

Women-Led Agroecology in West Africa

In West Africa, social and patriarchal conditions and norms limit rural women's opportunities and rights. Women are often denied rights to access and own land, or permission to leave the household for employment. This discrimination leads to poverty, and with it, added marginalization and vulnerability.

Women-Led Agroecology has the power to advance gender equality, while also improving food security and environmental resilience in the face of a changing climate.

Women-Led Agroecology involves three steps:

1. Establishing strong women's organizations capable of advocating for their rights;
2. Building and expanding agricultural systems that rely on local biodiversity and knowledge;
3. Linking rural production to local and regional markets to foster local economic development and greater access to nutritious foods.

Scaling up Women-Led Agroecology in West Africa

Inter Pares is working with grassroots organizations in West Africa*, who are organizing and mentoring village-level women's groups and providing training in agroecology. They all emphasize the reliance on crops that have adapted over generations to flourish in local conditions, without the need for irrigation or chemical inputs. The crops are also highly nutritious. The groups have also established processing and distribution networks owned and operated by women's collectives who then sell directly to consumers. Women-Led Agroecology has significantly improved the lives of rural women and their families while also helping them to better respond and adapt to climate change. This work is poised to be scaled up.

*COPAGEN (West Africa regional), Enda Pronat (Senegal), Inades-Formation (Burkina Faso and Togo), Tiniguena (Guinea-Bissau)



Results at a Glance

- Stronger women's organizations and networks that can better advocate for their rights;
- 2500 women trained in agroecological production and marketing;
- Establishment of processing units for local varieties in operation in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal, lessening the burden on women and improving incomes and wellbeing;
- Increased access of locally produced and nutritious foods in urban markets.



The Potential

By scaling up Women-led Agroecology, within five years, we would see:

- More rural women organized into groups, aware of their rights, with more power and influence to secure basic needs and resources, including access to land;
- Climate resilient and nutrition-sensitive agriculture adopted and practiced by more groups over more acreage;
- Businesses managed by women's collectives will be more profitable thanks to the provision of organizational training and basic equipment to process and conserve local foods on their way to local markets;
- Greater economic power of women leading to greater gender equality.



About Inter Pares

Inter Pares is a Canadian feminist social justice organization. We see women as agents of change, and collaborate with over 70 grassroots organizations worldwide to build peace, advance justice, and globalize equality. For a decade, Inter Pares has been coordinating international exchanges among rural women from India, West Africa and Canada, fostering learning and innovation in building sustainable food systems. Inter Pares is a registered Canadian charity.

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