

Women and Family Farming – A Discussion Paper:

Moving Forwards from the International Year of Family Farming

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Introduction

2014 has been the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF). As this year draws to a close, it is timely to take stock of how gender dynamics and women's rights have been considered in the framework of studies and activities related to the IYFF, as well as what lessons can be learned for addressing gender issues in family farming going forwards.

Crucial in this context are the assumptions related to the idea and definition of family and family roles, dynamics and structures. Family arrangements can vary and change according to family specificities and features at different times, and this matters very much from a gender perspective. Gender issues have been given some attention in the IYFF. However, in the broader context of strong concerns about land grabbing and food security, the debate has tended to focus on small-scale farmers as a whole vs. corporate capital and large farms.¹

In order to bring more attention to gender dynamics and women's rights as the IYFF draws to a close, the present discussion paper was conceived, based on studies commissioned by the International Land Coalition (ILC) for the IYFF. Among these, three in particular, from China, India and Nicaragua, incorporate attention to gender issues in a positive way, and are strongly grounded in empirical fieldwork. This discussion paper explores the lessons from these case studies within the context of other studies and activities focused on family farming throughout the year, and against the background of an extensive historical literature on gender dynamics within farming families.

The discussion paper will launch an ILC-led open online discussion, hosted by the Land Portal from 10-19 December 2014, with the aim of provoking more thought and engagement on how to address gender dynamics and women's rights in all policy-making, projects, programmes and interventions around family farming. At the end of the online discussion, comments and contributions will be synthesized and attached to this paper, along with a note of the conclusions and recommendations that have emerged. The new paper will then be published online as a tool for everyone working on these issues going forwards.

The wider background

In February 2011, ActionAid International claimed that:

“women are not recognized as farmers by their own families, or communities, and definitely not by governments or donors. Patriarchy, stereotypes about men and women's rights and roles, traditional values and cultures, as well as the current global economic model all come together to generate and reinforce why women are not recognized as equal human beings in society, never mind as farmers. This is compounded by actual policies, legislation and practices on the ground.

The net results of all this are that the needs of women farmers are ignored when it comes to policy, legislation, extension services, research, or other government support. Women are desperately short of secure and adequate land, basic tools and inputs, credit, extension services and technical advice, relevant research, and appropriate infrastructure and technology. In short, women farmers have not received the support they need in order to thrive".²

ActionAid's 'Blueprint for Action' set out a list of specific needs from different stakeholders – governments, civil society organizations, community level structures, international organizations, donors, agricultural research organizations, etc. – and the needs remain as relevant today as they were four years ago.³

During the 2014 IYFF, which has coincided with the African Union's 'Year of Agriculture and Food Security in Africa', the World Bank's Africa Region Gender Innovation Lab teamed up with the ONE Campaign to produce a major study of the reasons behind the gender gap in agriculture and set out a list of ten concrete policy priorities that can be pursued to address this.⁴ The emphasis is on measuring the gender gap empirically and boosting the productivity of women farmers by addressing "broader norms, market failures or institutional constraints" that limit the returns to the resources and inputs that women already have, as well as ensuring access to resources and inputs that they lack.⁵ While the report makes a very valuable contribution, it has a clear technical focus and does not address itself to underlying gender dynamics and power relations – even though these are intricately bound up with the very norms, market failures and institutional constraints that its policy recommendations are designed to address. Further, by its own admission, the study did not look at either tenure security and access to land or the social networks that affect women farmers, including cultural aspects of farming that are similarly bound up with gender dynamics and power relations.⁶

The 2014 State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) Report, on the other hand, 'Innovation in Family Farming', stresses the importance of gender and intergenerational considerations, noting that "policies will be more effective if they are tailored to the specific circumstances of different types of farming households within their institutional and agro-ecological settings".⁷ For example, "the needs of different types of family farms as well as different household members in farming families need to be addressed" in ensuring rural advisory services are relevant; special attention also needs to be given to boosting the capacity for innovation of women and girls "based on their needs and roles in agriculture and rural livelihood strategies".⁸ The 2014 SOFA report makes numerous other mentions of gender in respect of specific issues, contexts and examples, building on the nuanced analysis of gender issues in farming in the 2010-11 SOFA, 'Women in Agriculture – Closing the Gender Gap for Development'.⁹ What should also be considered, however, is that one reason why women farmers appear to be less productive than men farmers may lie in much simpler considerations such as their choice of crops to farm – if these are less market-oriented and more geared to family food consumption then their productivity will be harder to gauge. What then becomes interesting is to understand the extent to which there is really any 'choice', and gender dynamics and power relations are also key factors in this.¹⁰

Towards the end of the IYFF, on 15 October 2014, Member States of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO's) Committee on World Food Security (CFS) endorsed the 'Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems' (commonly referred to as the CFS-RAI Principles), to provide guidance on national regulations, global corporate social responsibility initiatives and individual contracts around investment in agriculture.¹¹ These Principles are intended to complement the 'Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security', endorsed by the CFS in May 2012.¹² Both these documents pay considerable attention to gender issues, and their implementation should

theoretically ensure that gender dynamics and women's rights are increasingly addressed in policy-making and interventions around family farming in the years to come.

However, earlier in the IYFF, at a major conference held in Montpellier, France, 1-3 June 2014, '*International Encounters on Family Farming and Research*', delegates concluded that better analysis and monitoring is still needed of power relations within families and of the status of women in terms of labour and decisions and their consequences on the individual (related to empowerment, nutrition, etc.). Delegates noted that social and cultural differences remain in many cases, even when gender-focused laws have sought to improve matters, and that greater educational efforts therefore need to be made within society, and better awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of familial organizations.¹³

The context of ILC's engagement with the IYFF

The declaration of 2014 as the IYFF has served to raise the prominence globally of issues around sustainable rural development and food sovereignty – the individual and collective rights of family farmers and the right of peoples to produce a substantial part of their own food.

*“The goal of the 2014 IYFF is to reposition family farming at the centre of agricultural, environmental and social policies in the national agendas by identifying gaps and opportunities to promote a shift towards a more equal and balanced development”.*¹⁴

At the start of the IYFF, at a meeting in Abu Dhabi, 21-22 January 2014, representatives of farmer organizations from five continents made five key demands on governments to guide the agenda for the year. Of these, Demand 4 specifically focused on gender issues: “*Institute the equality of rights between men and women family farmers*”. The meeting's declaration stated that:

*“Women are the backbone of agriculture production, the supply chain, marketing and all other aspects...women are crucial to the success of the family farm. Wage discrimination between men and women is tremendous and should disappear...women do most of the work relating to food production but are not recognized...women and their families will continue to struggle...unless women have the right to sole or joint ownership [of land] and families collectively give men and women equal rights, responsibility, shared profit and risk management tools...frequently cultural factors impede the enforcement of...laws aimed to correct existing inequalities...women farmers are in desperate need to organise themselves”.*¹⁵

In this context, ILC has supported research activities during the IYFF on the intersection between land rights and family farming, and the role played by family farmers and small-scale food producers in people-centred land governance. Six pieces of original empirical research at country and regional level were commissioned, of which three, from China, India and Nicaragua, incorporate attention to gender issues in a particularly positive way. The studies were premised on FAO's definition of family farming, which states that it:

*“includes all family-based agricultural activities, and it is linked to several areas of rural development. Family farming is a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family labour, including both women's and men's”.*¹⁶

As a working definition, then, family farmers are all those who farm plots of land managed by families or use forests, pastures and fisheries managed by families and communities, largely rural but also including those in peri-urban areas and families who have members living in both rural and urban areas. The similarity in position, in terms of defining who is a family farmer or not, lies in the level of their dependence on natural resources for their livelihoods and therefore their interest in the quality of governance of those resources.

Importantly, family farmers are not a new social group – rather, the terminology has changed over the past 50 or so years from peasant farmers, to smallholders, to small-scale farmers to family farmers. Neither has everyone embraced the new terminology, and that is largely because of issues and concerns like those raised within this discussion paper:

- Who is the family?
- What assumptions are made about the structure of families and their internal dynamics and composition?
- What assumptions are made about who does different types of productive and reproductive (unpaid care) work within families?
- What assumptions are made about the role of women in the management of the family farm and their control over its resources, natural and otherwise?
- Who inherits the family farm?
- How can we ensure women do not get left out when family farming is promoted, both as an idea and through practical interventions in agriculture and rural development?

The ILC studies were commissioned specifically to look at the links between family farming and land governance. This matters because small-scale food producers are a large proportion of all poor people, with the majority of them on low incomes, and they are inextricably linked to world food security. Small-scale food producers play a key role in producing staples, horticultural products and traditional foods, and thus ensuring food security – their own, as they rely on it, as well as through national and regional markets. Secure tenure rights are central to helping these small-scale food producers to produce food, and fulfill their potential to produce more food, while also being responsible for environmental stewardship through safeguarding biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Yet whatever approach is taken to securing their tenure rights to land and other natural resources, there are opportunities and challenges that are specifically relevant to women. It was therefore also intended that the ILC studies would contribute evidence to answer specific questions about gender issues:

- What are the land-related challenges faced by women in family farming?
- What are the practical solutions to ensure that women's equal participation in land governance translates into women's equal participation and autonomy in small-scale food systems?
- What are the organizational opportunities for women small-scale food producers outside family farming?

Who/what is a family? Who/what is a family farmer?

One of the ILC studies, from Colombia, describes how “the family manages their employment autonomously, strengthening the family union”.¹⁷ In contrast, the Nicaragua study directly critiques the standard neoclassical model of the family as a unified unit of consumption and production where all resources and income are distributed to the mutual benefit of all – a sort of perfect co-operative, where a benevolent (usually male) head of household assigns resources for the benefit, and in the interest, of all.¹⁸

In practice, families are clearly not such units, but are instead places of complex social relations defined by gender, age, parenthood, etc., and where bargaining over resources takes place continually. As Sen has argued, the family is thus an ambiguous unit of co-operation and conflict.¹⁹ How each individual in the family bargains – their bargaining power – depends on the social legitimacy and status that they have – both in their own eyes and those of others. For Deere and Leon (quoted in the Nicaragua study), as earlier for Agarwal, the bargaining power of family members is determined by what would happen were they to survive outside of the household, for example after a divorce – this 'worst case scenario' or 'fall-back option' influences very much how household members bargain.²⁰

Moreover, families are clearly not homogenous either, yet a lot of the debate over family farming has not paid enough attention to this. It may seem like stating the obvious – but a widow living with her disabled adult daughter and raising seven grandchildren, five of them orphans, presents a very different family arrangement to a monogamously married man and woman raising three children of their own. Both present different family arrangements to an older man who has never married and lives alone, but whose sister, nephews and nieces provide him with some help with farming and extra food when he needs it. And all are different to the arrangements of a family or families of a polygamously married man.

The structure of families – their total number of members, number of generations they contain, number of able-bodied adults, number of children old enough to contribute to certain farming and domestic tasks, numbers of male and female members of the family, relative weight of different livelihood activities done by members, their existing income sources, the opportunities and possibilities beyond farming facilitated by different members' levels of education, literacy etc. etc. These all matter critically to understanding both who/what is a family and who/what is a family farmer.

This is also before any consideration is given to the amount of land the farming family has rights to use – whether owned, borrowed or rented – and how secure those rights are. Land is crucial as it is the basis for generating income, can function as collateral, and can also be passed on to future generations, so it has a strong role to play in providing long-term security to the family. Linked to this are questions about the range of natural and common property resources available to the family farmers – water sources, forests, fisheries and foreshores, and more.

Last, the detail of who is in a farming family and what land and resources they have available to them, is also absolutely critical to understanding that particular family's land and labour relations, the role and importance of agriculture in their livelihood strategies, and the sorts of support from government, civil society and private sector organizations that they would benefit from most.

Is history repeating itself? What lessons must be learned?

There is an extensive historical literature on gender dynamics within farming families, starting with the early 20th century anthropological studies conducted during the colonial era that described gender divisions of labour in different social groups, and moving onto research that uncovered gendered impacts of resettlement, agricultural modernization and development, and land registration projects and programmes taking place from the 1950s to the 1980s. Famous studies exist about intra-household conflict, about the differential benefits coming from development projects to male and female household members, and about the negative impacts on women from mass rice farming schemes in the Gambia and from land titling and registration in Kenya.²¹ Later, from the 1980s and 1990s, more studies emerged looking at gender dynamics in peasant resistance in Malaysia and at intra-household co-operation and conflict and bargaining powers as noted above.²²

By the end of the 20th century it should have been abundantly clear to all those working in rural development that land, natural resource and agricultural policies, projects, programmes and interventions affect men and women differently, and affect different men and different women differently according to their age, class, marital status, family situation, etc. Yet, is it possible that by 2014 little has changed? That the focus on largely non-differentiated family farmers during the IYFF has left issues around gender dynamics and co-operation and conflict within farming families off the centre of the stage?

At the start of this year, in a special issue of *Feminist Economics* on 'Land, Gender and Food Security', a paper analyzing problems related to gender inequality caused by large-scale land acquisitions (LSLAs) in Brazil highlighted a key tension between the widespread formal recognition in rural development that women's access to land is a condition for reaching gender equality and the concrete realities for traditional Amazonian communities. The paper argues that gender relations and land tenure reflect interconnected social arrangements based on historical specificities of traditional communities. When LSLAs disrupt these arrangements, despite stated commitments by investors to social and environmental responsibility:

"conflict over land tenure intensifies gender inequalities by affecting the economic, social, and ecological balance traditionally achieved through indigenous communities' management of soil and forest resources".²³

As Bernstein has written, "*whether class differentiation is strongly marked or not, 'community' and its reproduction is always likely to involve tensions of gender and intergenerational relations*".²⁴ Indeed, it is striking how 'sticky' gendered roles within a family are, even in contexts where the role of women is changing quite dramatically. In ILC's Colombia study, for example, the fundamental role of female household heads in ensuring subsistence food production for their families during a conflict situation is highlighted, even though the basic patriarchal structure of social relations where men dominate in the public sphere and in any production beyond subsistence seems to remain intact – the standard divide of women to the domestic/reproductive sphere and men to the public/productive sphere. This underscores why it is so important to recognise that a family farm today is a site of contestation and difference in the same way that farming households – or indeed any households or families – have always been.

The question, then, is – what lessons must be learned from historical experience and from the existing body of knowledge and literature on the complexities of rural households and farming families?

Lesson 1 – addressing gender

First, gender has to be addressed. It cannot be left as the 'elephant in the room'. Gender relations are critical within families of all sorts and must be acknowledged and analyzed. Three of the ILC studies do just this.

ILC's Nicaragua study explicitly focuses on women's land rights and the role of women in family farming. Its concern is to look at the challenges rural women face in accessing land and how to secure their land tenure from a gender perspective, by reviewing the experiences of different organizations using different approaches to help rural families gain access to land.²⁵ The study specifically examines differences between projects focusing on women without access to land and those focusing on family groups. With respect to the latter, interactions within the family including intra-household conflicts and lack of support from husbands' are underlined, and power relations and imbalances are acknowledged as crucial to outcomes. The study finds that women's effective control of assets and property is

a first step to their economic empowerment, but it is not sufficient as this is also related to how women see themselves as potential farmers – and how others see them. This is because unequal power relations cannot be addressed just through giving women property rights alone – there has as well to be recognition of the inequalities and a desire to change them.

The Nicaragua study also finds that decisions about land titling – jointly or to individuals – influence the way in which a couple work together. Individual titles for women bring a stronger responsibility for the land to one person only, but with the risk that husbands might not support women to farm and pay off debts; there can also be an emotional impact on women from not having this support from their husbands. Alternatively, while joint titles allow for joint visions of the family, and shared responsibility for it, the study does not find enough evidence to suggest that decision-making powers within households became more equal as a result, and women could still end up submitting to men's decisions 'for the good of the family'. Related to this, the study highlights the general emotional dependency of women upon men that goes with financial/material dependency, and also draws attention to the threats that men perceive to their masculine identity when women acquire land. This can lead to domestic violence and to pressure on the women to sell their land and buy instead where the husband identifies a plot – so as not to upset the existing balance of gender inequalities and social roles.

ILC's India study provides comprehensive details about gendered divisions of labour within Kurichya joint farming families in Kerala State, and discusses the gendered structure of power relations and decision-making within these unique extended matrilineal families.²⁶ Kurichya is a system of tribal land governance where land is owned by the extended family and not by individuals, and in which there are very strict traditional gender roles and divisions of labour and responsibility. Men make all the decisions and hold all key decision-making roles, while women are only represented through and by men and have no real rights of their own. While the system ensures that no family members go hungry, there is no gender equality at all and men control the family land. At the same time, the study finds that external socio-economic changes and pressures of individualization have been impacting on the Kurichya system, with smaller family units within the extended family now becoming more economically separate and engaging more in their own individual income-earning and use of land. The study finds that these smaller family units are more patrilineal and patriarchal than the extended Kurichya family, and that women still shoulder the main labour burdens of Kurichya joint family farming even as the system moves in this more individual and patrilineal direction.

The India study is most interesting because it is highly problematic from a rights-based perspective yet it clearly demonstrates the value of this particular kind of extended family farming from the environmental stewardship and food security perspectives. The study shows how ideas about custom and community land rights that directly threaten gender equality and repress women are still very current, and are even being advocated within the family farming debate – because of its very privileging of food security concerns over issues of human rights and women's rights to land. This then raises the very relevant question – if the main rationale for supporting family farming during the IYFF has been largely about food security and the environment, does this mean women's land rights might have to be foregone?

ILC's China study provides a potential answer to this question in a different way.²⁷ The China study separates out rural households according to a typology of the different livelihood patterns that emerged during fieldwork, and examines each livelihood pattern with reference to who does what in the household, noting the different things men and women contribute to the farming family in each different livelihood type. Gender relations within the household are not analyzed to the same extent as they are in the Nicaragua and India studies, but the

study addresses itself to how families make choices about different livelihood strategies according to their individual membership structure and specific situations and attributes. It contains important insights about the value of mixing livelihood activities and drawing on the strengths of different members for the greater good of the household as a whole. For example, a family might mix farming with employment, or focus on livestock farming, or mix a skilled job with renting out their land. From the sample village studied, land use rights were core to livelihoods for 56% of households, essential to livelihoods for 15% of households, an indispensable supplement to livelihoods for 5% of households, and only a back-up to livelihoods for 24% of households. Women in this village have a key role in farming of all sorts, and in all businesses in the village, while those who leave the village for skilled employment tend to be men. The study also finds that women have generally high levels of awareness of their rights, and actively engage in household decision-making about the use of their land rights. In four of the seven livelihood types identified in the study, women “*play an equal or even more important role than men in family budgeting and farm work*”.²⁸

The China study thus very much supports the 2014 SOFA Report’s view that:

*“Below a certain level, a farm may be too small to constitute the main means of support for a family. In this case, agriculture may make an important contribution to a family’s livelihood and food security, but other sources of income through off-farm employment, transfers or remittances are necessary to ensure the family lives a decent life”.*²⁹

By examining this in practice through a gender lens, the China study also shows that family farming, as a tool in poverty reduction and as part of a diversified livelihood strategy, does not at all have to be inconsistent with gender equality and women’s rights.

Lesson 2 – using the information generated from studies that address gender

The second lesson that must be learned from historical experience and from the existing body of knowledge and literature on the complexities of rural households and farming families concerns what to do with the information arising from studies such as these, which do address gender dynamics and analyze gender relations. How can detailed information about the complexities of gender relations within farming families be used to steer policy and guide the development of appropriate projects, programmes and interventions? This is a much bigger issue, and there are no easy answers.

ILC’s Nicaragua study makes recommendations for organizations involved in supporting family farming to go beyond a focus on the family and the individual to adopt one that looks at the entire community and the social and gender relations within it – thus to focus on women’s rights without worrying about making visible some of the gendered conflicts (including domestic violence at the extreme) that exist within households and the community. Lessons include the need to adopt a flexible strategy and avoid working with pre-established approaches; the need to develop indicators to measure change in terms of gender relations in order to measure project impact, and to develop those indicators in collaboration with women; and the need to recognise that the family is a unit of co-operation as well as of conflict. Moreover, the Nicaragua study finds it important for organizations working to support family farmers and women’s rights to land to use a gender lens to understand why some men do not support their wives while others work alongside their wives without fearing the loss of their masculinity. It is not enough to work with women and women’s groups, but instead the organizations working with family farmers must look at how they themselves are implicitly gendered in the approaches they take, and how they can change this so as to have greater impact through their work.

ILC's China study recommends that women's land rights should be further strengthened by policy measures and legislation to avoid violations by other stakeholders, and that further studies of family farming should be carried out from the perspective of women, focusing on the opportunities and challenges they face in family farming and the formal and informal institutions that influence their role in organising agricultural production, budgeting and starting up their own businesses. The China study suggests that more policy attention is needed to women's rights in land governance and to economic decisions that affect the family.

However, as with anything to do with gender, policy recommendations from studies such as those commissioned by ILC during the IYFF can still lean towards tokenism – a sentence or two, a couple of paragraphs perhaps, on specific measures that can support women (as individuals, usually). There can even be a temptation to claim that gender is not addressed specifically because it has somehow been 'mainstreamed'. Both of these are problematic because at root the fundamental issues are about power and social relations, and these are not easy issues to address.

Family farming vs. gender equality? Are they actually compatible?

The question was raised earlier, in discussing the ILC's India case, of whether family farming and gender equality are actually compatible. The China case suggested they might be, while the Nicaragua case raised numerous issues that still need to be explored. The question of family farming vs. gender equality is not moot. Writing during the IYFF, Agarwal draws our attention to the "serious contradictions" between "strengthening family farming and achieving gender equality"³⁰:

"how will unequal gender relations embedded within families be tackled? Indeed an emphasis on family farming, which often depends on women's unpaid labour, could go in the opposite direction, unless intra-household inequalities are addressed...The issue of gender inequality is especially complex and may be difficult to address by prioritizing individual family farming. Alternative institutional arrangements based on proactive farmer cooperation in production, especially cooperation among women farmers, may be more conducive to gender equality, but that could go contrary to individual family farming".³¹

Agarwal goes on to elaborate from her research in India how:

"many family farms are effectively managed by women...[yet]...family farms do not provide autonomy to women workers or the means to realize their potential as farmers. Hence a nod toward gender equality is not enough. The problems women face as farmers are structural and deep-rooted, and would need to be addressed specifically...redistributing productive assets such as land and inputs within peasant households in gender-equal ways, and directing state services to cater better to the needs of women farmers, such as services relating to credit, extension, training, information on new technology, field trials, input supply, storage and marketing. Institutional innovations involving only women rather than entire families...hold potential gains, both in terms of productivity and equity".³²

Agarwal explored various forms of co-operative and group/collective farming as an alternative to individual family farms during her research, which may be more empowering and transformative for women. She describes how:

"In the women-only group farms there is a basis for women's empowerment outside the family structure, but women's claims on family land and labour for

their collective efforts remain weak. Nevertheless...many groups...do receive support from the husbands of some of the women involved in finding land to lease, or in terms of technical advice and help in marketing their crops...women's group farming ventures are typically seen by spouses as bringing additional income or food in kind, rather than as conflicting with family farm production".³³

This highlights the notion that family farming as it is generally perceived might not be so compatible with gender equality, but that perhaps the two can be compatible if creative and innovative alternatives to standard models and approaches are pursued.

Moving forwards from the IYFF

ILC's open online discussion on '*Women and Family Farming – Moving Forwards from the IYFF*' will shortly take place on the Land Portal, from 10-19 December, using the present discussion paper as a point of departure. The aim is to provoke more thought and engagement on exactly how to address gender dynamics and women's rights in all policy-making, projects, programmes and interventions around family farming.

Two other relevant online discussions have previously taken place during the IYFF, hosted by the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN): one on '*The future of Family Farming: empowerment and equal rights for women and youth*' (9 June to 7 July 2014); the other on '*The Future of Family Farming: Providing Resources for Women and Young Farmers*' (15 September to 6 October 2014).³⁴ Participants in the first of these discussions argued that:

"support for women farmers should be tackled in the context of the need for greater gender equality, the main issue being their empowerment to acquire capacities and rights to act as family farming leaders and entrepreneurs...the entire society needs to be involved, including, most importantly, those in power".³⁵

Likewise, participants in the second of the FSN discussions recommended that support for women farmers has to be backed up by more radical changes in gender relations and power, including especially through: tackling gender-based violence; gender-sensitization and training that includes both women and men and emphasizes the benefits to the family and society as a whole from measures and interventions that target women; and creation of women's farming groups and women-only spaces to support women's empowerment starting with basics such as literacy training etc.³⁶

These various recommendations come on top of all the suggestions about ways to improve women's access to resources, improve laws and policies, etc. that are indicated in reports and studies such as the above-mentioned 2011 ActionAid '*Blueprint for Action*', 2010-11 SOFA, 2014 SOFA, 2014 World Bank/ONE Campaign study, 2014 ILC studies and from the research carried out by Agarwal – all of which cannot be 'one size fits all' but have instead to be relevant to different country contexts and cultures. What remains now is to make sure that the lessons learned during the IYFF are really taken on board, and the global community of practice on women's land rights can lead the way here, through all its own work.

However, even supposing that all these recommendations, measures and suggestions are pursued, there is a question of how they are pursued and how they are kept on the global policy agenda and inserted into the continuing debate on family farming, to make sure that this is not all talk but leads to action and real change. Thus, what seems most likely is that more substantial and transformative change is needed, starting right at the grassroots

through the use of approaches such as Oxfam's '*Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights*'.³⁷

As ILC's online discussion now opens, reflections on the issues and questions raised in this discussion paper are warmly welcomed, including on four key outstanding issues:

- What is the departure point – food security, environmental stewardship or human rights (gender equality and women's land rights)?
- How can women be included as participants in decision-making?
- How can women's unpaid labour within family farming be addressed, including their care work?
- How can the income distribution from family farming be made more equal?

Comments and contributions are especially sought on the critical questions of what can be learned from the IYFF and how gender dynamics and women's rights issues can be inserted into and kept on the family farming agenda going forwards.

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³ Ibid.

⁴ *Levelling the Field – Improving Opportunities for Women Farmers in Africa*, March 2014, World Bank Group and ONE Campaign http://www.wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2014/03/14/000333037_20140314131214/Rendered/PDF/860390WP0WB0ON0osure0date0March0180.pdf (last accessed 25 November 2014).

⁵ Ibid, p.7.

⁶ Ibid, pp.36-37.

⁷ *The State of Food and Agriculture 2014 In Brief – Innovation in Family Farming*, 2014, FAO, p.1 <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4036e.pdf> (last accessed 25 November 2014).

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