



Tropentag, September 16-18, 2015, Berlin, Germany

“Management of land use systems for enhanced food security:
conflicts, controversies and resolutions”

A Gender Focused Analysis of Learning Processes of Smallholders within a Development Program in Nepal

KATHARINA ZANGERLE¹, LORENZ PROBST¹, ROMANA ROSCHINSKY¹, MANINDRA MALLA²,
CHINTAN MANANDHAR², MARIA WURZINGER³

¹*University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Centre for Development Research (CDR), Austria*

²*Caritas Nepal, Nepal*

³*University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Dept. of Sustainable Agricultural Systems, Austria*

Abstract

Smallholder farmers in Nepal are facing increasing problems caused by climate change. Within the action research and development project Strengthening Adaptive Farming in Bangladesh, India and Nepal (SAF-BIN), Caritas collaborated with the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Vienna, associated partners from civil society and research as well as smallholder farmers collectives to build resilience towards climate change. Based on the Theory of Transformative Learning, this study analyses learning activities, outcomes and potential impacts of SAF-BIN in Bardiya and Kaski, Nepal. Learning activities lead to instrumental (technical knowledge about farming practices and site-specific technologies) and communicative (communication skills) learning outcomes, which can result in learning impacts. In order to examine if and in which ways women and men benefit from the project, a focus on gender was applied. Through participant observation and 32 semi-structured face-to-face interviews with project participants (16 women, 16 men), qualitative data was collected in 2014. A fieldwork diary and photographs completed the dataset. A comprehensive structure analysis and descriptive statistics were performed using Atlas.ti and Excel. Results show that - due to male job migration - more women, with diverse social backgrounds, than men participated in SAF-BIN activities. Especially learning activities like regular group meetings and on-farm adaptive field trials lead to learning outcomes. Instrumental learning outcomes included: increasing knowledge about climate change and its' links to farming, new inputs, new cultivation practices, new management approaches as well as diversification and professionalisation of farming. Communicative learning outcomes included: enhanced analytical capacities, improved presentation skills and self-confidence and increased understanding of abstract concepts. Realized impacts were increased crop production, increasing reflection of gender roles and formation of (saving-)networks. Men were more likely to achieve technical learning outcomes, while women were more likely to benefit from communicative learning outcomes. Potential impacts are increased food security, commercialisation of farming and a changing role of traditional knowledge about farming. Thus, the project setting provides a fruitful learning environment. Ways how male and female farmers can achieve equal learning outcomes need to be explored.

Keywords: Action research and development, gender, learning, Nepal