

VOICE OF  
THE RURAL WORLD

2016/04 No.124



**SOCIAL  
PROTECTION** IN  
**AGRICULTURE**

# VOICE OF THE RURAL WORLD No.124

**Chief editor:**

George Dixon  
FERNANDEZ

**Secretariat:**

FIMARC aisbl  
rue Jaumain 15  
5330 ASSESSE  
BELGIQUE  
Tél/Fax: +32-83-656236  
www.fimarc.org  
fimarc@skynet.be

**Account number:**

ING 310-0756026-94  
IBAN  
BE87 3100 7560 2694  
BIC/SWIFT  
BBRUBEBB

**Lay out:**

FIMARC aisbl

**Photos & Design:**

FIMARC aisbl  
except special mention

**Subscription:**

15,00 €/an

**Publishing:**

33e année

**Printing:**

FIMARC aisbl

## Summary

Editorial	3
Social protection in agriculture	5
FIMARC News	11

Periodical published by FIMARC in four languages.  
It highlights the rural world's life and activities of  
the member movements belonging or not to the Federation

© FIMARC



Dear Readers,

*Greetings from International Secretariat!*

This edition of VMR spells out an interesting topic “Social Protection in Agriculture”. What is social protection really means? There is no single definition of social protection, but broadly speaking social protection is a set of interventions whose objective is to reduce social and economic risk and vulnerability and alleviate extreme poverty and deprivation. In the past, social protection was a safety net to protect people against destitution, especially when confronted by sudden shocks. Now, it is recognised that social protection can play a wider range of functions, as seen in the Protect-Prevent-Promote-Transform (PPPT) scheme where social protection may relieve deprivation (protective), avert deprivation (preventative), enhance and stabilise incomes and capabilities (promotive), and tackle social inequity and exclusion (transformative).

Social protection is a menu of policy instruments that addresses poverty and vulnerability, through social assistance, social insurance and efforts of social inclusion. Social protection has risen rapidly up the development policy agenda. The right to adequate food and the right to social protection are human rights under international law, and that implementing social protection policies and programmes using a rights based approach is not only morally and legally appropriate but is likely to lead to improved food security outcomes.

Food insecurity refers to both the inability to secure an adequate diet today and the risk of being unable to do so in the future. People who are already poor are vulnerable to hunger because they lack the resources to meet their basic needs on a daily basis. They are also highly vulnerable to even small shocks that will push them closer to destitution, starvation, even premature mortality. The appropriate social



---

protection response to chronic poverty-related food insecurity is social assistance linked to ‘livelihood promotion’ measures that enhance incomes.

People who are not poor now but face the risk of future poverty are vulnerable to hunger if these risks materialise and they are inadequately protected against them (they will face transitory food insecurity). These people need effective ‘social safety nets’. Social protection systems should not be seen as ‘deadweight’ burdens on fiscal systems. Well-designed social protection interventions are good for growth. In particular, by preventing the depletion of assets and reducing the personal risk of investing for the poor, social protection can be a ‘win-win’ strategy: pro-poor and pro-growth.

Social protection exists when governments develop policies and programmes to address economic, environmental and social vulnerabilities to food insecurity and poverty. Through cash transfers, vouchers, insurances and in-kind contributions, social protection programmes enhance the income, status and capacities of poor and vulnerable people. Social protection improves people’s access to health care and other social services, enabling them to sustainably provide for themselves and their family members.

In the absence of social protection, poor households, which are already constrained by limited access to resources and services, are at constant risk of hunger and poverty, especially when faced with a crisis or shock of any nature. Social protection is critical in such cases because, the economic or in-kind support it provides prevents people from hunger in the short term. Moreover, by stimulating production, social protection provides greater income stability and ability to manage risk, thus contributing to reducing poverty and food insecurity in the longer-term. Social protection can also change the lives of the poor by shifting their focus away from day-to-day survival to investing in their future, by shifting power relations within households (as social protection can empower women) and by strengthening their social networks and capacities to take their lives in their own hands. Find more details in the main article.

Enjoy your reading

George Dixon Fernandez  
Secretary General



---

# SOCIAL PROTECTION IN AGRICULTURE



*After having dealt with the social responsibility of enterprises and seen what are the health and safety measures for workers to better their situations, we will see in this dossier of VMR that a large part of the population are out to these measures. These are the farmers who, in developed countries, have a recognized legal status and have some protection but in many other countries, this status does not exist and it is urgent to implement social programs to protect them.*

*According to surveys of the FAO, in 2013, welfare programs have rooted out extreme poverty of not fewer than 150 million people living in rural areas, thus saving them from the vicious circle of poverty and hunger.*

## **What is social protection?**

In the broad sense, social protection is the set of collective security mechanisms that allow individuals or households to cope financially the consequences of social risks, namely situations that may cause a decrease of resources or an increase in expenditures (old age, illness, disability, unemployment, family...). Social protection has both material objectives (allow individuals to survive when they are sick, or elderly, or responsible for many families, for example) and social objectives (reduce inequality before the life risks and guarantee individuals a minimum income enabling them to be integrated into society).

For FAO, the social protection is a mixture of policies, programs and interventions that



---

are intended to protect the poor people suffering from food insecurity and to root out them of poverty and hunger. Through a range of programs that provide financial or in-kind assistance to poor and vulnerable people, social protection improves revenues, the power to act and the rights of these people. ([www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org))

Social protection programs are generally classified as follows:

- Social assistance programs - cash transfers are provided by public administrations and can be subject to conditions or not. It can also include in-kind transfers or public works programs.
- Social insurance programs - usually funded by contributions from employees, employers and the State, these systems allow people to protect themselves against risks (illness, accidents, etc.) through the pooling of resources among a greater number of individuals or households exposed in a similar way.
- Labor market programs - they offer unemployment benefits, provide training and improve productivity while increasing the chances of finding a job.

Social protection helps reduce the vulnerability of rural households; it is essential to improve food security and nutrition and reduce rural poverty. The predictability social protection mechanisms help households to better manage risk and to invest in more profitable livelihood activities. Social protection systems have more impact if they are coordinated with broader strategies for safety, food and nutrition, rural development and poverty reduction.

### **Role of FAO in social protection**

About 73% of human beings do not have access to adequate social protection (ILO, 2014). The majority of these people live in rural areas of developing countries, and many of them rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. Poor rural households, already penalized by limited access to resources, low agricultural productivity and the malfunctioning of markets, have more of evil to deal with risk and economic and natural shocks that threaten their livelihoods.

Access to social protection helps them better manage social and economic risks and environmental threats to which they are exposed. By providing direct income support to the most vulnerable households, social protection contributes to reduce extreme poverty and food insecurity. At the same time, improving the income security and investing in rural livelihoods, social protection can contribute to improve agricultural





---

productivity, to stimulate local economic development, increase resilience, promote sustainable use of natural resources and promote social inclusion.

When it is well designed, social protection tends to be beneficial for women and to promote their economic and social empowerment. Children and young people can also benefit because it helps to improve nutrition and health. As that it guarantees an income for households, young people can attend school longer, and work programs against salary contribute to create jobs for young people.

### **Social protection is better that relieve hunger and poverty**

Many countries in the developing world recognize increasingly that social protection measures are needed to relieve the State of deprivation in the immediate future, people living in poverty and to prevent other people from falling into poverty when crises arise.

Experience shows that when poor households in rural areas benefit from social assistance, they are better able to manage the risks and shocks. Feeling financially more secure, and perceiving that they have a margin of time long enough to get by, they will tend to increase their investments in farm assets and activities likely to provide them with more profitable and more sustainable livelihoods.

The increase in purchasing power generated by the transfer of funds or additional income provided by social protection programs is increasing the demand for goods and services produced locally for the benefit of the local economy and, in doing so, contribute to a virtuous circle of economic growth, reduction of poverty and improvement of food security.



By providing financial or in-kind support to poor and vulnerable households, social protection programs help low-income people to overcome the liquidity and credit constraints and managing risks that might otherwise discourage them to seek higher yields.

Social protection programs, such as public works projects, can increase the income of farmers and boost agricultural productivity by improving infrastructure, soils, water management, and the connection to markets and access to high-yield inputs.

In Africa, the cash transfer programs are known to have increased the economic activities of households, especially those headed by women.



From studies conducted in a number of countries, including Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi, and Zambia, we see that the cash transfer programs contribute strongly to the increase of investments in agricultural inputs, tools and assets such as livestock. Result: the household production increases, thus contributing to a more important and diverse food consumption.

In countries where women have limited access to land, financial services, technology and labor, social protection programs can make a real difference, particularly in preventing maternal or infant malnutrition. In addition, it has been shown repeatedly that the social protection interventions have a greater impact on education, health and nutritional status when women are the direct beneficiaries.

### **Social protection for food safety: some successful experiences**

In West Africa, social transfers have evolved in recent years to be more predictable and regular devices. There is however not yet of real national systems of social protection for rural people, guaranteed by the State and implemented in a sustainable way. In other parts of the world, such systems exist in recent years: in Latin America with “Zero hunger” in Brazil or “Oportunidades” in Mexico, but also in southern Africa.

**Act on several fronts** - In Brazil, the “Zero hunger” strategy integrates the different dimensions of food insecurity. It is characterized by the combination of emergency measures and of measures of medium-long term. It relies on instruments affecting both the rural and urban populations. Finally, it deploys its interventions on the different dimensions of food security (production, markets, access to food, nutrition).

Programs are related to each other: for example, the national school feeding program aims to provide a free lunch to students and provides 30% of the purchases of commodities that come from local family farming. This measure aims at the strengthening of family agriculture and provides insurance for family farming



**An inter-ministerial approach** implementing the systems combining several programs consistently requires good coordination between all the actors involved. In Botswana, several departments are implementing a set of social protection programs: Department of local Administration (public works and financial aid), Department of Social Services (transfers of cash and food), Ministry of Education (school feeding), Ministry of health (distribution of food rations to children, pregnant women and





---

nursing mothers). In its new national policy of food and nutritional security, Burkina Faso also aims to coordinate and harmonize existing programs. But coordination between institutions is a complex process, which is still to deepen in the region.

**Exercise of political will at the highest level of the State** Since the beginning of the 2000s, crisis response programs involve more States and seek to integrate into national policy frameworks. At the scale of CEDEAO, the ”Hunger zero in West Africa” strategy, social protection is an important component, is designed as a mobilizer program around the priority project to eradicate hunger and seems to show some political will.

**Finance welfare with the national budget** In Burkina Faso, only 3% of planned budget allocations for the financing of the national Plan for the rural sector over the period 2011-2015 are devoted to the “prevention and management of food and nutrition crises. In this country, donors would contribute to social transfers up to 80% according to the World Bank. Conversely, Lesotho, whose GDP is lower than that of Burkina Faso, has opted to fund alone his pension for the elderly program.

**“Penalizing” food insecurity** In Brazil, the right to food is part of the constitution since 2010, as a mandatory priority of the State. A law which came into force in 2006 specifically defines the concept of family farming, which allows determining the beneficiaries of support programs. In South Africa, the right to food and the right to social assistance enshrined in the Constitution and the population can refer to justice. The right to the Child Support Grant (family allowances) has been included in national legislation

**Allow an active civil society mobilization** It is at the end of a long struggle that Brazilian civil society got a governance reform guaranteeing its participation in the strategy ‘zero hunger’. A national system for food and nutritional security (Sisan) was put in place, including a National Conference on food security and nutrition (it combines thousands of representatives of the various categories of actors, meets every four years and determines the directions of the strategy) as well as a body for dialogue and coordination between the public authorities and civil society, at different territorial levels. At the national level the national food and nutritional Security Council (Consea) is an advisory body chaired by civil society and two thirds of the members are from the civil society.

**Involve farmer’s organizations** In Brazil, farmers organizations (OP) are represented in the various follow-up and implementation of the strategy of ‘Zero hunger’ at



municipal, regional and national levels. They also play a role of support to producers, helping them to organize themselves to participate in the programs. In West Africa, the OP are not really mobilized on these issues. However, the Brazilian example shows that it is possible to reconcile ‘social’ approach and “productive” approach in the fight against food insecurity, by allowing family farmers benefit from social protection for food security. Programs for the promotion of family farming in Brazil helped to pass the poverty rate of family farmers of 41% to 24% between 2003 and 2009. Loans granted to them have been multiplied by 8 and farm incomes have increased by 58%.

**Conclusion:** we see by these various examples, that social protection can actually relieve rural households. Remains that these mechanisms of social protection are not simple and that they require the strong intervention of the States both for their implementation and for the support to peasant and family agriculture. We encourage everywhere where it is possible the actions of protection, particularly for women who are more vulnerable than men in the small agricultural sector.

### Questions for the groups and movements



- *Are there in your country of social protection mechanisms?*
- *How are they organized?*
- *Are they free or accessible to everyone?*

### keyfacts

- In the developing countries, women represent 45% of the agricultural workforce. (20% up to 60% in some areas of Africa and Asia and Latin America)
- In the developing countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, women work generally 12 to 13 hours more than men per week.
- From a general point of view, women are less likely to own or manage land than men and their plots are often of poorer quality. Less than 20% of the landowners of this world are women.
- If women enjoyed the same access to resources as men, the number of people suffering from hunger in the world could reduce 150 million thanks to productivity gains.
- Women reinvest up to 90 percent of their income in their homes (nutrition, food, health, school, and income-generating activity) helping to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

## FIMARC NEWS

### UN CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN PARIS (COP 21)

The 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC took place in December 2015, in Paris, France from November 30, 2015 until 11 December 2015. FIMARC participated in this event with the following initiatives denouncing the false solutions to the climate crises. In Paris, at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21), where representatives of corporations negotiated "false solutions" for climate change, FIMARC along with other peasant movements and CSO's made it clear that Food Sovereignty and small holder family agriculture are among the real solutions to global climate crisis, by feeding the world in a sustainable way.

### CMR (FRANCE), FIMARC AND COP21



*The village of Alternatives : The Stand of CMR-FIMARC, close to our friends CCFD*

Many events have been organized in Paris during the COP 21 to support the guidelines discussed by the UN Conference on climate change. The CMR, the national movement of FIMARC in France in collaboration with FIMARC International, has organized two specific activities in relation with our lobby work on climate change on December 5 and 11. Moreover, FIMARC was involved in other activities.



*The village of Alternatives. The theme of priority : Agriculture and Food*

**5 December 2015 : participation in the " Citizen Summit for the Climate" with a booth of CMR-FIMARC in the Global Village of Alternatives at Montreuil, in the suburbs of Paris. Several thousands of people were visited the global village in the course of this day which brought together 300 stands. It was indeed a great occasion for meeting with visitors**

to say what is CMR and FIMARC and our involvement with the rural world, links with the rural associations as well as our involvement to support an agriculture which is more respectful for the environment and more close to the consumer, in a living rural territory.

**11 December 2015-** A day of exchange was organised by CMR, with the MRJC, on agriculture, rural world and the climate transition. This meeting was organized in the premises of the Bishops Conference of France. 70 persons from both rural and urban areas, of the different French regions, from the North to the Pyrénées mountains, and from Bretagne to the Jura participated in this encounter. A series of testimonials of farmers and an associations of consumers followed with exchanges in the workshops on the themes illustrating the investment of the members of CMR for the development of an agriculture which provides quality food production accessible to all :

- An agricultural world open to the Ecology, presented with humor by a sketch "Ecology told to my father,"
- Agricultural production, health, respect for the environment with the testimony of two farming couples explaining how they have changed their production to reduce

the use of plant protection products in their mode of production

- The access for all to good quality of agricultural products , with the presentation of a consumer association which organises a supply based on short circuits from producer to the consumer.

The day continued around a conference-debate on the theme " Is agricultural transition possible? In what climate? "with Mathieu Calame, an agronomist and Director of the Foundation Leopold Mayer for the progress of human rights, Jean-Claude Balbot, National Secretary of the Federation of Centers of initiatives to enhance the agriculture and the rural areas(CIVAM).

Then a synthesis was made linking with Laudato Si recalling that "everything is intimately linked, and that the current problems require a vision that takes into account all aspects of the World Crisis".

FIMARC was associated with all these meetings organised by our



*Conclusion of the seminar by Fr. Marc Delebarre, membre of the national team of chaplains of*

CMR

French National movement with the participation of Wolfgang Scharl and Jean Claude Germon, respectively, the President and Treasurer of the FIMARC, as well as François Delvaux of the CIDSE.

### **8 December 2015 : International Seminar of CCFD on « The question of seeds ».**

During the COP 21, the CCFD has organized an international seminar on the theme of seeds with 30 international participants (20 NGOS from 20 different countries) mobilized in Paris on the issues of climate change. This seminar helped to emphasize the need to maintain an international mobilization in order to preserve the right of farmers, and in particular of small farmers, to produce and exchange their traditional seeds and to avoid a monopolisation of the market by the multinational seed companies. Jean Claude Germon has participated in this seminar on behalf of FIMARC. A few highlights of presentations and exchanges:

- The seeds are become an issue for the industrial lobbies: in 1980, there were 7000 seed companies but in 2016 only 10 companies control 75% of the seed market and are dominant on the market of plant protection products.

- This control of the seed market is accompanied in different countries by a criminalization of peasants who want to keep the control of their production of seeds.
- The defense of the right of a self production and exchange of seed is a major agricultural and food issue in agreement with the respect of the food sovereignty.
- - The seeds from an ancient work of selection should be considered as a common good of humanity which must be defended and protected.
- The mobilization for the preservation of the right of seed production is also a form of refusal of the privatization of the living.
- The question of the seed is not yet on the agenda of the Committee on World Food Security (CSA-FAO) but should be imposed. Interest to the Declaration on the Rights of the peasants of the Human Rights Council.

### **10 December : involvement of CIDSE for sustainable development**

This meeting brought together around hundred people from the different components of CIDSE present in Paris for the COP21. Wolfgang Scharl and Jean Claude Germon have met with the representatives of development



*Opening session of the CIDSE meeting: informations on status and progress of the negotiations of the COP21.*

agencies that support FIMARC (CCFD, Entraide et Fraternité, Misereor) and other Christian development organisations. They have been able to explain the role of FIMARC as a structure for exchange and support in favor of a full development in rural areas with the Christian movements involved in 50 countries around the world. In the course of the workshop entitled “move toward sustainable lifestyles”. Wolfgang Scharl explained the motivations and



*The Wolfgang Scharl's presentation : FIMARC and peasant family farming.*

the approach of FIMARC for support to peasant family agriculture .

**Press Release of CMR :** For changes to the measures against the challenges of agricultural crisis »

As an extension of the COP 21 and in connection with the role of agriculture in climate change, the CMR has published a press release on the occasion of the agricultural fair in France in March 2016, entitled “for changes to the measures against the challenges of agricultural crisis “. Jean Claude Germon , representative of the CMR to the FIMARC, has been associated with the drafting of this release. Below, a few excerpts of this text released to the press during the visit of the agricultural Fair by a delegation of the Bishops of France.

- “At a time when the farm crisis is at the center of the media attention, the CMR wishes to bring a voice nourished by the the diverse and complex realities of the rural world which shape its identity. In the middle of purely economic speeches and superficial proposals , we call on all citizens to mobilize to think and implement changes in systems of economic and social relations to stop the destruction of the peasant market and preserve the land that nourishes us. “



- The CMR proposes to “build together an ethics for an agricultural and rural culture concerned with the management of the living environment for the benefit of humanity, while respecting the common good, its richness and diversity”. It appeals to the responsibility of the public authorities for the integration of the regulator role played by the peasants, guarantors of the common good, in particular by the establishment of tools for adjustment of the production allowing a fair remuneration to the producers, A land policy based on the recognition of the land as a common asset, support for the settlement of young people and taxation that favors employment rather than capitalization of assets, support for commercialization in short circuits favorable to the structure of the territory.
- Promote access for all to quality food through the involvement of everyone in its territory. This action aims to mobilize the CMR teams to reflect and get involved locally in actions to link agricultural producers and consumers for the production and marketing of quality food at prices accessible to all and enabling a fair remuneration to the producers in the different regions of the territory..
- Supporting farmers in difficulty: by putting in relations with community actors working on precariousness in rural areas. This action aims at strengthening solidarity in rural areas by building on existing networks and aiming at developing exchanges and relations between different actors involved.

These two actions have been proposed as a support and as a contribution to the project presented to the European Union by the European coordination of FIMARC.

**2016-17: INVOLVEMENT OF CMR FOR THE SUPPORT TO A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT.**

In the framework of its program of action 2016-17, CMR mobilizes on two main actions:



# VMR

***VOICE OF  
THE RURAL WORLD***

**PUBLISHED BY**

Fédération internationale des Mouvements d'Adultes Ruraux Catholiques  
Federación internacional de los Movimientos de Adultos Rurales Católicos  
Federação Internacional dos Movimentos de Adultos Rurais Católicos  
International Federation of Rural Adult Catholic Movements

**Chief Editor**

George Dixon FERNANDEZ, rue Jaumain 15 - 5330 ASSESSE (BELGIQUE)

---