

GEM Digest of the Month for November 1, 2012

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Floral cow sculpture in Ventspils, Latvia. Photo courtesy of D. Ceplis.

The Gender Equality Mainstreaming (GEM) Working Group of the Agricultural Institute of Canada (AIC) gathers information and articles on an ongoing basis on gender equality mainstreaming within agriculture, scientific research, rural development, climate change and organizational development. Information is shared with members, partners, scientific societies and member organizations. The views and opinions presented are not necessarily representative of AIC.

If you have information to share, please send it to dinah.ceplis@gmail.com and I will compile it to re-distribute once a month. Back issues of the GEM Digest are available at <http://www.aic.ca/gender/resources.cfm>.

Regards,
Dinah Ceplis, GEM Committee Member (Volunteer)

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Opportunities and Upcoming Events

1. European Gender Summit 2012 'Aligning Agendas for Excellence'

http://www.gender-summit.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=43

Dates: 29-30 November 2012

Venue: European Parliament, Brussels

Distinguished scientists will discuss opportunities for advancing excellence through greater awareness of the role of gender as a dimension of research content, and as an important driver to promote innovation and mobility of talent and knowledge. The 2012 edition of the European Gender Summit will demonstrate innovative initiatives in the area of gender equality introduced by leading science institutions, such as the League for European Research Universities (LERU), German Research Foundation (DFG), European Research Council (ERC), National Science Foundation (NSF) and European Commission (EC). The Summit is designed to confront common challenges at national, EU and international levels

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This Month's News

1. The Face of Food Security Is Female

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/10/the-face-of-food-security-is-female/>

DES MOINES, Iowa, USA, Oct 19 2012 (IPS) - In a major endorsement for investment in women – the bulk of food growers in the developing world – United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said food security could not be achieved without women, and that the world's hungry also needed leaders to prioritise actions.

"Girls and women are society's best chance to overcome hunger," Ban told a gathering of world leaders, researchers, farmers and policy-makers at the presentation of the 2012 World Food Prize.

Global leaders meeting in the mid-west U.S. state of Iowa to discuss strategies to boost food production worldwide say the particularly challenging food security situation in Africa will require mobilising the continent's best scientific minds, including those of African women. **Refer to the link for the full article.**

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2. Racist, Sexist USDA

http://metrofarm.com/mf_Food_Chain_Radio.php

The *Weekly News Topic* for the Food Chain Radio Show #792 on MetroFarm, on Saturday, October 6, 2012 at 9 AM Pacific was hosted by Michael Olson. He indicates that for the fourth time in 15 years, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has confessed to practicing institutional racism and sexism. This serial discrimination leads to topics such as how USDA finds itself guilty of serial racism and sexism; why U.S. taxpayers must pay \$5 Billion and more in reparations for the deeds of the miscreant bureaucracy; and how an institution that practices racism and sexism should be managed.

Listen to the podcast at the link.

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3. Ag enrollment climbs in Saskatchewan

http://www.fcc-fac.ca/newsletters/en/express/articles/20121019_e.asp#story_1

The College of Agriculture and Bioresources at the University of Saskatchewan is well on the path to exceeding its long-term enrolment goals.

The target is 830 undergraduate students by the 2015-16 school year, which is only 30 less than the current enrolment.

"We have been seeing steady increases over the last five years," says Murray Drew, associate dean (academic). "From 2011 to 2012, we have seen a 10 per cent increase to about 250 first-year students."

There are also 210 students in second year, 180 in third year and 160 fourth-year students. **Approximately 55 per cent of the agriculture students are women.**

Refer to the link for the full article.

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4. UN Launches New Initiative to Empower Rural Women and Girls

<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/158377/icode/>

The United Nations launched a programme in October 2012 to empower poor rural women through economic integration and food security initiatives.

"Accelerating Progress Toward the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women" is a five-year initiative that will focus on improving food and nutrition security, increasing rural women's incomes, enhancing leadership and participation in rural institutions, and creating a more responsive policy environment at national and international levels.

"When women are empowered and can claim their rights and access to land, leadership, opportunities and choices, economies grow, food security is enhanced and prospects are improved for current and future generations," said Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

The programme will be carried out jointly by UN Women, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Food Programme (WFP). It will be implemented initially in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Niger and Rwanda.

Women make up 43 per cent of the agricultural work force worldwide, and as much as 70 per cent in some countries. Often working longer hours than men, rural women are also the caregivers who look after children, the elderly, and the sick. In addition, many are small business entrepreneurs and investors who dedicate most of their earnings to the well-being of their families and societies.

However, most rural women and girls still face more obstacles than men in gaining access to public services, social protection, decent employment opportunities, and markets and other institutions.

"Together, UN Women, FAO, IFAD and WFP will generate synergies that capitalize on each agency's mandate to advance gender equality," UN Women said in a news release. "When women are empowered - economically and socially - they become leaders and agents of change for economic growth, social progress and sustainable development."

Refer to the link for the full article.

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5. IFPRI Awards Fellowships on Gender and Agriculture

<http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/weaiawardannounce.pdf>

IFPRI and its partners are pleased to announce that Jessica Ham (University of Georgia), Brooke Krause (University of Minnesota), Christopher Manyamba (University of Pretoria), and Greg Seymour (American University) have been awarded Ph.D. dissertation research fellowships on the **Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)**. The first of its kind to directly capture women's empowerment and inclusion levels in the agricultural sector, the purpose of the Index is to understand why women in developing countries face persistent obstacles and economic constraints to inclusion in the agriculture sector though they play a critical role in agricultural growth.

Released on February 28, 2012, the Index is a partnership among IFPRI, the US Government's Feed the Future initiative of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) of Oxford University. Read more about the Index at <http://www.ifpri.org/pressroom/briefing/women-s-empowerment-agriculture-index>.

The threefold goal of the fellowship is to strengthen understanding and evidence of the WEAI; expand understanding of WEAI dynamics through complementary qualitative and ethnographic work; and support promising researchers interested in gender and agriculture. Research proposals supported under this call must be focused entirely or mostly on one or more of 19 Feed the Future countries, listed at <http://www.feedthefuture.gov/countries>.

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6. CWSE-Prairies Newsletter of October 2012

<http://cwse-prairies.ca/>

Dr. Annemieke Farenhorst is the NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering – Prairie Region. She is Professor, Department of Soil Science, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences at the University of Manitoba.

CWSE-Prairies web-site: <http://cwse-prairies.ca/>

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7. Talk by Dr. Betty Achan Ogwaro, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry for the Republic of South Sudan

<http://www.ifpri.org/blog/south-sudan-s-agriculture-minister-speaks-ifpri>

Video at <http://www.ifpri.org/event/new-path-forward>

On October 23, IFPRI hosted the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of the world’s newest nation: the Republic of South Sudan. Dr. Betty Achan Ogwaro described the great potential that South Sudan holds for increasing food security for its people and neighboring nations, as well as for economic growth more broadly, and encouraged partners from both private and public sectors to help the country reach it.

A nation with a wealth of unexploited arable land, South Sudan has a high productive potential, but also faces heavy challenges to developing that potential. Foremost among them are a lack of infrastructure, particularly roads; a lack of foreign investment in agriculture; and a lack of national research institutions.

A formidable presence in South Sudanese politics, Dr. Ogwaro is also a leader for women’s rights in her country, and one of the key negotiators of a constitutional right for 25 percent representation of women at all levels of government – and that’s just the beginning. “Now we are no longer talking of 25 percent,” she told the audience. “We are now talking of 50-50, so that we share equally in development.”

The minister emphasized the “crucially important” role of women in agriculture in South Sudan, where 60 percent of the rural population are women who “till the land, grow crops, reap, harvest, store, and feed the family.”

“Our policy in the Ministry of Agriculture...is that women are part and parcel of the development of agricultural production,” she noted.

Dr. Ogwaro also mentioned the need to encourage women to pursue research careers in higher education.

Hon. Dr Betty Achan Ogwaro is a member of the mediation team negotiating peace settlement between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the government of Uganda, and the first Sudanese woman to challenge Joseph Kony, the LRA's top leader, face-to-face for the group's atrocities in the Sudan and their lack of commitment to the peace process. She holds a master's degree in veterinary science from the University of Edinburgh. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Betty_Ogwaro

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8. Plan for female quotas on EU company boards dealt blow

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/oct/23/female-quotas-eu-company-boards?newsfeed=true>

EU plans to enforce a much higher profile for women in the European business elite have been thrown into disarray, with a Brussels commissioner being told to try again on legislation to compel female quotas on company boards.

Viviane Reding, the commissioner for fundamental rights has been pushing through new draft EU legislation insisting on 40%-female quotas for company boards across Europe, with stiff penalties for noncompliance. The proposals fell foul of British-led opposition among the EU member states, with at least 10 governments reluctant to impose quotas.

Those countries argued that the issue should not be legislated at EU level but rather left to national policy-making, and that policies already being pursued in member states to redress the gender imbalance should be given time to work.

Existing examples: France, Spain, Belgium, Denmark and Italy have introduced quota laws, as have non-EU nations Iceland and Norway, which has had a quota system since 2006 that requires at least 40% of either sex on all listed company boards. Firms were given only two years to comply. The Spanish law, passed in 2007, obliges quoted firms with more than 250 employees to aim for a 40%-female minimum on their boards by 2015. France passed its law in 2011, forcing large companies to reserve at least 40 % of boardroom positions for women by 2017. It applies to 2,000 companies in France that are either listed, have more than 500 employees or revenues over €50m.

Refer to the link for the full article.

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9. Entrepreneurs and Women: Keys to Growth in Africa

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/10/entrepreneurs-and-women-keys-to-growth-in-africa/>

DEAUVILLE, France, Oct 25 2012 (IPS) - The international financial crash of the late 2000s created more than a global economic recession: it accentuated popular doubts about the paradigms on which our economies are built and prompted a closer look at two crucial drivers of economic growth: women and entrepreneurship.

At the recently concluded Women's Forum held in France earlier this month, a pivotal point on the agenda was how to promote sustainable economic and social development in the world's second fastest growing region: Africa.

Recent research from the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) shows that natural resources account for only about a third of Africa's growth. The rest is the result of internal structural changes that have stimulated domestic economies: telecommunications, banking and retail are flourishing and construction is booming.

Trade between Africa and the rest of the world has increased by 200 percent since 2000 and the continent is also gaining increased access to international capital, with the annual flow of foreign direct investment (FDI) into Africa increasing from nine billion dollars in 2000 to 62 billion dollars in 2008.

With a population that is set to more than double from one to two billion by 2050, Africa's potential is enormous – if it can create the conditions for women-led, sustainable development by opening up the formal economy to female entrepreneurs.

Refer to the link for the full article.

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Reports, Publications and Resources

1. The 'New Extensionist': Roles, Strategies, and Capacities to Reduce Hunger and Poverty

<http://www.g-fras.org/en/>

http://www.g-fras.org/images/GFRAS_New_Extensionist.pdf

If women had equal access to productive farming resources, they could increase their yields by 20 to 30 percent and potentially raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5 to four percent.

This is according to a concept note by the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS), an advocacy organisation. The information is based on the organisation's work through its Working Group on Gender Equality in Rural Advisory Services, which aims to ensure that more women are able to work effectively as extension agents to better serve women farmers.

Extension services provide information, training, advice and technical support to farmers to help them improve productivity and farming methods.

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2. Women Empowerment for Improved Research in Agricultural Development, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer in the West Asia/North Africa Region

http://www.fao.org/docs/eims/upload/300580/AARINENA%20women%20empowerment%20study_final_29.pdf

This study on women empowerment in agricultural research and development was commissioned by the Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa (AARINENA). It aims at proposing policies to ministries of agriculture, agricultural research institutions and extension agencies to advance the role of women working in agriculture in the region. It combines a desk-study with literature, internet research and field studies in Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia. Given limited resources, only field-research was conducted in three of the five WANA (Western Asia and North Africa) sub-regions. The region includes primarily agrarian economies such as Somalia and Sudan, countries with a large agricultural sector such as Pakistan, Egypt, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia and countries that have virtually no or minor agriculture like the countries of the Gulf, especially the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar.

The results illustrate the significant barriers rural women and female farmers face in the WANA region. The reasons are manifold, ranging from the limiting impact of the prevailing patriarchal gender paradigm on rural women, to gender-blind agricultural policies, insufficient human resources, lack of skills and know-how in agricultural institutions and organizations. Shortages of funds, weak commitment, gender equity on all levels and persistent gender stereotyping are common. The study concludes with the following key messages: 1) Persistent discrimination of women hold development back; and 2) Gender stereotyping in agricultural policy making, innovation and knowledge transfer still persists.

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3. Blueprint for the Future: Framing the Issues of Women in Science in a Global Context

http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13306&utm_medium=email&utm_source=The%20National%20Academies%20Press&utm_campaign=NAP+mail+new+10.23.12+A&utm_content=&utm_term=

The scientific work of women is often viewed through a national or regional lens, but given the growing worldwide connectivity of most, if not all, scientific disciplines, there needs to be recognition of how different social, political, and economic mechanisms impact women's participation in the global scientific enterprise. Although these complex socio-cultural factors often operate in different ways in various countries and regions, studies within and across nations consistently show inverse correlations between levels in the scientific and technical career hierarchy and the number of women in science: the higher the positions, the fewer the number of women. Understanding these complex patterns requires interdisciplinary and international approaches. In April 2011, a committee overseen by the National Academies' standing Committee on Women in Science, Engineering, and Medicine (CWSEM) convened a workshop entitled, "Blueprint for the Future: Framing the Issues of Women in Science in a Global Context" in Washington, D.C.

CWSEM's goals are to coordinate, monitor, and advocate action to increase the participation of women in science, engineering, and medicine. The scope of the workshop was limited to women's participation in three scientific disciplines: chemistry, computer science, and mathematics and statistics. The workshop presentations came from a group of scholars and professionals who have been working for several years on documenting, analyzing, and interpreting the status of women in selected technical fields around the world. Examination of the three disciplines - chemistry, computer science, and mathematics and statistics - can be considered a first foray into collecting and analyzing information that can be replicated in other fields.

The complexity of studying science internationally cannot be underestimated, and the presentations demonstrate some of the evidentiary and epistemological challenges that scholars and professionals face in collecting and analyzing data from many different countries and regions. *Blueprint for the Future: Framing the Issues of Women in Science in a Global Context* summarizes the workshop presentations, which provided an opportunity for dialogue about the issues that the authors have been pursuing in their work to date.

The free pdf of the report is available at the link.

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4. Science and Innovation in Family Poultry Value Chain Development: Lessons for African countries

http://knowledge.cta.int/en/Dossiers/Commodities/Livestock/Enhancing-competitiveness-in-the-ACP-poultry-value-chain/Feature-articles/Science-and-Innovation-in-Family-Poultry-Value-Chain-Development-Lessons-for-African-countries?utm_source=nIEN&utm_medium=nIENLinkSept2012&utm_campaign=nIENSept2012

Scientific innovations and appropriate regulation in the family poultry value chain, even in their simplest form, would bring significant benefit to the producers and their flock. Essential to raising the output of family poultry production systems is the recognition of who owns and takes care of the birds. It is also important to understand flock size as a balance between local feed resources, household subsistence needs and disease prevalence.

To achieve a positive outcome and secure production, science and policy must thus facilitate the regional production of appropriate poultry feed from locally available resources, the identification of helpful traits in indigenous breeds (for disease resistance in particular) and, the valorisation of ecosystems services that birds provide at the village scale.

Successful scientific and regulatory innovations in biosecurity practices, preservation of fresh eggs, cold storage of meat, vaccination campaigns and participatory epidemiology are making their way to small producers but are still not widespread. Radio, mobile phone and branding of indigenous poultry products are marketing tools that will help the family poultry value chain. Still, structural hurdles remain considerable, at the traders' level; namely ethnic affinities and networks, transport routes, cage sanitation or within the country's legal and institutional framework e.g. extension and advisory services and livestock census forms. These issues must be tackled by scientists and policy-makers.

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5. Women and Water Quilt

<http://www.nature.org/media/womenandwater/>

<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/habitats/riverslakes/explore/women-and-water.xml>

This interactive learning example was located on a website called <http://elearningexamples.com>. The website owner indicates that some of the best examples of multimedia learning come from visual and multimedia journalism.

Every day, all around the world, women are connecting with water. Indeed, water is at the core of women's responsibilities in many societies, and millions of women and girls spend their days collecting and preparing water for cooking, cleaning, drinking and maintaining sanitation.

In the United States, most of us simply lift a handle or turn a knob and out it pours. The search for clean water doesn't stop us from working or attending school. It doesn't take us to dangerous parts of town.

But regardless of where we live, women are dependent on clean water for our health and our happiness, to nourish ourselves and our families.

Reviving our waters is like making a quilt: you work with what you have. And the more people who are working on the different parts, the faster it goes. In the case of fresh water this means involving women and men everywhere in protecting and, in some cases, reconstructing the natural patterns that ensure that *all* of us have the safe and available water we need.

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