

Who is a Rural Widow?

Understood in the traditional or customary context, the term rural widow most often refers to the poor community woman who loses her husband through death and is made or forced to undergo a series of traditional rites practices in order to demonstrate her loyalty as a woman who



A widow who just lost her husband

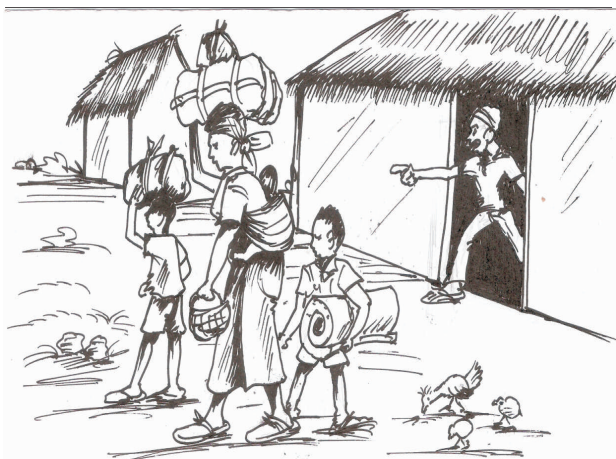
honours her dead husband and his surviving family members.

The period during which the poor woman, still facing severe psychological torture from the loss of her husband, is subjected to several inhumane

traditional rites activities, is called widowhood. The appreciation of widowhood is not only limited to the customary ordeals she undergoes, but it extends as long as she remains unmarried to any other man.

Why the Worry on the Rural Widow and the Traditional Widowhood Rites Practices?

Because the family of the man, when a



Widow and children ejected from home

woman's dowry has been paid, considers her as part of their family service 'instrument' or 'human property', in the event of the man's death, she is often poorly treated. In the limelight, global networks and policies have deemed such degrading customary treatments as an abuse to women's rights and human rights. In a similar qualification, such inhumane treatments are also considered as violence against women which form prejudicial offenses in both national and international legislation and policies. Some of such inhumane treatments include:

- Illegally denying the widow inheritance and custody of her late



Widow forced to remain by decaying corpse

husband's property;

- Forcefully ejecting her and her children from their matrimonial home;
- Sometimes accusing her and holding her unlawfully guilty of killing her husband;
- Forcing her to stay by the late husband's decaying corpse for several hours;
- Segregating and Denying her the freedom to partake in public activities;
- Subjecting her to the usage of a particular coloured dressing and utensil for alimentation;
- Compelling her to cohabit and share intimacy with the late husband's brother;
- Denying her the late husband's family support to bring-up her children; and many more...

How are These Barbaric Traditional Rites Practices Prejudicial to the Human Rights of the Widow?



Widow claiming her human rights

The practices are considered prejudicial to the dispositions and spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) accordingly:

- The traditional customs which impose unequal and bias treatment on a widow in favour of her late husband's family violate the Art.1 of UDHR. This human rights disposition considers her to be a human person with equal dignity and rights as every other person. Also, those involved in promoting such customs are by such, denying their endowment of human reason and consciences to act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.
- Disinheriting a widow and allowing her to fend alone for herself and her orphaned-children without any resources, is denying them security of their personhoods. Addressed by Art. 3 of UDHR which gives the right to life, liberty and security of person to the widow and her children.
- Having a dominating influence over the woman/widow by the man's/late husband's family is against her right of not being held in servitude as given in article Art.4 of UDHR.
- Subjecting the widow to the list of barbaric sociocultural or traditional rites practices violates her right of not being subjected to torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment as stipulated in Art. 5 of UDHR.
- Considering a widow as guilty for killing her husband and subjecting her to onerous and human dignity abasement and health endangering practices such as drinking or bathing with water used to wash the corpse of her late husband in order to prove her innocence, strongly violates her human rights and dignity. This is addressed in Art. 11

which stipulates that, as a human person, she retains the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to a public trial, in case of suspicion of a penal offence; and not to be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed.

- Intruding into a widow's home to disinherit her and children without any legal consensus to such, but based on some vain customary practices, therefore violates Art. 12 of UDHR. This article highlights that, as a human person, the widow has the right **of** not being subjected to arbitrary interference with her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon her honour and reputation, as well as, the right to be protected by law against any such interference or attacks. And, in the case where a public authority in charge of withholding the law, fails to take effective measures to redress or protect the widow's rights in these circumstances, such an official is liable for a prejudicial factor against his/her duty obligations.

- Denying the widow the right to own her late husband's property and/or to take custody for such on behalf of her children due to traditional practices or customs violates Art. 17 of UDHR. This principle provides the widow with the right to own property alone as well as in association with others; and not to be arbitrarily deprived of the property.

- Denying the widow the possibilities of interacting, socializing or even moving to her religious gatherings during the widowhood period as part and parcel of the widowhood rites practices directly violates Art. 8 of UDHR. The article stipulates that, as a human person, the widow **has** the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion which she could practice alone or in community with others, and either in private or in public.

- Depriving the widow of access to the late husband's property or sources of subsistence economic assistance and/or not offering her such family coherent support services violates the social protection principle of Art. 25 of UDHR. In this human rights principle, as a human person, she has the right to a standard of living that is adequate for the health and well-being of herself and her family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services...; as well as, the right of special care and assistance to her widowhood within motherhood and with children in childhood deserving similar social

Part One: The Rural Woman's and Widow's Socioeconomic Values

What are the Probable Ways to Assist and Lessen the Plight of the Rural Widow?

Merely complaining about the widow's rights may help adjust the inhumane traditional

loss of her husband and other community biases. As well, it is still possible for her to engage in socioeconomic activities that will help bring-up and possibly educate her orphaned children.



Widow thinking of how to remedy her situation

widowhood rites for the benefit of future widows but what about the case of those widows who are presently in aggravated situations?

As a widow who has been through the widowhood rites trauma, all is not yet lost. Though it is impossible to turn back the hand of time to correct the situation, there is need for the widow to understand that she plays a major role in the development of any community within which she finds herself. It is the widow's right to contribute to the development process in her community. The widow still possesses a lot of physical strength and time which she could make use of and by so doing, help in healing the psychological torture she faces due to the

What are the Possible Income Generating Activities that the Rural Widow May Occupy Herself With?

The primary activity of the rural woman is usually farming. But in the case of the widow, there are certain worrisome issues that may handicap her self-proficiency on subsistence



Possible income generating activities for widows

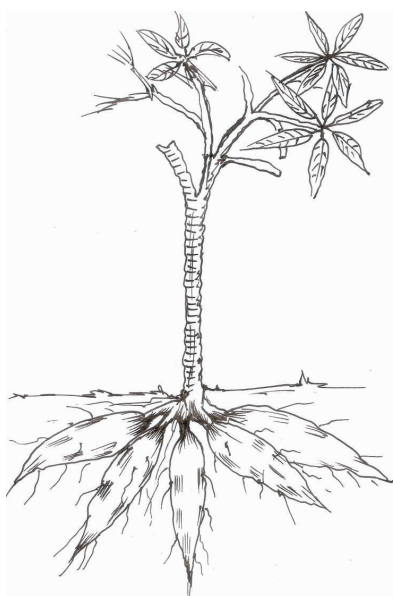
and commercial farming.

- When a woman gets married, adequate home provisions made by husband may make her to abandon farming activities thus, making it difficult for her to provide food for herself and her children when such a husband dies.

- Seizing the widow's late husband's possessions, including all cultivable land may destabilized her in such a way that she may lose any farming desires.
- Having some portion of land to cultivate on but not knowing how to transform cultivated products into commercial food stuff provisions may also dampened or weaken the widow's ability of survival and elevate her poverty level and that of her children.
- Also, having the land to cultivate and knowing how to go about the

commercial management of farm produce but not having the essential seed to cultivate is also another major worry.

Considering the presented worries, a gender mainstreaming advocacy approach to support the widow in widowhood that shall be introduced later, will help broaden the community widow's avenues for gaining farming resources and other community social assistance measures. However, when a widow has access to small or large parcels of cultivable land, it is possible to assist her

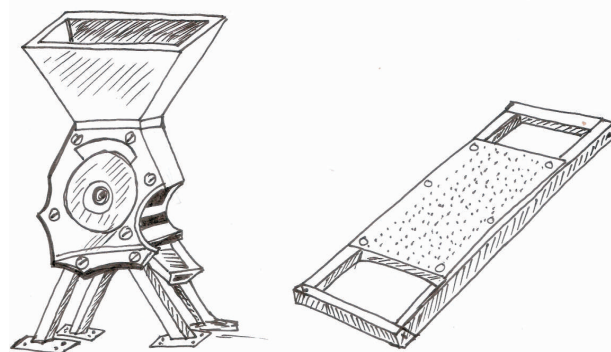
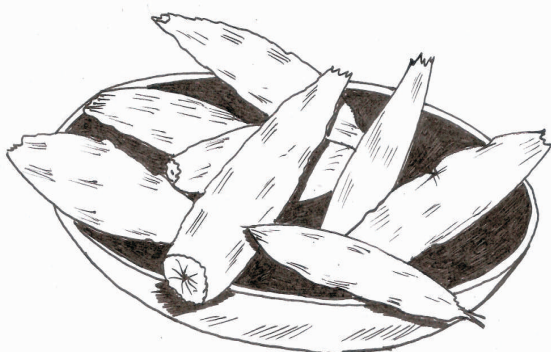


with the transformation process of some food crops which are largely produced in rural localities. When transformed as such, the products, besides providing enjoyable and nutritious food types for the family, they

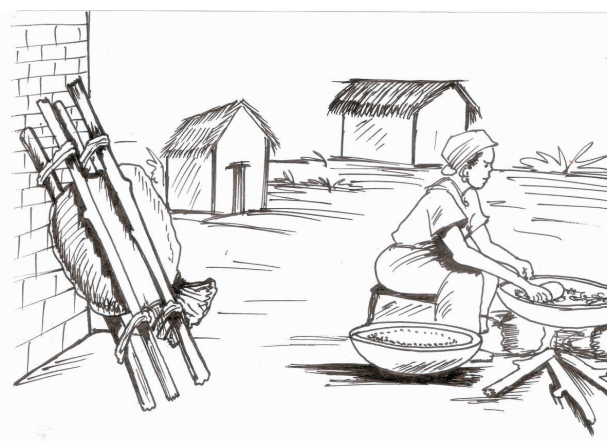
could be further and better conserved and sold in the local markets to raise income for the widow and her children. Some of these crops include:

1. Cassava

Cassava is a consumable tuber plant that is



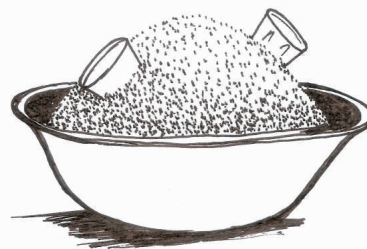
widely eaten within tropical Africa. The derivative food products that are gotten from cassava tubers make it an ideal cultivable commercial food crop type for the local communities. Thus, it is advisable for a rural widow who is into subsistence farming to cultivate cassava in significant quantities and



learn how to transform it to one or more of the following exemplary marketable food product formats.

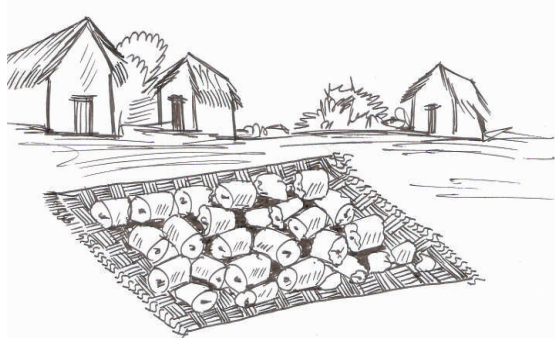
(a) 'Garri'

Garri is produced from the harvested cassava



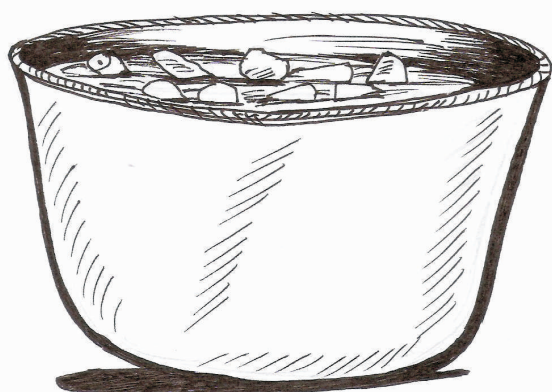
crop through the following processes:

- Peeling the cassava, washing it properly and then grinding it with either the use of the locally made graters from sizable metal plates (usually flattened cans or tins) or through local grinding mills.
- The ground cassava is then left for a period of about 24 hours to permit a semi-fermentation process on the cassava or, it is immediately introduced into a sack for the water



draining process depending on the product's contexture quality desire of the processer. Note that, when it is left to go through the semi-fermentation process, the end-garri product will have a sour taste.

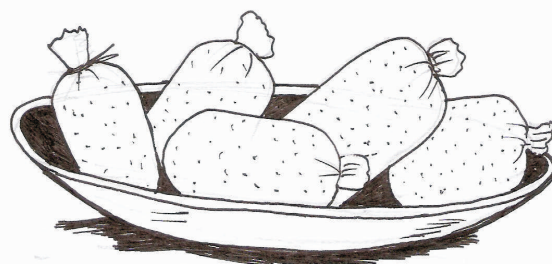
- The ground cassava which is still wet is then introduced into a sack which is put under pressure to squeeze out the liquid or water content from the cassava. This process is realised through the use of carefully arranged sticks or any other method that can apply heavy pressure on the sack. The squeezing process may take hours



or days depending on the pressure applied on the sack.

- When the ground cassava in the sack is felt as 'dry', it is then removed from the sack and sieved to remove bigger grains and fibres within it. After this, it is then fried or further dried on fire using specialised pots. Some persons may do this by using palm oil to colour and give another texture to the garri product or may allow it to remain whitish

When cassava is processed in this manner, it can be preserved for longer durations and as well, can be sold rapidly in the local markets to raise small incomes for the family.



(b) **Cassava-Flour (n'kum-n'kum flour)**

The flour or powered product that is made out of the cassava product is traditionally called 'n'kum-n'kum'. This product can also be preserved and sold to raise small incomes for



the family. It is produced through the following ways:

- Peeling the cassava, washing and cutting or slicing it into small bits that can easily be dried when

becomes fermented and the hard lumps of the soaked tubers become soft or squashy.

- The fermented and squashy



Harvest maize

exposed to sunlight for several hours.

- When the sliced cassava particles are dry, they are then taken to the local grinding mill where they are transformed to a powdered product called 'cassava-flour'.

(c) **'Water-fufu'**

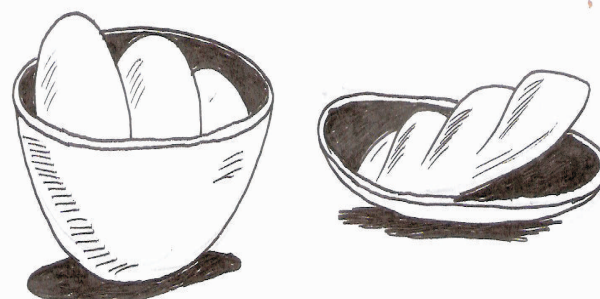
This is another food type product from the cassava tubers that could be preserved for eating and also sold to raise small incomes for the family. It is processed as follows:

- The cassava is peeled, washed and steeped or immersed in water in full lumps or halves without slicing it to bits or grinding it, unlike the former cases.

- The cassava is allowed in the water for several days until it

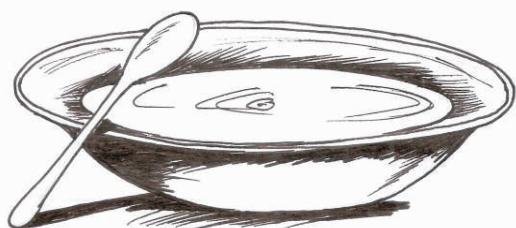
cassava tubers are then washed or rinsed through a sifter which helps in extracting the non-fermented or hard particles in the product.

- The sieved product is then introduced into a sack that permits more of the water to drain away



A plate of corn fufu and bread

through the application of limited



A plate of pap

pressure.

- The semi-wet product is then put into small plastic bags and can be preserved for long periods in cold and dry environments.

(d) **Starch**



Widow selling corn beer

Starch is another element that is highly demanded for non-food needs in the local communities. For example, in cleaning and hardening of certain cloth and texture fabrics. When produced locally, it can be sold in the markets to those in need of it. Considering the cassava tubers, starch can be made out from it as follows:

- The cassava is peeled and ground. When this is done, the ground product is then sieved to obtain the whitish water drains from it.
- The whitish water collected is further sieved through a more enclosed or stricter sieving process to eliminate or separate the purely water content from the semi-liquid starch content. When this is done, the obtained results could then be dried and



Home garden

preserved as starch for whatever purposes required of it.



Widow working in a home garden

2. Plantains

Plantains are easily cultivable farm produce within several localities but what some people do not know is that, other home and locally commercial food products could be further processed from plantain. For example, we have what can be regarded as the plantain-flour or "m'pou'h" as an appellation in certain local dialects,



processed as follows:

- The plantain is peeled and sliced into small bits which can easily get dry when exposed to the heat of sun light.

- When dried, it is then ground to obtain the powdered form of the plantain which can be preserved and used to prepare certain traditional dishes.

3. Maize

For maize or corn, unlike the previously mentioned crops, the products of corn are easily known and prepared locally within several communities. Though these products maybe popularly produced, they are as well popularly consumed, thus, they can make a good source for small income generation opportunities for widows. The presentation of some of these corn products in this manual is considered as a means to encourage the widow on how to make good use of the common resources at her disposal in order to sustain her livelihood with her orphaned children. They include:

- **Corn Flour.** This is produced from grinding dried corn. The flour product can be preserved for food such as 'corn-fufu' which is widely consumed in many localities. It can also be used in baking bread.

- **Pap.** This is obtained through the same process presented above in obtaining starch from cassava. When fresh corn is used, it is ground the way it is but

when the corn is already dry, it needs to be soaked in water for several hours or days in order to make it squashy. The semi-liquid product obtained through the sieving process is considered to be pap which can be preserved and sold to raise small incomes.

- **Corn Beer.** This is another commercial product of corn which brings much income to women in rural communities. It is made by soaking the corn in water for several days such that it becomes fermented. The fermented grains are then exposed to the sun to get dry and later taken to the corn mill for grinding. When ground as required, the corn is then boiled to obtain the product which is then dished out or served as corn beer. This is a very profitable income generating source for some local women.

It should be understood that the list of local farm products that can be transformed for home food provisions, as well as marketed to generate small incomes for the household, is unlimited. Thus, depending on the context and locality in which the widow may find herself, this brief presentation should serve as an encouragement guide to invigorate not only the widowhood self-sustaining zeal but also the community women's exploitative potentials to build ceaseless rural development efforts in the dimension.

Since farming is the most common activity of the

Traditional Gardening to Improve Food Security and Build the Socioeconomic Importance of the Widow



Widow generating income from home garden

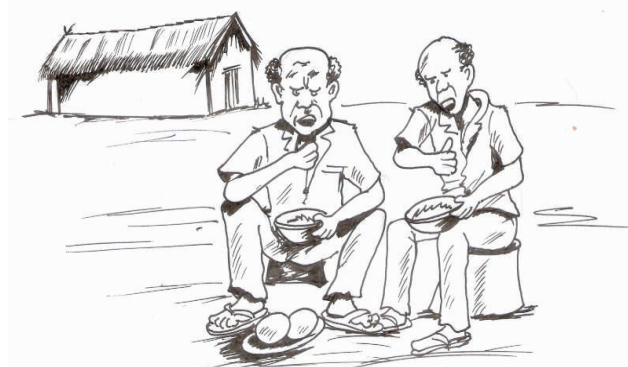
Other considerations for farming which can pull in enormous support from the local government or other rural development partners is that of coordinated and effective gardening. This can be a very satisfying farming endeavour to a rural woman and widow in the sense that, gardening provides a multitude of farm produce on small portions of land which may not only provide substantial amounts of daily marketing income but, can help to build the nutritional standards and health of her children.

In fact, the measured importance and potential benefits of home gardening, of which the most important is increased direct access to nutritious foods, have spurred the sponsorship of numerous gardening projects by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments and United Nations agencies. However, even though support for home gardening is acknowledged to be vital in increasing nutritious food supplies in poor communities foreign support in the domain have still been ineffective within rural setups. This is because of a lack of understanding and of adaptation to local conditions; and community friendly seed measures to direct the concerned community friendly progress in the domain. In this thought, a profound inside of home or traditional gardening or farming methods and prerequisites that suite the community farming women, needs proper orientation from the needy community woman's or widow's perspectives.

Within the rural community needs context,

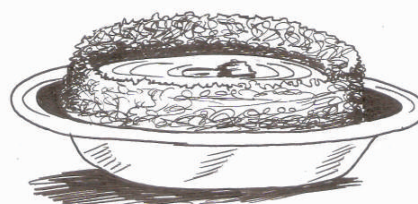
the roles of women and children are very important in any home gardening project. In order for a widow to effectively handle such a project successfully, and in order to gain some support from her community sympathizers and other foreign bodies, she needs to understand how to switch over her imposed home or community gender dependent roles. She automatically becomes the head of the household in event of death of her husband. This implies that:

- If gardening was typically a family



Community elders enjoying widow's corn fufu

activity involving her husband and her children with separate and joint tasks? She could engage in the man's tasks and where impossible, invite other elderly family members to give her a hand in the heavier tasks such as: bed establishment, fence building, well digging and tree harvesting etc. [She should remind herself that the community has a social responsibility to assist her, so, she need not shy away or be afraid to ask of this right which she possesses].



A plate of achu

- In certain cultures, since the woman may not be allowed or exposed to meet third-parties or outside supporters to community or home gardening promotion programs without the approval of her husband, in the case where she becomes a widow, her support seeking avenues become limited. In this case, she is also reminded that, rather than shying away, she should engage herself in a community social responsibility framework for information and support for her home gardening ventures in order to bring-up her children.
- Also, marketing of garden produce, though it may form an important source of income for the widow who becomes the independent head of her household, it can be a very challenging task for her when she traditionally needs to feed the family through many other home occupations. In this case, she can build a community awareness strategy based on the condition of her status and obligations and, engage the community responsibility to direct the purchase requests for her garden produce to her farm or home garden.
- *In reflection to experiences of gardening projects across the globe, pertinence is given to the importance of building on indigenous knowledge; reducing biophysical, agronomic and economic constraints; integrating nutrition education and social marketing in gardening projects; promoting the economic benefits of gardening; understanding the roles of women and children; and working towards an integrated food security strategy.*

Some Economic Benefits to Traditional Home Gardening

In addition and as means to foster the will of the widow in traditional home gardening for subsistence and other small incomes,

emphasis on the importance and benefits of this activity in rural economic development that makes it very worthy for increased government and private project support considerations may include:

- The returns to land and labour are often higher than those from field agriculture;
 - Gardening gives dual benefits of food provision and income generation;
 - Gardens provide fodder for household animals;
 - Household processing of garden fruits and vegetables (drying, canning) increases their market value and ensures year-round supply;
- The required input for low-cost gardening has few entry barriers;
- Marketing of garden produce and animals (such as goats, sheep, cows etc) is often the only source of independent income for women;
- Home gardening provides a strategic socioeconomic support and empowerment measure for vulnerable community women such as widows with very little or no other sources of income.

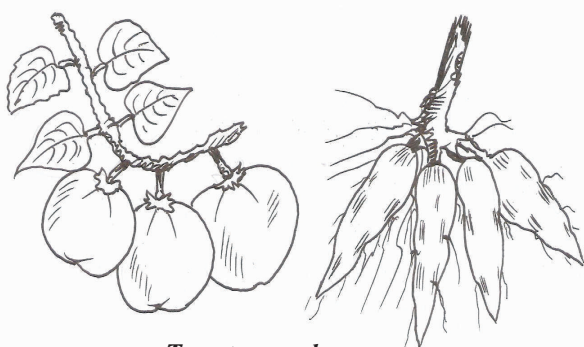
Other Benefits of Home Gardening

- Generally, *home gardening contributes to household food security and nutrition by providing direct access to diverse foods that can be harvested, prepared and fed to family members, often on a daily basis.*
 - *Most importantly and because we understand that traditional widowhood rites biases may cause widow disinheritance through seizure of all her late husband's properties including land, there is an implication to pass on that, even very poor and landless people can practice gardening since it may be done with virtually no economic resources.*
 - *Homestead production is also an important source of supplementary income for poor rural and urban households worldwide.*
 - *As well, the garden may become the principal source of household food*

and income during periods of stress.

What are the Type of Food Crops That Could Be Cultivated in the Traditional Home Garden?

Depending on the culturally followed



Tomatoes and cassava

context on food demands within the rural communities and how marketable and accessible garden produce be, the list of items to cultivate on the traditional home gardens are limitless. However, in order to gain small incomes through fast and



Cultivated spices from home garden

regular sales, selection of the crops planting types should be guided as follows:

- Food crops that form part and parcel of the community's traditional dishes or are raw produces used in processing other derivative cultural dishes. For example: fufu made from corn and becomes a traditional dish when taken with vegetables;
- Crops that form basic and highly

consumable food spices for traditional dishes in the community. For example, the preparation of 'achu-soup' requires particular spices which may be highly demanded in the community that has 'achu-soup' as their traditional dish;

- Food crops that have high potentials to generate many recognized derivative food products. For example, cassava that can be turned into garri, waterfufu, flour, etc;
- Most edible and commonly demanded vegetable types that serve well for both traditional dishes and general nutritious needs;
- Food crops that have very high demands from external markets or which are highly purchased by foreign visitors to the community. For example plantain, cocoyam etc. This depends on the assessment made by the community people;
- Food crop types that are overly used in the preparation of palatable food requisites. For example, tomatoes;
- Other food crop types that serve for generally required cooking spices such as: garlic, onion, pepper, and many others including green spices, provided they are in demand in the community.

Widow's Group Socioeconomic Endeavours for Sustainable and Mutual Growth

The potential to generate socioeconomic sustenance and improve on quality, quantity and ready market opportunities for widows' farm produce can be effectively harnessed through group farming activities. This implies that, because a single widow may have only very limited available capital or other resources to invest in huge farming initiatives, combining resources, expertise and expectations may turn a single initiative to a more recognised, bigger and sustainably rewarding venture. The following examples are more illustrative.

- In a situation where a single widow decides to keep about 5 fowls such that they can provide minor incomes when sold in the

market, she could share her idea with other widows in the community who have similar goals. If about 50 of them have the same idea, it means they jointly have 5 fowls times 50 which gives 250 fowls. As such, as a group, if they agree, they could decide to combine and run a poultry farm. By doing this, they could have their poultry business registered and then sort ready markets in local restaurants and hotels within or beyond the locality. By so doing, and with the quality and rapid multiplication rate of the poultry fowls, each member's initial investment may make profits turnover which are about three times larger than if she had singly kept only her 5 fowls.

- In a second example, community widows who are interested in farming and processing cassava come together as a group and purchase a cassava grinding mill. This grinding mill could then be used to serve other

community dwellers at a price but maybe free to the widows who are members to the group. In this situation, not only will the group women process their cassava produce freely, they will as well receive small incomes from the grinding mill services they offer to the public. They could also jointly produce very huge quantities of cassava that



A group of widows purchase a grinding mill for community use

Part Two.

Widowhood Advocacy Empowerment Strategies in Localities What Do We Need to Know in First Place?



A group of widows demonstrate empowerment strategies

The concern of widows in traditional societies which practice barbaric widowhood rites is not only limited to the level of violating human rights but, to a wider extend, it retards development and destroys the psychological build-up of the younger

generations in several ways, this includes:

- Increasing poverty levels in the community by reducing food security measures that could be managed by the labour force of the widows;
- Reducing psychosocial and cognitive motherly moral support to the community's children when the widow becomes disrespected and treated as an outcast;
- Degrading the development value and status of the community women in general who are regarded as property that could be discarded when need arises;
- Denying the only true psychological and moral support instrument of womanhood that should help grow community children in love and care for one another.

The analytical discern upon the presented

worries imply that, there is a necessity for all persons within localities to get engaged and involved in the battle against the barbaric widowhood rites practices in their area because, such is causing development retardation.

How Do We Go About This?

Primarily, for all interested community organisations which are on ground with activities or still planning to intervene in the area of widowhood rights as part and parcel of women's rights, the Modern Advocacy Humanitarian Social and Rehabilitation Association (MAHSRA) has developed this ADAPT and ACT Collectively framework guide below which could be a very useful and effective tool in directing objective activities.

Note. This framework is introduced in this domain in order to ensure an effective gender mainstreaming approach and help coordinate efforts across localities for better management and assistance for vulnerable women and widows facing silent troubles. Its benefits include:

- Building an understanding medium within localities that may empower even an unconcerned party to transmit and seek help to a widow's suffering situation that otherwise would have been undermined;
- Empowering the local and younger community girls and married women to build-up adequate influential protection strategies that could adjust their marital situations and inheritance rights before any unfortunate death event of their future spouses or already existing husbands;
- Engaging both the men and boys in rights-based awareness positions that could help influence the men-only traditional councils on issues of widows and their human rights;
- Coordinating and networking near and distant community activities and intervention strategies on widowhood rights that could provide interdependent solutions to the community widows' plight.



Concubines encouraged to legalise their marriage status



Community elders discuss on how to redress widowhood troubles

Knowing All the People and Empowering Them to Address their Community Widowhood Rites Worries: Via the ADAPT and ACT Collectively ? Gender Mainstreaming Framework

<p>Analyze gender differences</p>	<p>In order to better understand the target populations for adequate community responses to program objectives, field action groups need to gather and analyse information which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of women, girls, boys and men (including by ethnicity and class/caste) consulted in the study tours, assessment, monitoring and evaluation processes; - Different skills sets, needs, vulnerabilities and responsibilities of affected widows and their girl and boy children; - Different community elders' (male and female) voluntary angles and traditional capacities to support or influence change for the widow's plight; - Different local government authorities' will (considering sex and age) to engage legal responsibility for community defaulters on the rights of widows; - Different private individual and civil society sectors (including women groups, local NGOs and other youth social gatherings) with particular interest in the rights of widows; - Different customary values on widowhood rites and their interpretative and flexible applications in the communities with respect to women, men, girls and boys; - Different gender division of labour, responsibilities and coping strategies within the household or traditionally married couples; - Ensure planning documents and situation reports reflect the gender analysis;
<p>Design services to meet needs of all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure an adequate percentage of facilitating speakers, trainers and interpreters use strategies to engage girls and boys equally and demonstrate attempts to create gender-equitable workshop environments for widowhood rights; - Ensure significant and non-biased portions of men, women, girls and boys rights-based needs are considered or included in the awareness generating initiatives with respect to the widow's plight in their community;
<p>Ensure Access for all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure a percentage of speakers, trainers and interpreters demonstrate attempts to create gender-equitable work environments and use knowledge transferring strategies to engage girls and boys equally; - Ensure no individual is denied access to widowhood rites and rights education and learning opportunities because of discrimination; - Ensure that documents or other data collection or training items do not limit access to certain persons and not others because of sex biases. - Routinely monitor women's, girls', boys' and men's access to cultural rites through spot checks, discussions with communities, etc. - Promptly address obstacles to equal access to the information on widowhood rights in the community.
<p>Ensure equal Participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure proportionate numbers of women, girls, boys and men, including representation by ethnicity and class/caste, are involved in community planning and implementation committees or teams and plans on a regular basis; - Ensure girls and boys are equally involved in child/youth participation activities of the widowhood rights; - Provide gender training to appropriate numbers of male and female community members; - Ensure a high percentage of widow teachers feel safe and are respected in the community and are fully involved in education decision-making.

<i>And</i>	
Train all equally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide gender training to female and male widowhood rights defending teachers in the community equally; - Target the specific needs of adolescent girls who are planning to get married through vocational training and non-formal education programmes and provide them with practical self-sustaining skills that they can use, including non-traditional skills; - Ensure teachers are trained to provide gender-sensitive life skills, including sexually transmitted diseases, human rights, and psychosocial support to community learners.
Collect , analyze and report programme monitoring data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the number and type of references to gender-specific issues in assessment planning, tools design and data analysis; - Reflect analysis with other reports from nearby or distant communities; - Identify the number and type of gender-specific issues in rights based education plans; - Routinely collect, analyze and report on sex- and age-disaggregated data on programme coverage and impact; - Monitor widow livelihood programmes for improvements in self-reliance as well as beneficiary satisfaction for both women and men; - Develop and implement plans to address any gaps or inequalities.
Target actions based on analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop strategies to overcome barriers of access to rights based education such as illiteracy and biased or discriminatory customary dispositions; - Develop materials that address/challenge gender stereotypes and are relevant for the specific widowhood rites redress setting and the widows' socioeconomic empowerment ; - Tailor subsistence livelihoods programmes to the unique needs of the various segments of the affected community widows
Collectively coordinate actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that all actors within the community and the distantly interested partners liaise in other areas to coordinate and show support on gender issues, including participating in regular meetings of the widowhood rites to rights gender network; - Work with other sectors such as the zonal and regional local government authorities, civil society organizations and private individual philanthropist and researchers to ensure gender-responsive community actions. - Collaborate effectively with all stakeholders to integrate gender equality principles on programming, policies, resources and budgets throughout the implementation phase to address gender inequality.

While the ADAPT and ACT Collectively framework guides an effective way to get the concerned communities truly involved in all activities to eliminate the discriminatory and inhumane traditional widowhood rites practices through a wider level of civil society engagement, it is still necessary to build a direct community concerned advocacy and monitoring group that could engage, follow-up and sustain most activities in the domain. Some may call it the widowhood rights community advocacy group but in actual sense, this should be regarded as the community widowhood rights



Widowhood advocacy group network traditional authorities, NGOs and the UN.



Widowhood advocacy group spy, listens to home troubles ombudspersons group.

The In-Community Widowhood Right's Overseer Group's Initiative



Widow advocacy group training

The major activities of such a group is to:

- Create a liaison network between the inaccessible community widows and other civil society parties with interest on the community's widowhood rights;

- Investigate both salient and silent widowhood maltreatment practices in families and transmit the reports to the appropriate quarters if, they cannot handle such by their own actions;
- Coordinate and advise the community widows on appropriate socioeconomic initiatives and other currents to help increase their livelihood standards;



Widowhood advocacy paying social support visit to unfortunate widow

- Provide psychosocial support to widows during the immediate moments after husband loss;
- Assess the living standards of widows and their children and make reports to appropriate quarters or, form and grow a community social support initiative to raise aid for the vulnerable widows and their orphaned children

The importances of the Group include:

- Being liable assets to help design, implement, monitor and sustain programs progress for the community widows;
- Being liable policing agents to bring-in rapid intervention solutions to the majority of the suffering widows;
- Serving as family conflict managers and resolvers between the widow and her late husband's family members;
- Acting as the most assured medium within which other community widows could discreetly share their

psychological pain;

The Organizational Standard Prerequisites to Assist Effective Activities and Fostered Advocacy Strengths for the Community Widowhood Rights Overseer Group

In order to build a target community overseer group that should serve its ideal purpose on advocacy and widowhood rights policing within the community, the following considerations need to be in place:

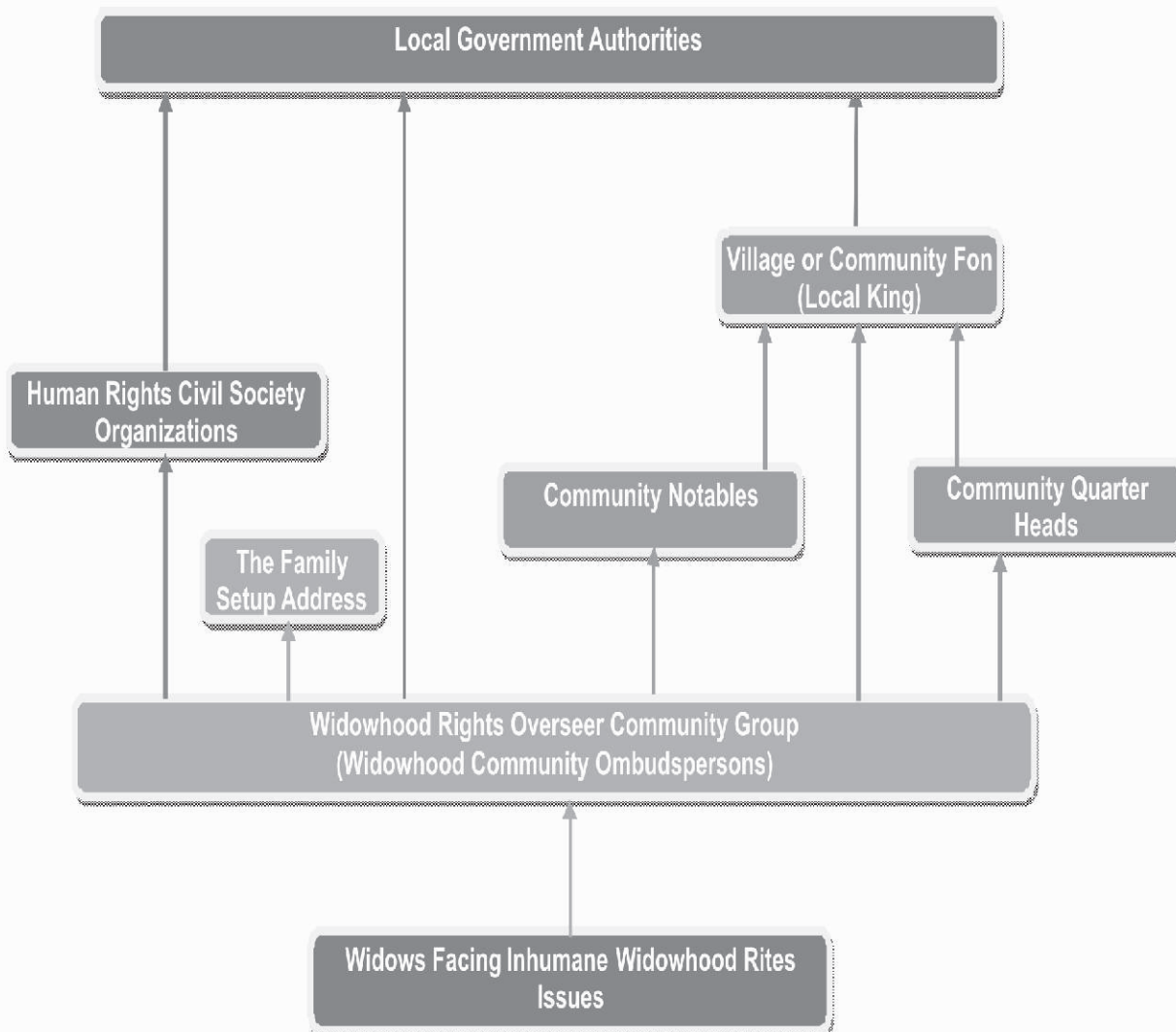
1. The group needs recognition at three major levels:

- At the level of the local populations. This will ensure that every community member is aware of their existence and raison d'être. As such, whenever they go for an intervention in a particular area, their presence by implication, should be able to automate psychological changes in the mindsets of their victims;
- At the level of the traditional authorities. This will ensure that the complains they table before such local community heads are given due attention and addressed accordingly;
- At the level of the local government authorities. This will ensure that, in case the traditional communities and their leaders are reluctant or unwilling

to resolve and respect the rights of widows, and keep on maltreating them, the group's forwarded complains to the local government authorities will be directly addressed with due respect and timeliness;

2. The group needs some discreet membership considerations. This is to ensure that, the anonymous members of the group within the community could secretly carryout investigations on widowhood maltreatment cases where the victimized widow is afraid to bring-out her complain for fear of threats or other reasons.
3. The group needs a simple, friendly but much organised management structure with an influential community widow leadership that can make most appropriate and reasonable decisions when and where necessary;
4. The group needs to have access to a wider range of women's organizations and other non-governmental civil society organizations which are influential and supportive to women's rights issues;
5. The group members need to gain periodic local training on widowhood programs management ventures

The Hierarchical Communication Flow for Community Widowhood Problems Address ed by the Widowhood Right's Overseer Group



The hierarchical communication flow pattern for addressing community widowhood problems by the widowhood right's overseer group is explained as follows:

- Widows facing inhumane widowhood rites or other discriminatory maltreatment issues from their late husband's families report to the widowhood rights overseer community group.
 - The widowhood rights overseer group analyzes and qualifies the problem which in the first place, it faces the family setup in order to educate them and try to resolve the issues at stake within the family circle.
 - When the resolution at the family level fails, depending on the gravity of the inflicted abuses, the overseer group presents the problem to the quarter head or the council of community notables for a comprehensive solution at that level.
 - If all efforts at the quarter heads or the council of notables level fail, either in consortium with the council of notables or singly, the overseer group will table the issue to the Fon. However, it is worth remarking that it is the responsibility of the council of notables to call the attention of the Fon on such an issue but, when they fail to do so, may be because of particular biases, the overseer group goes to meet the Fon directly.
- If the Fon fails as well in his duty to command a change in respect to the human rights of any reported victimized widow in question, then the overseer group should make an organised and evidence-based report directly to the local government officials of the area.
- The local government officials have the official mandate and responsibility to ensure the respect of law and norms which are in line with human rights standards. However, because of corruption within several systems, the community overseer group, based on tangible evidences, can at any time consult with the civil society organizations which are near or far. The refusal or tacit delay of any authority to address a situation which, beyond any reasonable doubt, is in violation of the human rights of a widow should also be taken into consideration and noted by the widow's community overseeing group. Such reports may also be shared with the civil society organizations which most often will be better placed to ignite a heavier advocacy battle and thus effect the desired or required change.

**Its is a Battle for Everyone so,
We are not Relenting Every Effort....**



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