community land allocations generally go to men and land transfers within families occur among men”. Lacking these essential assets lowers the agricultural

yields or farm productivity of women farmers thus making it harder for them to achieve food security (Habtezion, 2012; Raney et al., 2011). Unfortunately, the voices of women farmers are being excluded from conversations on agricultural production, policies, programs, among others. In addition, discriminatory laws and practices deprive women from their land, their rights, and their livelihoods (Global Fund for Women, n.d.). Women need equal access to resources such as land and credit to improve agricultural productivity and food security in their households and communities.

A report published by FAO in 2011 suggested that closing the gender gap in agriculture could increase yields on women run farms by 20 to 30 percent thus generating significant gains in terms of food security, economic growth, and social welfare (Utkina et al., 2019). According to GAC (2017), increasing gender equality can: deliver strong economic growth; cut down on extreme poverty; reduce chronic hunger; lead to longer-lasting peace; benefit entire families; and empower all those who face discrimination. Development projects need to take into consideration the different needs and interest of women and men, and the power relations between them during the planning phase. If gender differences are overlooked during the planning phase, this could have negative effect on the division of labor, and the access to and control allocation of resources and decision making. It is crucial that discriminatory laws on gender are eliminated, gender mainstreaming is implemented in policies and programs, and women have a greater voice in decision making at all levels within agriculture and food security programming and policy.

To address some of the gender inequalities that women face in the agricultural sector, Canada developed a feminist policy. Following in the footsteps of countries such

as Sweden and recently Mexico, in 2016 Canada carried out consultations internally with over 15,000 people across Canada and in 65 countries around the world (Brown & Swiss, 2017) during preparation of its own feminist policy “Feminist International Assistance Policy” (FIAP) which it launched in 2017. FIAP was to address the current challenges that disadvantaged groups, specifically women and girls face by using a feminist approach and increasing international assistance. Canada firmly believes that promoting “gender equality and empowering women and girls is the most effective approach to achieving this goal” (GAC, 2017). According to GAC (2017), Canada’s feminist vision seeks to ensure that the empowerment of women and girls can lead to positive economic and social outcomes. This study focuses on how international gender policies such as Canada’s FIAP is applied at the local level to promote gender equality through programming and projects.

1.2 Research Purpose

The primary purpose of this study is to understand how localising international gender policies such as FIAP, as well as agricultural practices in East and West Africa impact gender and food security in the area. This study is guided by the following research objectives:

1. Determine how agricultural projects or programs supported by Canadian food organizations help women farmers achieve food security.
2. Explore the experiences of both international and local program managers in East and West Africa regarding the benefits and challenges of localizing international gender policy such as FIAP to support local women farmers.

1.3 Chapter Outline

The study is organized in six chapters. Chapter One provides an insight of the research being conducted and an overview of the aim and objectives of the thesis. Chapter Two is a review of literature relevant to the research. The literature focuses on women's role in the agriculture sector and constraints they face achieving food security in Africa. The chapter also provides details on the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) developed by Canada and the theoretical framework being used in the study. Feminist theory informed the research work, data collection and data analysis process. Feminist theory provides insights on the unequal power relations between women and men as well as the patriarchal norms and structure that shape societies. The study also provides insights on how Canada is using a feminist approach in their assistance policy to address the challenges that women and girls face, as well as provide some criticism about the policy. Chapter Three discusses the motivations for the research, the research methods used, limitations and ethical considerations. It provides details on the interview process, sampling methods, and research participants. It also examines my own positionality and how it might have impacted the research. Chapter Four is a discussion of my findings and the themes that emerged from my participant interviews. I discussed eight themes which were used to answer the two research objectives of the study. The discussion focuses on how Canadian international organizations are assisting women and local organization to take the lead in implementing projects or programmes in their communities. It also focuses on the benefits and challenges of implementing FIAP in a local context. Chapter Five provides a deeper analysis of the two research objectives which I relate back to the existing literature and other relate studies. Chapter Six I gave a

summary of the research and conclusion based on the results, as well as recommendations based on the findings of the study. My recommendations are based on the role local and international organization can play to develop better strategies to implement gender policy in a local context.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a literature review on gender, women's role in agriculture and food security in Africa. Most of the population in Africa is heavily dependent on agriculture to feed the community and sustain their livelihoods. Women have a major role to play in improving agriculture and food security in their household and community. The review also looks at the constraints or challenges women face in the agricultural sector. The chapter also provides details on my theoretical framework, which is guided by feminist theory. I also provide detail on Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) and its relevance to African women.

2.2 Food Security

2.2.1 Food security

Over the years, about 200 definitions of food security have been developed (Thomas, 2006). According to the author, the concept food security originated in the mid-1970s, because of the global food crises caused by the instability of agricultural commodity prices, following the turbulence in the currency energy markets at the time. The initial focus was on food supply, ensuring the availability and stability of basic food at the international and national level. Given the events of the mid-1970s, problems such as famine, hunger and food crises led to the redefinition of food security by recognizing the behavior of vulnerable and affected people (Thomas, 2006). The World Food Conference in 1974 defined food security as "availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices" (Berry et al., 2015). Later, the focus

shifted from food availability to securing vulnerable people's access to available supplies. The definition of food security was revised to emphasize the balance between the demand and supply side as "ensuring that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food that they need" (Peng & Berry, 2019; FAO, 2006).

In addition, in 1986, the World Bank also expanded this definition in their report on "Poverty and Hunger" which focused on the temporal dynamics of food insecurity. The report focused on the difference between chronic and transitory food insecurity. Chronic food insecurity is linked to the problems of continuing or structural poverty and low incomes (FAO, 2006). Whereas transient food insecurity is linked with natural, man-made disasters, economic collapse, or conflicts (Berry et al., 2015; FAO, 2006). These concerns were reflected in the definition to include: "access of all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life" (Berry et al., 2015). The most widely and accepted definition of food security was adopted during the World Food Summit (WFS) in 1996 defined food security as "when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO, 2016). This definition by the WFS focuses more on the consumption, demand side of food security rather than the supply side. This study focuses on household food security, which is described as the ability of food providers to secure adequate food at all times to meet the dietary requirements and cultural preferences of their household members (Ibnouf, 2011).

2.2.2 Components of Food Security

Food security is defined as having four components: availability, access, utilization, and stability (Peng & Berry, 2019).

Food availability: Is described as having sufficient amount of food supplied locally and imported from abroad. For instance, food is available because it's obtained in the markets since it is produced on local farms, land, or home gardens or as food aid (Achampong et al., 2012).

Food access: Focuses on how people obtain available food either through home production, stocks, purchase, barter, gifts, borrowing or food aid (Achampong et al., 2012). According to the IFRC (2006) report food access is ensured when individuals and communities have adequate resources (i.e., money) to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet. The report states that access is dependent on the household income, the distribution of the household income, the cost of food and other factors such as an individual's access to market, social and institutional entitlement, or rights. However, access to food can be affected by "physical insecurity such as conflicts, loss of coping options such as border closure preventing seasonal job migration, or the collapse of safety net institutions that once protected people with low incomes" (IFRC, 2006).

Food utilization: This dimension focuses on nutrition security by ensuring all households have adequate protein, energy, micronutrients, and minerals (Quisumbing et al., 1996). At this stage, food and water must be safe and clean, thus proper water and sanitation are also essential. According to IFRC (2006), food utilization is dependent on the quality of foods, how it is prepared and stored, nutritional knowledge, and the health of the individuals consuming the food. The report also mentions several factors such as endemic disease, poor hygiene, a lack of nutrition knowledge or culturally imposed taboos that impact nutrition security for certain groups or family members based on age or gender.

Food stability: Refers to “the availability of and access to food, regardless of sudden shocks (e.g., an economic or climatic crisis) or cyclical events (e.g., seasonal food scarcity)” (FAO, 2006). For food security to exist, stability must be present at all times in terms of availability, access, and utilization (Napoli et al., 2011). This fourth pillar ensures that the other three pillars do not face any adverse impacts. For a household, individual or population to be food secure or be stable, there must be food available, access to adequate food and proper utilization of food at all times (Napoli et al., 2011).

According to Berry et al. (2015), food security exists at a number of levels: (1) availability at the global or national level; (2) accessibility occurs at the household level; (3) utilization at the individual level; and (4) stability occurs at all levels. Therefore, for to achieve food security, all four components or dimensions must be met. In other words, food availability is essential but not sufficient to ensure accessibility, just as accessibility does not guarantee utilization. Women in agricultural households have a crucial role in achieving food security on all levels, “from production on the family plot, to food distribution between sale and self-consumption and food allocation within the household” (Gebre et al., 2021).

Food sovereignty and Sen’s idea of entitlement theory can address the issues of food security. Food sovereignty is described as “the right of peoples and nations to control their own food and agricultural systems, including their own markets, production modes, food cultures and environments (Desmarais, 2015). Food sovereignty advocates for peasants, farmers, women, Indigenous peoples, and minorities' rights to define their own food and agricultural systems instead of being victims of international markets. (Islam and Berkes, 2016). According to the authors, the notion of food security ignores

the social aspects of food systems. Desmarais (2015) states that gender equity is integral to the meaning of food sovereignty. She adds that the position of La Vía Campesina stresses the importance of ensuring women's access to and control over productive resources, equal participation and representation in decision making, and most significantly that food sovereignty means "stopping violence against women". Food sovereignty encourages community autonomy by allowing women and men determining for themselves what seeds to plant, animals to raise, type of farming to carry out, the economic exchanges they engage in and what they eat for dinner (Pimbert, 2009).

In the 1980s, Amartya Sen changed the focus of food security from availability to entitlement and analyzed its relevance in famine solutions (Islam & Berkes, 2016). Entitlement is described as "the set of alternative commodity bundles that a person can command in a society using the totality of rights and opportunities that he or she faces" (Devereux, 2001). This framework is useful in understanding the causes of food insecurity because it breaks down the reasons why a person or group may be vulnerable to being unable to access food (Islam & Berkes, 2016). The authors describe three entitlement approaches: (1) direct entitlement (people produce own food, harvest); (2) indirect entitlement (market food, income from different sources); and (3) transfer entitlement (selling commodities to buy food/ owning something previously owned by someone). This framework is useful for understanding the causes of food insecurity because it helps to disaggregate the reasons why an individual or group may become vulnerable to not having access to food (Islam & Berkes, 2016).

2.3 GENDER, FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA

Gender is defined as the socially constructed roles, behaviors and expectations of men and women (Quisumbing, 1996; King & Mason, 2001). Women and men are different biologically, however, societal expectation on what behaviors and activities are appropriate, and what rights, resources, and power they possess are used to describe these biological differences (King & Mason, 2001). The differences between men and women is because of their belief systems, habit and practices that are part of the whole complex known as culture (Akanle & Adejare, 2016). All cultures, determine the power and resources for females and males. This gender differences and differentiation result in prescriptions and expectations on what one gender can and cannot do, which gender is more prestigious, and how the genders interact (Akanle & Adejare, 2016). Therefore, gender is socially and culturally constructed instead of behaviorally driven. Some scholars argue that the term gender has been associated as an only women's issues, excluding men, and it's been regarded as binary category of sex which undermines gender as a social construct (Akanle & Adejare, 2016; Chitja & Mkhize, 2019).

In African societies, gender roles are socially constructed and vary across a continuum within and across societies based on unequal gendered power and authority (Chitja & Mkhize, 2019). For instance, sexist and patriarchal ideas and cultural practises assign women subordinate gender roles such as domestication, nurturing, and reliance, while males are assigned superior gender roles such as leadership, ownership, and independence (Chitja & Mkhize, 2019). The authors state gender inequalities in social structures and practices are worsened by these sexist and patriarchal normative gender

role assignment. Though women do most of the work in agricultural production, it is men that control and access agricultural productive resources.

The distribution of different jobs or roles to women and men according to their gender is known as gender division of labor. It focuses on both paid and unpaid work that are assigned to men and women. There are several variables that contribute to the gender division of labor: kinship, age, descent, culture, education, status, and marriage (Sikod, 2010). Traditionally, household work (i.e., cooking, cleaning, washing, fetching water or fuel, small scale agriculture) and childcare is unacknowledged due to cultural expectations that a wife or mother should do it in privacy of the home (Coltrane & Shih, 2010). Whereas paid work is publicly acknowledged and usually associated with men (Coltrane & Shih, 2010). Men are considered to be the breadwinners of the family. When women do work, they are still paid less as compared to their male counterparts (Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2006). In the agricultural labor force in Africa, men cultivate cash crops such as cocoa, coffee while women produce for the family's consumption, thus the term "subsistence farming" (Sikod, 2010).

Gender equality is described as “equal participation of women and men in decision-making, equal ability to exercise their human rights, equal access to and control of resources and the benefits of development, and equal opportunities in employment and in all other aspects of their livelihoods” (Nelson et al., 2011). Whereas gender equity means the fairness and impartiality in the treatment of women and men in terms of rights, benefits, obligations, and opportunities (FAO, 2009). Gender equity seeks to improve gender relations and gender roles, and achieving gender equality (FAO, 2009). Gender inequality exacerbates food insecurity, women’s access to and control of resources, and

their decision-making power. This study adopts gender equity to understand the barriers that affect women's agricultural productivity.

The agriculture sector is essential to enhancing the availability of food and achieving food security. Strategies need to be put in place to increase food productivity and the revenue for small-scale farmers, as well as increase access to income and employment of the rural people who lack access to land (Mehra & Rojas, 2008). Agriculture still remains a central part of the livelihoods of most poor rural households, though this varies across country or region. In Sub-Saharan Africa, food insecurity continues to be a major concern in most poor rural households. Over the years, Africa's agricultural productivity growth continues to be very low (Langyintuo, 2020). In Africa, 70% of the poor people still live in rural and peri-urban areas and rely on agriculture for their food and livelihoods (Nyambura, 2017). Agriculture is primarily focused on the family farm in this region, with relatively small plots of land (Christiaensen & Demery, 2017). Most of the food producers in the sub-Saharan Africa are small-scale subsistence farmers, who make up the largest socio-economic group and usually work on less than 2 hectares of land using agro-ecological methods (Nyambura, 2017). The household is where farming decisions are taken which could influence farm activities.

Women do the bulk of the work in agriculture which is crucial to the communities' food security. They comprise about 43 percent of the agricultural labor force, ranging from 20 percent in Latin America to 50 percent in Eastern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa (FAO, 2011). Women work on the farms as either unpaid workers on family farms or as paid or unpaid laborers on other farms and agricultural enterprises (FAO, 2011). They are involved in food production and cash crops, as well as managing

agricultural operations such as crops, livestock, and fish farming (FAO, 2011). They also ensure that the households nutrition needs, especially of the children are met. However, women continue to face more constraints than men in the agricultural sector due to a lack of resources and opportunities (Glazerbrook et al., 2020). According to Kilic et al. (2015), the gender gap exists because of the gender disparities men and women face in “(i) use of agricultural inputs, (ii) tenure security and related investments in land and improved technologies, (iii) market and credit access, (iv) human and physical capital, and (v) institutional and cultural constraints affecting intra-household assignments of farm/plot management and marketing duties”. These constraints or gender gaps not only affect food security but also economic growth (World Bank et al., 2009). Closing this gap can increase agricultural productivity, reduce poverty and hunger while promoting economic growth.

In developing countries, women’s roles or contributions to agriculture vary by region. Women are involved in almost every part of agriculture including farming, processing, and distribution (Amu, 2005). According to Palacios-Lopez et al. (2017), Uganda has the highest share of agricultural labor at 56 percent, followed by Tanzania (52%) and Malawi (52%). Whereas in Niger (24%), women contribute to less than a quarter of the agricultural production and slightly more in Ethiopia (29%) (Palacios-Lopez et al., 2017). Women in rural areas usually manage the households and engage in multiple livelihood activities such as “producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wage in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for their households”,

among others (FAO, 2011). Unfortunately, majority of the work that women perform is undermined because it is viewed as traditional chores rather than as an economic activity.

Even though women outnumber men in the agricultural labor force, they work more hours than men. Women work more hours because they are involved in different agricultural and household activities. On average, women spend 2.5 times more time than men on unpaid care and domestic labor (Glazebrook et al., 2020). According to FAO (2011), women's time contribution in agricultural activities in Africa is about 30 percent in Gambia to 60-80 percent in different parts of Cameroon. In the mid Right Valley of Ethiopia, women work about 15-16 hours per day while men work for about 10-11 hours per day (Negash, 2012). The time women spend as unpaid or paid workers, and caregivers in the household, limits their time for schooling, training, and economic activities.

Given women's crucial role and contribution to food security, efforts made to reduce food insecurity needs to consider the factors and constraints that affect women's abilities. Some of the challenges or constraints women face in agriculture are access to land, education, credit, information extension services, and financial services. These productive resources are a critical determinant of agricultural productivity. Though the size of the gender gap varies depending on the resources and location, the primary causes are the same across region: societal norms consistently limit women's possibilities (FAO, 2011).

2.3.1 Access to Land

Africa has more than 60% of arable land in the world (Langyintuo, 2020). In sub-Saharan Africa, the rural poor depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Smallholders'

access to land is critical not only for food production but also for household income (Namubiru-Mwaura et al., 2013). Unfortunately, smallholder farmers still find it difficult to access suitable and sufficient land to aid in agricultural production. Even though access to land is a problem, the security of accessing the land is also a problem that these farmers face (Langyintuo, 2020). Women's rights to resources have had an impact on their ability to produce and their behavior as producers. One of the biggest challenges that women farmers face is access to ownership and control of agricultural land.

In most developing countries, a secure land tenure is an essential asset for the urban and rural poor. However, land policy reforms are focused on changing household rights to land rather than the rights of individuals within the household (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2014). In many areas, control over land is associated with wealth, status, and power (FAO, 2011). Land rights acts as a form of economic and social access to markets, nonmarket institutions such as household relations and community level governance structures (World Bank et al., 2009). Hill & Vigneri (2014) states that female headed households and women in male headed households face more constraints in accessing land. In Ghana, women farmers own about 10% of land as compared to men (23%) (Send Ghana, 2014). The lands in Ghana tend to be small in size which limits any large-scale production (Send Ghana, 2014).

In developing countries, land is predominantly owned by men and transferred intergenerationally to males. Many African countries such as Mali, Zambia, Malawi, Ghana, Burkina Faso and large parts of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria, Tanzania and Mozambique still use the customary land tenure system (Langyintuo, 2020). These customary practices and laws prevent women from having control and access over land

(Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2014). This is also affecting their ability to access credit, limits their decisions making power in crop production and their ability to maintain a wide range of livelihoods. When men migrate, abandon, divorce or die, women become the head of the household. Therefore, it is critical that women have appropriate access to land to support themselves and their families (World Bank et al., 2009). Some justifications for ensuring women's land rights include (i) providing access to equal resources to increase their agricultural investment and productivity (ii) recognize women's land rights as a basic human right (iii) secure land tenure helps reduce women's vulnerability due to economic hardship, divorce, or widowhood (iv) and strengthen their bargaining power within the household (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 2014).

2.3.2 Access to Credit

Even with land availability for smallholder women farmers, they still have limited access to credit and finance which affects their agricultural productivity. Land is used as collateral to have access to credit (ADB, 2013). Limited access to loans hinders women's ability to invest in future production or to take risk and diversify into producing new crops. Women's capacity to engage in more effective irrigated farming, for example, is hampered by a lack of credit, as this involves more expensive equipment and labor (Oseni et al., 2015). Send Ghana (2014) research indicated that in Ghana, only 16 percent of smallholder farmers were able to access credit. In Greater Accra Region, 20 percent of women had access, and in the Upper East Region, less than 1 in 10 did. Women farmers having access to credit can allow them to invest in businesses and equipment such as processing equipment which can change their farm production, marketing, and income (Send Ghana, 2014). Additional benefits for improving women's access to credit as stated

by Fletschner & Kenney (2011) is ensuring women have direct access to credit instead of accessing it through their husbands or male relatives. This enhances their ability to influence their households' behavior (Fletschner & Kenney, 2011). A recent study in Malawi showed that increasing women's access to credit boosts the total household expenditures on food which improves long-term food security of young female children (FAO, 2011). Some factors that prevent women farmers from obtaining credit and other financial services are lack of education, mobility, social and cultural barriers. In Ghana, for example, customs prevent women from receiving information from outside lenders in three of the northern regions (Send Ghana, 2014).

2.3.3 Education

As stated by FAO (2011), one of the major factors that determines individuals' access to opportunities is human capital (i.e., education, health & nutrition) which is related to household productivity, and economic (i.e., income, assets) and social well-being. Economic well-being is defined as people having financial stability to meet their basic needs such as food, housing, among others (International Rescue Committee, n.d.). Whereas social well-being is defined as the quality of the relationship with other people and society (Cicognani, 2014). Education is used as a measurement for the level of human capital available in the household which is correlated with measures such as agricultural productivity, household income and nutritional outcomes. This could have an impact on the household well-being and economic growth. A lack of access to education limits women's access to new technological knowledge, gain positions as agricultural researchers and extensions, and having a voice for research, training, and other kinds of support such as technology, policy, and financing. Though land is a valuable asset for the

rural people, education is also essential for them to pursue opportunities in agriculture, obtain skilled jobs, start businesses, and migrate successfully (World Bank, 2007). In most developing countries, female headed households in rural areas tend to be less educated than their male counterparts. However, a study conducted by FAO (2011) suggests that there has been progress in enrollment of girls in primary school. “A cross-country study of developing countries covering the period 1970–95 found that 43 percent of the reduction of hunger that occurred was attributable to progress in women’s education,” (Miruka et al., 2016).

2.3.4 Information Extension Services

Agriculture extension services (also known as agricultural advisory services) encompasses a wide range of services, information, advice, training, and knowledge related to agriculture or livestock production, processing, agribusiness, health, and marketing provided by governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other sources that increase farmers’ ability to improve productivity and income of rural populations (Ragsa, 2014; FAO, 2011). According to the World Bank et al. (2009), in the United States and Europe, as farmers adapted to new geographical areas, new crops, and urban markets, it led to an increase in the demand of extension services. However, in the twentieth century, research focused on increasing the food production of the world’s rapidly growing population while extension services in developing countries focused on encouraging farmers to shift to higher-yielding crops and breeds (World Bank et al., 2009). Providing information on new techniques and technology is crucial for farmers to decide whether to adopt new innovations. Green Revolution technologies have rapidly spread and been adopted mostly in irrigated areas due to extension systems (Ragsa,

2014). However, research indicates there has been some failings of previous approaches and delivery methods, “including weak linkages among extension, research, and farmers; weak accountability to farmers and lack of incentives for extension workers to perform; financial sustainability problems; elite capture; and limited established impact on remote areas, female farmers, and the poor” (Ragsa, 2014).

There are various forms of delivery in the agricultural extension system which are “individual or groups visit; organized meetings; use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT); or learning through demonstration plots, model farms, or farmer field schools (FFSs)” (Ragsa, 2014). Agricultural extension services tend to be male dominated and focuses less on providing support to women or meeting their needs for technology and information (van der Meulen Rodgers, 2018; World Bank et al., 2019). In 2019, the World Bank stated that “extension services often seem to follow a “man-to-man” technology transfer approach in which men extension staff work with men farmers” (World Bank et al., 2019). In addition, women are excluded from development interventions or information campaigns due to social norms and cultural practices. Only a few of them attend community meetings or demonstration plots organized by extension services. One of the reasons for women’s lack of participation is a lack of female extension agents. For example, in Ghana, extension agents have equal contacts with male and female farmers in male headed households, but in female headed households, they have less contact (FAO, 2011). Despite the benefits of extension services, extension agents tend to approach male farmers due to the misconception that women do not farm and that these services will trickle down from the male households to other households (FAO, 2011).

Furthermore, women's lack of education poses as a barrier to them when it comes to the delivery of extension services which impacts how they receive information on innovations (FAO, 2011). Extension services such as ICT (i.e., radio, mobile, phones, computers, and internet services) play an important role in transferring information. These could be beneficial for rural women who are not able to go to distant markets. However, there is still unequal access in the usage of ICTs. According to Rasga (2014), the perception of technology as a man's domain has contributed to how technologies are distributed in rural areas. As a result, ICT programs tend to be gender biased or lack gender sensitivity.

2.3.5 Financial Services

The Food and Agriculture Organizations (FAO) states that "financial services such as savings, credit and insurance enhance agricultural output, food security and economic vitality at the household, community and national levels" (FAO, 2011). According to Fan and Rue (2020), rural farmers are not able to access the needed capital to access these financial services. A study on maize farmers in Ghana shows that small farms face more constraints as compared to bigger farms (Fan & Rue, 2020). Fan and Rue (2020) highlight some reasons why rural farmers can't access financial services, "dispersed demand and the high cost of service in low-population areas; weak administrative capacity of rural banks; agriculture-specific risks such as variable weather patterns, pests and price fluctuations that affect whole communities; and lack of formally defined property and land-use rights to act as collateral for loans". Other reasons smallholder farmers do not have access to financial service include poorly developed communication and transportation infrastructure, underdeveloped agri-food chains, and a lack of

understanding and the opportunities of financial institutions in the agricultural sector (Langyintuo, 2020).

According to the FAO (2011), studies show that improving women's access to financial resources or services leads to higher investments in human capital such as children's health, nutrition, and education. Some barriers that women face in accessing finance include low levels of education and financial literacy, low-income levels, lack of assets, legal constraints, limited time and mobility, socio-cultural constraints, conflicts managing domestic and professional roles and lack of market exposure (Daniels, 2014). Women's ability to inherit properties and to engage in economic activity is impacted by laws which deprives them from acquiring assets to be used as loans from financial institutions (Daniels, 2014).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Feminist Theories

Feminist theories are based on the fundamental concepts of "Feminism," which focuses on the gender inequalities and subordination of women in patriarchal systems, as well as advocates for the rights of women and legal protection (Trier-Bieniek, 2015). Feminist theory takes many forms (e.g., Marxist feminism, ecofeminism) and fields (e.g., history, environment, etc.). The rapid transition of economies, ecologies, cultures, and politics from global to local levels led to the interest in environment, gender and development (Rocheleau, et al., 1996). Women and men as stakeholders and actors in resource use and allocation, environmental management, the creation of environmental norms of health and well-being have been influenced by the changes in the global economics, politics, and the environment (Rocheleau, et al., 1996). Some scholars believe

that there's no gender differences in relation to the environment, but they believe that political and economic structures can impact them. Others believe that the gender difference is rooted in biology. Rocheleau et al. (1996) argue that gender differences are a result of "the social interpretation of biology and social constructs which vary by culture, class, race and place and are subject to individual and social change".

There are many gendered perspectives that have been developed on environmental problems, concerns, and solutions: ecofeminists, feminist environmentalism, socialist feminist, feminist poststructuralist, and environmentalist (Rocheleau, et al., 1996). Ecofeminists focus on the connections between women and nature. This connection is rooted in the socio-economic conditions, and patriarchal institutions and dominant Western culture (Rocheleau, et al., 1996; Harcourt, 2018). Ecofeminism originated in the mid-1970s and was influenced by Mary Daly's brand of cultural feminism (Sapra, 2017). According to Dobscha (1993), the four main principles of ecofeminist are: (1) "there are vital connections between the oppression of nature and women, 2) understanding these connections is necessary to understanding the two veins of oppression, 3) feminist theory must include an ecological perspective, and 4) ecological problems must include a feminist perspective".

Bina Agarwal describes feminist environmentalism as gendered interests in particular resources and ecological processes based on materially distinct daily work and responsibilities (Rocheleau, et al., 1996). The relationship between women and the environment is structure by a given gender as a class organization of production, reproduction, and distribution (Agarwal, 1992). Socialist feminist focuses on the incorporation of gender into the political economy by understanding the role of men and

women in economic systems using the concepts of production and reproduction (Rocheleau, et al., 1996). Feminist poststructuralists focus on the gendered experiences that are shaped by many dimensions of identity and difference such gender, race, class, ethnicity, and age, etc. (Rocheleau, et al., 1996). Lastly, many environmentalists are using liberal feminist perspective to treat women as participants and collaborators in environmental protection and conservation programs (Rocheleau, et al., 1996). These gendered perspectives were used to develop the conceptual framework, feminist political ecology.

2.4.2 Feminist Political Ecology

In this thesis, I use the feminist political ecology (FPE) lens to explore the lived experiences of smallholder women farmers in East and West Africa to understand how the implementation international gender policy impacts their ability to achieve food security. In the developing world, FPE is widely used in gender and agriculture research. FPE is a subfield of political ecology which uses elements of feminist theory to analyze the power relations in the access and control of productive resources (Kansanga et al., 2019). In the 1980s, political ecology (PE) emerged in human geography, it brought political analysis to understanding the links between environment and society (Resurrección, 2017). The PE approach analyzes the environment-society relations and power dynamics that shapes people's unequal access and control of resources at local, regional, and global scales (Resurrección, 2017; Sultana, 2021).

In the mid-1990s, FPE was introduced as an approach that considers “gender as a critical variable in shaping resource access and control, often interacting with class, race, culture, and ethnicity to shape processes of ecological change, and the struggle of men

and women to sustain ecologically viable livelihoods” (Nyantakyi-Frimpong, 2019). According to Jarosz (2011), FPE’s aim shows how women’s knowledge and the gender division of labor are important to understand environmental degradation and change. Individual and group access to social and natural resources, as well as subsequent environmental changes are impacted by gender, race, ethnicity, and class. In contrast to the homogeneity of the family as a unit in which resources are distributed equally among all members, FPE considers the household to be a complex entity whereby gender relations influence an individual’s ability to negotiate and control resources (Kansanga et al., 2019). Therefore, the focus of FPE is to understand gendered resource access and control practices are produced and reinforced by the different power relations between men and women (Kansanga et al., 2019).

Scholars such as Dianne Rocheleau, Barbara Thomas-Slayer, and Esther Wangari were the first to establish an analytical framework for the FPE approach focusing on three themes: gendered knowledge; gendered environmental rights and responsibilities; and gendered environmental politics and grassroots activism (Sapra, 2017; Gonda, 2019). It is believed that the work on FPE has overemphasized gender. Recent studies have started to engage with other theories such as intersectionality, identity, and post-colonial studies (Nyantakyi-Frimpong, 2017). According to Gonda (2019), the new feminist political ecology is intersectional focusing on a variety of social factors such as race or ethnicity, age, seniority, class, religion, and co-sanguinity, among others that shape both oppression and privileges, making some individuals vulnerable to social and environmental change (Nyantakyi-Frimpong, 2017). This approach helps us to consider other dimensions and relations that may be more essential than women and men, as well as conjugal relations.

Cole (2017) stated that intersectionality has been impacted by post-colonial studies looking at how capitalism, patriarchy and ethnicity inform women's subordination.

Though the household unit is used to understand gender dynamics, FPE places a greater emphasis on macro-level issues such as the impact of government policies (Kansanga et al., 2019). The FPE lens is important in this research because it will be used to understand how power dynamics, traditional and social norms affect women access to and control over resources and knowledge. Some of the ideas from FPE was used to frame the interview questions for the study to help me gain insights into some of the key issues that affects women's access to and control of resources, as well as decision making power.

2.5. Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy

Since the development of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), the Canadian Government has centered promoting "gender equality and empowering women and girls is the most effective approach to achieving this goal" (GAC, 2017). The main aim of the FIAP is to ensure that gender equality and feminism is at the core of Canada's development assistance programming (Morton et al., 2020). According to GAC (2017), Canada's feminist vision seeks to ensure that the empowerment of women and girls can lead to positive economic and social outcomes. To help eradicate poverty and defend the rights of women and girls, FIAP needs to contribute to building local capacity. In the following paragraph I will briefly discuss the term localisation and its relation to Canada's FIAP. Moving towards localisation will empower local actor to take on more leadership roles.

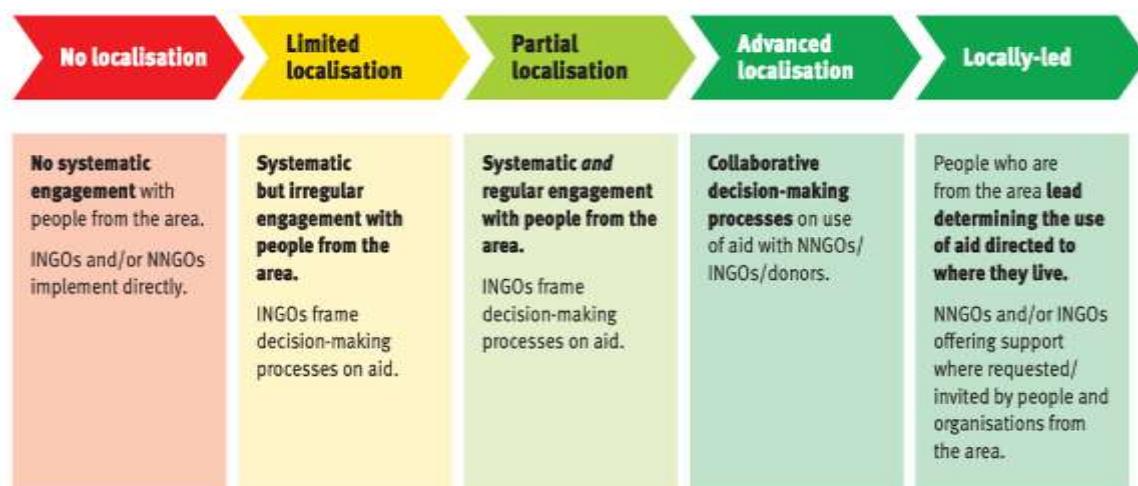


Figure 1: Saferworld's Localisation Spectrum (OxfamBlogs, 2020)

There are several interpretations and perspectives of localisation that have been defined by NGOs, governments and civil society groups have different perspectives or interpretations of the term. However, most of the literature defines localisation as “the need to recognise, respect, strengthen, rebalance, recalibrate, reinforce or return some type of ownership or place to local and national actors” (Barbelet, 2018). Localisation has been used to refer to any activities involving local actors. First, who are these local or national actors? Local or national actors has been defined as “community members and groups, local and national NGOs implementing humanitarian action within one country and including all other forms of civil society organisations and community-based organisations and National Red Cross/Crescent Societies” (ActionAid et al., 2019). However, this has opened room for different stakeholders to interpret the term according to their own interests and agendas. In this study, local or national actors are local organizations or community members or groups that are situated in the communities that they live in.

However, there has been some criticism that localisation puts the international humanitarian actors at the centre rather than local humanitarian actors or responders. Other terms such as ‘local humanitarian action’ and ‘locally-led humanitarian action’ has been used to show a different understanding or objectives of localisation (Barbelet, 2018). As shown in Figure 1., Safeworld’s Localisation Spectrum demonstrates the relationships between International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and local and national Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in different stages. The spectrum indicates that no localisation happens when INGOs and National Non-Governmental Organizations (NNGOs) fail to engage with the people in the area. Whereas localisation or ‘locally-led’ happens when INGOs and NNGOs support the people from the area to take the lead to determine the use of the aid provided to them. Localisation is an important term to help us try to understand how Canada’s FIAP is being applied in a local context. This focuses on how the programs or projects on gender equality that are implemented by international organizations in local communities are ensuring that these communities are taking the lead in implementing them.

Canada’s FIAP consists of six action areas to ensure that Canada’s international assistance can achieve the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. These action areas are gender equality and the empowerment (core action areas); human dignity (health and nutrition, education, humanitarian action); growth that works for everyone; environment and climate action; inclusive governance; and peace and security (GAC, 2017). Global Affairs Canada made a commitment that across all action areas, 15 percent of its bilateral international development assistance will be used to advance gender equality and improving women and girls’ quality of life.

The following are the six action areas outlined in the policy (GAC, 2017): (1) The first action area addresses sexual and gender-based violence, strengthens women's organizations and advancing women's rights to enhance the governments' capacity to provide services to women and girls; (2) To meet the needs and potential of women and girls, the second action area supports access to quality health care, nutrition and education, and principled, timely, needs-based humanitarian assistance; (3) The third action area enhances women's access to economic opportunities and resources; (4) The fourth action area "supports government planning and initiatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change, advance women's leadership and decision making and create economic opportunities for women in clean energy" (GAC, 2017); (5) The fifth action area seeks to end gender discrimination by protecting human rights and encouraging the political participation by women and girls; and (6) The sixth action area supports women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Also, ensure the representation of women in the security sector and maintain a zero-tolerance policy for sexual violence and abuse by peacekeepers. Canada is also committed to improve the effectiveness of their international assistance to improve the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable.

As a feminist donor, Canada's international assistance only invested 1 to 2 percent in programming designed to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in 2010. In the FIAP, Canada will ensure "by 2021-22 no less than 95 percent of Canada's bilateral international development assistance initiatives will target or integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls" (Global Affairs Canada, 2017). Parisi (2020) states that about 50 percent of that fund will go to sub-Saharan

Africa and CAD\$150 million has been set aside for Women's Voice and Leadership program which will assist local women's organizations in about thirty countries.

According to Morton et al. (2020), the NGO community in Canada have been in support of Canada's FIAP. For instance, "CARE Canada reports that the FIAP is bringing attention to previously neglected areas, including adolescent sexual health, sexual and gender-based violence and sexual violence, placing LGBTQ2 rights firmly as a development issue". The Canadian Council for International Cooperation recognizes the values of FIAP on their members ongoing work on funding targets and incorporating gender equality and women's empowerment. Others argue that the FIAP build on the decades of work by the Canadian government and a return as global leader in gender equality.

2.5.1 Criticism of FIAP

Though scholars, policy experts and development practitioners have applauded the feminist policy for expanding on the Canadian government and civil society organizations efforts on prioritizing gender equality and women's empowerment in development work, it has led to some criticism. Some critiques argue that the policy doesn't clearly define what feminism, gender equality and empowerment mean and how it will be practiced. Brown and Swiss (2017) state that (Rao & Tiessen, 2020):

Without ever defining feminism, the policy outlines GAC's understanding of a feminist approach to international assistance as: human rights-based and inclusive; strategically focused on initiatives that best empower women and girls and reduce gender inequalities; challenging unequal power relations,

discrimination and harmful norms and practices; and reliant on gender-based analysis while being accountable for results.

Though the policy is labeled as “feminist”, it only appears 35 times in the document and does not indicate how the feminist approach will be applied. There isn’t a single type of “feminist” or “feminism” (Swan, 2020). There is a lot of diverse and overlap between liberal, intersectional, radical, postmodern, post-colonial, Marxist, and standpoint feminist, etc. (Swan, 2020). The main goal of “feminist” or “feminism” is to analyze the gender power imbalances and fight for a more social, political, economic equitable by opposing oppression and dominance (Swan, 2020). Failure to define feminism in the policy leaves room for different interpretations. Cadesky (2020) argues that even though multiple lens can be applied to the feminist principles, the term has lost its transformation potential and instead it is used to provide political investments that does not go far enough to change patriarchal structures that perpetuate gender inequality.

Questions have also been raised on how FIAP will be implemented in the targeted countries and how the language of feminism will be embraced by the partner organizations in the Global South (Rao & Tiessen, 2020). Rao and Tiessen (2020) also highlights that during the consultation process of the FIAP, there was little emphasis on how feminism in perceived in a particular cultural, social, and political settings. It also didn’t address how FIAP will address the structural barriers of gender inequality in these settings through a feminist lens. Though the policy gives the impression that aid is donor driven, it briefly recognizes the importance of local ownership (Brown & Swiss, 2017). The policy states that for partnership “to be effective, international assistance must respond to local needs and priorities. Partner country governments at all levels establish

these priorities and they are—and will continue to be—primary partners for Canada’s international assistance” (GAC, 2017). Brown and Swiss (2017) goes on to state the language in the policy can be quite directive that it may potentially annoy the partners and delay programs.

Though countries in the Global South can benefit from Canada’s foreign policy, Canada cannot impose itself and its foreign policy objectives on them. Morton et al. (2020) argued that using feminist policies such as FIAP in the Global South, organizations need to be aware of the politics associated with that term. Some critiques argue that the FIAP assumes developing nations interests and objectives align with Canada’s feminist principles. For example, Rao and Tiessen (2020) conducted a study in Kenya, Malawi and Uganda on NGO staff members interpretations of feminism(s) and a feminist foreign policy and found that about 50% of participants were concerned that feminist development or gender equality and women’s empowerment hindered the livelihoods of men and boys. The authors go on to state that while participants acknowledge the need to address gender inequality, their concerns is a result of people’s misinterpretation of feminism.

Another critique is that the policy has been ‘instrumentalized’ and described as a solution to economic growth or reducing poverty instead of describing it as an end in and of itself (Brown & Swiss, 2017). Rao & Tiessen (2020) also refers to the emphasis on women and girl as a “magic bullet” to solve complex social, economic, and political challenges. The instrumentalist feminist approach “approaches often focus on easily attained measurements such as counting the number of women or girls involved in – or impacted by – policy interventions and/or the effect these interventions have in broader

societal, political, economic or social gains” (Tiessen, 2019). An example of an instrumentalist feminist approach includes a quota to ensure that women are considered in the hiring process or to ensure that targeted programs does not exclude marginalized groups (Tiessen, 2019). This approach uses women and girls and other disadvantage groups (i.e., trans individuals) as tokens in a broken or oppressive system and institutions that prevent them from participating (Swan, 2020; Tiessen, 2019).

Instead, FIAP needs to take a transformative feminist approach to identify strategies to address the systemic barriers and complexity of gender inequality (Tiessen, 2019). This approach recognizes the causes of gender inequality in relation masculinities, cultural norms and socially sanctioned power relations that marginalize certain groups such as women, girls, and transgender individuals (Tiessen, 2019). However, Morton et al. (2020) suggests that a lack of effective methods limits a government’s ability to integrate intersectionality in policy. Therefore, policymakers end up using one-dimensional approaches such as gender mainstreaming (Morton et al., 2020). Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw describes intersectionality as the “interaction between gender, race and other categories of difference individual lives” and “the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power” (Mason, 2019). It is not enough to comprehend our intersectional identities, we must also consider the impact of power system on our individual privileges and penalties (Mason, 2019).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study adopts an interpretivist paradigm and phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of both Canadian and local program managers in East and West Africa regarding the benefits and challenges of localizing international gender policy or projects to support local women to achieve food security. This information is attained through semi-structured telephone interviews with key informants from food or agricultural based organizations in Canada, Kenya, Ghana, Sudan, and Liberia. The data gathered from the interviews was analysed using thematic analysis. The chapter describes the research paradigm, methodological approach, methods, my positionality, and ethical considerations of the study. The research objectives guided by this study are as follows:

1. Determine how local projects or programs supported by Canadian food organizations help women farmers achieve food security.
2. Explore the experiences of both Canadian and local program managers in East and West Africa regarding the benefits and challenges of localizing international gender policy or projects to support local women to achieve food security.

3.2 Positionality

I spent the most part of my life in various regions in Africa. I was born and raised in Ghana, I lived there for twelve years. I moved to Ethiopia and stayed for six years before moving to Kenya for four months. Finally, I moved to Canada in 2014 to pursue both my undergraduate and graduate degree. Growing up in Africa, I was interested in understanding the gender challenges that the continent faces in education, agriculture, environment, etc. I was motivated by the work organizations such as Plan Ghana is doing

to help children access their rights to health, education, food security and protection. I identify as both an insider and outsider researcher. I am an insider researcher because I have grown up in these African societies and though I haven't experienced the challenges that many women face, I have seen some of these inequalities that women face especially in rural communities in Ghana. From a young age, we have been taught about the specific role boys, girls, women, and men have to play. My grandmother, for example, never attended school because at that time boys were given priority in education over girls. This is because girls were expected to stay home and help their mothers with the domestic or household work. However, as an outsider, I have not been through the issues that women farmers in rural areas have experienced in the agricultural sector.

During my undergraduate studies at York University, I gained a better understanding of the role women (i.e., Indigenous women) play in the environment in Canada. I also learnt about the role patriarchal systems plays in exacerbating gender inequalities. However, I was more interested in women's contribution in the agricultural sector in Africa. Before starting my graduate studies, I had limited knowledge on the gender issues in agricultural and rural development in Africa. However, I have now gained critical insight and awareness of the various factors that influences women's inability to achieve food security. As a black African woman who has been educated in the American and Canadian school system, it is important I recognize how that has impacted my research. I recognize that the challenges men and women face in urban areas differ from the challenges men and women face in rural areas. Growing up in the urban areas of Ghana, I wasn't exposed to the conditions or challenges that women farmer faced in agriculture in rural communities. The internship I did at Forestry

Commission, Ghana allowed me to see the role organizations play in ensuring gender equality in their project implementation. During one of the sensitization meetings with the men and women of the community, the men highlighted the importance of women's participation in the projects. Also, the organizers kept encouraging the women to have a voice during the meeting.

3.3 Research Paradigm

Paradigm is defined as a worldview that guides the investigator in their choice of methods (Hussein et al., 2013 as cited in Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). According to Hussein et al. (2013), the term paradigm is used in three ways in human sciences: it is used the institutionalisation of intellectual activity, for the broad groupings of certain approaches and perspectives to the study of any subject, and for the description of broad approaches to research, e.g., the positivist or interpretive paradigms (as cited in Grix, 2010). In the research community, research paradigm is a set of beliefs and assumptions about ontological, epistemological, and methodological concerns (Johannesson & Perjons, 2014). This shapes and impacts how the researcher understands their study. Researchers such as Guba and Lincoln (1998) suggest that a research inquiry based on ontology, epistemology and methodology provides an interpretative framework that guides the research process including strategies, methods, and analysis (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). Ontology is a belief system about the nature of social reality (Hesse-Biber, 2017). It answers questions on “what is there that can be known?” and ‘what is the nature of reality?’ (Ataro, 2020). Epistemology is the “assumptions we make about kind or nature of knowledge, and how we look at and make sense of the world” (Ataro, 2020).

This study is situated within an interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm “grew out of the philosophy of Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology and Wilhelm Dilthey’s and other German philosophers’ study of interpretive understanding called hermeneutics” (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Being raised in an African environment, my social and cultural background was influenced by practices, beliefs, values, customs, norms, and attitudes that define my behaviour and view on the world. I believe that reality is socially constructed by individuals ideological and cultural positions (Chimhundu, 2018; Hussein et al., 2013). Therefore, multiple realities exist because of social interactions (Chimhundu, 2018). I focus on exploring the diverse realities of the local and Canadian participant experts in implementing international gender policies to assist women farmers to achieve food security. An interpretivist epistemology is intersubjective, knowledge is produced through the interactions of the researcher and the study participants (Hiller, 2016). It also looks at how researchers’ interpretations are understood in terms of concepts, theories, and literature guidelines (Hussein et al., 2013).

3.4 Qualitative methods

Qualitative research is defined as “the systematic inquiry into social phenomena in natural settings” (Teherani et al., 2015). Some of these phenomena include how people view aspects of their lives, how individuals and/or groups act, how organizations functions and how interactions shape relationships (Teherani et al., 2015). A qualitative approach allows the researcher to probe into a participant’s responses to obtain a detailed description and explanation of their experiences, behaviors and beliefs (Guest et al., 2013). The approach used in the study is a phenomenological approach. A phenomenological approach is described as “the lived experiences of individuals about a

phenomenon as described by participants” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Lived experiences is described as the “representation and understanding of a researcher or research subject’s human experiences, choices and options and how those factors influence one’s perception of knowledge” (Given, 2008). This study uses a phenomenology approach to explore the experiences of local and Canadian managers in implementing international gender policy in a local context, as well as the impacts for gender and food security in East and West Africa.

3.4.1 Data collection

The primary data collection for this study was semi-structured telephone interviews. Prior to conducting the interviews, a detailed literature review on localization, gender, agriculture, and food security was conducted. The initial information was gathered from reports and policy documents from reliable organizational and governmental websites, as well as peer-reviewed journal articles. A systematic review is defined as a detailed and comprehensive plan and search strategy used to reduce bias by identifying, appraising, and synthesizing all relevant studies on a particular topic (Uman, 2011). Some benefits of systematic reviews are, it provides a “clear and comprehensive overview of available evidence on a given topic; used to identify research gaps to improve future work in the topic area; and it can be used to answer questions that provide clear answers” (Peričić & Tanveer, 2019).

The second phase of the study is semi-structured telephone interviews conducted with key informants. Key informants are experts who provide insight into a research phenomenon or situation that the researchers themselves lack (Cossham & Johanson, 2019). Semi-structured interviews use open-ended questions pertaining to the research

objectives or questions to guide the interview. This approach allows the interviewee to drive the conversation while also allowing the interviewer to probe further based on their response (Kallio, 2016). The semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted via email, Skype, WhatsApp and Zoom. The telephone interview times ranged between 30 mins to 120 mins. Telephone interview was chosen because of limited funding, time constraints and the fact that participants were location across several countries.

Despite these constraints, telephone interviews have been found to be an effective approach to obtaining qualitative data because they are convenient, they create access to geographically dispersed interviewees, reduced costs, increased interviewer safety and greater flexibility for scheduling (Drabble et al., 2016). Novick (2008) also suggested that telephone interviews allow participants to remain on their own turf, it increases anonymity and privacy, decreases social pressure, and increase rapport. Another advantage of using telephone interview is it reduces interviewer bias and allows for a more balanced distribution between the interviewer and interviewee (Farooq, 2015). This method encourages the interviewee to talk openly and freely and allows the interviewee to control the direction of the conversation (Farooq, 2015).

In qualitative research, traditionalist (researchers that conduct face-to-face interviews) believe that telephone interviews are inferior to face-to-face interviews. This is evident in the omission of telephone interviews from qualitative research text and the small body of current literature on telephone interviews, as well as in statements expressing researchers' low expectations of telephone interviews to elicit high quality data (Novick, 2008). Traditionalist also argue that telephone interviews lack elements of face-to-face interviews such as the interviewees body language and visual cues and the

difficulties of building and maintaining rapport with the interviewees to gain in-depth data (Farooq, 2015). Rapport may be hard to build and maintain if it is hard to create a “good interview ambience” (Novick, 2008). One strategy I employed to establish a sense of connectedness with the participants and put them at ease was to speak to them informally. I used member checking to check the validity of the information provided by the participants. Member checking is a technique used to explore the credibility of results (Birt et al., 2016). Participants were sent a copy of the transcripts for review.

3.4.2 Sampling and Recruitment

The sampling method employed for the study is purposive and snowballing sampling. Purposive sampling is used to “sample cases or participants in a strategic way so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed” (Bryman, 2016). The snowball sampling method was used to identify other relevant participants that can provide information on the study (Bryman, 2016). Firstly, I used purposive sampling to identify participants who have expertise working on gender, agriculture, and food security in East and West Africa. Participants had to be English speaking individuals. This decision was made because I do not speak any other languages. The participants from study were from organizations in Canada, Kenya, Ghana, Liberia, and Sudan. The participants were recruited to explore their experiences on implementing gender policy in a local context in East and West Africa to assist women farmers to achieve food security in their community. Secondly, with the aid of the participants I interviewed from the Canadian organizations, snowballing sampling was used to recruit participants from East and West Africa with expertise in gender, agriculture, and food security.

Table 1: Description and Location of Research Participants

Participant ID	Sex	Type of Organization	Profession	Location
456	Male	Canadian Organization	Program Development Officer	Canada
236	Female	Canadian Organization	Development Program Coordinator	Canada
587	Female	Canadian Organization	Program and Policy Analyst	Canada
643	Female	Canadian Organization	Gender Specialist	Canada
928	Female	Canadian Organization	Program Coordinator	Canada
707	Female	Canadian Organization	Gender Officer	Canada
341	Male	Local Organization	Food Security Field Extension Officer	Kenya
872	Female	Local Organization	Program Coordinator and Manager	Sudan
609	Male	Local Organization	Chief Executive Officer	Liberia
259	Female	Local Organization	Head of Gender and Quality Management System	Ghana
290	Male	Local Organization	Country Manager	Liberia
143	Female	Local Organization	Country Director	Liberia

For this study, I conducted 12 interviews with participants from different organizations. After the 10th interview, there were no new themes generated from the interviews. Therefore, it was deemed that the data collection had reached a saturation point. I continued data collection for two more interviews to ensure and confirm that no new themes emerged from the data. I interviewed one participant via email and eleven

participants through Skype, Zoom and WhatsApp. Six participants were interviewed from Canadian organizations and six participants from local organizations from Ghana, Liberia, Kenya, and Sudan. I interviewed four male participants and eight female participants (Table 1). The gender of these participants could be useful to see if there's any similarities or difference in the participants response when it comes to the issue of gender, agriculture and food security East and West Africa. In qualitative research with a smaller group of in-depth interviews, I did not seek to explain the relationship between gender and outcome variable, but rather to seek representative or diversity in the data source and hence a great range of representation of concepts and phenomena.

I was able to recruit participants from the Canadian organizations with the help of my committee member. I also asked the participants from the Canadian organizations to refer me to experts from local organizations in East and West Africa that they work with. Participants were recruited via email, which included an introduction to the researcher and a brief description of the research, as well as a consent form for them to review. Before scheduling an interview, the participant was given ample time review the project and decide whether or not to partake in the study. Participants were reminded throughout the interview process that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were assured that their anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained.

3.5 Data Analysis

The telephone interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participants. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim using transcription software such as Express Scribe, Microsoft Word Dictation and Otter.ai. Once the audio recordings were transcribed, I then entered the data into NVivo, qualitative data analysis

software. The data was analyzed using thematic coding. Coding is described as the process of taking text data gathered during data collection and categorizing them into themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A combination of an inductive and deductive coding was used to analyze the transcripts. First, deductive coding was used to develop preliminary codes derived from the literature review. Second, inductive coding was used to identify and code emergent themes within the data (Guest et al., 2013). The themes that are generated from the research appear as the major findings in qualitative studies and are usually used as headings in the finding sections (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A total of 31 codes were generated and categorized into seven themes.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

There were two approaches used to assess the accuracy of the findings: triangulation and member checking. These two approaches help the researcher produce an accurate and credible report. Triangulation refers to the process of using multiple types of data sources (i.e., observational field notes and interviews), different individuals (i.e., a principal and a student) or methods of data collection (i.e., documents and interviews) to build coherent justification for the themes (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The findings of the study were verified using the key informant interviews, the literature review and field notes taken during the interview. Member checking (also referred to as informant feedback, respondent validation, member validation, or dependability checking) is a process whereby the researcher presents data transcripts or data interpretations to one or more participants to check for accuracy (Varpio et al., 2017; Thomas, 2017). To ensure that nothing was missed from the interview, I emailed the transcripts back to the participants to review.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethics approval was obtained from the Dalhousie Research Ethics Board (REB) for the primary data collection because it involved human participants. On 29th April 2020, I was granted permission by the Dalhousie REB to conduct the study. As stated by the CIHR et al. (2018), “researchers and REBs should consider issues of consent, confidentiality and privacy, and relationships between researchers and participants in the design, review and conduct of the research”. Prior to conducting the interview, an e-mail was sent to participants informing them about who the researcher is and the purpose of the study. A consent form was attached to the e-mail informing participants about the research purpose in plain language, the research procedures, the expected duration and nature of participation, a description of research procedures and an explanation of the responsibilities of the participant. Consent was obtained from the participants through oral consent. Participants were given the option to have their transcripts sent to them to make any changes or withdraw any information that they provided. Throughout the interview process, participants were assured that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were also guaranteed that the information they shared with the researcher was kept confidential. The participants data was anonymized to remove identifying characteristics or information to prevent members of the public from tracking the information or findings back to any participant. The data gathered (audio recordings, master lists, transcripts) was secured on the researcher’s password-protected laptop.

3.8 Limitations

The biggest challenge I faced when conducting the research was recruiting participants. Initially, I had intended in conducting interviews with 16 to 20 participants. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic it was harder to recruit participants. At the beginning of the research, I struggled to get participants to respond to my emails because a lot of them were busy. I would usually hear back from participants a month after I had sent an email, or I would end up not hearing from them. I had some participants agree to participate but end up not scheduling an interview with me. It also became harder to recruit participants from local organisations in East and West Africa. However, with the help of my father and his colleague, they linked me with participants from civil society organizations (CSOs) that could help with the research. Even though I could not get the initial sample size, the data provided was still sufficient.

The second challenge I faced was transcribing the interviews. Some of the audio recordings were unclear due to bad internet connection, the location of the participants. For example, the participant from Sudan, the interview process took about a week to complete. We had trouble connecting with each other via WhatsApp, and the time difference made it harder to complete the interview. Another reason for the unclear audio recording was because of the surroundings (e.g., living near a construction site) I found myself in. The lockdown that happened because of the pandemic made it difficult for me to find a quiet place to conduct the interviews. It was hard to understand and transcribe some of what the participants were talking about. While transcribing the interviews, I would refer to my field notes to help me figure out what I missed in the transcription. I also used member checking to give the participants a chance to review the information

they presented to me during the interview. I had highlighted the parts that I missed on the transcripts to make it easier for the participants to make clarifications.

Another challenge was the impact my positionality and researcher bias had on my data collection. Since I view gender as binary, I failed to ask participants how they self-identify in the study as demonstrated in Table 1, where I highlighted participants' sex. I made assumptions about how participants identified themselves. This influences how I present the various responses of participants when it comes to the issues of gender, agriculture, and food security in East and West Africa.

An additional limitation is since participants were speaking on the behalf of the organization, they were careful with type of information they presented to me. For example, one participant from the Canadian organization was selective on discussing how the organization is implementing Canada's FIAP in local communities and whether the policy has been effective. My interview questions refrained from asking participants personal opinions.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings that emerged from the data analysis of the participants interviews in relation to the research objectives. More specifically, it provides a summary of the emergent themes in the data which resulted from the interviews conducted. For the first research objective, I'll be presenting the viewpoints of local non-governmental organizations, as well as the perceptions of the Canadian NGOs because they are aware of what is happening on the ground in the communities. I developed four major themes for this objective: conducting assessments, improve women's agency, financial support, and capacity building (Figure 2). The second research objective, I would also focus on the views of both the local and Canadian participants to identify any similarities or differences. For this objective, I developed four major themes: gender responsive or sensitive programs, improve livelihoods, perceptions and behaviors, and social and cultural barriers (Figure 3).

As introduced in the methodology chapter, I interviewed six experts from local organizations in Kenya, Ghana, Liberia, and Sudan, and six experts from Canadian organizations. I interviewed four males and eight female participants. Two of the participants worked in the same Canadian organizations which partners with Canadian and faith-based agencies to eliminate global hunger. Four of the other Canadian organizations are church based organizations that fight against poverty and hunger. The fifth Canadian organization works with cooperatives to assist them as catalysts for inclusive and long-term socioeconomic development. These Canadian organization collaborate with local and governmental organizations to help them empower

communities and support them in their efforts to access more and better food in the long term.

For the local organizations, the Kenyan organization is a faith-based organization that works with church groups and communities to help them meet their needs. The organization in Sudan is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization that works with local communities to help them build and maintain peace while working towards a greener future and promoting sustainable development practices amongst rural communities with the goal of reducing poverty in a sustained peace environment. The first Liberian organization is a National NGO, not for profit, non-political and a national humanitarian organization. The organization empowers women, girls, and youth to realise their full potential through sustainable agriculture and livelihood activities while protecting natural resources, animals, and environmental conservation. The second Liberian organization is an international partner that works in Liberia, specifically at the community level to help the locals understand the importance of protecting their forest. The third Liberian organization works with civil service organization and the government towards sustainable production and trade. The organization works in various sectors such as tea, cocoa, coffee, food crops and other ingredients. The organization located in Ghana collaborates with local communities, farmers, miners, and workers to promote sustainable production, inclusivity and agricultural service provision for small and medium enterprises.

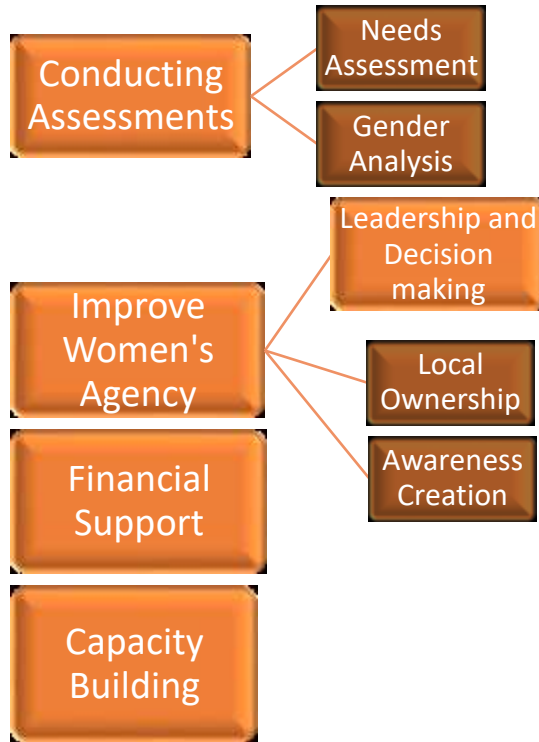


Figure 2: The major themes and sub themes for research objective 1

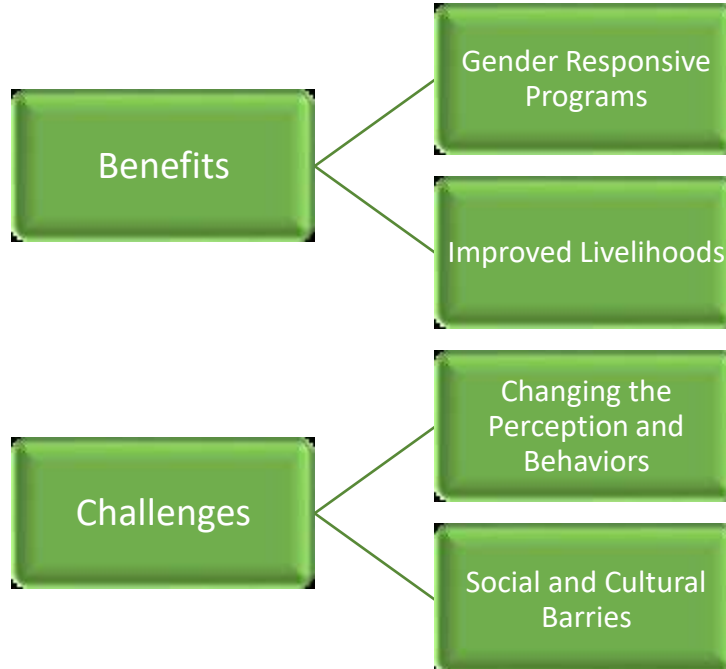


Figure 3: The major themes for the benefits and challenges of implementing international gender policy

4.2 Research objective 1: Determine how local projects or programs supported by international food organizations help women farmers achieve food security.

4.2.1 Conducting Assessments

Conducting assessments such as needs assessment and gender analysis in the community are important to understand the dynamics of the community (UN Women, 2020). For a project to be successful, local communities need to be consulted at every stage of the project cycle (UN Women, 2020).

Needs Assessment

Needs assessment are used by organizations to “identify the assets of a community and determine potential concerns that it faces” (Sharma et al., 2000). It allows organizations to make good decisions on resource allocation and gathering of more resources to meet the needs of disaster communities. Conducting needs assessment also enables organizations to address the gender disparities that exist between women and men in agriculture. Most of the participants explained before conducting any projects or programs in the community, they conduct a gender analysis or needs assessment to help them meet the needs of the community. To assess the needs of a community, residents are asked “their opinions about the development of services within the community, their satisfaction with services and what particular services are needed” (Sharma et al., 2000).

I asked participants about how the organization is assisting local actors or organizations to take the lead in responding to food insecurity in the countries within East and West Africa. Participant 236 (female, Canadian organization) responded that they conduct a needs assessment and consultation before designing a proposal. This allows the community to have local ownership of the project design. However, the participant states

that back donors might have their own agenda when it comes to implementing these projects which makes it hard for the projects to be locally owned. The original contributor is often referred to as the 'back donor' when money is transferred from one organisation to another.

For a project to be implemented successfully in the communities, it is important to gain the trust of the community. Participants stated that once they enter a community, they do a community entry approach where they consult with the local authorities of the community, as well as conduct a needs assessment to identify what activities are a priority in the community. One participant described how local NGOs conduct the needs assessment in the communities they work in.

So, when it comes to the cassava and rice farming, the local NGOs, they first of all conducted the assessment to identify the activities that were prioritized by the communities. And then they went to the communities to identify the participants in the training, to identify the women's groups who participated in the training. And then they also helped to identify like, demonstration sites where the farms were established. They help selecting the location of the rice and cassava mill facilities to make sure that it's like in a convenient location, like in the middle of the village, and that also environmental procedures are being followed... (Female Participant 143, Canadian organization)

Gender Analysis

Gender analysis examines the relationships between men and women, their access to and control of resources, their activities, and the constraints they face relative to each other (Global Affairs Canada, 2019). Five international organizations and one local organization discussed the importance of conducting gender analysis to understand the gender contexts in the community. One participant explained that before they implement a project, they conduct a gender analysis to try and fix things in the communities. They

ensure that every single beneficiary is involved in their activities and understand what the project is about.

Another participant 587 (female, Canadian organization) discussed how they ensure that their local partners are implementing a gender analysis to help them support women farmers. By conducting a gender analysis, the local partners take into account some of the challenges or barrier that women farmers face.

So, we consider those people our local partner and so we work very closely with them when they're designing projects to say, you know do you have a gender analysis? What is your program design? and try and encourage them to put those sorts of things in place to support women farmers in their programming. So, when you ask us what we're doing to support, we are working with our partner O3 Ethiopia to ensure that through their programming they're supporting women farmers. So, we talked about this a lot with them, we are well aware of some of the challenges and disadvantages that women farmers face in terms of; access to inputs, access to credits, access to financial services, access to information extension services, all of those sorts of things. So, you know we would expect that our partner through the gender analysis would have taken some of those issues or challenges or barriers that women farmers face and that they would then have a way of addressing them through the project design.

Three of the participants from local organizations also discussed that from their experiences it is important to consult with the local leadership or authorities before designing a proposal since they have an influence on the people in the community. They stated that it is important to respect the local structures that are in place.

Participant 259 (female, local organization) said: "...we do the community entry. First of all, we knock on the doors of the traditional authority. We can't work outside the local structures right, we can't work outside their local traditional structures. We need to accord them that courtesy. We first of all enter the community and if it's a community with a chief, we pay a courtesy call to the chief; try to explain our mission and then also solicit their support for the program; and after we have done that we try also to find opinion leaders in the communities. So, these are people who have a kind of a strong following in the community, who have a voice and people listen to them also".

4.2.2 Improve Women's Agency

Agency is described as the individual's or a group's capacity to make effective decision and turn them into desired outcomes (World Bank, 2011). Women and men's ability to make effective decisions differs across the country, with women typically at a disadvantage (World Bank, 2011). Women's agency is defined as a woman's belief in herself and understanding of her rights, as well as her ability to make decisions and control acquired resources (Qutteina et al., 2019). For this part, I focus on the three ways the Canadian organizations have assisted women farmers to achieve food security by improving their agency: leadership and decision-making power, local ownership, and awareness creation.

Leadership and decision-making power

When speaking to the female participant 643 (Canadian organization) about the indicators they look for before implementing a project, she discussed the importance of conducting a needs assessment and gender analysis to understand the challenges (i.e., low decision making, being overburdened with work, low access and to control of resources, etc.) women face. While assessing the situation in the community the participant notices that women have less agency than men. The organization ensures that their projects include or address some of these key issues. She stated that to increase women's substantive decision making, they need to be put in influential positions. Women have to be removed from the typical roles they are usually positioned in and not to be perceived as beneficiaries. For example, positions such as secretary, women are less likely to be taken seriously when addressing specific problems.

So, we try to push that so that the person who is a chairperson and the treasurer are actually women. And, the person who does the minutes or the secretary of the

committee is a man. So, we are trying to push the envelope and have women to be portrayed in a typical role. We all know that leaders are men, superior, they're men because that's what culture tells us. But, for them to be able to achieve gender equality, they have to be able to raise or increase their voice in decision making, and for them to make decision, they've to be in leadership position. So, that's why we push for the community leadership and the participation.

Participant 609 (male, local organization) also discusses how the organization is aiding women to take more decisions in what they can produce, in accessing land and other resources at the organization level, community level, and national and regional level.

One primary focus is policies driven organization. The organization hired women in major positions (Administration/finance, program, trainer, supervisor etc.). At the level of the community, structures are established, and women are encouraged and motivated to take leadership role even women participants are also encouraged in the membership... At the community, women are placed in positions to make decision and speak out on issues. At the national and regional level, women are being appointed as commissioner, town chief, governor, paramount chief, and superintendent. The gender disparities will in some setting be around. However, our role is to identify more women with special potential in community and place them in position to raise issues of concern for all women. Our organization prioritize women role in leadership, in participation, in position, obtaining properties for women to take ownership of their rights, to make decisions, and raise their voices. That's the role that we consider at the moment.

Another female participant from Ghana discusses how they ensure genuine local ownership and genuine leadership in agriculture with the community they work with. She states that when women are in mixed groups, they tend to take a back seat and let the men run the show. But, in a women's only cohorts they take up leadership roles without the influence of men.

... we feel that when women alone are in their space, they tend to take all the control. I mean in most cases when they are in mixed groups, they tend to take the back seat and then expect the men to run the show. But, the women only cohorts, you are all woman and you have to do all the work, you have to take up all the leadership positions, you have to make all the key decisions because there's no man in there right. And, this we find that it has helped to build the leadership

skills of so many women we engage with, it has helped to build the confidence of these women and they are already building some leadership skills and potential they're taking up leadership roles. They are just honing their skills and it has been one success story to the other. And through that they are able to take leadership, they are able to be more assertive, they able to exercise a lot of control and then demand for what is rightfully theirs. They even become like role models to women in other places.

Local ownership

Projects or programs are locally owned when local actors have a central role and power in the decision-making process and have access to resources. All the local participants stated that local ownership and gaining the trust of the people is necessary when conducting projects in the community. The participants also discussed that enhancing the capacity of these local actors to make the project more sustainable.

Participant 143 (female, local organization) discusses the relation between increasing women's agency and local ownership. She discussed the importance of activities being led by the communities instead of it being donor driven.

...when it comes to selecting participants for activities, we will make sure that everyone is included, when it comes to the planning that they are included. You see this also linked again to the local ownership. We are making sure, in particular, when it comes to food security issues, that we are not promoting activities, or bringing activities to a community that the community is not interested in. But we really basically ask the community to design their own project. And you see, this is something that happens to us very often, that we are responding to the requests from the community. And you see, this is also only possible because we have this long term relationship with communities...

Participant 290 (male, local organization) discusses how the stakeholders that they support are taking an active role, as well as building their capacity.

Organization support stakeholders in selected districts to prepare Participatory Land Use Plans that identify land for agriculture development, land-based resources for conservation and sustainable management, and land for agro-infrastructure development. Farmers and farmers' groups also receive training in improved agricultural practices through Farmer Field Schools, support to create labor sharing groups, and financial support to establish agricultural related

infrastructure and small enterprises. For example, O9 is supporting the refurbishing of 8 dams in Foya Statutory District, Lofa County to scale up lowland rice production, and supporting farmer groups to establish Cassava processing facilities to add value to the cassava they grow locally.

Awareness Creation

Sensitization workshop help create awareness on the importance of gender & gender inequalities in agriculture. This helps the local communities have a better understanding of the projects being implemented. During the interview with a female participant from a Canadian church-based organization on how the organization addresses gender disparities in agriculture, she stressed the importance of targeting women and the need for sensitization once a project starts.

We really do try to target as many women as possible. Just because often they are the ones that have a lot more insecurity, whether that may be their livelihoods, codependence on male family members. So it puts them in a more precarious position especially if there's gender based violence involved in their settings where their living. But again, you can't totally ignore the men because then they get upset and you have to provide some types of inclusion for them because if they see the women doing all this amazing things, they often want to be a part of that, there are often compromises... And there's a lot of sensitization once a project starts where the partners, the community based staff will hold meetings and sensitize people to let them know what the program objectives are, who are the intended participants, etc., just so that there's clear expectations going into ... at the beginning. We really do encourage partners to work with local leadership because often they have a lot of influence, over you know the success of projects and building ownership and also understanding of projects that enter communities.

The female participant from Liberia also discussed that creating awareness is a continuous thing. Changing people's attitudes or perceptions about certain issues doesn't happen overnight.

Participant 143: *...we can never do enough to somehow raise awareness. And, actually, we just had applied for a grant to really do a gender and social inclusion trainings in communities and to do gender action learning systems, and raising awareness in communities, because they will see that there is a nice development and that the women are strong, but they may not really understand*

the underlying causes, or some of the dynamics. So I think, much more training would be beneficial in that regard.

Additionally, she explained the gender and social inclusion training that was organized for the organizations staff members and local partners and some of the interesting ideas that came up.

So, we did actually conduct a training on gender and social inclusion, but that was not for the community members, unfortunately, it was for our own staff members and for our partners. So, including the local NGOs that we are working with, were doing the agricultural projects. And I think for some of them, it was really like an eye opener, just to understand all the different dynamics and understand some stereotypes that are in the community or in a society they're living in. Also, understand maybe some traditional practices which in reality, rather being obstacles to development, because they are like being used as tools to suppress women or other groups in society.

So, after the training, we really discussed that it will be great if we can give similar training to the communities we are working with. Because even for us, my staff members enjoyed it so much. And it was so interesting for everyone. And then, we really like talked straight to the point. I think we never had like the session, open discussion. And they were like, a strange ideas coming up, for example, you need to beat your wife because otherwise she thinks you don't love her.

4.2.3 Capacity Building

Capacity building should be a two-way process. It is important to recognize that not only local communities, but also organization staff members, require gender inequality and gender-based violence sensitization or training. This can enhance the knowledge, skills and understanding of the staff members. Building women's capacity can enhance their knowledge and skills, so that once a project ends, they are able to continue with the projects, as well as transfer some of the knowledge and skills they have acquired. The Ghanaian female participant talked about how the organisation ensures that the communities continue to adopt the gender practises, projects, or programmes that have been implemented in the community.

Participant 259: Okay, I think when we started, we spoke about ensuring that we work through local structures right; so we are aware that we run mainly projects and every project has a lifeline after some period it comes to an end. So, we work with the district assemblies, so those ones are local governments agencies who are always there. So we try to build their capacity and then they implement some of the components of the program with us, especially the gender aspect. So, we have the gender officers in the various districts that we work with. So, even if the program folds up, it ends and we are no longer in contact with the communities, these gender officers are always stationed there and they are able to continue the engagement.

The female participant from Sudan explains that the long conflicts in the country have left women to become the head of their household because the men have migrated out of Kordofan and Darfur.

Participant 872: Also, we supporting the woman specifically through capacity building, in each project, we focus how to enhance their capacity and also provide and disseminate the information that can help her secure their life. As you know, due to the long conflicts, most of the men leave from the area in Kordofan and Darfur and left the woman alone and she became the head of household. So, that is the load of responsibilities is very huge, it needs more supporting. So, you need to build her capacity and increase her knowledge before improving their livelihoods and through providing of micro enterprises project or how to learn about the financial management and how to market their products without middlemen.

4.2.4 Financial support

Providing financial support or services to aid both local organizations and women farmers to improve their livelihoods. Funding for local organizations enables them to support the local community. A male participant from Kenya discusses the financial services available to women, such as Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA). He also explains how the VSLA has benefited to women and their families.

... through the Village Savings and Loans Associations (inaudible) they have been able to borrow and that sustains family basic needs. And also, they are able to source some capital for farm work either buying seeds or when they are in the field or when they are preparing the land. So, that has enabled them since men used to think they are the only ones who can source or they can be able to borrow, but women now has a way of borrowing. The major problem here is

money or capital. As they are able to come up with this good plans for the community and even VSLA, they are able to sustain themselves. So, that has a great impact.

Two of the female participants from a Canadian church-based group described how the organization's trainings (i.e., sustainable agriculture practices and entrepreneurship) and small village and loans savings associations has helped women become food secure.

Participant 928: ...looking at things like aggregation groups, and village savings associations and self-help groups like that, where a lot of women are in those groups to help them get access to cash for their families has also helped.

Participant 236: But, I would say that you know even providing training, especially in sustainable agriculture practices, etc., and providing them some basic entrepreneurship training and in some instances there's the small village and loans savings associations which enable people to invest on a smaller scale in their own incoming generating activities has had a positive impact, especially for women. Once they are able to kind of get above that threshold, were they're more food secure, they've some income coming in, whether they are able to start sending their children to school, and maybe expanding their houses or improving the houses they've, I think that's a good marker of success in terms of how agriculture can improve their wellbeing overall.

As indicated in the previous chapter, there are several reasons that hinders women's capacity to access financial services. Some of the reasons are a lack of assets, limited time and mobility, socio-cultural constraints, low levels of education, among others (Daniel, 2014). Women who have access to financial services become less reliant on their husbands or male relatives and become more financially independent. Improving women's access to financial resources or services leads to increased investments in human capital, such as children's health, nutrition, and education (FAO, 2011).

Two participants from the local and Canadian organizations discussed the benefits of the village savings and loans association (VSLA) for women and their families. The

VSLA allows them to get some capital for their farm work to buy seeds. VSLA is described as an informal financial intervention that is entirely based on member savings and loan interest, with no capital input from an outside organisation (Bannor et al., 2020). In Uganda, for example, VSLAs have helped rural women meet some financial needs such as improved access to farm inputs such as inorganic fertilizers through vouchers, loans, or cash transfer (Harriet & Franklin, 2021). Furthermore, VSLAs are localised they are more vulnerable to local economic shocks such as theft and robbery which can affect all group members (Harriet & Franklin, 2021).

4.3 Research questions two: Explore the experiences of both international and local program managers in East and West Africa regarding the benefits and challenges of localizing international gender policy or projects to support local women to achieve food security.

4.3.1 Benefits

Gender Responsive/ Sensitive Programming

Programs or projects are more gender responsive or sensitive because it takes into account the gender norms, roles and inequalities that women face in agriculture, and measures have been taken to actively address them. According to participant 456 (male, Canadian NGO), the organization has shifted its focus on gender as a back burner issue to a front burner issue since the development of FIAP.

... gender is something that we have occasionally talked about as an organization for a long time going back many years. But, really the Feminist International Assistance Policy gave us a real kick to get moving on those discussions and actually solidify that and improve policy, develop improve guidance materials, conduct training. It moved it from a back burner issue to a front burner and made us take it much more seriously...things like our gender policy was updated since the FIAP came in, our organizational gender policy was a new policy that was

created since the FIAP came in, all the guidance notes that I mentioned are new since FIAP. So really it created a flurry of activity for us on trying to strengthen that area of our programming.

Another female participant states that a gender responsive programming acts as a motivator for the organization and their local partners.

Participant 587 (Canadian): ...as an organization, we have found Canada's feminist international assistance policy or the FIAP to be very helpful at providing the needed motivation within our organization. Really, focus on gender-responsive programming to make that a priority to, for that you know we're well trained and we have the resources, this will have me working you know very closely on gender. And then, it also provides [pause] you know sort of the motivation necessary when we're working with our partners, and say hey guys you know if we want to get this money it's really helpful, you know we need to think through gender. So, it's really encouraged our partners to implement this more and think about more in that way.

The female participant from Ghana described how taking measures to achieve gender equality may benefit communities and households.

Participant 259: In terms of the benefits, we can have a lot of conversations on how gender equality benefits humanity. Okay, so if you empower women, children are better off; if you empower women, communities are better off because they always plow back that benefits into other people. It could be their children, it could be their communities, it could be the entire households. I mean I keep saying that investing in women is a direct investment in the bigger population because the benefits just doesn't rest with the women.

Improves Livelihoods

Two of the Canadian participants explained that by building the capacity of women farmers, they are able to acquire new skills, have access to services and goods, new agricultural practices, etc.

Participant 643 (female): ...learning a skill, or they start a small business or actually doing work and getting paid for it...they do get the needed services and goods, which could be food or ability to learn or have a new skill or they could get sanitation facilities.

Although they have had problems adopting FIAP with their local partners, Participant 928 said that strengthening their capacity via training and discussions has helped them embrace some of FIAPs principles. It also helps the local organizations in competing for funds.

Participant 928 (female): ...how do you contextualize that instrument so that it fits through the lens, and the realities of the local context? ...I've talked about our approach to training and you having those conversations around gender...I can say, that's a success story that I'm really excited about...So building that capacity actually sets them up to compete for other funding in the future and other opportunities, and to be able to account for their work, not just to donors but to their communities.

According to a female participant from Liberia, when a project is locally owned, people see the projects as their own business and take responsibility for managing their natural resources sustainably. She goes on to explain that promoting champions and local ownership encourages community members to take up initiatives to develop similar projects.

Participant 143: ... for example, for our fish farming activities, we have community members who started constructing their own fish ponds without any input from us and then being absorbed into the system. How the fish farmers are supporting each other and how they're planning together, well similarly with our beekeeping activities. Like the people involved, they are then training family members, they are taking the initiative to construct extra beehives by themselves. Then there is another community that also wants to learn it, and they would send someone to the first community. You see, it's like self-dynamics that are developing and so I think this is another benefit.

... also, some of the women in particular, they can serve as role models. Even for the younger children, when they see that there is a woman that is doing his own thing. I mean, it is successful, it is able to stay sustain her family or contribute to the family income. I think these are things that are like really promoting development.

The local participants that were interviewed were unfamiliar with Canada's FIAP, however, they stated that their organisation had its own gender policies that they apply in

their programmes. Another participant mentioned that their organization does not have its own gender policy. However, most of the participants highlighted the importance of having a more gender-responsive or sensitive programming. One of the participants stated that since the development of FIAP, gender has shifted from a back burner issue to a front burner issue. This has helped strengthen their programming and motivated their local partners to develop gender transformative programs if they want to get funding for their project. A gender responsive program benefits women, their families and community.

To improve the livelihoods of women and their families, you need to build their capacity and provide technical assistance such as training. Most of the participants indicated that with capacity building and trainings, women have been able to acquire new skills, have access to services and goods and developed new agricultural practices (World Bank et al., 2009). Adopting international gender policy at a local level enables local organizations to compete for funding and other opportunities. Women are also able to take the lead on the projects that are implemented and serve as role models for their community.

4.3.2 Challenges

Most participants from the local and Canadian organizations indicated that altering people's perceptions and behaviors, as well as social and cultural obstacles, are the most difficult issues they have encountered while implementing international gender policies or projects.

Changing Perception and Behavior

Some local NGOs claimed that the existing local structures, as well as the males in the community, make it difficult to change people's attitudes about gender inequities, empowering women, and so on. One of the participants from Sudan stated that in the country it takes time to engage men and boys in working towards gender equality.

Another participant from Ghana stated that the local structures make it hard for people to change.

Participant 259: Sometimes, the local structures are very very traditional and then people are very very unwilling to change. They are used to their old ways of doing things and then it becomes very disruptive and nobody really likes to be overly distracted. So, there's a bit of fighting back, there's a bit of resistance... So, for me in my work those are some of the main challenges I have seen, the clash with the traditional setting, the local setting. There's always this clash, especially in the initial stages and it takes a bit of time before things begin to fall in place.

Another concern that was raised was people's understanding of the terminology 'gender'. One of the female participants from the Canadian NGO stated that they attempted to address gender with their local partners but encountered pushback. This is because the local partners saw gender as only concentrating on women, therefore they didn't see the need to learn more about it.

Participant 587: ...often when you go to a partner, and you talk about gender and you know the first response is "oh you know you've been talking about this forever and we mainstream gender already because we make sure women are involved in our program". And, they assume that when you talk about gender, you're just talking about women and girls and so that always sort of been the default position and they think "oh, it's okay we've been around conversation for years, where people are talking about women and girls so we got it".

Another participant stated that gender is viewed as a western construct or idea. As a result, it will be harder to address it at the local and community level. The participant

argues that adopting culturally appropriate term will help community members to accept it.

Participant 236 (female, Canadian NGO): Speaking just about gender itself, you know to some extent that can be seen as a western construct. You know it's easier for westerners or expats to come to a community and start preaching about gender. So I know, I don't think gender has been handled so well when it's been addressed at the community level or local level. I see there's a lot of learning we can do, (pause) on maybe using their terminology or more culturally appropriate terminology cause I'm sure not all languages contain the word gender in it.

Social and cultural barriers

Most of the participants stated that the community traditions and practices had an impact on women's ability to be food secure. One participant noted that, while gender trainings in the community can be performed, at the end of the day, it is the traditional authorities who will be able to bring about these changes.

Participant 259 (local) states that "I mean you will train a woman alright, but then it is not entirely up to the woman to cause the change that we hope for. It takes the torchbearers, it takes the custodians of norms and culture and tradition, it takes the traditional authorities, it takes the leaders, it takes the employers, for example, if it was a business we were talking to bring about these changes.

One of the female participant from the Canadian NGO adds that as an African, she understands how tough the traditional systems and customs can be. She believes that while implementing programmes in a local context, it is critical to evaluate the country's progress toward gender equality.

Participant 707: The other challenge we face is that localization of programmes must consider the level of countries general progress in gender equality. They must consider national laws and policies, and most of the time it is not at the same page on women rights. Not on the same page concerning, for example, gender equality because they have strong traditions. Other challenge I can explain is traditions and customs. I am from Africa and I grew up in these traditions, I know exactly how communities and families interact with traditions. And most of the time, when we talk about, for example, patriarchal system, it is not easy to all just come from West and cut all these customs, put them down.

Most participants stated that changing people's perceptions, along with social and cultural hurdles, are the most difficult issues they face while implementing gender policy or programs at the local level. Participants stated that because the local structures are very traditional it is harder to change people's mind about addressing gender inequalities in agriculture. Another concern that was raised was people's lack of understanding of the concept of gender. Some of the participants stated that the local people view gender as "women's thing" and a western construct. As discussed in the literature, organizations cannot impose themselves and their feminist foreign policy in countries in the Global South. Morton et al. (2020) stated that organizations need to be aware of the politics associated with the word 'feminist'. Organizations also need to find a culturally suitable term for gender that the local people will understand.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1 Organizations Assisting Women Farmers to Achieve Food Security

The results of the study indicate that for international organizations to assist women farmers to achieve food security, a needs assessment and gender analysis needs to be conducted to tackle the issues that are currently present in the community. The gender analysis and needs assessment are useful tools to address some of the gender gaps that exists because of the gender disparities that men and women face in the agricultural sector. The literature review highlighted some of the productive resources and assets that women lack in the agricultural sector: land, credit, education, information, and extension services, among others. Removing these barriers or gender gaps is key to obtaining gender equity in agriculture which benefits not only women and girls but the society, and food security will improve significantly. Adeyemi (2010) explains that the first step to empowering women and “full participation in rural development and food security strategies is the collection and analysis of gender disaggregated data to understand role differences in food and cash crop production as well as men's and women's differential managerial and financial control over production, storage and marketing of agricultural products.

The gender disparities that men and women face in developed countries differ from those in developing countries. African societies tend to be more patriarchal which makes it harder for women to acquire new knowledge or skills, to access resources, etc. Njuki et al. (2016) explains that gender norms are hard to change because of how they are widely held and practiced in daily life because it tends to benefit the gender that already holds the balance of social and economic power. The authors also state that due to the

unconscious biases about gender difference, it is easier to conform to long-standing norms than adopting new ones.

Another major finding was improving women's agency and ensuring that projects are locally owned. As stated in the finding, the projects or programs that are implemented are local owned when women farmers have a central role and power in the decision-making process, as well as have access to productive resources. Sen's entitlement theory and food sovereignty approach helps us to understand women's right and access to food. Sen's direct entitlement approach and food sovereignty is essential to ensure women have autonomy on deciding what they can produce, the type of farming to carry out, among other (Islam & Berkes, 2016). Thus, women farmers need to have access to and control over resources (i.e., land) to have that autonomy to be able to produce more of their own food. Pimbert (2009) states that local organizations play a key role in the reforms of food sovereignty, however, these organization do not always create enough space for women. Some of the participants state that if community members are not involved in the project from the beginning, the project will not be successful. Working outside the local traditional structures makes it harder for any policies or projects to be implemented in the community. The local and international organizations need to ensure that women are given space to strengthen their capacity for collective action and to be heard.

As indicated in the literature, localisation is necessary to give local actors ownership of the projects that are implemented in their communities. The findings suggest that increasing women's agency allows them to make substantive decisions in the community. For women to make substantive decisions, they need to be in influential positions. Substantive decision-making is defined as "decision making that results in

substantive actions aimed at creating meaningful outcomes” (Zurba et al., 2016). One participant discussed placing women in typical roles meant for the men such as treasurer or chairperson. Women's leadership must be visible for them to be taken seriously. The FPE approach helps us understand the intersectional dimensions of difference.

Nyantakyi-Frimpong (2019) states that FPE can help us understand power relations and access to resources by addressing intersectional positionalities and how they interact and co-produce each other. The study findings show that the status or seniority of women plays an important role in accessing productive resources or being able to make decisions in the household and community.

Therefore, international, and local organizations need to enhance women’s participation in development projects. Women need to be given more opportunities to take charge of projects that are implemented. For instance, the Resilient and Sustainable Livelihoods Transformation (RESULT) project initially implemented by the Canadian Hunger Foundation (CHF) and taken over by the Canadian Feed the Children (CFTC) partnering with the Association of Church Based Development Projects (ACDEP) was aimed at assisting rural communities in the Upper East and Upper West Regions of Ghana to diversify their incomes and increase agricultural production, income and assets of the beneficiaries (Crentsil et al., 2019). This project has helped women farmers adopt farming practices such as growing maize, early millet, late millet, and rearing livestock which are usually preserved for men (Crentsil et al., 2019). If projects or programs fail to include women, it could perpetuate and deepen the challenges that reinforce gender inequalities. That is why it is crucial that constant awareness is being raised about the importance of gender equity in communities.

The results also indicated that creating awareness should not only be limited to women, but also among men about the roles women play in agriculture (World Bank et al., 2009). Some researchers have stated that when changing social or gender norms, there tends to be backlash which can lead to marginalisation of certain social groups (Njuki et al., 2016). The researchers state that though increasing women's ownership has been beneficial for the household and society, it can still increase domestic violence. Therefore, it is crucial to bring men and women together to challenge these gender norms in the agricultural sector.

5.2 Benefits and Challenges of Implementing FIAP

The study findings indicated that the benefits of implementing gender policy such as Canada's FIAP in a local context has made programs more gender responsive or sensitive. During the interviews, I noticed that only the Canadian organizations were familiar with Canada's FIAP whereas the local organizations were not familiar with the feminist policy. I had to reframe my question to the local organizations on the benefits and challenges of implementing other gender policy in their regions. Gender-responsive programming reflects on the gender roles and inequalities, as well as encouraging equal participation and equal and fair distribution of benefits (Nelson, 2015). This can challenge the gender norms and power relations that occur in the community and ensure that gender equity is achieved.

Previous studies such as the Resilient and Sustainable Livelihoods Transformation Project (RESULT) project in Ghana, women believed that the change in gender relations and reduction in discriminatory practices against women was because of educating and sensitizing on the importance of gender equality (Crentsil et al., 2019). The

project helped change people's attitudes and perceptions that prevented women from participating in agriculture and alternative livelihoods. The authors state that changing these attitudes has allowed women access productive resources such as land, as well as men have become more involved in domestic work (i.e., care-giving work). This has helped increase women's participation to engage in more productive work. Njuki et al. (2016) also states that programs that address gender inequalities in accessing productive resource not only improves productivity and food security but also the status of women.

Another benefit of implementing FIAP is organizations focus on the core area of the feminist policy, empowering women, and girls. Organizations stated that applying the FIAP in a local context has improved the livelihoods of both women and men which has enhanced their capacities. Building the capacity of women and providing them with technical assistance such as training has enabled women to acquire new skills, have access to services and goods and developed new agricultural practices (World Bank et al., 2009). Adopting international gender policy at a local level enables local organizations to compete for funding and other opportunities. Women are also able to take the lead on the projects that are implemented and serve as role models for their community.

The results indicate that the two main challenges participants faced when implementing gender policy or program are people's attitudes or perceptions on gender, and social and cultural barriers. Some of the participants stated that local communities and organizations that people did not properly understand the term gender. As indicated in the literature, gender is seen as a women's only issue which excludes men. This is evident when one of the participants from the Canadian organization discussed gender with their local partners, there was pushback since they did not see the need to talk about

it because the organization is already focusing on “women and girls” (Akanle & Adejare, 2016; Chitja & Mkhize, 2019). In a previous study conducted by Rao and Tiessen (2020), respondents from the study expressed concern over the negative effect the feminist policy could have on men and boys in their community. The respondents stated that being a feminist means threatening men’s job and losing their prestige of being the good woman.

Participants from both local and international organizations emphasized the that further dialogue and discussion is needed to raise awareness on gender equality. Projects such as the Financement agricole et rural au Mali – Agricultural and Rural Financing in Mali (FARM) initiative, for example, has helped to change the attitudes that hinders women’s participation in the agricultural sector (Goïta, 2020). The FARM project engages with male “champions” who are committed to gender equality and are working towards a social change agenda (Goïta, 2020). The author explains that these male champions can instill the significance of gender equality in other men’s attitudes. As a result, women can gain access to productive resources such as land.

The second challenge was social and cultural barriers make it difficult to implement FIAP. The findings indicate that traditional structures or practices that are already in place make it hard to implement gender policy. As stated in the literature, the sociocultural norms and traditional expectations of gender roles have exacerbated the gender gaps in agricultural productivity (van der Meulen Rodgers, 2018). For example, the author states that women are more income- and time-constrained than men which affects their ability to obtain financial services, land, and adequate levels of inputs. As a result of these restrictions, there are significant gender differences in the adoption of high-value crops, and in the use of agricultural equipment, male household labour,

pesticides, and fertilizer, among other things (van der Meulen Rodgers, 2018). According to Njuki et al. (2016) traditional definitions of gender roles, duties and responsibilities can be altered by enhancing women's economic participation.

Another important aspect is to recognize the role religion plays in agriculture. Only one participant described how the communities that she works in, everyone has their own religion and belief which makes hard to change the customs and traditions in the community. In the church, we are taught that women are supposed to be submissive to their husbands. In a rural setting, bringing in ideas of gender equality can lead to backlash from the community, especially from men. This is because the community leaders or the men might see it as being disrespectful. Two participants suggested that when implementing a project in the community, it is important to involve the religious leaders of the community.

Additionally, faith-based organizations (FBOs) can also have an impact on people's perception on gender. In developing countries, FBOs play an important role in encouraging and promoting women empowerment in communities. They can represent the voices of women, who are often not heard. However, though FBOs play an important role in enhancing human rights, they could also perpetuate a form of western imperialism by establishing a powerful base of converts in a community, which can in turn have a strong control over the educational system, economic activities, social policy, government, and even military affairs of that community (Green, 2020).

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1 Overview of the study

As the primary producers and caregivers, African women farmers face more challenges as compared to their male counterparts. Some of the challenges they face include access to and control of resources, financial services, education, access to credit and other opportunities (Kilic et al., 2015). The gender disparities between men and women in accessing to and control of productive and financial resources hinders agricultural productivity and reduces food security. However, the patriarchal systems in the African societies make it harder for women to acquire new knowledge or skills, to access resources, etc. Even though several laws protect women's right to land, patriarchal norms make it difficult to implement these regulations (World Bank et al., 2009). By reducing these barriers or gender gaps, not only will women and girls benefit, but the society will benefit, and food security will improve significantly. This thesis sought to understand how localizing international gender policies such as FIAP are assisting women farmers in East and West Africa. Specifically, it aimed to answer two research questions: (i) Determine how local projects or programs supported by Canadian food organizations help women farmers achieve food security; (ii) explores the experiences of both Canadian and local program managers in East and West Africa regarding the benefits and challenges of localizing international gender policy or projects to support local women to achieve food security.

My findings for research objective one indicated that for the organizations to better support women farmers, they need to conduct a needs assessment or gender analysis to understand the dynamics or needs of the community. The local communities

need to be consulted throughout the project cycle. The local organizations in Kenya, Liberia, Ghana, and Sudan have assisted women farmers by increasing their leadership and decision-making power. According to the participants, women have been given influential roles such as chairperson, gender officers, commissioner, and others, making them visible and heard. Organizations are also ensuring that women take control of the projects that are being implemented in the community. It is crucial that organizations continue to train and build the capacity of both men and women in the community so that once a project ends, they will be able to take over. Both local communities and organization staff members need to build their capacity on gender and gender equality. For a project to be sustainable or have long lasting effect on the community, local communities need better funding. Some local organizations might not be able to follow up on a project once a project ends due to limited funds. They might not have enough funds to enable them hire people to monitor and evaluate the effects of the project on the community. Women farmers also need to be given better financial support or services that will help them improve their livelihoods. Two participants talked about financial services such as the VSLA, which allows women farmers to have access to farm inputs, low cash and transfer, and others.

My second research objective explored the challenges and benefits of implementing international gender policy in East and West Africa through the perspectives of local and Canadian program managers. Some of the benefits that were mentioned on implementing gender policy such as FIAP are, programs are more gender sensitive or responsive, as well as it has improved the livelihoods. Most of the Canadian organizations stated that since the development of FIAP, programs are more gender

responsive and sensitive. Since programs are gender sensitive and local communities are taking ownership of the projects being implemented, organizations have been able to assist women to acquire new skills, have better access to services and goods, financial services, amongst others. It also encourages community members to take up initiatives to develop similar projects. For example, the Greater Rural Opportunities for Women (GROW) project led by the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) assisted a woman farmer in Ghana in learning how to cultivate soybeans which she later shared with her community (Cooperation Canada, n.d.). The GROW project has enabled smallholder farmers acquire farm inputs such as three-wheeled motorcycles. The motorcycles were subsidized to encourage women to purchase them, therefore introducing women to local equipment providers, who now regard women as potential clientele.

Two of the major challenges that the local and Canadian program managers faced implementing international gender policy in a local context are changing the perception and behavior of the local people and social and cultural barriers. All the participants stated that changing the attitudes of the local communities takes time to happen. So, to be able to change the perception of the local communities on gender or gender equality, they stressed that awareness needs to be created constantly. All the participants from the local organizations stated that because of the traditional structures, it takes a while to change people's mind on the importance of gender equality. One participants suggested that finding a culturally appropriate term might help these local community members to embrace the idea of gender equality. Another suggestion participants gave was to involve

the traditional authorities because they have the most influence on the community members.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the interviews, the following recommendations are based on developing better strategies to implement gender policy at the local level:

- International organizations need to educate local organizations on the concept of localisation and how that looks in practice. More research will need to be done to understand how international organizations are involving local organizations and communities in their project implementation.
- International and local organizations must work together to develop a culturally appropriate word for gender that community members would accept.
- International organizations should provide training with local organizations to develop their own gender policy in their context instead of adopting an international gender policy.
- International organizations should continue to build the capacity and train local organizations, the local authority structures within the community on gender and gender inequalities in the community.
- International organizations should provide long-term funding for local organizations to support communities and their projects.
- Men and boys also need to be consulted before and after project implementation since they have a high influence in their communities.

Both international and local organizations need to constantly raise awareness about the gender imbalances that women face in the community.

- Future research needs to focus on men and women's farmers experiences with international gender policy implemented at a local level.

6.3 Final Thoughts

To conclude, the development of international gender policy such as the Canadian Feminist International Assistance Policy has helped Canadian organization shift gender from a back burner issue to a front burner issuer. This has allowed Canadian organizations to ensure that their programs are more gender-responsive or sensitive. However, there needs to be additional consultations with Canadian agencies on FIAP at the regional and local level to explain the aims of the policy to local actors and build an understanding with local implementing agencies. To add on, Canada's FIAP makes no mention of agriculture and food security in the policy. This is surprising to see since because in developing countries, it is women that are doing the bulk of the work in the agriculture sector. Agriculture is a vital pathway to achieving women's empowerment and equality. Both agriculture and food security should be made a priority in the policy's action areas, without it Canada will struggle to meet the FIAP's goals. Advancing this policy can help challenge these unjust systems and norms women face in the agricultural sector. The study also focused on how Canadian agencies are ensuring local ownership of the projects. This can encourage women farmers to take up more leadership roles and help them improve their livelihoods.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Position

1. What is your role in the organization? Explain
2. How long have you been working on projects, programs or policies on gender, agriculture and food security?
3. Which regions do you work in East and West Africa?
4. What projects or programs have you worked on in East and West Africa in relation to gender, agriculture and food security?
5. As a local or international organization, what roles does your organization play in supporting women farmers to achieve food security?

Gender

1. What are the roles women and men play in agricultural practices in the region/area that you work in? Are there any similarities or differences?
2. How is your organization assisting local actors (especially women) to take the lead in responding to food insecurity in their region?
3. How does your organization address the gender disparities in agriculture in the region?
4. Do men and women have equal participation on the projects or programs that your organization implements? Is there a minimum percentage the organization for women and men to participate in your projects?

Humanitarian Assistance and Localization

1. How does your organization define localization? How is that being practiced?
2. What are some of the gender policies, food security and gender guidelines and best practices that your organization is promoting to assist local organizations/communities?
3. What are the challenges and benefits of implementing international gender policy on local women farmers in your region?
4. What assistance does the local organizations get from international organizations to address food insecurity?
5. How have projects, programs, policies implemented by your organization affected the ability of women to achieve food security?
6. Has the localization of gender policy in your organization affected the organization's assistance to support local actors?

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT



Project title: Localizing International Gender Policy to Assist Women Farmers to Achieve Food Security in East and West Africa.

Lead researcher: Abena Dwumfour, School for Resource and Environmental Studies, Dalhousie University, abenad@dal.ca, 902-412-6070

Supervisor: Dr. Melanie Zurba, School for Resource and Environmental Studies, Dalhousie University, Melanie.Zurba@dal.ca,

Introduction

You have been invited to take part in a research study being conducted by, Abena Dwumfour, who is a Master's student at Dalhousie University, School for Resource and Environmental Studies. Choosing whether or not to take part in this research is entirely your choice. There will be no impact on your employment if you decide not to participate in the research. The information below tells you about what is involved in the research, what you will be asked to do and about any benefit, risk, inconvenience or discomfort that you might experience.

Purpose and Outline of the Research Study

The purpose of the study is to understand how the localization of international gender policies and agricultural practices in East and/or West Africa impact gender and food security in the area. The use of telephone interviews will be used to explore the experiences of local and international program managers localizing international gender policies to support local women to achieve food security in East and West Africa.

Who Can Take Part in the Research Study

You may participate in this study if you are a program manager working on programs, projects or policies on gender and food security from local organizations in East and/or West Africa and international food organizations in Canada. The international organizations must be in partnership with local organizations in East and West Africa. The local organizations should be located in Anglophone countries in East and West Africa. Eligible participants must speak English fluently and have experience working with local women farmers in rural areas.

What You Will Be Asked to Do

If you decide to participate in this research you, the telephone interviews will be conducted over the phone through WhatsApp or skype call. The phone interviews will take place at a location where your privacy is assured (i.e. home). Each interview session would last about 30mins to an hour. The interviews will occur between April and October 2020. The interview sessions will take place according to the participants time

availability. The interview sessions will be audio recorded. Your decision to stop participating will not have any effect on your employment. Should you choose to stop participating in the study, you can choose whether you want any of the information you have provided to be removed or used in the study. You will have until December 20th, 2020 to make your decision.

At your request, you will be provided a transcript of your interview for review, using a secure format to transmit it to you (FileExchange). You will have 2 weeks to review your transcript and to make any changes you desire. If you do not respond with your changes before this deadline, I will assume that you have approved the contents of the transcript. I will then move forward with data analysis.

Possible Benefits, Risks and Discomforts

Your participation in the study will aid you and your organizations to find better ways to localize international gender policy to improve food security in the region. The risks and discomfort associated with this study are minimal. Outside parties might identify you from the way you speak or your expressions. The lead researcher will ensure that all identifiers will be anonymized throughout the study. Efforts will also be made to ensure that participants are comfortable with sharing their experiences. At all times, the questions will still focus on your professional experience and it will not be used to identify your name or personal details.

How your information will be protected:

Your participation in this research will be known only to members of the research team. The information that you provide to us will be kept confidential. Myself and my supervisor will have access to this information. All your identifying information (such as your name, organization and contact information) will be securely stored separately from your research information. We will use a participant number (not your name) in our written and computer records so that the research information we have about you contains no names. During the study, the data gathered would be stored and encrypted on the lead researcher's password protected laptop.

The findings from the study will be shared in a thesis, presentation, journal articles, posters or infographics. The report will not be based on individual results but rather on group results. This means that you will not be identified in any way in the report. Once consent has been confirmed, you can obtain these results by providing your email address.

Questions

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this research study. Please contact me at abenad@dal.ca or my supervisor, Melanie Zurba at Melanie.Zurba@dal.ca. If you have any ethical concerns about your participation in this research, you may also contact Research Ethics, Dalhousie University at (902) 494-3423, or email: ethics@dal.ca