

Chapter 15

Gender, Climate Change and Sustainable Development: The Unhappy Marriage of Engendering Policy and Practice



Yvonne Corcoran-Nantes

Abstract The terminal ending of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) with a claim to a ‘revolutionary but realistic agenda’ failed to deliver in any substantive way. We now embark on appraising and negotiating to implement a new agenda with the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015. While there were 8 MDGs, SDGs consist of more ambitious 17 goals, and while the former focused on developing non-western nations, the latter now requires all nations to work towards a global development agenda. The UN claims that the SDG fund underwriting this global agenda is a game changer; so how does that work in practical terms especially when it comes to SDG5—the commitment to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls?

Keywords Gender · Environment · Gender equality · SDG5 · Sustainable development · Policy · Aid programs

Introduction

In the proposed gestation period of the SDGs 2015–2030, what can we hope to achieve? Will SDG5 be the success story this time? If the advocated success of the MDGs is anything to go by, that could be in doubt. The claim made for MDG was that it had reduced extreme poverty by 50% globally; the smoke and mirrors of that claim are underwritten by a move from absolute poverty [those who have virtually nothing] to relative poverty [those who have almost nothing]. Important to consider is that those on the frontline of confronting and combatting poverty are women who are also the principal food producers, processors and physical reproducers of the family, the community and the nation. As Shiva once said, it is women that have kept the world fed all these years; it is they who are the principal knowledge bank, the seed savers and perennial environmentalists (Shiva 2016). If women are not

Y. Corcoran-Nantes (✉)
Flinders University, Adelaide, SA, Australia
e-mail: yvonne.corcoran-nantes@flinders.edu.au

recognised and supported fully in that role, if they are not the focal point of and pathway to sustainable development, then they will vote with their feet. Should women walk away from agricultural production in significant numbers, the risk to food security and human security could be insurmountable.

They say the road to hell is paved with good intentions and nowhere more so than in the field of social and economic development. This chapter will focus on project and planning both within Australia and its aid programs in the Asia Pacific within which the nexus between gender, climate change and sustainable development offers a cautionary tale for future development programs and political excursions into this area.

Australia's Commitment to Gender Equality and Sustainable Development

Both the MDGs now SDGs are gender inclusive, and as such it is possible to measure how effective the former has been and in doing so have some measure of what has been done, what we have failed to do and what should be the focus of future government investments on aid. Crucially, while countries ratified the global development agendas, there was no sanction for failing to implement them. In the case of SDGs, the onus was placed solely on the shoulders of each respective government to develop a national program and agenda for implementation and embedding within its programs both at home and abroad.

In 2014, Australia assessed its own performance in achieving the MDGs and in the advent of SDG5 of the poor performance of its aid investment with respect to gender equality and a general failure to have significant impact. This was most striking when looking at those projects that focused on agricultural development and DFAT produced a document which analysed the shortcomings of meeting gender criteria, the poor quality of previous programs and the way forward:

While there are likely to be a number of contributing factors to the poor quality, the 2014 ODE Smart Economics evaluation found that DFAT's agriculture programs show little analysis and integration of gender approaches in program design. Further, the evaluation found that only one third of aid program staff felt confident in incorporating gender considerations into the aid programming cycle. Many identified a need for more sector-specific gender advice. (DFAT 2015)

Such an admission offers limited hope for change in the future when experienced staff long used to hearing about and, in some cases, trained in gender inclusive practice can admit to not knowing what to do or even where to start. Nevertheless, an important outcome of this bureaucratic soul searching was a resolute commitment to amend the failure of previous years and to commit to 80% of its aid investment to address gender equality issues. Moreover, that such investment would 'do no harm' to women and local gender dynamics, to work on agricultural value chains, technology and policy with a potential to empower women and women's empowerment, would be measured (DFAT 2015).

Perhaps the most important way we can address failings in the nexus between policy and practice is that top-down initiatives can reinforce the unmet promise. Field staff on the ground have to be prepared to learn in ways that will synchronise local gender knowledges with 'established' development practice to offer more nuanced and relevant programs that institute a pathway to gender-specific changes in agriculture unto the future. This would be a step forward moving beyond the consistent failure of advocacy for gender-focused futures to meaningfully impact on the implementation of policy and law.

Often there is an idea that donor countries funding projects in non-western countries have somehow got it right and that the kind of policies they develop and implement in their own country are more advanced and with proven outcomes (Alston 2014). Nothing could be further from the truth such as gender mainstreaming being implemented in non-western countries long before they are introduced 'at home'. Here we will consider a few agricultural programs which have as a focus the amelioration of climate change and sustainable development with or without gender as a focal point and their outcomes for gender equality.

Murray Darling Basin Plan

The saving of the Murray Darling Basin [MDB] project emerged out of the environmental crisis that reached a tipping point when a severe drought hit between the years 2002 and 2009. The drought exposed the environmental vulnerability of the MDB which occupies 14% of Australian territory, cuts across four states and is home to two million people as well as rare wildlife and birds. Successive years of drought led to a radical reduction of the water flowing through the basin which impacted not only on the environment but also the livelihood of the farming industry on which the local population either directly or indirectly depends. The bifurcated needs of farming and the environment were complex, and individual states 'managed' the drawing of water resources from the river individually and without consultation with other adjoining states with which they shared the resources. The result was a haphazard system of water management which advantaged the states at the upper end of the basin and severely prejudiced those situated in the lower end of the MDB complex where the Murray basin had started to silt up and dry.

Protest in the south with respect to the visible threat to the MDB as an important resource threw the farming community, environmentalists and other stakeholders in conflict with one another. Given this scenario the federal government drew the right to water management back into the central decision-making structure. It was announced that the preservation of the river basin, biodiversity and environmental protection would take precedence over the priority given to farmers drawing on the MDB water resources. The centralisation of water management in the region was carried out under the 2007 Water Act from which the Murray Darling Basin Plan (MDBP) was developed where water allocation and the buyback of water licences held by farmers would be coordinated and consolidated. The commensurate water

savings would be funnelled back into the MDB as investment in the recuperation of the environment. In essence, the goal of reducing the water resources dedicated to in favour of the environment and the future of the MDB. However, it represented a massive blow to farming interests, many of which were already crippled by the escalating debt acquired during the millennial drought years. Many farms were simply in no position to invest in a restructuring exercise of productive activities focused on water-saving measures, and for others, especially the dairy farmers, this was near nigh impossible. While the political and economic issues surrounding government decision-making remain controversial and complex, the social devastation that hit the farming communities surrounding the MDB bankruptcy, depression and suicide was irrevocable.

A little-known consideration is that 98% of farms in Australia are family owned passed from one generation to another often involving extended family interests and most especially a family enterprise within which women farmers are pivotal. It is often said that women are the most affected by climate change; already working a triple day in most cases, they must take up the slack and ensure the food security of their families, the community and the nation (Mignaqui 2014: 11–12; Alston 2006: 125). In the developed and developing world, women are the invisible farmers and remain so subsumed under the auspices of the family farming enterprise and their relationship to the principal resources property and land. In Australia this rings true as women are seen to ‘marry into’ farming rather than assume the role of farmers in their own right. The invisible farmer’s project, a 4-year endeavour involving Margaret Alston, a leading researcher in the field of gender and agriculture in Australia, demystifies the role of women in the harsh farming environment of the nation throughout history and relates women farmers’ stories in different fields of agriculture (Invisible Farmers Project (n.d.)). Moreover, Alston’s work on gender and climate change and the most recent study of Australian women dairy farmers offers a glimpse into the invisibility of women in the face of the MDB plan. It demonstrates how the MDB plan forced a restructure of the gender division of labour in the farms across the MDB which involved women in a gruelling fight for the survival of the family business and in some cases the family itself.

Whatever tasks were undertaken by men and women in the farm up to the introduction of the MDB plan were fairly clearly mapped out. Men would plough the fields, deal with irrigation issues and oversee farm labour, while women on top of their unpaid productive caring and family work were looking after animals, processing dairy and agricultural products, including on some farms, responsible for all the milking. In the highly patriarchal agricultural organisation of farming, many of the farming activities undertaken by women were dissociated from the classification of ‘farming’, while any and all work undertaken by men were considered to be productive farming activity moreover the latter more essential, pivotal than the former. In the post-MDB plan, an uncompromising radical restructuring of farming required an equally radical recalibration of the gender division of labour on farms in the MDB irrespective of the principal farming activity undertaken on each individual farm. In the post-MDB plan environment, over 30% of agricultural labour became unemployed as the farmers were no longer financially able to run their farms depending

on a contract agricultural labour force. In this difficult financial climate, while the working hours of men extended, those of women multiplied exponentially as their capacity to multitask was pushed to the limits. The augmentation of the extent and nature of their labour on the farm had to be taken on in tandem with their unpaid caring and physical reproductive role in the family. If men had assisted with family work in the past, for most farmers this was no longer the case, and as such women had to manage alone which meant a further increase in their workload. Added to this most farms operate at a distance from towns; the isolation offers no support for women farmers with respect to using childcare, and in many cases, there was simply no spare cash to do so. Women had to simply step up to the plate no matter what the personal or emotional cost might be. If their work had been considered undervalued and invisible in the past, the toll on women especially in terms of doubling their workloads was never in consideration. In the contest between the environment and farming, a gender agenda was nowhere in sight. To add to women's responsibilities, many found themselves having to take on paid work off the farm in order to put food on the table while the farm's earnings went to paying exorbitant interest rates on loans acquired in the drought years (Alston et al. 2018: 5–6; Mignauy 2014: 11–12). In a scenario in which there was little consideration for male farmers, there would be none at all for female farmers whose invisibility seemed to be further consolidated in the restructures required to attempt to maintain the viability of family-owned farms. Within the basin it seems the restructuring resulted in the feminisation of climate change response in which the fall out fell squarely on women's shoulders. But the restructuring in the basin had women questioning their lack of status within the farming community. As one female farmer in the Alston et al. study stated:

So, I think it is hard for women to see themselves as an equal because we're seen as the wife, raising kids, washing clothes, and calf rearing, that's the normal traditional woman's job on the farm.... Oh yeah, and hosing out the [dairy] yard, that's the other girl job. Stage 3, C1 5. (Alston et al. 2018: 7)

I used to introduce myself, "I'm a dairy farmer's wife," and so [I say to myself], "No, you're a full-time professional dairy farmer, that's what you should say you are, and when you meet men you shake their hand and say hello". I shouldn't have to do all that stuff really, I should be treated as equal but it is hard in probably a male dominated industry to step up, but there are some pretty good women who I talk to. Stage 2 C1 KI 7. (Alston et al. 2018: 8)

Moreover, there was no synchronicity between the restructuring of the gender division of labour from one farming enterprise to another. Some women assumed a full-time role managing the farm, while others increased the hands on labouring work and skilled jobs around the farm while their husbands focused on the intricacies of water management refinancing and achieving a balance between family and hired labour. Either way women's invisibility increased rather than decreased. In some cases women were holding the farms' finances together managing a failing enterprise, working off farm and dealing with their husband's depression and in some cases the sole manager and parent in the wake of a husband's suicide. The long drought and the fight for water in its wake were far too much for women farmers who were faced with

an uphill battle to maintain the family and the well-being of the family farm. This was exacerbated by the fact that women were not recognised as having any financial stake in it, not in the land, as inheritance beneficiaries, which continues to be patrilineal, as in laws they were simply ‘outlaws’; with no stake at all and as such, many would simply vote with their feet:

Family breakdown that occurs because of the economic pressures, and wives will be more willing usually to cut losses and walk away than men will from farms ... But on the whole it's the women that will say, 'I can't take this anymore, I just don't want to do it anymore', and its often because they're seeing the impact on their children ... so mothers are more likely to be the ones who will say, "This is just not acceptable", and want out from farms. And, you can see immediately the problem when one wants out and one wants in you've got a breakup of a marriage and then you've got the breakup of the farm, and then you've got all sorts of huge issues there. Stage 2 C1 KI 4. (Alston et al. 2018:11)

Thus, a radical shift in the gender division of labour, workload and responsibilities brought about by the MDB plan did not lead to a change in women's status in agriculture or legal access to or control over resources. To the contrary the increased labour was designated as part of the ‘family duties’ associated with women.

The focus on climate change and the river health of the MDB was the endgame and one that the rural community was expected to support and engage with, whatever the cost. While the political arguments continue with respect to the success or failure of the plan, one thing is certain nothing will be what it once was for the rural community of the MDB who were never really on the agenda at all. For women it was more of the same, invisibility while supporting the lion's share of the stresses and strains of agricultural life.

Productive Partnerships in Agriculture Project [PPAP] and the Maura Savings Group of Oria Village: Bougainville

The second example that this paper focuses on is diametrically opposed to the previous one. This was a scenario in which there was a clear and stated commitment to the recognition of women farmers in the belief that in the post-conflict situation, it would be easy to reconfigure gender relations in favour of greater gender equality. Moreover, they were projects in which Australian aid had a partial or principal role in funding and project orientation. Suffice it to say they are also cited within the recent review comment as successful projects funded by the Australian government (DFAT 2018). The question is what constitutes success?

Papua New Guinea is certainly a difficult environment in which to implement projects and programs that will focus on strengthening women's role and decision-making input in agriculture both regionally and nationally. In PNG there is a strict gender division of labour whereby women are responsible for all subsistence farming, domestic and local food production and the raising of small animals such as chickens and pigs. While men dominate and control cash crop agriculture such as cocoa, coffee and palm oil, although women do play an important role and have

significant inputs into mainstream farming endeavours, men overwhelmingly control the decision-making and marketing of cash crop production (Cahn and Liu 2008: 134; Mikhailovich et al. 2016: 2). Within households the control over earned income maybe gender specific, but whether or not the woman or man has control over income depends on the cultural mores of the community in question. Nevertheless, Byford and Guanara found that women's familial and community inputs and responsibilities were given lower status by virtue of being female as opposed to those of men who were considered to be 'de jure heads of household' and worthy of greater consideration and higher remuneration merely by virtue of being male (Byford and Guanara 2002: 30). In the face of an imbued gender inequality, projects focusing on raising gender awareness or acknowledging the central role of women in agriculture faced opposition and challenge in the communities within which they were aimed.

Idealistic projects focusing on 'new beginnings' and a belief in the face of destruction and reconstruction of agriculture in a post conflict and post disaster were overly optimistic and ambitious. In the early 2000s, the neglect of agriculture, apart from that of household food production, was evident. Energies were focussed on reviving the cocoa industry as a pivotal crop in the process of rebuilding the agricultural cash cropping economy, which by 2006 represented an almost impossible task as neglect had led to the proliferation of cocoa pod borer (CPB) disease which destroyed 80% of cocoa production with farmers facing a complete restructure and regeneration of the acreage given over to cocoa farming (World Bank 2014). Some described it as virtually year zero task requiring planting of new saplings to restore farming livelihoods. For many agencies this offered a unique opportunity to engender programs targeting agriculture in the region and reinforcing gender awareness and the centrality of women to farming with the amelioration of gender inequality as one of the outcomes (Keenan 2013).

In PNG one of the principal post-conflict reconstruction projects to reactivate cocoa farming with women taking an equal role was the Productive Partnerships in Agriculture Project (PPAP) with initial funding coming from the government of PNG and the World Bank. Other partners in the process over the following years were the EU and International Partners for Development and World Vision. Australia in cooperation with the World Bank launched the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative through which women were targeted directly through Australia Direct Aid program which offers small grants to community-based initiatives. In this case to 'women's groups, funding water and sanitation systems, community resource centres, classrooms, arts, crafts and tailoring skills' (DFAT 2018: 46) These initiatives have been led by women of the community and with a certain belief that community leadership roles offer a springboard for women to enter the PNG politics and other leadership.

In the Productive Partnerships in Agriculture Project, early expectations that the role of women might be strengthened through their inclusion were in many ways misplaced. A focus on lead or 'model' farmers meant that it was predominantly men that would be the major beneficiaries of the program in both the short and long term. In spite of the recognition that women carry out 70% of the work in agriculture, the PPAP inevitably ran into the gender ghetto of business as usual. Women already

invested in cocoa farming would clearly benefit from the program, but those who were not would receive little or no investment either with respect to training or resources which would have expanded their agricultural initiatives into cash cropping which was and continues to be a male domain. With an overwhelmingly male contingent of 'lead' or 'model' farmers, it would not go amiss that cash cropping would for the foreseeable future remain in the hands of men.

Within the reconstruction of cocoa farming in the initial stages, there was a need to generate hybrid seedlings to be used in the replantation of cocoa farming acreages. This required a cloning and grafting of cocoa budding sticks resistant to the CPB disease which had infested cocoa farms a decade earlier. While for the most part it was men that managed the seedling nurseries and women who undertook the cloning and planting process so fundamental to the future productivity of the industry. In this farming activity, far more women are centrally engaged in the process with some setting up their own nurseries through the small grants schemes targeted at women. But at the end of the day, the amount of money earned from selling the hybrid seedlings to that earned from cocoa production itself is at the lower end of the income market. In the process the grafting of nurturing of cocoa seedlings has now become a gendered activity reinforcing rather than challenging the gender division of labour in the cocoa-producing industry. Thus, women refocus their farming activities into other areas, strengthening and expanding their horticultural skills whereby a traditional gender division of labour is reassumed.

Another example of program funding that directly targeted women was support for micro-finance projects, the fallback position of gender-focused aid projects. It meets the short-term needs of women with income generation in a crisis and in periods of reconstruction. It is in these periods that the burden of family subsistence and survival falls on the shoulders of women. As the principal food producers, they are required to redouble their efforts with respect to increasing food production for the household and the local market. While farms and acreage are under regenerative and replanting activities, families cannot wait 2 years until the first harvest comes in and is sold. Women not only seek to redouble their efforts in the area of food production and animal husbandry but also in seeking 'off-farm' employment or income generation. In Papua New Guinea in the post-conflict period, there was little of the former for either women or men and as such other means to support the family needed to be pursued.

One initiative in Bougainville was the Maura Savings Group of Oria Village which emerged from the women of the community and sponsored by World Vision as one of the projects established with a small grant arising from the Australian Direct Aid program (DFAT 2018). The aim of the women-only savings and loans group was to create a sound financial environment for them to invest in their own income-generating activities and use part of the profits to save for materials to rebuild their homes, pay school fees or have running water. The group also had a social fund which helped support women members facing temporary hardship or illness. Members contribute a set amount per week at the meeting and can apply for loans from their savings at 10% interest which they are required, under the rules, to pay back in 3 months (World Vision 2017). This offered women a means of

applying their skills to income generation and savings investment that would directly benefit the family while retaining control over the profits from their activities. An interesting component to the savings group was the financial literacy training they received from the program. This would have other applications within the cocoa family farm. Women were not in many cases simply micromanaging their own income-generating activities, but when cocoa farming began to take off and income flows from cash cropping boosted family income, women would be the ones responsible for taking over the accounting and management of the family farm (Cahn and Liu 2008: 141–142).

In both examples cited here while the programs claimed to have gender equality outcomes in terms of ameliorating women's disadvantages in both the family and the community, the outcomes do not offer any significant challenge to gender inequalities in PNG society or constitute, as claimed by one agency, life changing support. One might argue that claims made with respect to the aforementioned programs are open to interpretation. The consistent reference to women cocoa farmers is correct in so much as they undertake work on cocoa planting and production on their family farms which for the most part are 'owned and run' by their husbands.

Similar to Australian women farmers, in PNG women are also the invisible farmers in cocoa production because it is men—for the most part—in the PPAP that are labelled the lead or model farmers as they own and control the resources which underpin cash crop agriculture. Thus, the inputs from the program with respect to resources and training inevitably fall to men. Moreover, in the reports and articles which consider the implementation of the PPAP, there were concerns expressed by elders that the younger generation need training in the requisite skills and by inference that would focus on training young men rather than women to carry on the cash crop farming. Bearing in mind that not only do women work in cocoa production and harvesting but they are also the primary food producers for household consumption as well as sale in the local markets. These activities however pivotal are associated with informal sector or subsistence activities which were not the focus of any of the projects and programs cited here. As Cahn and Liu assert, in consideration of the clear gender division of labour in the different farming sectors, both formal and informal women's agricultural endeavours are frequently overlooked or given little consideration (Cahn and Liu 2008: 134). In the broader remit of programs such as the PPAP which focus on male-dominated cocoa farming, women have little visibility or status as farmers. The moral of the story is that if you focus on cash crop production which is under male control without consideration of food production on which the commercial sector depends, then women will be allocated fewer resources and training opportunities than men.

The savings group initiatives funded through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program and supported by World Vision specifically targeted women and certainly satisfied a need identified by women to manage their own affairs and invest their money, through the savings group, in future projects. As the leader of the savings group in Oria Village stated, they wanted a woman-only group so that women could make decisions with respect to their own money and financial endeavours without men being 'too bossy' (World Vision 2017). Bearing in mind that women may work

across several sectors outside of cocoa farming, the most important dimension of the scheme was the training in financial literacy. Given the regeneration of family cocoa farming, their predominance in food production and small retail endeavours, the financial management of all these activities as well as saving was important, not least to the rationalisation of women's work obligations and the increasing burdens placed on women seeking to augment the family income while at the same time bearing all of the responsibility for productive unpaid domestic work in the home.

Illustrative of the possible outcomes from both programs in PNG, which were in many ways interlinked, were the benefits to the family of a 'lead' male cocoa farmer from the PPAP highlighted in an article by World Vision. Underwritten in the case study was the cocoa farming for this farmer was a 'family affair' where the wife and children assisted in the farming activities carried out on 'his' land and 'his' nurseries. His wife was a member of the savings group and would keep the financial records of the cocoa farm while operating a small trade store in the village. Thus, the family income through all of these activities was increased. In this scenario the woman still remains the invisible farmer and is defined as a producer and trader in activities outside of cocoa farming. All of these factors are understandable within the PNG culture whereby men exercise power over resources, consider themselves to be superior to women and dominate all decision-making bodies in the public sector. Within a cultural environment in which government efforts to ameliorate gender equality have for the most part been weak and under resourced, there was certainly a need to have project outcomes that focused on gender inequality. Without question the World Bank initiatives at the outset of the PPAP were highly optimistic believing that it would strengthen the role of women in the cocoa industry. In the end it seems to have shored up male advantage albeit making some inroads to counter female disadvantage. A World Vision video on the project offers a highly masculinist view of the project with hardly a woman in sight and none playing a foremost role. It would seem that women irrespective of the fact that they do the majority of agricultural work are still not recognised as the main players in reconstruction at least with respect to visibility, acknowledgement and power. The invisible female farmer once again, at least publicly, becomes the 'bit player' in the reconstruction of the cash cropping agriculture.

When Gender Slips off the Agenda

In a world in which climate change is already presenting considerable challenges for agricultural development and environmental protection, the 'big picture' agendas will increasingly depend on local solutions, whether we consider the environmentally centred Murray Basin solution in which the complexities of farming in a challenging environment were not only underestimated but lacked meaningful local and national support. PNG-funded programs to reconstruct one of the principal cash crops, cocoa, again focused more on agricultural outcomes for both the national and local economy with a circumscribed notion of the status and importance of the

major players. Within that scenario men rather than women are identified as 'lead' subjects at the expense of women who are pivotal to successful outcomes in the whole process. In neither the Australian nor the PNG case studies was a gender inclusive perspective orientating the policy or its implementation. In the early objectives of the original PPAP program, there were strong expectations of it having meaningful impact on the gender balance within the agricultural sector, with women's contribution and active engagement being not only recognised but expanded and improved upon, especially in the field of decision-making both in the family and in public decision-making forums. In reality, the gender-specific programs such as the savings group reinforced women's entrepreneurial activities and responsibilities outside of cocoa farming. In this process women's farming and agricultural activities are occulted within the savings group wherein the priority was on women as financial managers and effective savers. Thus the objective of this gender-specific program melded into one that reinforced rather than challenged gender stereotypes underpinning PNG culture by 'empowering local women with skills and knowledge to save more effectively' (DFAT 2018: 62) which begs the question why and to what purpose. Thus, the PPAP project evolved and with a deft sleight of hand gender went from being mainstreamed to a footnote.

In any claims for focus on gender equality and work towards meaningful outcomes that in some way alter the status quo, gender must from the outset be the principal focus of the plan. Moreover, there should be clearly defined gender-specific implementation strategies appropriate to the cultural context of the socio-economic environment targeted for strategic support. Most especially the nature of gender relations and its impact on the division of labour and activity status in agriculture is basic knowledge that is needed to underpin any plans for development and change. Gender knowledges are fundamental to understanding local cultural practice in questions of inheritance, land rights and economic decision-making which configure in long-term planning and strategies for change to improve the lives of men and women in the face of climate change and sustainable agricultural development (Corcoran-Nantes and Roy 2017; Dankelman 2002).

In both Australia and PNG, women are not the principal landholders, and most will not inherit land rights irrespective of their input into the family farming business while sustaining other income-generating activity outside of it which they are able to control. It is this conundrum that besets the future of farming worldwide. Women, excluded from any form of ownership of the resources on which they depend to produce food and maintain a viable livelihood, will in times of crisis will vote with their feet. The threat to food security does not lie exclusively on our response to climate change but to the clear support and acknowledgement of women as the principal food producers globally and important famers in their own right. Meeting the goals of SDG5 at home or abroad needs a clear commitment to permanent change in the way women in agriculture are viewed, treated and most of all supported. Any project or plan to do so must not only underwrite meaningful evidence-based, quantifiable outcomes but also practically subscribe to a belief that such change is possible and fundamentally necessary.

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